

Dr. Zacharias Ursinus

Large and Small Catechisms
with the Heidelberg Catechism

Translated by Fred H. Klooster and John Medendorp

Ursinus: Large Catechism

1 Q What firm comfort do you have in life and in death?

A That I was created by God in his image for eternal life; and after I willfully lost this in Adam, God, out of infinite and free mercy, took me into his covenant of grace that he might give me by faith, righteousness and eternal life because of the obedience and death of his Son who was sent in the flesh.

And that he sealed his covenant in my heart by his Spirit, who renews me in the image of God and cries out in me, “Abba,” Father, by his Word and the visible signs of this covenant.

2 Q How do you know that God has established such a covenant with you?

A Because I am a true Christian.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

1 Q What comfort sustains your heart in death as well as in life?

A That God has truly forgiven all my sins because of Christ and has given me eternal life in which I may glorify him forever.

2 Q How are you sure of that?

A The Holy Spirit witnesses to this in my heart by the Word of God and the sacraments, and by the beginning of my obedience to God.

The Heidelberg Catechism

1 Q What is your only comfort in life and in death?

A That I am not my own, but belong – body and soul, in life and death – to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil, He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven: in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.

Because I belong to him Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me whole-heartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*3 Q Whom do you call
a true Christian?*

A One who by true faith
is grafted into Christ
and is baptized in Him.

*4 Q Is there then no true religion
beside the Christian religion?*

A None.

5 Q Why do you say that?

A Because the Holy Spirit witnesses
only to this religion
in believers' hearts.
Only this religion promises
certain deliverance
from sin and death.
Only this religion convicts
the conscience
of its purity and truth.
And finally,
since the beginning of the world,
God confirmed only this religion
by great miracles,
by true predictions of future events,
by protection from all enemies,
and by the blood of so many holy martyrs.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

6 Q Where is it contained?

A In the books
of the prophets and the apostles.

*7 Q What then distinguishes this religion
from all others?*

A All other religions teach
something of the truth
only about external things
and add the worship of idols
and various other errors
which are even contrary to sound reason.
However, they teach nothing
about the perfect righteousness
which God requires in his Word,
nor about the Mediator
through whom this righteousness
is obtained,
and thus they leave man
in the midst of despair and death.
Only the Christian religion shows
what kind of man God created,
for what purpose he created him,
and how he may reach that goal.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*8 Q In how many parts
is Christian doctrine summarized?*

A Four.

9 Q What are they?

A The summary of the divine law
or the ten commandments,
the summary of the gospel
or the Apostles' Creed,
prayer to God
or the Lord's Prayer,
and the institution
of the ministry of the church.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

3 Q What does God's Word teach?

A First, it shows us our misery,
second, how we are set free from it,
and third,
what thanks must be given to God
for this deliverance.

4 Q How do we come to know our misery?

A From the divine law
which is summarized
in the ten commandments.

*5 Q How do we learn
the way of deliverance?*

A From the gospel,
that is, the articles
of the Christian faith,
and the sacraments.

*6 Q Where are we taught
the thanks we owe to God?*

A In the ten commandments
and the doctrine of prayer to God.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*2 Q What must you know
to live and die in the joy
of this comfort?*

A Three things:
first, how great my sin and misery are;
second, how I am set free
from all my sins and misery;
third, how I am to thank God
for such deliverance.

Part I – Man's Misery

3 Q How do you come to know your misery?

A The law of God tells me.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

10 Q What does the divine law teach?

A It teaches
the kind of covenant God established
with man in creation,
how man behaved in keeping it,
and what God requires of him
after establishing the new covenant
of grace with him.

That is,
what kind of man God created
and for what purpose,
into what state he has fallen,
and how he must conduct himself,
now that he is reconciled to God.

11 Q How was man created?

A In the image of God.

12 Q What is this image?

A A true knowledge of God
and the divine will
and the inclination and desire
of the whole man
to live according to
God's will alone.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

13 Q For what purpose was man created?

A That he might worship God
with his whole life
in eternal blessedness.

14 Q What is worship of God?

A It is obedience given to God
according to his law
with the primary purpose
of honoring him.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

15 Q What is the summary of this law and this obedience?

A That we love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength.

And that we love our neighbor as ourselves.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

7 Q What is the summary of the ten commandments?

A Christ summarized it with these words in Matthew 22 –

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.

And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.

Concerning these commandments God said:

Cursed be every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them.

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4 Q What does God's law require of us?

A Christ teaches us this in summary in Matthew 22 –

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the great and first commandment.

And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*16 Q What does it mean
to love God with all one's heart
all one's soul and all one's strength?*

A It means to acknowledge Him alone as God,
that is,
as our creator, provider, and savior,
and therefore, before all things,
to obey Him perfectly
with both body and soul
through our whole life,
so that we would rather
deny ourselves
and give up every created thing
than offend Him in anything.

*17 Q What does it mean
to love our neighbor as ourselves?*

A It means,
to the best of our ability,
to desire and do good for all,
in so far as God's perfect honor permits,
just as we would have them do for us.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

18 Q Can any of us fulfill this obedience?

A With the sole exception of Christ, no one has ever been able or ever will be able to fulfill it in this life.

19 Q Why are we unable to fulfill it?

A Because we lost the image of God.

20 Q How was it lost?

By the fall of our first parents in Paradise.

21 Q What was this fall?

A By their own will, they submitted to the Devil, made light of the command and warnings of God, and ate the fruit of the forbidden tree.

22 Q What was the result of this fall?

A That all, by nature, can do nothing but sin and therefore deserve eternal damnation.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

8 Q But are we able to do this?

A No.
For although the first parents of the human race in Paradise were created righteous and holy by God with the ability to do this, they robbed themselves and all their descendants of God's grace by willful disobedience so that now we are all born children of wrath, and, unless we are renewed by the Spirit of God, can only sin against God and our neighbor.

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5 Q Can you live up to all this perfectly?

A No.
I have a natural tendency to hate God and my neighbor.

6 Q Did God create man so wicked and perverse?

A No.
God created man good and in his own image, that is, in true righteousness and holiness, so that he might truly know God his creator, love him with all his heart, and live with him in eternal happiness for his praise and glory.

7 Q Then where does man's corrupt nature come from?

A From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise. This fall has so poisoned our nature that we are born sinners – corrupt from conception on.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

23 Q What is sin?

A Whatever is contrary
to God's law.

*24 Q Are not even infants
free from sin?*

They are not;
original sin is inborn
and remains in us all
as long as we live on earth.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

9 Q What is sin?

A All ignorance and doubt of God,
every inclination and act,
internal or external,
in conflict with God's law is sin;
all these make us deserve
God's anger
and eternal death.

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*8 Q But are we so corrupt
that we are totally unable to do any good
and inclined toward all evil?*

A Yes, unless we are born again,
by the Spirit of God.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

25 Q What is original sin?

A It is guilt
because of the fall of our first parents,
ignorance and doubt
of God and his will,
and the inclination
to that which God has forbidden.

It is inborn
because of the fall of our first parents,
and is the cause of all
internal and external sinful actions.

26 Q What are the results of sin?

A Every sin deserves
the anger of God
and both temporal and eternal death.

27 Q What is temporal death?

A It is the separation of soul from body
and all the miseries
associated with it.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

28 Q What is eternal death?

A It is the terrifying awareness
in one's conscience
of divine anger and judgment,
and the continuous torment
of soul and body.

29 Q Why does sin deserve eternal punishment?

A First, because God's justice demands
that punishment be equivalent to the wrong.
Every sin involves infinite wrong
because it is an offense
against God who is infinite Good.
Therefore it deserves
infinite punishment.

Second, since sin does not cease
its punishment cannot cease.
But without the grace of Christ
no one stops sinning;
therefore no one can ever be set free
from punishment.

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*9 Q But doesn't God do man an injustice
by requiring in his law
what man is unable to do?*

A No, God created man with the ability
to keep the law.
Man, however, tempted by the devil,
in reckless disobedience,
robbed himself and his descendants
of these gifts.

*10 Q Will God permit
such disobedience and rebellion
to go unpunished?*

A Certainly not.
He is terribly angry
about the sin we are born with
as well as the sins we personally commit.

As a just judge
he punishes them now and in eternity.

He has declared:
“Cursed be every one who does not abide by
all things written in the book of the law,
and do them.”

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11 Q But isn't God also merciful?

A God is certainly merciful,
but he is also just.
His justice demands
that sin, committed against his supreme majesty,
be punished with the supreme penalty –
eternal punishment of body and soul.

Part II – Man's Deliverance

*12 Q According to God's righteous judgment
we deserve punishment
both in this world and forever after:
how then can we escape this punishment
and return to God's favor?*

A God requires that his justice be satisfied.
Therefore the claims of his justice
must be paid in full,
either by ourselves or by another.

13 Q Can we pay this debt ourselves?

A Certainly not.
Actually, we increase our guilt every day.

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14 Q Can another creature – any at all – pay this debt for us?

A No.
To begin with,
God will not punish another creature
for man's guilt.
Besides,
no mere creature can bear the weight
of God's eternal anger against sin
and release others from it.

15 Q What kind of mediator and deliverer should we look for then?

A He must be truly human and truly righteous,
yet more powerful than all creatures,
that is, he must also be true God.

16 Q Why must he be truly human and truly righteous?

A God's justice demands it:
man has sinned,
man must pay for his sin,
but a sinner can not pay for others.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

** 57 Q Who is Jesus Christ?*

A He is the eternal Son of God,
one God with the eternal Father
and Holy Spirit,
who was made man for our salvation.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*10 Q How can you then escape
eternal death?*

A Through God's Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ,
who for me
became man,
satisfied God's most perfect
and very strict justice
by his suffering and obedience,
and earned eternal life
which he has already begun in me
through his Holy Spirit
and will make perfect
after this life.

The Heidelberg Catechism

17 Q Why must he also be true God?

A So that,
by the power of his divinity,
he might bear the weight of God's anger
in his humanity
and earn for us
and restore to us
righteousness and life.

*18 Q And who is the mediator –
true God and at the same time
truly human and truly righteous?*

A Our Lord Jesus Christ,
who was given us
to set us completely free
and to make us right with God.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

30 Q Where then do you get your hope of eternal life?

A From the gracious covenant which God newly established with those who believe in Christ.

31 Q What is that covenant?

A It is the reconciliation with God gained by the mediation of Christ in which God, because of Christ, promises those who believe in him that he will always be a gracious father and will give them eternal life.

They in return respond to him by accepting his blessings in true faith and, as is fitting for thankful and obedient children, by glorifying him forever.

And both parties publicly confirm this mutual promise by visible signs which we call sacraments.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

32 Q Why is this covenant also called a testament?

A First, because the term testament began to be used in the church instead of the term covenant.

Second, because just as a testament is not valid without the death of the testator, so also this covenant could not be valid without the death of Christ.

33 Q What is the difference between the Old and the New Testament?

A It is the same testament or covenant of God with all the elect from the first promise given in Paradise, concerning the seed of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent, to the end of the world.

But they are called Old and New Testaments because some of the circumstances and signs of the covenant were changed.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

(33 cont.)

First,
in the Old they believed in the Christ
who was still to come;
in the New we believe in the Christ
who has been revealed.

Second,
the Old contained the promise
of the preservation
of the nation of Israel
until the time of Christ;
in the New we have only the general promise
of the preservation of the church
under various governments.

Third,
the Old had levitical ceremonies, for which,
having been abolished in the New,
Christ instituted baptism and the Lord's supper.

Fourth,
the Old was more obscure;
the New is clearer.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

34 Q How do we know that God establishes such a covenant with men?

A From the gospel.

35 Q What does the gospel teach?

A It teaches
what God promises us
in the covenant of his grace,
how we are received into it,
and how we know we are in it;
that is,
how we are set free from sin and death
and how we are certain of this deliverance.

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19 Q How do you come to know this?

A The holy gospel tells me.
God himself began to reveal the gospel
already in Paradise;
later, he proclaimed it
by the holy patriarchs and prophets,
and portrayed it
by the sacrifices and other
ceremonies of the law;
finally, he fulfilled it
through his own dear Son.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*36 Q What is the difference
between the law and the gospel?*

A The law contains the covenant of nature
established by God with man in creation;
that means,
it is known by man from nature,
it requires perfect obedience of us
to God,
and it promises eternal life
to those who keep it
but threatens eternal punishment
to those who do not.

The gospel, however,
contains the covenant of grace;
that means,
although it exists,
it is not known at all from nature;
it shows us
Christ's fulfillment of that righteousness
which the law requires,
and its restoration in us
through Christ's Spirit;
and it promises eternal life
freely on account of Christ
to those who believe in him.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

37 Q Does the gospel teach that all are in the covenant of grace?

A It certainly calls all to this covenant, but no one becomes a member of it except those who accept and keep it, that is, those who by true faith receive Christ, who has been offered to them, and his blessings.

38 Q What is faith?

A It is firmly to assent to everything taught us in God's Word, and a firm assurance by which each one is personally convinced that forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and eternal life have been freely given him by God because of Christ's merit, and through him, and which, having been created in the hearts of the elect by the Holy Spirit, makes us living members of Christ and produces in us true love and prayer to God.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

11 Q Does Christ's satisfaction benefit all?

A No.
Only those who accept it by true faith.

12 Q What is faith?

A It is a firm assent whereby we know that all things taught us in God's Word are true, and a deep-rooted assurance created in the hearts of God's elect through the Holy Spirit by which each one is personally convinced that forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and eternal life have been freely given to him by God because of Christ's merit alone.

The Heidelberg Catechism

20 Q Are all men saved through Christ just as all were lost through Adam?

A No.
Only those are saved who by true faith are grafted into Christ and accept all his blessings.

21 Q What is true faith?

A True faith is not only a knowledge and conviction that everything God reveals in his Word is true; it is also a deep-rooted assurance created in me by the Holy Spirit through the gospel that, out of sheer grace earned for us by Christ, not only others, but I too, have had my sins forgiven have been made forever right with God, and have been granted salvation.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

39 Q What then is the summary of those things which the gospel presents for us to believe so that we may be members of God's covenant?

A It is summarized in the articles of faith or the Apostles' Creed.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

13 Q What is the summary of those things which a Christian ought to believe?

A It is summarized in the Apostles' Creed.

14 Q What is that creed?

A 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 Spirit,
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 living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit;
I believe a holy catholic church,
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting.

The Heidelberg Catechism

22 Q What then must a Christian believe?

A Everything God promises us in the gospel. That gospel is summarized for us in the articles of our Christian faith – a creed beyond doubt, and confessed throughout the world.

23 Q What are these articles?

A 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 Spirit,
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 living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit;
I believe a holy catholic church,
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

40 Q How many main parts does it have?

A Three:
First, creation and providence;
Second, deliverance;
Third, our sanctification.

41 Q What is the first part?

A “I believe in God the Father, almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.”

42 Q Who is God?

A God is one, spiritual, intelligent
eternal, infinite essence,
distinct from all creatures,
truthful, good, righteous,
holy, merciful, kind,
absolutely free,
the source and cause of all good,
of infinite power and wisdom,
and angry with sin.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

15 Q How many parts does this creed have?

A Three:
First, the eternal Father
and our creation;
Second, the Son
and our deliverance;
Third, the Holy Spirit
and our sanctification.

The Heidelberg Catechism

24 Q How are these articles divided?

A Into three parts:
God the Father
and our creation;
God the Son
and our deliverance;
God the Holy Spirit
and our sanctification.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

(42 cont.)

He is the eternal Father
who from eternity generated
the Son, his own image,
and the Son,
who is
the coeternal image of the Father,
and the Holy Spirit
who proceeds
from the Father and the Son.

This is how the Godhead is revealed
by the sure Word
and the Divine testimonies:
The eternal Father,
with the Son and the Holy Spirit,
created, upholds, and rules
by his providence
heaven and earth
and all creatures
gathers an eternal church for himself
within the human race
because of and through the Son,
and is the judge
of the just and the unjust.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*43 Q Since there is but one God,
why do you speak of
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?*

A Because that is how
God has revealed himself
in his Word and divine testimonies:
the eternal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
are three persons,
distinct from each other
by specific properties,
and yet there is
only one divine essence and one God,
creator of heaven and earth,
in whom we are baptized,
and whom we are commanded
to worship.

44 Q How are they one?

A First of all
because they are one essence and one God.
Secondly
because in everything they are equal –
eternity, power, majesty,
wisdom and goodness.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*16 Q Since there is but one God
why do you speak of
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?*

A Because that is how
God has revealed himself in his Word:
these three distinct persons
are one, true, eternal God
who created heaven and earth,
in whom we have been baptized
and whom we are commanded
to worship.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*25 Q Since there is but one God,
why do you speak of three:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?*

A Because that is how
God has revealed himself in his Word:
these three distinct persons
are one, true, eternal God.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

45 Q How do they differ from one another?

A The eternal Father
is the first person of the Godhead
who generated the Son from eternity
and works all good in all creatures
through the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Son
is the second person of the Godhead,
the image, wisdom, and Word of the Father,
generated by the Father from eternity,
through whom the Father
created and upholds all things,
who was sent from the bosom of the Father
to reveal the gospel,
to take on human nature,
and to be Mediator,
Redeemer, Justifier, and Savior.

The Holy Spirit
is the third person of the Godhead
who proceeds from the Father and the Son
and was sent to sanctify
the hearts of believers in Christ.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

46 Q What does it mean to believe in God?

A It means to be firmly convinced that this one true God who has revealed himself in the church is Lord of all creatures so that with the highest right he is able to do with them whatever he wishes, and yet he so desires our good that we ought to expect from him everything that pertains to our salvation.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

17 Q What do you believe about the eternal Father?

A That the eternal Father is the first person of the Godhead who from eternity generated the Son, his own image, through whom he made, out of nothing, heaven, earth, and all creatures, who upholds and rules them according to the eternal decree of his will for his own glory and the salvation of his own, and who works all good in all and through all creatures, even through the wicked who sin out of their own corruption. He has adopted me as his own son because of his only begotten Son, and takes such care of my body and soul that nothing can happen to me without his fatherly will, and that all things must work together for my salvation.

The Heidelberg Catechism

26 Q What do you believe when you say, "I believe in God the Father, almighty maker of heaven and earth"?

A That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and everything in them, who still upholds and rules them by his eternal counsel and providence, is my God and Father because of Christ his Son.

I trust him so much that I do not doubt he will provide whatever I need for body and soul, and he will turn to my good whatever adversity he sends me in this sad world.

He is able to do this because he is almighty God; he desires to do this because he is a faithful Father.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

47 Q Why do you call him “Father”?

A First, because he is the eternal Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ;
Second, because he is the Father
of believers whom he adopted in Christ.

48 Q Why do you call him “almighty”?

A Because he can do and does
whatever he wishes
in heaven and on earth,
so that nothing happens
apart from his will and decree.

*49 Q What does it mean to believe in God
as “Father” and “almighty”?*

A It means to know certainly
that he is both willing and able
to freely and faithfully give
all those things
that concern our salvation.

50 *Q Why do you add:
“maker of heaven and earth”?*

A Because he made all other things
out of nothing,
upholds them by his presence,
and rules them by his providence
for his glory
and the salvation of his own.

51 *Q Did God then create evil things also?*

A Everything that God created
was very good,
but devils and men
willfully turned away from God
and corrupted themselves.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

52 Q What do you call the providence of God?

A The eternal, immutable,
all wise and good counsel of God
according to which
all things happen
and are directed
to the glory of the Creator.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*27 Q What do you understand
by the providence of God?*

A Providence is
the almighty and ever present power of God
by which he upholds, as with his hand,
heaven
and earth
and all creatures,
and so rules them that
leaf and blade,
rain and drought,
fruitful and lean years,
food and drink,
health and sickness,
prosperity and poverty –
all things, in fact, come to us
not by chance
but from his fatherly hand.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

53 Q Must one then say that even the wicked are ruled by God?

A By his power and counsel
he certainly works out
through them (the wicked)
what he wills in such a way
that they cannot even move themselves
without his will,
but he neither sanctifies them
nor leads them
by his grace and Spirit.

54 Q Then isn't God the author of the sins which they commit?

A By no means!
For God brings about and carries out
only that
which is very good and righteous
even through the very wicked.
That they themselves sin
while God works good through them
is not caused by God's good will
and just judgment
but by the corruption
which clings to them
and has been brought about
by their own will.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*55 Q What does it mean to believe
in the creator of heaven and earth?*

A It means to be certain
not only that we were created
but also that we are nourished
and sustained by God,
and that we and all that is ours,
as well as all creatures,
are so upheld and ruled by his hand
that nothing can happen to us
except by his good and saving will for us.

*56 Q What is the second part
of this article of faith?*

A And in Jesus Christ,
his only begotten Son,
our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
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 living and the dead.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*28 Q How does the knowledge
of God's creation and providence
help us?*

A We can be patient when things go against us,
thankful when things go well,
and for the future we can have
good confidence in our faithful God
and Father
that nothing will separate us from his love.
All creatures are so completely
in his hand
that without his will
they can neither move nor be moved.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

57 Q Who is Jesus Christ?

A He is the eternal Son of God,
one God with the eternal Father
and Holy Spirit,
who was made man for our salvation.

58 Q Why is he called “Jesus”?

A Because by his merit and power
he is the author
of perfect and eternal salvation
for all who believe in him.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

18 Q What do you believe concerning the Son?

A That the Son is the second person
of the Godhead:
Word and image of the Father,
equal with the Father,
coeternal and consubstantial,
and generated by the Father from eternity.
He was sent so that,
having taken on a human nature,
he might set free from eternal death
and restore to eternal life
me and all who believe in him
by his merit and almighty power.

*19 Q Why do you call him “Jesus” meaning
“savior”?*

A Because I am firmly persuaded
that he alone
by his merit and power
is the author
of perfect and eternal salvation
for me and all who believe in him.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*29 Q Why is the Son of God called “Jesus”
meaning “savior”?*

A Because he saves us from our sins.
Salvation cannot be found in anyone else;
it is futile to look for any salvation
elsewhere.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*30 Q Do those who look for
their salvation and security
in saints, in themselves, or elsewhere
really believe in the only savior Jesus?*

A No.

Although they boast of being his,
by their deeds they deny
the only savior and deliverer, Jesus.
Either Jesus is not a perfect savior,
or those who in true faith accept this savior
have in him all they need for their salvation.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

59 Q What does the name “Christ” mean?

A That he has been appointed by the Father as prophet, priest, and king.

60 Q With what kind of anointing was he anointed?

A With the fullness of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

20 Q Why do you say “Christ,” meaning “anointed”?

A Because he has been ordained by his eternal Father and has been anointed with the Holy Spirit to be for me and all believers the chief prophet who reveals God’s will for us, our only high priest who reconciles us to God by his mediation and by the one sacrifice of his body on the cross, and our king who governs us by his Word and Spirit, guards the salvation won for us, and hands it over to us after this life as our perfect and eternal possession.

The Heidelberg Catechism

31 Q Why is he called “Christ” meaning “anointed”?

A Because he has been ordained by God the Father and has been anointed with the Holy Spirit to be our chief prophet and teacher who perfectly reveals to us the secret counsel and will of God for our deliverance; our only high priest who has set us free by the one sacrifice of his body, and who continually pleads our cause with the Father; and our eternal King who governs us by his Word and Spirit, and who guards us and keeps us in the freedom he has won for us.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

61 Q Why do you call him “prophet”?

A Because he has revealed to us,
through the ministry
and the Holy Spirit in our hearts,
the Father’s will for us.

And he fulfills the prophecies and types
which pointed to him
in the Old Testament.

62 Q What is his priesthood?

A It is to gain the grace
of the Father for us
by his mediation
and by the sacrifice
of his obedience and death.

63 Q What is his kingship?

A The Son of God from the very beginning
instituted and maintains
the ministry of the Gospel,
through which
he converts the elect and makes them alive,
sanctifies them by the Holy Spirit,
defends them against devils,
raises them to eternal life
and ushers them into the presence of the Father
so that from then on
God might reign publicly among them
rather than through the ministry.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*64 Q What then does it mean
to believe in Jesus Christ?*

A It means that we have this comfort
that from him
as our king
we are given and ruled
by the Holy Spirit
and protected from all dangers;
as our high priest
we are reconciled
and led to the Father
so that we can ask and expect
all good things from him;
and as the true prophet
we are illumined
with the knowledge of the Father;
consequently with him we become
kings,
who eternally reign with him
over all creatures,
priests,
who already now offer ourselves
and all that is ours
as thank offerings to God,
and prophets,
who truly know
and glorify God.

The Heidelberg Catechism

32 Q But why are you called a Christian?

A Because by faith
I am a member of Christ
and so I share in his anointing.
I am anointed
to confess his name,
to present myself to him
as a living sacrifice of thanks,
to strive with a good conscience
against sin and the devil
in this life,
and afterward to reign with Christ
over all creation
for all eternity.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*65 Q Why do you call Christ
the “only begotten Son” of God
when we also are God’s children?*

A Because we,
who were by nature enemies of God,
have been adopted by God
as his children by grace,
by which the merit of Christ
and the right of heirs
is communicated to those
who have been grafted into Christ.
But Christ alone
is God’s Son by nature,
according to his divinity –
eternally generated
out of the essence of the Father
and according to his human nature
by the personal union
of his flesh with divinity.

*66 Q What does it mean
to believe in the Son of God?*

A It means,
through the testimony of the Holy Spirit,
to feel in one’s heart
that we have been adopted by God as children
because of his only begotten Son.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*21 Q Why do you call him
God’s “only begotten Son”
when we are also God’s children?*

A Because he alone,
according to his divinity,
is God’s Son by nature –
eternally generated by the Father,
and one, eternal God
with the Father and the Holy Spirit;
however, God has adopted
me and all believers
as his children by grace.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*33 Q Why is he called
God’s “only begotten Son”
when we also are God’s children?*

A Because Christ alone is the eternal,
natural Son of God.
We, however, are adopted children of God –
adopted by grace through Christ.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

67 Q Why do you call him “our Lord”?

A Because he was appointed by the Father
head over all things
in heaven and on earth
and has bought us for his own
with his blood.

*68 Q What does it mean to believe
in Christ “our Lord”?*

A It means to know for certain
that since we belong to Christ
he will not allow us
to be removed from his hand
nor are we allowed
to desert him for another.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

22 Q Why do you say “our Lord”?

A Because he was appointed by the Father
head over all things
in heaven and earth
and has bought us for his own
with his precious blood.

The Heidelberg Catechism

34 Q Why do you call him “our Lord”?

A Because –
not with gold or silver,
but with his precious blood –
he has set us free
from sin and from the tyranny of the devil,
and has bought us,
body and soul,
to be his very own.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*69 Q What do you understand when you say
“conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary”?*

A That the Son of God,
who is the eternal Word of the Father,
took to himself
in the womb of the virgin Mary
without the seed of man,
a human soul and body –
formed from the substance of the virgin
and perfectly sanctified,
together with the soul,
from the moment of conception
by the power of the Holy Spirit
so that,
according to the promises given the fathers,
he might be true man
in all things like us
except for sin
and the true descendant of David.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*23 Q Why do you say
“conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary”?*

A Because I am taught by God’s Word
that God’s Son,
from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary
through the working of the Holy Spirit,
took to himself a human nature,
so that he might at the same time
be true God,
as he was from eternity,
and the true son of David,
in all things
like us his brothers
except for sin,
and so that he might cover my sins
before God’s sight
by his most perfect obedience.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*35 Q What does it mean that he
“was conceived by the Holy Spirit
born of the virgin Mary”?*

A That the eternal Son of God,
who is and remains
true and eternal God,
took to himself,
through the working of the Holy Spirit,
from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary
a truly human nature
so that he might become David’s true descendant
in all things like us his brothers
except for sin.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

70 Q How do you understand that the Word became flesh?

A This way:
that neither the divine nature
was changed into the human
nor the human into the divine
but that these two natures
were so united in one person
as soon as the human
was conceived in the womb
of the virgin
that they can never be separated later
and they both retain their own
distinct attributes
and that one and the same Christ
is true God and true man,
who can do and endure
both what is divine
and what is human,
yet each, however,
according to that nature
to which it belongs,
just as soul and body
are one man.

71 Q Why was it necessary that Christ be true God and true man?

A Because otherwise
he could not be the mediator
between God and men.

The Heidelberg Catechism

36 Q How does the holy conception and birth of Christ benefit you?

A He is our mediator,
and with his innocence and perfect holiness
he removes from God's sight
my sin – mine since I was conceived.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

72 Q What then is the work of the mediator?

A To restore the covenant
between God and men
who rebelled against him.

*73 Q Why could this covenant
not have been valid
without a mediator?*

A Because God's justice demanded
that he be angry with men forever
on account of sin.
Therefore, since it was impossible for God
to have any fellowship with the human race
contrary to his justice,
it was necessary that some one intervene who,
by pleading with God for us,
satisfying the justice of God,
and removing every future offence,
might again unite God with men
who were separated from him.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

74 Q Why must this mediator of the covenant be true man?

A Because the justice of God required that sin be atoned for by suffering and death. But, since the divine nature could not suffer and die, satisfaction had to come through a creature; and since man sinned, through no other creature than man himself.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

24 Q Why must Christ be true man?

A Because God's justice demanded that the human nature which had sinned make satisfaction for sin.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

75 Q Why must he be true God?

A First,
because one who is only a creature
would be destroyed under the immense weight
of God's anger against sin.

Second,
because one who is only a creature
would not be able to pay completely to God
the price for sin.

Third,
because we can not be led
into the presence of God
unless we are adorned
with righteousness and eternal life.

Therefore,
it was necessary for the Mediator
in this life,
to gather and preserve the church,
to give it the Holy Spirit,
and afterwards,
to raise it to eternal life –
all which are from God alone.

*76 Why did he have to be conceived
by the power of the Holy Spirit
and not by the normal course of nature?*

A So that no stain of sin
would be passed on to him.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

25 Q Why must he also be true God?

A So that he would be able to bear
the immense weight of God's anger
against the sin of the whole human race,
and to restore to us
righteousness and eternal life.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

77 Q Why did he have to be without any sin?

A Because the divine would not be able to take on a sin-infected nature, nor could one who is not himself completely free from sin be a God-pleasing mediator and sacrifice for others.

78 Q What does it mean then to believe in Christ who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin?

A It means to be certain in one's heart that, even though we were all conceived and born in sin and under the anger of God, the Son of God was conceived and born true man without sin, so that by his merit and by communion with him, he might make us pure and holy.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

79 Q What do you understand when you say that he suffered?

A Christ sustained
all sorts of misery and pain
in soul as well as body,
not only in that final act of our redemption
in which he was arrested and crucified,
but also all the way
from his mother's womb to the tomb.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

26 Q What do you believe about Christ's suffering?

A That all the torments and insults
which he sustained in soul and body,
as well as the awareness and horror
of God's anger,
unbearable for all creatures,
are the unique and sufficient sacrifice
by which he has redeemed me
and all believers
from eternal death
and has gained for us
forgiveness of sins,
reconciliation with God,
the Holy Spirit,
righteousness,
and eternal life.

The Heidelberg Catechism

37 Q What do you understand by the word "suffered"?

A That during his whole life on earth,
but especially at the end,
Christ sustained
in body and soul
the anger of God against the sin
of the whole human race.
This he did in order that,
by his suffering as the only atoning sacrifice,
he might set us free, body and soul,
from eternal condemnation,
and gain for us
God's grace,
righteousness,
and eternal life.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

80 Q Why is the name of the ruler under whom he suffered mentioned?

A First,
so that since Christ was suffering,
the Roman ruler might be a proof
that the royal scepter
had passed from Judah,
just as had been foretold,
and that, therefore,
no other Messiah is to be expected.
Second,
so that we might be reminded
that we have escaped,
not only punishment
but also just condemnation
by the divine judgment,
because Christ was condemned for us
by an earthly judge,
even though he was innocent.

81 Q Why did God want him to die on the cross?

A So that he might show
that the curse to which we were subject
had been placed on him,
for anyone who hung on a tree
was accursed.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

27 Q But why did he suffer “under Pontius Pilate”?

A So that he, though innocent,
yet condemned by earthly judgment,
might set us free
from the condemnation of divine judgment
which we deserved.

28 Q Why was he crucified?

A So that he might testify
that the divine curse
to which we were subject
had been placed on him,
since anyone who hung on a tree
was accursed by God.

The Heidelberg Catechism

38 Q Why did he suffer “under Pontius Pilate” as judge?

A So that he,
though innocent,
might be condemned by a civil judge,
and so free us from the severe judgment of God
that was to fall on us.

39 Q Is it significant that he was “crucified” instead of dying some other way?

A Yes.
This death convinces me
that he shouldered the curse
which lay on me,
since death by crucifixion was accursed by God.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

82 Q Why was he able to redeem us only by dying?

A Because divine justice and truth did not allow sin to be atoned for without death.

83 Q Why did he also want to be buried?

A First, in order to testify that he really died.
Second, so that by his burial as well as by his death he might earn a blessed rest for us in our own graves.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

29 Q But why did he want to redeem us only by dying?

A Because divine justice and truth did not permit sin to be atoned for and life to be restored to us without death.

30 Q Why was he “buried”?

A In order to prove that he really died and to make our graves, just as his own, quiet resting places for our bodies.

The Heidelberg Catechism

40 Q Why did Christ have to go all the way to death?

A Because God’s justice and truth demand it: only the death of God’s Son could pay for our sin.

41 Q Why was he “buried”?

A His burial testifies that he really died.

42 Q Since Christ has died for us, why do we still have to die?

A Our death does not pay the debt of our sins. Rather, it puts an end to our sinning and is our entrance into eternal life.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

84 Q What do you understand by his descent to hell?

A That he experienced in his soul and conscience, yet without despair, the pains of death and the horror of God's anger by which the damned are driven to despair and eternally tormented.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

31 Q What do you believe about his descent to hell?

A That in addition to the death of the body he also felt the pains of hell in his suffering, and that he cast himself down in utter shame and disgrace so that he might prepare heavenly joy and glory for us.

The Heidelberg Catechism

43 Q What further advantage do we receive from Christ's sacrifice and death on the cross?

A Through Christ's death our old selves are crucified, put to death, and buried with him, so that the evil desires of the flesh may no longer rule us, but that instead we may dedicate ourselves as an offering of gratitude to him.

44 Q Why does the creed add: "he descended into hell"?

A To assure me in times of personal crises and temptation that Christ my Lord, by suffering unspeakable anguish, pain, and terror of soul, especially on the cross but also earlier, has delivered me from the anguish and torment of hell.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*85 Q But could God ever be angry
with Christ or desert him?*

A No.
But he hid his favor and help
from him for a time
so that the human nature of Christ
underwent the same anguish
which oppresses those
who are deserted and rejected by God.

*86 Q Why was it necessary
that he experience those torments?*

A Because the sins of us all
were cast on him;
therefore he felt God's anger against them
as if he alone had committed
the sins of all men.

*87 Q What benefits come to us
from the suffering and death of Christ?*

A It is the one sacrifice
by which he has earned our admission
into the covenant of divine grace,
that is,
the forgiveness of sins,
the gift of the Holy Spirit,
righteousness, and eternal life.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*88 Q What does it mean then to believe in Christ
who suffered, was crucified, died,
and was cast into hell?*

A It means
that each one personally is firmly convinced,
since Christ has fully endured for us
those things which we deserved,
that we have been set free
from the curse and eternal death
and will enjoy with him
blessing and eternal life.
And it means
that each one experiences in his heart
the beginnings of the dying to sin
through the Spirit of Christ.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

89 Q But since Christ has suffered these things for us, why do we still suffer so many things and die?

A We certainly do suffer in this life and we die a bodily death, but our afflictions are not signs of God's anger nor are they to be compared with our sins or our future glory. For they are placed on us by our heavenly Father, so that we may be made like Christ, our head, our old self may be crucified and buried with Christ more and more until finally it is completely destroyed, faith and prayer to God may be practiced by us, and the presence of God may be seen through our protection and deliverance. Therefore, all these afflictions are bearable and for our good, and the death of the body itself is the entrance into everlasting blessedness.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

32 Q Since Christ has suffered and died for us why then do we still suffer and die?

A Our suffering and death do not pay the debt of our sins. Rather, they are a training in Christian patience, a testing of our faith, a fatherly chastisement which calls us to constant penitence, a making us Christ-like, and finally, deliverance from sin and all misery.

The Heidelberg Catechism

** 42 Q Since Christ has died for us, why do we still have to die?*

A Our death does not pay the debt of our sins. Rather, it puts an end to our sinning and is our entrance into eternal life.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

90 Q How do you understand: “the third day he rose again from the dead”?

A The divinity of Christ,
by its own almighty power,
called his body,
which he did not lay aside after it died,
back to life and adorned it
with immortality and heavenly glory.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

33 Q What do you believe concerning Christ’s resurrection?

A That he, by his divine power,
called his body back to life
and adorned it with eternal glory,
so that the man Jesus Christ
might raise even me from the dead
and all who believe in him
at the appointed time
and might make us share in
righteousness
and every heavenly good
which he earned for us
by his death,
and so that in the meantime
he might make us
who are his members
more certain of our resurrection.

The Heidelberg Catechism

45 Q How does Christ’s resurrection benefit us?

A First, by his resurrection he has overcome death,
so that he might make us share in
the righteousness
he won for us by his death.

Second, by his power we too
are already now resurrected to a new life.

Third, Christ’s resurrection
is a guarantee of our glorious resurrection.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*91 Q Why was it necessary
that he come back to life?*

A First, for himself:
because it was impossible
for the human nature united with the Word
to remain in death.
Second, for us:
because it would not be enough
that he earn righteousness and life for us
if he did not also give them to us
by his power as the Mediator,
God and man, Jesus Christ.
But he would not have been able to do this
if he had not first conquered death
in his own body.

*92 Q Who then may be said to believe
in the risen Christ?*

A Those who feel in their own heart
that, since death has been overcome by Christ,
they have already received
the beginnings of righteousness
and eternal life from him,
and are no more able to remain
in physical death than He is, the head,
of whom they are members.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*93 Q What do you mean when you say:
“he ascended into heaven”?*

A That he lifted up his human nature
above all the visible heavens
and in that nature is,
until the end of the world,
not on earth,
but in that infinite light
in which God is plainly seen
by the blessed angels and men.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*34 Q What do you believe
concerning his ascent to heaven?*

A That he exalted his human nature
above all the visible heavens
and in this nature is and remains
until the end of the world,
not on earth,
but in heaven,
so that he might
serve as our Mediator
before the Father,
assure us
that he will take us up to himself,
just as the head takes up its members,
by setting up our very own flesh
as a guarantee in heaven,
and send his Spirit to us from heaven
as a further guarantee.
by whose power we meditate,
not on earthly things,
but on things above.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*46 Q What do you mean by saying:
“he ascended into heaven”?*

A That Christ,
while his disciples watched,
was lifted up from the earth into heaven
and will be there for our good
until he comes again
to judge the living and the dead.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

94 Q But isn't Christ with us until the end of the world as he promised?

A In his human nature he is not now on earth, but in his divinity, Spirit, power and grace, he is never separated from us.

95 Q But if his humanity is not present wherever his divinity is, then aren't the two natures of Christ separated from each other?

A Certainly not. Since the divine nature is infinite, it is not necessary that it be separated from his body in order to be somewhere else, for it perpetually is and remains at the same time inside and outside his body.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

35 Q But isn't Christ with us until the end of the world as he promised?

A Since Christ is true God and true man, in his divinity, majesty, grace and Spirit he is always with the Church; but in his human nature he is not now on earth but in heaven.

36 Q But if the human is not present wherever the divine is, then aren't the two natures of Christ separated from each other?

A By no means. Since the divinity is infinite and at the same time is and remains present everywhere, it is not necessary that it be separated or divided from his body in order to be somewhere else.

The Heidelberg Catechism

47 Q But isn't Christ with us until the end of the world as he promised us?

A Christ is true man and true God. In his human nature Christ is not now on earth; but in his divinity, majesty, grace and Spirit he is not absent from us for a moment.

48 Q If his humanity is not present wherever his divinity is, then aren't the two natures of Christ separated from each other?

A Certainly not. Since divinity is not limited and is present everywhere, it is evident that Christ's divinity is surely beyond the bounds of the humanity he has taken on, but at the same time his divinity is in and remains personally united to his humanity.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

96 Q Why did he ascend into heaven?

A First, because it was necessary for the majesty of the man, Christ, when his time of humiliation was over, to spend some time, not in this corruptible world, but outside of it in heavenly glory.

Second, so that through this extraordinary triumph he might testify to us of his victory over sin and death and over all his and our enemies.

Third, so that until the end of the world the church might know that he was not an apparition, did not change into another nature, nor disappear after the resurrection, but that he continually remains true man and has gone away to a heavenly place where he now dwells visibly and physically until he returns.

Fourth, so that he might also testify that the gates of heaven have been thrown open for us, his brothers and his members.

Fifth, so that he might be present as our mediator and advocate in the presence of God.

The Heidelberg Catechism

49 Q How does Christ's ascension into heaven benefit us?

A First, he pleads our cause in heaven in the presence of His Father.

Second, we have our own flesh in heaven – a guarantee that Christ our head will take us, his members, to himself in heaven.

Third, he sends his Spirit to us on earth as a further guarantee. By the Spirit's power we make the goal of our lives, not earthly things, but the things above where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*97 Q Now say what it means
to believe in Christ
who has been raised above the heavens.*

A It means to be certainly persuaded
that Christ, as our first-born brother,
has taken possession of heaven in our name
so that he is now our advocate there
before the Father,
and after a little while
will take us there to himself.

*98 Q What is the right hand of the Father
where Christ is said to sit?*

A It is the authority over heaven and earth
by which the affairs of the universe
are governed
and the church gathered and preserved,
and it is the visible manifestation
of this glory
to creatures.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*37 Q Why do you say that he sits
at the right hand of God?*

A Because he ascended into heaven
so that there,
in his human nature,
he might show
that he is Lord over all creatures
and head of the church
through whom
the Father administers all things,
and so that he might fill us
with the gifts of his Spirit
and powerfully guard and defend us
from all his and our enemies.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*50 Q Why the next words:
“and sitteth at the right hand of God”?*

A Christ ascended to heaven,
there to show that he is head of his church,
and that the Father rules all things through him.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*99 Q Why is this called
“the right hand of God”?*

A The comparison is taken
from rulers who place
at their right hand
those to whom they entrust
the duties of administering the government.

*100 Q What does it mean then
to sit at this right hand?*

A It means that the Son of God
is head of the church, angels, and men,
and the person through whom the Father
directly brings about
all goods things for all,
and that he visibly manifests this glory
in his human nature
which has been exalted
above all heavens
and above all creatures.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*51 Q How does this glory of Christ our head
benefit us?*

A First, through his Holy Spirit
he pours out his gifts from heaven
upon us his members.

Second, by his power
he defends us and keeps us safe
from all enemies.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*101 Q Explain what it means to believe in Christ
who is seated at the right hand of the Father.*

A It means to be persuaded in our heart
that Christ, our brother and our flesh,
has taken over the government of the world
so that he might share it with us,
and in the meantime,
until we fully inherit it,
he guards and rules us
and fills us with the gifts of his Spirit.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*102 Q What is the meaning of these words:
“From thence he shall come
to judge the living and the dead”?*

A That Christ,
on the last day
with divine power and majesty,
will visibly return from heaven
just as the disciples saw him
ascend to heaven,
and that he will judge all men,
those who are still living
on the earth at that time
and those who have lived
from the beginning of the world,
so that he might take to himself
into the fellowship of heaven
all who have truly believed in him,
but might cast out the rest
into eternal fire
with the devil and his angels.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*38 Q What do you believe
concerning his return
to judge the living and the dead?*

A That just as he ascended into heaven
in his human nature
he will indeed again descend from there
on the last day
in his Father’s glory,
and, after he has cast out
all unbelievers into everlasting punishment,
he will set me and all his chosen ones
free from all evil,
and will take us to himself
into the everlasting kingdom of heaven
which he has already taken possession of
in my name.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*52 Q How does Christ’s return
“to judge the living and the dead”
comfort you?*

A In all my distress and persecution
I turn my eyes to the heavens
and confidently await as judge the very One
who has already stood trial in my place
before God
and so has removed the whole curse from me.
All his enemies and mine
he will condemn to everlasting punishment:
but me and all his chosen ones
he will take along with him
into the joy and the glory of heaven.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*103 Q What does it mean then
to believe in Christ
who will return as judge?*

A It means to be sustained by this comfort:

after a little while
Christ will return
so that,
after all unbelievers have been cast out
to everlasting punishment,
he might set us free
from all evil in body and soul,
show before all creatures
that in him we are innocent,
and take us to himself
to be with him forever.

*104 Q How can you say that Christ
was conceived, born, anointed;
that he suffered, died, was raised,
lifted up into heaven, and will return,
when you confess that he is true God
and these things do not happen to God?*

A All these things happen to him
according to the human nature
but not according to the divine nature,
just as, according to his divinity,
from eternity he is omnipotent, immutable,
infinite, and fills heaven and earth,
but not according to his human nature.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*105 Q Recite the third part
of the Apostles' Creed.*

A I believe in the Holy Spirit;
I believe a holy catholic church,
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.

106 Q Who is the Holy Spirit?

A He is the third person of the Godhead,
one true God
with the eternal Father and Son,
who renews us in the image of God.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*39 Q What do you believe
concerning "the Holy Spirit"?*

A That the Holy Spirit
is the third person of the Godhead,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
and is coeternal and consubstantial
with both;
and that he is sent to my heart
and to the hearts of all the elect
to sanctify us,
works in us true faith and conversion to God,
remains with us forever,
and thus makes us share
in Christ and all blessings.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*53 Q What do you believe
concerning "the Holy Spirit"?*

A First, he, as well as the Father and the Son,
is eternal God.

Second, he has been given to me personally,
so that, by true faith,
he makes me share in Christ and all his blessings,
comforts me,
and remains with me forever.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

107 Q Why is he called “Spirit”?

A Not only because he is God,
but especially because
he is the person
through whom the Father and the Son
make us alive and move our hearts.

108 Q Why “Holy”?

A Because he is God
and makes us like God.

109 Q What is his work?

A The sanctification of the elect
by which they share in
Christ and his blessings,
and the distribution of gifts in the church
which work for its edification.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

110 Q What is the sanctification of the elect?

A The Holy Spirit,
through the ministry of the gospel,
teaches the elect God's will for them,
regenerates them,
and makes them,
through faith,
into temples of God
and members of Christ,
so that
they might put to death
the works of the flesh
walk and advance in newness of life,
feel comfort and joy in God,
and be kept safe for eternal life.

*111 Q Do any gifts of the Spirit for eternal life
also come to the non-elect?*

A They come to many in the church
who are not saints,
but without true faith and conversion,
to their own condemnation.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*112 Q What does it mean to believe
in the Holy Spirit?*

A It means to be convinced
and feel in one's heart
that the Spirit of Christ,
one true God
with the Father and the Son,
has begun true faith and conversion in us,
is the author of everything
that pertains to our sanctification,
and will remain with us forever.

*113 Q What is that church
that you believe exists?*

A It is the community of those,
chosen by God for eternal life,
and born again by the Holy Spirit,
who accept the pure doctrine of the gospel
with true faith,
use the sacraments
according to the divine institution,
fulfill the obedience owed
to the ministry,
and are given righteousness and eternal life
because of and through Christ.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*40 Q What do you believe
concerning the "holy catholic church"?*

A That the Son of God,
from the beginning of the world to its end,
out of the entire human race,
has and will gather to himself
through his Word and Spirit,
a community chosen for eternal life
and united in true faith.
And of this church I am and always will be
a living member.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*54 Q What do you believe
concerning the "holy catholic church"?*

A I believe that the Son of God,
through his Spirit and Word,
out of the entire human race,
from the beginning of the world to its end,
gathers, protects, and preserves for himself
a community chosen for eternal life
and united in true faith.
And of this community I am and always will be
a living member.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

114 Q Why do you say “holy”?

A Because Christ,
who redeemed the church with his blood
and clothed it with his righteousness,
also renews it by his Spirit
for holiness and uprightness of life
which is begun in this life
but will be perfected in the life to come.

115 Q Why “catholic”?

A Because
in all times
and from all peoples
and all parts of the world,
there are and will be
to the very end
some who believe in Christ
and make up this church.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

116 Q Why “the communion of the saints”?

A Because all the saints are called to share in the same Christ and in the same blessings of Christ, and because each one uses whatever gifts one receives from God for the enrichment of the whole church.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

41 Q Why do you call it “the communion of saints”?

A Because all believers share in the same Christ and the same blessings which Christ gives to his church; and because each one should freely use his gifts for the enrichment of the whole body of the church.

The Heidelberg Catechism

55 Q What do you understand by “the communion of saints”?

A First, that believers one and all, as members of this community, share in Christ and in all his treasures and gifts.

Second, that each member should consider it his duty to use his gifts readily and cheerfully for the service and enrichment of the other members.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

117 Q What is the basis for this communion of the saints in Christ?

A The Holy Spirit, who lives in Christ as well as in all the saints, is the invisible and indissoluble bond which joins them to Christ so that, having been made one body with Christ, they might receive life and blessing from him, just as the members depend on the head and the branches on the vine, and so that they might be joined as closely as possible to one another by the same Spirit.

118 Q Can the church be distinguished from other people by the human eye?

A No, only the Lord knows his own.

119 Q How then can we unite with it?

A It is necessary that we join the visible church.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

120 Q What is that visible church?

A It is the community of those who confess by their words and external deeds, the uncorrupted doctrine of the gospel, the proper use of the sacraments, and the obedience owed to the ministry; and yet some in it are saints some surely are hypocrites.

121 Q Is the visible church different then from the church of the saints?

A It is partly different and partly not. For the entire church of the saints is contained in this visible church, but the entire visible church is not holy because it has many hypocrites mixed in.

122 Q Since the church of the saints is included in the visible church, why isn't it also visible?

A It is not called invisible because saints are not visible to the eye but because in this life we cannot distinguish them with enough certainty from hypocrites.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*123 Q Is it then necessary that all who
will be saved
be in the church of the saints
before they leave this life?*

A Yes,
for those whom God has chosen
for eternal life
he also calls in this life
to the communion of Christ.
But those who are separated from it
will not inherit the kingdom of God.

*124 Q But how will we personally know
that we are in the church of the saints?*

A If we feel the beginnings
of true faith and conversion to God in us,
and if we show it by our lives.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*125 Q What does it mean to believe
“a holy catholic church,
the communion of saints”?*

A It means to have no doubt
that a church,
which has been chosen for eternal life
and worships God according to his Word,
is gathered and preserved on earth,
from the beginning of the world
to its end,
by the Son of God
through the Holy Spirit
and the ministry of the gospel,
and that we are and will remain forever
living members of this church.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*54 Q What do you believe
concerning the “holy catholic church”?*

A I believe that the Son of God,
through his Spirit and Word,
out of the entire human race,
from the beginning of the world to its end,
gathers, protects, and preserves for himself
a community chosen for eternal life
and united in true faith.
And of this community I am and always will be
a living member.

*55 Q What do you understand by
“the communion of saints”?*

A First, that believers one and all,
as members of this community,
share in Christ
and in all his treasures and gifts.

Second, that each member
should consider it his duty
to use his gifts
readily and cheerfully
for the service and enrichment
of the other members.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*126 Q What do you understand
by “the forgiveness of sins”?*

A That God,
because of Christ’s mediation and merit
does not hold against those who believe in him
any of their sins,
nor does he condemn them
because of their sins
or punish them with eternal punishment.

*127 Q How do you believe
“the forgiveness of sins”?*

I know with such certainty,
that all my sins have been so forgiven
because of the atonement of Christ,
that God will never call me into judgment
for them.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*42 Q What do you believe
concerning “the forgiveness of sins”?*

A That God,
because of Christ’s atonement,
has forever erased the memory
of all my sins,
receives me in grace,
and credits to me the obedience of Christ
so that I will never come under judgment.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*56 Q What do you believe
concerning “the forgiveness of sins”?*

A I believe that God,
because of Christ’s atonement,
will never hold against me
any of my sins
nor my sinful nature
which I need to struggle against all
my life.

Rather, in his grace
God grants me the righteousness of Christ
to free me forever from judgment.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

128 Q What “resurrection of the body” do you confess?

A That, when Christ returns to judge, all those who have died since the beginning of the world will receive their same bodies which they had in this life, only immortal and imperishable, and those who are living on earth at that time will be renewed by a sudden change – the godly to happiness and glory, the ungodly to torments and eternal disgrace.

129 Q What is this “life everlasting” of which you speak?

A It is a clear knowledge and praise of God, an eternal joy in him, and the fullness of all good.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

43 Q What do you believe concerning “the resurrection of the body”?

A That this same body which I now have will return to my soul on the last day through the power of Christ, will be made like Christ’s glorious body, and will live with him and all the elect forever.

44 Q What do you believe concerning “life everlasting”?

A That after this life I will enjoy perfect and eternal blessedness and joy in God, since already now I feel the beginning of a true knowledge of God and of the joy of the Holy Spirit in my heart.

The Heidelberg Catechism

57 Q How does “the resurrection of the body” comfort you?

A Not only my soul will be taken immediately after this life to Christ its head, but even my very flesh, raised by the power of Christ, will be reunited with my soul and made like Christ’s glorious body.

58 Q How does the article concerning “life everlasting” comfort you?

A Even as I already now experience in my heart the beginning of eternal joy, so after this life I will have perfect blessedness such as no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no man has ever imagined: a blessedness in which to praise God eternally.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*130 Q What does it mean to believe
in “the resurrection of the body”?*

A It means to be firmly convinced
that on the last day
our bodies,
which we now have,
will be completely restored,
and our souls will be returned to them
through the power of Christ
so that we may enjoy with Christ,
both in body and soul,
eternal life and glory.

*131 Q What does it mean to believe
in “the life everlasting”?*

A It means already now to feel in our hearts
the beginnings of eternal life,
and to hold on to this comfort with
all our might –
that after this life
we will enjoy it more fully,
and, after our bodies have also been raised
through Christ,
we will enjoy it perfectly.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

132 Q What then do we gain by this faith when we believe all these things?

A All the things that God promised in his covenant to those who believe are valid for us, that is, we are made right with him and are heirs to life everlasting.

133 Q How are we made right with God in this life?

A Only by faith in Christ when God, out of sheer grace for us who believe, forgives our sins credits to us the satisfaction of Christ as if we ourselves had done it, and on account of it receives us in grace without our deserving it at all and gives us the Holy Spirit and eternal life.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

45 Q What do you gain by this faith, when you believe all these things?

A That I am right with God and heir to life everlasting as certainly as I believe I am.

46 Q How are you then right with God?

A Only by faith in Jesus Christ, by which I am certainly persuaded that God, without my deserving it at all, out of sheer grace, grants and credits to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never sinned or had myself made satisfaction for all my sins and had been as perfectly obedient as Christ was obedient for me.

The Heidelberg Catechism

59 Q What good does it do you, however, to believe all this?

A In Christ I am right with God and heir to life everlasting.

60 Q How are you right with God?

A Only by true faith in Jesus Christ.

Even though my conscience accuses me of having grievously sinned against all God's commandments and of never having kept any of them, and even though I am still inclined toward all evil, nevertheless, without my deserving it at all, out of sheer grace, God grants and credits to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never sinned nor been a sinner, as if I had been as perfectly obedient as Christ was obedient for me.

All I need to do is to accept this gift of God with a believing heart.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*134 Q How does what you say agree:
that we are justified by God's grace,
by Christ's merit,
and by our faith?*

A These agree completely
and have the same meaning.
For it is the grace of God alone
that accepts us,
the unrighteous as righteous.
It is because of the death
and righteousness of Christ,
credited to us by grace,
that we are pleasing to God.
And it is by faith that we receive
the righteousness of Christ,
granted to us by God.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

135 Q Why is it necessary that the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ be credited to us in order for us to be righteous before God?

A Because God, who is always just and true, wants to receive us into his covenant of grace in such a way that he does nothing against the covenant established at creation, that is, he does not treat us as just nor give us eternal life unless his covenant law is completely fulfilled, either by ourselves, or, since that is impossible, by someone in our place.

136 Q Why does God want to credit this righteousness to believers only?

A Because he justifies and saves us so that we may acknowledge and praise his blessings; this would not happen if we did not believe that they were given us by him.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*137 Q But why do you say
that by faith alone
we are right with God?*

A We are right with God not because
of the merit or value of faith
nor of any other of our works,
but only by receiving the righteousness
given by God.
Since this gift is spiritual,
it can be received only
with heart and soul,
that is, by believing.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

** 48 Q Why do you say
that by faith alone
you are right with God?*

A Because neither faith
nor my other works,
but only the suffering and obedience
of Christ is the righteousness
which pleases God in this life.
This righteousness
is granted and credited to me
by God
as if I had done it myself,
if only I receive it
with a believing heart.
For, since this gift
is invisible and spiritual,
it cannot be received by us
except with the heart,
that is, by true faith.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*61 Q Why do you say that
by faith alone
you are right with God?*

A It is not because of any value my faith has
that God is pleased with me.
Only Christ's satisfaction, righteousness,
and holiness
make me right with God.
And I can receive this righteousness
and make it mine
in no other way than
by faith alone.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*138 Q But why can't our works
make us right with God
or be part of the righteousness
which has value before God?*

A Because before regeneration
all our works are sins.
And after regeneration,
even though we begin to do good works
while we are in this life,
they are still always tainted by evil.
But the law of God subjects to condemnation
all those who do not keep it perfectly.
Therefore, whatever very small part
of our righteousness
we might attribute to our good works,
will cause our righteousness
to be impure and incomplete,
and therefore it will not be able
to pass God's scrutiny.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*47 Q Why can't the good we do
make us right with God,
or at least help make us right with him?*

A Because all our works in this life,
even the best,
are imperfect and stained with sin,
and therefore,
if they were examined in God's judgment
it would only be fitting
that they be rejected by God
and condemned together with us.
For the righteousness
which passes God's scrutiny
must be perfect and pure in every way
and measure up to the divine law.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*62 Q Why can't the good we do
make us right with God,
or at least help make us right with him?*

A Because the righteousness
which can pass God's scrutiny
must be entirely perfect
and must in every way measure up to the
divine law.
Even the very best we do in this life
is imperfect
and stained with sin.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

139 Q But since a temporal and eternal reward is so often promised for good works, don't they earn anything from God?

A No creature's good works can earn anything from God except the obedience of Christ alone. For even if we did everything we ought, we would still be unworthy servants and would owe more than we had given, God would owe us nothing. Therefore the reward follows good works according to divine promises; it is given freely, by grace, not because of obligation or merit.

140 Q Therefore if good works add nothing to our righteousness, can we be justified even though none are found in us?

A No, we can not.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

The Law

** 72 Q Can anyone who has been given true faith but does not do good works be righteous before God?*

A No, he cannot. For only those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. And it is impossible that true gratitude to God not follow faith.

The Heidelberg Catechism

63 Q How can you say that the good we do doesn't earn anything when God promises to reward it in this life and the next?

A This reward is not earned; it is a gift of grace.

64 Q But doesn't this teaching make people indifferent and wicked?

A No. It is impossible for those grafted into Christ by true faith not to produce fruits of gratitude.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

49 Q Where does that faith come from?

A It is God's gift which he works in our hearts through his Spirit.

50 Q Why is it that this gift comes to you instead of to so many others who are lost forever?

A Because God has chosen me for eternal life in Christ before the foundations of the world were laid, and now regenerates me by the special grace of his Spirit.

For, unless this had happened, the corruption of my nature is such that I would have perished, knowingly and willingly, in my sins, just like the many reprobate.

The Heidelberg Catechism

65 Q You confess that by faith alone you share in Christ and all his blessings: where does that faith come from?

A The Holy Spirit produces it in our hearts by the preaching of the holy gospel, and confirms it through our use of the holy sacraments.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

141 Q On what grounds do you say this?

A First, because the covenant of God is valid only for those who keep it. So we are obligated not only to believe in Christ but also to live in holiness before God, beginning already in this life and in the next, perfectly.

Second, because God gave his Son over to death for us, and received us in grace, not so that we might have license for wallowing in our sins, but so that we might be thankful for his blessings by walking in newness of life.

Third, because all whom God justifies because of Christ, he also regenerates to a new life by the Holy Spirit. But he does not credit Christ's merit to those who are not governed by the Spirit of Christ.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

51 Q Doesn't this view, in which you declare that you are elect to eternal life, make you careless, and more negligent in the daily exercises of repentance?

A No. Rather, it kindles in me an even stronger desire to continue and advance in piety, since, without true conversion to God, I cannot take comfort in the confidence of my election. And the more certain I am of my salvation, the more I want to show God that I am thankful.

The Heidelberg Catechism

64 Q But doesn't this teaching make people indifferent and wicked?

A No. It is impossible for those grafted into Christ by true faith not to produce fruits of gratitude.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

(141 cont.)

Fourth, because it is impossible
that there be true faith
without its fruits.
Therefore, one who does not have
these fruits
can neither boast of faith
nor take comfort in the fellowship
of the divine covenant.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*52 Q But aren't you inclined
to doubt your own salvation
when you hear that none are saved
except those elected by God?*

A Not at all.
Rather, precisely because of this
I have a firm comfort in every temptation.
For, if I desire with all my heart
to believe and obey God,
I ought to be convinced
by this most certain proof,
that I am included in those
who have been chosen for eternal life
and therefore can never be lost,
no matter how weak my faith is.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

80 Q What are the ten commandments?

A First, Hear, O Israel.
I am the Lord your God
who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of bondage.
You shall have no other gods before me.

Second, etc.

The Heidelberg Catechism

Part III – Man’s Gratitude

*86 Q We have been delivered
from our misery
by God’s grace alone through Christ
and not because we have earned it:
why then must we still do good?*

A To be sure, Christ has redeemed us
by his blood.
But we do good because
Christ by his Spirit is also renewing us
to be like himself,
so that in all our living
we may show that we are thankful to God
for all he has done for us,
and so that he may be praised through us.

And we do good
so that we may be assured of our faith
by its fruits,
and so that by our godly living
our neighbors may be won over to Christ.

92 Q What does the Lord say in his law?

A God spoke all these words:

Ursinus: Large Catechism

142 Q What then is the fruit of faith to which the covenant of God's grace obliges us, and by which true faith is recognized?

A True conversion to God.

143 Q What is conversion to God?

A The dying-away of the flesh and the coming-to-life by the Spirit.

144 Q What is the dying-away of the flesh?

A It is sorrow because God is offended by our sins, and a deep hatred for and running away from sin.

145 Q What is the coming-to-life by the Spirit?

A It is joy in God who is gracious to us through Christ and a love and burning desire for righteousness for the glory of God.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

73 Q What is that gratitude?

A True conversion to God and the fruits of this conversion.

74 Q What is conversion?

A The dying-away of the old self, and the coming-to-life of the new.

75 Q What is the dying-away of the old self?

A It is to be genuinely sorry that we offend God by our sins, and to detest and run away from them more each day.

76 Q What is the coming-to-life of the new self?

A It is to rest and rejoice in God, who has been reconciled through Christ, and to be roused more each day by a desire for holiness and righteousness.

The Heidelberg Catechism

88 Q What is involved in genuine repentance or conversion?

A Two things:
the dying-away of the old self,
and the coming-to-life of the new.

89 Q What is the dying-away of the old self?

A It is to be genuinely sorry for sin, to hate it more and more, and to run away from it.

90 Q What is the coming-to-life of the new self?

A It is wholehearted joy in God through Christ and a delight to do every kind of good as God wants us to.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

146 Q What follows from this conversion?

A Good works.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

77 Q But aren't there still some sins remaining in believers?

A There remain in all the saints, as long as they live on this earth, many grave sins: defects with which we are born, evil inclinations, and many sins of ignorance and weakness. These are resisted by the saints through their whole life because of their true conversion to God, and therefore these sins are not held against them, their beginning obedience is pleasing to God because of Christ, and they do not continue in sin against their conscience. For fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, coveters, drunkards, slanderers, or robbers will not inherit the kingdom of God.

78 Q What are the fruits of conversion?

A Good works.

The Heidelberg Catechism

87 Q Can those be saved who do not turn to God from their ungrateful and impenitent ways?

A By no means. Scripture tells us that no unchaste person, no idolater, adulterer, thief, no covetous person, no drunkard, slanderer, robber, or the like is going to inherit the kingdom of God.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

147 Q What are good works?

A They are internal and external actions commanded by God in the ten commandments, and done by those who have been reconciled to God in Christ, for this main purpose – so that obedience and thanks may be shown to God for all the blessings received from him.

The Law

148 Q Do Christians who have already been received into God's covenant also still need the teaching of the ten commandments?

A Yes.
For the law of God must be preached both to those converted through the gospel, and to those not yet converted.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

79 Q What are good works?

A Those which God commands us in the ten commandments.

The Heidelberg Catechism

91 Q What do we do that is good?

A Only that which arises out of true faith, conforms to God's law, and is done for his glory; and not that which is based on what we think is right or on established human tradition.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

149 Q Why is the law preached before the gospel to those not yet converted?

A So that, terrified by the knowledge of sin and God's anger, they may be aroused to seek deliverance, and may be prepared to hear the gospel and be converted to God.

150 Q But why must it still be proclaimed to the converted after the gospel has been preached?

A First, so that they may learn what worship God approves and requires of his covenant partners.
Second, so that, seeing how far they are in this life from the perfect fulfillment of the law, they may continue in humility and aspire to heavenly life.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

151 Q Since Christ has abolished the law, why are we bound to the ten commandments?

A Christ has done away with the civil and ceremonial laws of Moses in such a way that no one is obligated to keep them anymore; moreover, it is not at all proper to reintroduce in the church the ceremonies which pointed to the future revelation of the Christ. And, for those who believe in him, Christ has also done away with the ten commandments in such a way that they no longer condemn them. But now that the grace of God in Christ is so much clearer, we owe all the more obedience to him.

152 Q How many parts are there in the decalogue?

A There are two tables. The first consists of four, and the second of six commandments.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

81 Q How is the decalogue divided?

A Into two tables. The first four commandments contain our pious duties to God. The second six include what we owe our neighbor.

The Heidelberg Catechism

93 Q How are these commandments divided?

A Into two tables. The first has four commandments, teaching us what our relation to God should be. The second has six commandments, teaching us what we owe our neighbor.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

153 Q What does the first table teach?

A How we ought to be and act
in relation to God.

154 Q What does the second table teach?

A How we ought to be and act
in relation to others.

155 Q What is the first commandment?

A “Hear, O Israel: I am the Lord your God
who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of bondage
You shall have no other gods before me.”

Ursinus: Large Catechism

156 Q What does God forbid in this commandment?

A That the worship we owe Him
neither be neglected
nor given to another.

157 Q What is the worship which he requires us to render to him?

A That we acknowledge him as our God
according to his Word,
firmly believe his entire Word,
put all our trust in him alone,
look to him for all good things,
love and honor him above all,
humble ourselves before him,
and patiently endure what he lays on us.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

82 Q What does the first commandment require?

A That we detest all idolatry
with our whole heart
and flee from it
with all our might.

The Heidelberg Catechism

94 Q What does the Lord require in the first commandment?

A That I, not wanting to endanger my very salvation,
avoid and shun
all idolatry, magic, superstitious rites,
and prayer to saints or to other creatures.

That I sincerely acknowledge the only true God,
trust him alone,
look to him for every good thing
humbly and patiently,
love him, fear him, and honor him
with all my heart.

In short,
that I give up anything
rather than go against his will in any way.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

158 Q When Moses speaks to the people of Israel does he also address us?

A No less than he did them.
First, because God was not then
for the first time
making known the law
summarized in the ten commandments,
but was repeating and clarifying
for the people of Israel
not only what he required of them
but also that for which
all rational creatures were created.

Second, since we have been grafted into Christ
who is the natural seed of Abraham,
we too are spiritual children
of Abraham and Israel.

159 Q Why does God call himself “Lord”?

A So that he might remind us
that he has full authority to rule us
since he is the creator
and the sustainer of all things.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

160 Q Why does he call himself our God who brought Israel out of Egypt?

A First, so that we may be reminded that this alone is the true God who revealed himself from the beginning in the church by his sure Word and clear divine testimonies. Second, so that, considering that we are saved and set free from all evil by him, we may realize that we owe him thanks and obedience.

161 Q What is an “other god”?

A Anything in which one puts any trust in place of the God revealed in the church; anything which one loves or fears more than or equal to God; anything to which one shows honor or reverence for the purpose of worshipping God outside of or in defiance of God’s Word.

162 Q Why is “before me” added?

A So that we shun all idolatry, not only in sight of others but also in our hearts, since God sees all things.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

83 Q What is idolatry?

A Idolatry is having or inventing anything in place of or alongside of the only true God, who has revealed himself to us in his Word, on which our hope and trust depend or which we love or fear more than him, or honor in defiance of his command.

The Heidelberg Catechism

95 Q What is idolatry?

A Idolatry is having or inventing something in which one trusts in place of or alongside of the only true God, who has revealed himself in His Word.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

163 What is the second commandment?

A “You shall not make for yourself a 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; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am strong and jealous visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

164 Q What is the meaning of this commandment?

A That we not try to worship God in any other way than he has commanded in his Word.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

84 Q What does the second commandment require?

A That we earnestly desire to worship God, not by our own will, but only by the command of the divine Word – in spirit and in truth, so that we do not, by false and idolatrous worship, bring terrible punishments upon ourselves and our descendants.

The Heidelberg Catechism

96 Q What is God's will for us in the second commandment?

A That we in no way make any image of God nor worship him in any other way than he has commanded in his Word.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

165 Q But are all sculptured or painted images forbidden by this law?

A No, only those which are made to portray or worship God.

166 Q Why doesn't God want to be portrayed by a visible form?

A Since he is eternal and incomprehensible Spirit, every representation of him in a corruptible, lifeless, bodily form, is a lie against God and diminishes his majesty.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

85 Q Then does God forbid the making or keeping of all images?

A No, only those which are made to represent or worship God or which give an occasion for or the appearance of idolatry.

The Heidelberg Catechism

97 Q May we then not make any image at all?

A God can not and may not be visibly portrayed in any way.

Although creatures may be portrayed, yet God forbids making or having such images if one's intention is to worship them or to serve God through them.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

167 Q What does it mean to worship God through images?

A It means to turn,
whether in soul or body,
to images when worshipping God,
as if God would listen to us better
if he were worshipped through them;
or to show honor to them
by thought, gesture,
mention of the divine name,
or any external sign whatsoever
as if they represented God;
or to desire in any way
to worship God by using them.

168 Q Why is it improper to worship God with images?

A Because it is not for any creature
but for the divine authority alone
to institute the form of divine worship
and the signs of the divine presence.
To represent God differently than he is,
is a serious insult to him.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*86 Q But shouldn't images
be permitted in Christian churches
as teaching aids for the unlearned?*

A No, God certainly does not want his church
to be taught by images and statues
but by his Word.
Therefore, those who dare to add statues
to this aspect of divine worship,
sin against this commandment
and do not escape the guilt of idolatry.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*98 Q But may not images
be permitted in the churches
as teaching aids for the unlearned?*

A No, we shouldn't try to be wiser than God.
He wants his people instructed
by the living preaching of his Word –
not by idols that cannot even talk.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

169 Q Why does God forbid not only worshipping but even making such images?

A So that we don't appear to approve of idolaters by having these images which can be a form of, or the occasion for idolatry. And so that we don't put God to the test by giving occasion for anyone else to sin.

170 Q Then this commandment isn't just talking about images?

A No, not only about images but also all humanly devised worship of God.

171 Q Why does God add a threat and a promise to this commandment?

A So that he may all the more effectively frighten us away from idolatry, one of the worst of sins.

172 Q Why does he call himself "strong"?

A So that we fear his power for vengeance.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

173 Q Why “jealous”?

A Because he never allows his honor to be given to another without punishment on account of the greatness of this sin.

174 Q Why does he threaten punishments even for the descendants of sinners?

A First, so that he may show the greatness of this sin which would bring down punishment, not only on those who commit it, but also on their descendants if God desired to act according to his strict justice. Second, so that people at least out of concern for their descendants, will keep themselves from sin.

175 Q But does the justice of God permit the descendants to be punished for the sins of their parents?

A Yes.
For we have such a corrupt nature that we would all continue in the sins of our parents if God did not look on us with his matchless mercy.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*176 Q Why does he promise to bless
the descendants of the upright?*

A First, so that he might express
the greatness of his mercy to the upright
by which he not only deals kindly with them
but also with their descendants,
and also so that he might move us more
to thankfulness and zeal for his honor.
Second, so that he might draw us to godliness
through the happiness
promised to our descendants.

*177 Q Then do all the descendants of the upright
receive mercy from God?*

A By this promise God did not bind his grace
to the physical descendants,
but he did distribute
both spiritual and physical blessing
to the descendants of the upright
as he saw fit to do from eternity
in order to show forth his glory.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*178 Q Why does he say that he will
show kindness
to thousands of generations
and will punish four?*

A To show that he rejoices
not in the damnation
but in the salvation of men,
and that he punishes
only as a demonstration of his justice.

179 Q What is the third commandment?

A “You shall not take the name
of the Lord your God in vain:
for the Lord will not hold him guiltless
who takes the name of the Lord his God
in vain.”

Ursinus: Large Catechism

180 Q What is forbidden by this commandment?

A That we speak nothing false or blasphemous about God, nor make mention of him lightly, nor dishonor his name by scandals, nor curse any one by his name, but especially that we not swear falsely, unnecessarily, or against his word.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

87 Q What does the third commandment require?

A That through God's name we curse no one nor swear falsely or unnecessarily, nor give others the occasion to do so, nor use it except with fear and reverence so that we always honor God's name and avoid God's horrible indignation which especially threatens those who disgrace his name.

The Heidelberg Catechism

99 Q What is God's will for us in the third commandment?

A That we neither blaspheme nor misuse the name of God by cursing, perjury, or unnecessary oaths, nor share in such horrible sins by being silent bystanders.

In a word, it requires that we use the holy name of God only with reverence and awe, so that we may properly confess him, pray to him, and praise him in everything we do and say.

100 Q Is blasphemy of God's name by swearing and cursing really such serious sin that God is angry also with those who do not do all they can to help prevent it and to forbid it?

A Yes, indeed. No sin is greater, no sin makes God more angry than blaspheming his name. That is why he commanded the death penalty for it.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

181 Q And what is required?

A That we proclaim divine truth
as much as we are able,
praise God
with words and deeds,
thank him,
pray to him,
and swear through him alone
where defense of the truth
or the harmony of men requires it.

182 Q What is scandal?

A It is an evil teaching or deed
which harms another.

183 Q What is an oath?

A It is calling upon God
to be a witness
that we do not intend to deceive
in what we are speaking about,
and to punish us
if we have deceived.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*88 Q May we occasionally swear
an oath in God's name
if we do it reverently?*

A Yes,
when necessity clearly requires
that the truth
be established and defended in this way
for God's glory and our neighbor's good.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*101 Q But may we swear an oath in God's name
if we do it reverently?*

A Yes, when the government demands it,
or when necessity requires it,
in order to maintain and promote truth
and trustworthiness
for God's glory and our neighbor's good.

Such oaths are approved in God's Word
and were rightly used by Old and New
Testament believers.

*102 Q May we swear by saints or other
creatures?*

A No.

A legitimate oath means calling upon God
as the one who knows my heart
to witness to my truthfulness
and to punish me if I swear falsely.
No creature is worthy of such honor.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

184 Q Why did he add a threat to this commandment?

A To show that dishonoring his name is one of the most serious sins.

185 Q What is the fourth commandment?

A “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.”

Ursinus: Large Catechism

186 Q What does it require?

A That a certain time,
free from hindering activities,
be set for the public ministry of the church
in which
the true doctrine of God
is taught and learned,
the sacraments
are properly administered and received,
and public prayer and confession
is made to God;
that obedience and honor
be given to this ministry,
and that everyone in his own place
earnestly desire to maintain it.

187 Q What does it forbid?

A All contempt, denigration,
or willful hindering of the ministry.

*188 Q Why does God want a certain time
designated for the ministry of the church?*

A First, because of our weakness,
since we rarely give ourselves wholly
to meditation on divine things
on other occasions.
Second, so that rest from labor
may be given those under another's power.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*89 Q What is required of us
by the fourth commandment?*

A First, that the ministry of the church
be maintained and cultivated;
that the church meet at the appointed times
to learn about the Word of God,
to receive the sacraments
according to the divine institution,
to call on God together
with public prayers,
and to bring offerings of mercy,
while all unnecessary hindrances to these
are removed.

And second, that throughout our whole life
we think on and practice the things
we have learned on these days
that is,
by resting from all our evil works
and by presenting our members to God
as instruments of righteousness.

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*103 Q What is God's will for us
in the fourth commandment?*

A First,
that the gospel ministry and education
for it be maintained,
and that, especially on the festive day of rest,
I regularly attend the assembly of God's people
to learn what God's Word teaches,
to participate in the sacraments,
to pray to God publicly,
and to bring Christian offerings
for the poor.

Second,
that every day of my life
I rest from my evil ways,
let the Lord work in me through his Spirit,
and so begin already in this life
the eternal Sabbath.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

189 Q Why did God designate the seventh day for ministry among the Israelite nation?

A Because on the seventh day he rested from the work of creation Therefore, by making this day holy, he wanted to remind his people that they too should rest from their works, that is, from their sins, and should devote themselves to the consideration of God's works.

190 Q Are we also bound to the seventh day?

A No, we are not because Christ abolished the Mosaic ceremonies by his coming. But to the best of our ability we must observe the necessary time and order for ministry set by the church without, however, considering them part of the worship of God.

191 Q What is the fifth commandment?

A "Honor your father and your mother, that you may grow old in the land which the Lord your God gives you."

Ursinus: Large Catechism

192 Q What is required in this commandment?

A That all faithfully carry out the work they are called to by God: that children show to parents, and subjects to magistrates and all who are in authority over them, reverence, love, obedience in all things not prohibited by God, thanks, and patience, in bearing with their particular failings. But, that parents, and all who are in authority, do the best they can so that children and those entrusted to them live upright and peaceful lives.

193 Q What is forbidden?

A All neglect of our work; all contempt of authorities, all ingratitude, and any dedication and obedience which is either feigned or in conflict with any commands of God.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

90 Q What does the fifth commandment require?

A That each person diligently carry out the work of his calling; that to our parents and to all who are in authority over us or properly direct us, we show reverence, love, required obedience and thanks. And that we likewise bear with their failings so that we receive from God the good things of this life which serve our salvation.

The Heidelberg Catechism

104 Q What is God's will for us in the fifth commandment?

A That I honor, love, and be loyal to my father and mother and all those in authority over me; that I obey and submit to them, as is proper, when they correct and punish me; and also that I be patient with their failings – for through them God chooses to rule us.

(cf. 124)

Ursinus: Large Catechism

194 Q Why does God add a promise to this command?

A So that he might encourage us to keep it,
and so that he might show
how highly he values it,
since human society cannot exist
without it.

*195 Q Does God then always prolong this life
for those who obey their parents?*

A God keeps both this and other promises
of earthly things for us
in the way he knows will be best
for our salvation.

196 Q What is the sixth commandment?

A “You shall not kill.”

Ursinus: Large Catechism

197 Q What is forbidden by this law?

A Not only every injury which can be done to the life or body, of ourselves or another, and all personal revenge, but also all unjustified anger, hatred, and the desire to harm or revenge as well as the suggestion of this desire by words and gestures.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

91 Q What is required by the sixth commandment?

A That no one harm his own body or life or anyone else's without the command of God, that no one avenge himself, be unnecessarily angry, desire to harm or revenge, or suggest this desire by word or gesture. But rather, that we love all men as ourselves, and do good, even to our enemies.

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105 Q What is God's will for us in the sixth commandment?

A I am not to belittle, insult, hate, or kill my neighbor – not by my thoughts, my words, my look or gesture, and certainly not by actual deeds – and I am not to be party to this in others, rather, I am to put away all desire for revenge.

I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself either.

Prevention of murder is also why government is armed with the sword.

106 Q Does this commandment refer only to killing?

A By forbidding murder God teaches us that he hates the root of murder: envy, hatred, anger, vindictiveness.

In God's sight all such are murder.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

198 Q What does it require?

A That we love all men
as ourselves,
and protect their life and well-being
as much as we can.

*199 Q Then do magistrates sin when they kill
criminals
or inflict other punishments?*

A He in no way sins
for he is God's servant
for wrath on those who do evil.

On the contrary,
he would be sinning very seriously
if he neglected his duty,
not only because he gives evil doers
license to do violence to others,
but especially because he draws
God's anger and punishment
on himself and all his people
by not punishing wrong.

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*107 Q Is it enough then
that we do not kill our neighbor
in any such way?*

A No.
By condemning envy, hatred, and anger
God tells us
to love our neighbor as ourselves,
to be patient, peace-loving, gentle,
merciful, and friendly to him,
to protect him from harm as much as we can,
and to do good even to our enemies.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

200 Q What is the seventh commandment?

A “You shall not commit adultery.”

201 Q What does it forbid?

A Not only adultery
but also obscenity and shameful behavior
in actions, gestures, words,
thoughts, and desires,
and in general –
lack of self-control
and anything which may give rise
to unchaste passions.

202 Q What does it require?

A That all,
whether single
or, for those suited for it, married,
practice chastity and modesty
not only externally, with the body,
but also in heart and soul
with words and gestures,
and in general –
self-control
without which chastity cannot be maintained.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*92 Q What does the seventh commandment
require?*

A That, whether married or single,
we avoid all filth and immodesty
and everything that provokes them,
in our actions, gestures, words,
thoughts and desires,
and that we always live
chaste and holy lives.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*108 Q What is God’s will for us
in the seventh commandment?*

A God condemns all unchastity.
We should therefore thoroughly detest it
and, married or single,
live decent and chaste lives.

*109 Q Does God, in this commandment,
forbid only such scandalous sins as adultery?*

A We are temples of the Holy Spirit,
body and soul,
and God wants both to be kept clean and holy.
That is why he forbids
everything which incites unchastity,
whether it be actions, looks,
talk, thoughts, or desires.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

203 *Q* What is the eighth commandment?

A “You shall not steal.”

204 *Q* What does it prohibit?

A That we do not take the goods of others for ourselves through violence or deceit; nor desire or try to enrich ourselves in any way at the expense of others; nor pointlessly squander our means.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

93 *Q* What is prescribed for us by the eighth commandment?

A That we not take our neighbor’s possessions for ourselves through deceit, nor desire to protect or increase our own possessions at the expense of others, nor pointlessly squander them. But rather that we prevent the misfortune of others, as much as we are able, faithfully carry out our work and be quick to help the needy according to the measure of our means.

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110 *Q* What does God forbid in the eighth commandment?

A He forbids not only outright theft and robbery, punishable by law.

But in God’s sight theft also includes cheating and swindling our neighbor by schemes made to appear legitimate, such as:
inaccurate measurements of weight, size, or volume;
fraudulent merchandising;
counterfeit money;
excessive interest;
or any other means forbidden by God.

In addition he forbids all greed and pointless squandering of his gifts.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

205 Q But what does it require?

A That we earnestly desire to protect everyone's possessions and be quick to meet our neighbor's need according to the measure of our means.

206 Q What is the ninth commandment?

A "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

The Heidelberg Catechism

111 Q What does God require of you in this commandment?

A That I do whatever I can for my neighbor's good, that I treat him as I would like others to treat me, and that I work faithfully so that I may share with those in need.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

207 Q What is forbidden by this law?

A Not only ruining anyone
in court by perjury,
but also all gossip, twisting words,
slander, evil suspicion,
and finally idle chatter, flattery
and every kind of lie.

208 Q But what does this require of us?

A That we earnestly desire truth and constancy
in courts, in contracts,
and in every word,
and that, as much as possible,
we think and speak well of others
and guard their good reputation.

209 Q What is the tenth commandment?

A “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house;
you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife,
or his manservant, or his maidservant,
or his ox, or his ass,
or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*94 Q What does the ninth commandment
require?*

A That we not testify falsely against anyone
nor twist words, gossip, or slander,
nor be suspicious
or quick to condemn others,
nor liars or idle chatterers;
rather, that we always
openly speak and acknowledge the truth
in the courts and everywhere else,
and guard our neighbor’s good name
as much as we can.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*112 Q What is God’s will for us
in the ninth commandment?*

A God’s will is that I
never give false testimony against anyone,
twist no one’s words,
not gossip or slander,
nor join in condemning anyone
without a hearing or without a just cause.

Rather, in court and everywhere else,
I should avoid lying and deceit of every kind;
these are devices the devil himself uses,
and they would call down on me God’s
intense anger.
I should love the truth,
speak it candidly,
and openly acknowledge it.
And I should do what I can
to guard and advance my neighbor’s good name.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

210 Q What is taught by this law?

A It adds a clarification to the other commandments, that is, that not any thought or desire contrary to God's law should arise in our hearts and souls, but that they must burn continually and fully with hatred for every sin and with love for whatever is right.

211 Q In this life can anyone completely fulfill the obedience required by these commandments?

A No one, not even the holiest, except Christ alone. For throughout our entire life we all carry the remains of sin with us and hardly have a small beginning of that obedience which God's law requires.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

95 Q What does the tenth commandment require?

A That not even the slightest desire or thought contrary to any of God's commandments should ever arise in our hearts. Rather, with our whole heart we should always hate all sin and burn with love for whatever is right.

The Heidelberg Catechism

113 Q What is God's will for us in the tenth commandment?

A That not even the slightest thought or desire contrary to any one of God's commandments should ever arise in my heart.

Rather, with all my heart I should always hate sin and take pleasure in whatever is right.

114 Q But can those converted to God obey these commandments perfectly?

A No. In this life even the holiest have only a small beginning of this obedience.

Nevertheless, with all seriousness of purpose, they do begin to live according to all, not only some, of God's commandments.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

212 Q But can people be holy and righteous before God while they continue to commit all sorts of sins?

A By no means.
For those who continue in sin against their conscience will not inherit the kingdom of God. But in the saints during this life original sin remains as well as many sins of ignorance, neglect and weakness against which they still fight; but if they are truly sorry for their sins, they obtain forgiveness from God through Christ.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

** 77 Q But aren't there still some sins remaining in believers?*

A There remain in all the saints, as long as they live on this earth, many grave sins: defects with which we are born, evil inclinations, and many sins of ignorance and weakness. These are resisted by the saints through their whole life because of their true conversion to God, and therefore, these sins are not held against them, their beginning obedience is pleasing to God because of Christ, and they do not continue in sin against their conscience. For fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, coveters, drunkards, slanderers, or robbers will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The Heidelberg Catechism

** 87 Q Can those be saved who do not turn to God from their ungrateful and impenitent ways?*

A By no means.
Scripture tells us that no unchaste person, no idolater, adulterer, thief, no covetous person, no drunkard, slanderer, robber, or the like is going to inherit the kingdom of God.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*213 Q Since even the obedience
of those born again is not complete,
and the law condemns all
who are not perfectly obedient,
how can this imperfect obedience please God?*

A It pleases God,
not because it is the kind of obedience
that by itself can please him,
but because the sins that stain it
are forgiven for believers,
and in Christ they are loved by God
as children.

*214 Q Since we are not made right with God
by this obedience,
why does he require it?*

A First, so that we might give our thanks to him
who has freely justified and saved us.
Second, so that even in our reconciliation
it will still be clear
that God is an enemy of sin,
since he receives in grace
only those who repent.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*115 Q No one in this life
can obey the ten commandments perfectly:
why then does God want them
preached so pointedly?*

A First, so that the longer we live
the more we may come to know our sinfulness
and the more eagerly look to Christ
for forgiveness of sins and righteousness.

Second, so that,
while praying to God for the grace of the
Holy Spirit,
we may never stop striving
to be renewed more and more after God's image,
until after this life we reach our goal:
perfection.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*215 Q Since we can do nothing by ourselves but sin,
how can we begin faith and the new life,
and continue in them?*

A In no other way
than by the Spirit of God
who renews and rules us.

*216 Q Does this grace come to all
or is it offered to all?*

A No,
only to those
whom God from eternity
has chosen in Christ for eternal life
to reveal his mercy in them.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

217 Q Then isn't God unjust when he condemns those to whom he does not give this grace so that they can repent and believe?

A No.

First, because no one has given anything to God first

so that he should pay him back.

Rather, God may do with his own whatever he wants.

Second, all deserve to be abandoned and rejected by God forever because of their corruption which they receive from Adam.

As a result no one is saved except by the infinite mercy of God.

Third, those who are not regenerated by the Spirit of Christ haven't any desire to be so.

Therefore, since they are lost because they want to be,

they have no excuse for complaining about God.

Fourth, man lost his ability to obey God and forced himself into the need to sin

by his own will,

not by any fault of God.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*218 Q Since by ourselves, we are unable
to think anything good,
shouldn't we indulge in unbelief and other sins
while we wait until forced to change by the Holy
Spirit?*

A It is neither right to do that,
nor does anyone who is elect do it.
First, for when we do,
our conscience condemns us.
Second, if God takes us from this life
while we are continuing in the way of sin,
we will perish forever.
Third, the Holy Spirit does not force
or push us unwillingly to repent and believe,
but when God's Word is heard and reflected on,
he renews and moves our heart and will
so that we sincerely desire
to be governed by him.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*219 Q But since no one is saved except those
whom God from eternity has chosen for
salvation,
how can you be convinced that the promise of
grace
belongs to you when you don't know
whether you are elect?*

A Because by true faith
I accept the grace of God offered to me,
and by that most certain proof
I know that I have been chosen
and will always be kept by God
for eternal life.
For if he had not chosen me from eternity,
he would never have given me
the Spirit of adoption.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*220 Q But how can you apply the promised grace
to yourself through faith
when you have been stained
in so many ways by so many sins?*

A First, because God has thus revealed his
mercy,
that he desires to forgive all the sins
of the believer, no matter how many and how
great.

Second, because the merit of Christ
is infinitely greater than all sins,
not only mine but also those of all people.

Third, because God commands me
to believe in Christ,
no matter how much I have sinned.

And, at the same time, he affirms
that not to believe
is a greater sin than any other
that could be committed by anyone.

Therefore, just because I have offended my God
with so many and such great sins,

I ought not to add this,
by far the greatest of all sins,
so that I ungratefully trample on God's mercy
and the blood of his Son
which was shed for me.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*221 Q Since your faith is so weak,
how do you know
you are justified through it?*

A Because God receives in grace
all who are given true faith,
no matter how weak it is,
and perfects the work
he has begun in them.

*222 Q But how do you know
that your faith is true
and not just historical faith
or fancy?*

A First, because I feel in my heart
this testimony of the Holy Spirit:
that I earnestly look for and receive
the grace of God offered in Christ,
abhor nothing more than this,
the greatest sin – not to believe in Christ;
and am therefore one of God's children.
Second, because I feel
that true conversion to God
has begun in me.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*223 Q How then do we obtain and retain
the grace of the Holy Spirit
to keep God's covenant?*

A When we earnestly and constantly
ask God for it,
diligently learn God's Word,
use the sacraments
according to the divine institution
and pursue holiness of life.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

Prayer to God

224 Q Why do Christians need to pray to God?

A First, because it is one of the most important parts of the worship of God which the covenant of grace requires of us. Second, because this is the way God wants the elect to gain and retain the grace of the Holy Spirit necessary for keeping his covenant, as well as all the rest of his blessings. Third, because it is a witness of the divine covenant in their hearts. For whoever prays to God properly has been given the Spirit of adoption as children and been received into the covenant of God.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

Prayer

96 Q Why do Christians need to pray to God?

A First, because it is the most important part of our thankfulness to God, without which true faith cannot exist. Second, because God does not want to give the Holy Spirit and eternal life, and all those things which serve it, to those who despise or do not recognize his gifts, but only to those who pray earnestly and constantly and praise him for these gifts.

The Heidelberg Catechism

Prayer

116 Q Why do Christians need to pray?

A Because prayer is the most important part of the thankfulness God requires of us. And also because God gives his grace and Holy Spirit only to those who pray continually and groan inwardly, asking God for these gifts and thanking him for them.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

225 Q What is true prayer to God?

A It is a burning desire of the soul by which we ask for and expect spiritual and physical gifts from God alone because of Christ in accordance with his command and promises, or it is giving thanks to God for gifts received.

226 Q Why must we pray to God alone?

A Because he alone is the source and primary giver of all good things to all, and because no one except almighty God can hear and help all who pray from all places.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

97 Q What kind of prayer pleases God and is heard by him?

A When we pray to the one true God in the name of Christ for everything he has commanded us to ask for, not with false desire in our heart, but with a true sense of our need and a firm confidence that he will listen to our prayer just as he promised us in his Word.

The Heidelberg Catechism

117 Q How does God want us to pray so that he will listen to us?

A First, we must pray from the heart to no other than the one true God, who has revealed himself in his Word, asking for everything he has commanded us to ask for.

Second, we must acknowledge our need and misery, hiding nothing, and humble ourselves in his majestic presence.

Third, we must rest on this unshakable foundation: even though we do not deserve it, God will surely listen to our prayer because of Christ our Lord. That is what he promised us in his Word.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*227 Q May we then not ask men
for anything at all?*

A Yes, we may,
but only for those things
which they can give,
and only from those who are living,
and as agents of God's goodness
toward us.

228 Q Is it enough to pray with our mouth?

A No.
For unless we pray
with an understanding of what we say,
out of a true sense of our misery
and a strong and urgent desire
for the grace of God,
our prayers are not only worthless
but even provoke God to anger.

*229 Q But where does this burning desire
for prayer come from?*

A The Holy Spirit must
kindle it in our hearts.
Therefore, this grace of the Holy Spirit
ought to be one of the first things
we ask God for.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*230 Q Must we also pray
with our mouth at times?*

A Certainly, even often.
First, because the Lord commanded it
when he said: “When you pray, say...”
Second, because our tongue and speech
ought also to praise God
through prayer and thanksgiving.
Third, because praying aloud
often helps our attention.

*231 Q Must we be convinced that our prayers
are always heard by God?*

A Yes,
because the Lord has promised
that we will receive
whatever we ask for in faith,
and commanded us to ask
with this confidence.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*232 Q How can we have this confidence
when our unworthiness is so great?*

A Since God has offered Christ to us
as a Mediator
who presents to the Father
the petitions of those who pray in his name,
he has promised that he will hear us
because of Christ.
And it is certain
when Christ prays for us and with us
that the Father cannot deny him anything.

*233 Q Then why don't we receive
everything we pray for?*

A We receive everything
which pertains to our salvation
in the way that is best for us.
But, if out of ignorance
we ask for something different from this,
it is better that it not be given us.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

234 Q But what must we pray for and with what form of prayer?

A Christ prescribed to his disciples the best form of prayer which summarizes everything that we must pray God for.

235 Q What is that prayer?

A Our Father who are in heaven, etc.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

98 Q What does God want us to pray for?

A All good things, both spiritual and physical, as long as they serve God's glory and our salvation. Christ summarized these in the six petitions of that prayer which he himself taught his disciples.

99 Q What is that prayer?

A Our Father who are in heaven, etc.

The Heidelberg Catechism

118 Q What did God command us to pray for?

A Everything we need, spiritually and physically, as embraced in the prayer Christ our Lord himself taught us.

119 Q What is this prayer?

A Our Father who are in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven 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.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

236 Q *How many parts does it have?*

A It contains a preface and six requests.

(“and a conclusion” in 2nd edition)

237 Q *What is the preface?*

A “Our Father, who art in heaven.”

238 Q *Why did the Lord attach this preface to our prayer?*

A First, so that when we pray we may distinguish our prayer from the prayers of unbelievers by turning ourselves to this God who has revealed himself in the church. Second, so that when we consider who and what kind of God we are praying to, we may be encouraged to call on him with awe and trust.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

100 Q *Why do we address God with these words: “Our Father, who art in heaven”?*

A So that, being reminded to call with the entire church of saints on this the one true God who is our father in Christ and Lord of heaven and earth, and therefore wants and is able, through Christ, to give us all those things which pertain to our salvation, we might worship him with the awe and trust which are proper for good children.

The Heidelberg Catechism

120 Q *Why did Christ command us to call God, “our Father”?*

A At the very beginning of our prayer Christ wants to kindle in us what is basic to our prayer – the childlike awe and trust that God through Christ has become our Father.

Our fathers do not refuse us the things of this life; God our Father will even less refuse to give us what we ask in faith.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

239 Q Why do we call God “Father”?

A So that,
when we consider that we have been
adopted by God as children
because we are members of Christ,
we will both call on him through Christ
and be convinced that he will listen to us
as a gracious Father.

240 Q Why do we say “our”?

A First, so we will consider that we must pray
not only for ourselves but also for others,
especially for those who are members
with us of the one body of Christ
and children of the same Father in heaven.
Second, so we will pray more boldly
when we consider
that the whole church of saints
and even Christ himself,
the first born among his brothers,
are praying with us.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

241 Q Why is “who art in heaven” added?

A First, so that we do not think anything earthly or human about God, but realize that his majesty is so great that neither our senses nor our souls can comprehend it.

Second, so that when we remember that our God has dominion over heaven and earth, is present everywhere, and hears and helps those who call on him, we will address him with fear and trust.

Third, so that we do not direct God’s praise to any place or thing contrary to his command.

The Heidelberg Catechism

121 Q Why the words, “who art in heaven”?

A These words teach us not to think of God’s heavenly majesty as something earthly, and to expect everything for body and soul from his almighty power.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

242 Q *What is the first request?*

A “Hallowed by thy name.”

243 Q *What is God’s “name”?*

A Whatever is believed and preached about God according to his Word.

244 Q *What are we asking for in this request?*

A That God be known, prayed to, and praised by men in the way that his holiness, kindness, and majesty require.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

101 Q *What is the first request in this prayer?*

A That God’s name be hallowed, that is, that we and all people really know and pray to God and that all our thoughts, words, and deeds be directed to the praise of God’s holiness, kindness, and majesty.

The Heidelberg Catechism

122 Q *What does the first request mean?*

A Hallowed be thy name means,

Help us to really know you, to bless, worship, and praise you for all your works and for all that shines forth from them: your almighty power, wisdom, kindness, justice, mercy and truth.

And it means,

Help us to direct all our living – what we think, say, and do – so that your name will never be blasphemed because of us but always honored and praised.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

245 Q What is the second request?

A “Thy kingdom come.”

246 Q What are we asking with these words?

A That God sanctify believers
more and more by his Spirit,
add to their number,
and restrain those who fight against him,
until it is made plain,
after all obstacles have been removed,
that all things are subject to his will.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

102 Q What is the second request?

A That God’s kingdom come,
that is,
that he rule us by his Word and Spirit,
subject us more and more to himself,
convert many,
preserve his church,
and destroy all the devil’s works,
until the fullness of his kingdom comes,
in which he will be all in all.

The Heidelberg Catechism

123 Q What does the second request mean?

A Thy Kingdom come means,

Rule us by your Word and Spirit in such a way
that more and more we submit to you.

Keep your church strong and add to it.

Destroy the devil’s work;
destroy every force which revolts against you
and every conspiracy against your Word.

Do this until your kingdom is so complete and
perfect
that in it you are
all in all.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

247 Q What is the third request?

A “Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.”

248 Q What is asked by this request?

A That we and all people desire and choose
only what is pleasing to God,
and that,
if we wish for anything
contrary to what he desires,
it not be fulfilled,
and that everyone carry out his own work
as promptly and willingly
as the holy angels in heaven.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

103 Q What is the third request?

A That God’s will be done
on earth as it is in heaven,
that is,
that we and all people
reject our own desires
and submit ourselves in all things
to the divine will,
which alone is good,
and further,
that each one carry out his own work
as willingly and faithfully
as the holy angels in heaven.

The Heidelberg Catechism

124 Q What does the third request mean?

A Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven
means,

Help us and all men
to reject our own wills
and to obey your will without any back talk.
Your will alone is good.

Help everyone carry out the work he is called to
as willingly and faithfully as the angels in
heaven.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

249 Q *What is the fourth request?*

A “Give us this day our daily bread.”

250 Q *What do you understand by the word “bread”?*

A Whatever is necessary to protect the present life.

251 Q *Why do we ask God for this when he commanded that it be acquired by our labors?*

A It is certainly necessary to work, but neither our labor nor its fruits do us any good without God’s blessing.

252 Q *Why do we say “our”?*

A Because it becomes ours by God’s giving, and because we must be content with what he has given.

253 Q *Why does the Lord want us to ask for “daily bread” and that it be given us each day?*

A So that we will be content with what is enough for our needs.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

104 Q *What is the fourth request?*

A That he give us this day our daily bread, that is, that he bless our labors and take care of all our physical needs in such a way that by them we come to know him as the source of all good and place complete trust in his fatherly provision and daily blessing alone.

The Heidelberg Catechism

125 Q *What does the fourth request mean?*

A Give us this day our daily bread means,

Do take care of all our physical needs so that we come to know that you are the only source of everything good, and that neither our work and worry nor your gifts can do us any good without your blessing.

And so help us to give up our trust in creatures and to put trust in you alone.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

254 Q *What is the fifth request?*

A “And forgive us our debts
as we forgive our debtors.”

255 Q *What are we asking for with these words?*

A That God,
out of free mercy
because of Christ,
forgive us all our sins,
turn his anger from us,
and receive us in grace.

256 Q *Do all need to ask for this forgiveness?*

A All, even the most holy,
because Christ prescribed
this form of prayer for all believers,
since there is no one righteous on earth
who does not sin.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

105 Q *What is the fifth request?*

A That he forgive us our debts
as we forgive our debtors,
that is,
that he,
because of his mercy
and because of Christ’s
suffering and death,
not hold against us poor sinners
whatever sins we commit
and whatever evil remains in us,
that he turn away his anger from us
and receive us in grace,
just as he will do
if only we sincerely erase
the memory of the wrongs
which have been done to us
and also love our enemies.

The Heidelberg Catechism

126 Q *What does the fifth request mean?*

A And forgive us our debts,
as we have forgiven our debtors means,

Because of Christ’s blood,
do not hold against us, poor sinners that we are,
any of the sins we do
or the evil that constantly clings to us.

Forgive us just as we are fully determined,
as evidence of your grace in us,
to forgive our neighbors.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

257 Q *Why did the Lord add:
“As we forgive our debtors”?*

A First, so that we enter into prayer
with true faith, conversion to God,
and love for our neighbor,
because, if we do not sincerely forgive others,
we ought not to expect pardon from God;
rather, we call down vengeance from him
on our sins.

Second, so that when we truly forgive others,
we might have the sure testimony
of the Holy Spirit in our hearts
that we are children of God
and obtain the forgiveness of our sins
from God.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

258 Q *What is the last request?*

A “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

259 Q *What are we asking for in this request?*

A That God build us up with the power of his Spirit against the devil and our own flesh, so that we do not fall into sin; and that he, when we have finally been set free from all sins, miseries, and death, give us eternal life and happiness.

260 Q *What do you understand by “temptation”?*

A The deceits and tricks of the devil with which he continually lies in wait for us all and would turn us away from God through our own weakness, if we were not protected by our Father’s hand.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

106 Q *What is the sixth request?*

A That he lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, that is, that he make us strong and defend us with the strength of his Spirit against all the assaults of our deadly enemies, the devil, the world, sin, and our flesh so that we neither fall into sin nor do down to defeat in this spiritual battle but may finally enjoy eternal blessing having won the complete victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Heidelberg Catechism

127 Q *What does the sixth request mean?*

A And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil means,

By ourselves we are too weak to hold our own even for a moment.

And our sworn enemies – the devil, the world, and our own flesh – never stop attacking us.

And so, Lord, uphold us and make us strong with the strength of your Holy Spirit, so that we may not go down to defeat in this spiritual struggle, but may firmly resist our enemies until we finally win the complete victory.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

261 Q How does God lead into temptation when scripture ascribes this to the devil?

A The devil tempts people to sin, but those whom God wishes to punish he deprives of his grace, strikes with blindness, and gives over to the devil to be driven into sin and destruction.

262 Q Why is there added: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever"?

A First, so that we may testify that our prayers do not rest on our own confidence, but only on the goodness and power of God.
Second, so that we may be reminded that all good things must be sought from God for this chief purpose: so that the kingdom, the power, and the glory be ascribed to him.
Third, so that we begin and end our prayer with praise to God.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

107 Q Why do you add these words: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever"?

A Because I look for everything I pray for from his goodness and power alone, and I desire that they all contribute to his praise.

The Heidelberg Catechism

128 Q What does your conclusion to this prayer mean?

A For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever means,

We have made all these requests of you because, as our all-powerful king, you not only want to, but are able to give us all that is good; and because your holy name, and not we ourselves, should receive all the praise, forever.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

263 Q What does the little word “Amen” express?

A It means we desire that what we are asking for certainly be done, and trust that it certainly will.

The Ministry of the Church

264 Q What is the ministry of the church?

A It is the public preaching of God’s Word, the administration of the sacraments, and church discipline – instituted by Christ for perfecting the salvation of the elect.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

108 Q Why do you add the little word “Amen” to the end of the prayer?

A Because I know for certain that God will listen to my prayers just as I really desire this.

The Sacraments

53 Q By what means and instruments does the Holy Spirit work, nurture and confirm faith in us?

A Through the preaching of God’s Word and the use of the sacraments.

The Heidelberg Catechism

129 Q What does that little word “Amen” express?

A Amen means

This is sure to be!

It is even more sure that God listens to my prayer, than that I really desire what I pray for.

65 Q You confess that by faith alone you share in Christ and all his blessings: where does that faith come from?

A The Holy Spirit produces it in our hearts by the preaching of the holy gospel, and confirms it through our use of the holy sacraments.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

265 Q Why did God institute the ministry of the church?

A So that through it
he might receive and keep us
in his covenant,
and certainly give us the confidence
that we are and forever will be
in it.

266 Q Why do you say that we are received and kept in God's covenant through the ministry?

A Because it is
the instrument of the Holy Spirit
by which he works and confirms,
in the hearts of the elect,
the faith and conversion
which God requires from us
in his covenant.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*267 Q Isn't the Holy Spirit's honor taken away
when sanctification is attributed to the ministry?*

A No, it is not.

For the strength and power
by which we are sanctified
is all from the divine Spirit;
the ministry is simply his instrument.
By it he moves
the hearts and souls of the elect
whenever and however he sees fit;
not because he could not do otherwise,
but because it pleased divine wisdom,
through the foolish preaching of the cross,
to save those who believe.

268 Q What must ministers preach?

A Nothing but the Word of God
contained in the law and the gospel.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

269 Q And how can we be sure that the Word of God is being proclaimed by ministers?

A If they proclaim the teaching written in the books of the Old and New Testaments, and if what they say conforms to the articles of faith and the commands of God; in short, if they teach us to seek our complete salvation in Christ alone.

270 Q Isn't it enough to study God's Word privately?

A It is certainly necessary for your salvation to meditate on it day and night, but if we want to be Christians, we must also make use of the public ministry, if we are not prevented by force of circumstance.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

271 Q Why is this necessary?

A First, because of God's command;
second, so that God may be publicly praised
by the whole church
before all people and all creatures;
third, so that the unity of the church
may be maintained and manifested.

*272 Q What does the Holy Spirit bring about
through the preaching of God's Word?*

A First, he teaches
what God promises us in his covenant
and what he requires from us in turn;
second, he persuades us
more and more each day
to believe and obey him.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*273 Q And how does the Holy Spirit work in us
through hearing and meditating on God's Word?*

A We learn the Word of God
with the result
that we believe and obey him
in all things.

or

When we are instructed
by the Word of God
with the result
that we believe and obey him
in all things.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

The Sacraments

274 Q What are sacraments?

A They are signs of the covenant between God and those who believe in Christ, or seals of the righteousness of faith.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

54 Q What are sacraments?

A They are ceremonies instituted by God so that by these visible pledges and public testimonies, he may remind and assure all believers of the grace promised them in the gospel. And so that they, on their part, may obligate themselves to faith and a holy life, and distinguish themselves from unbelievers.

The Heidelberg Catechism

66 Q What are sacraments?

A Sacraments are holy signs and seals for us to see. They were instituted by God so that by our use of them he might make us understand more clearly the promise of the gospel, and might put his seal on that promise.

And this is God's gospel promise: to forgive our sins and give us eternal life by grace alone because of Christ's one sacrifice finished on the cross.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

275 Q Say that more clearly.

A Sacraments are ceremonies,
instituted by God
and added to the promise of grace,
so that by these
visible pledges and public testimonies
he might represent the grace
promised in the gospel,
that is, the communion of Christ
and all his blessings;
and might assure all those
who use these ceremonies in true faith
that this promise certainly belongs to
and will eternally be valid for them;
and so that those who use them,
on their part,
may bind themselves
to continue in true faith
and piety toward God.

*276 Q Then does God present and assure us
of the same blessings
in the Word and the sacraments?*

A Yes, the same ones;
for the signs of the covenant
cannot testify to any thing other than
that promised in the covenant itself.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*67 Q Are both the Word and the sacraments then
intended to focus our faith
on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross
as the only ground of our salvation?*

A Right!

In the gospel the Holy Spirit teaches us
and through the holy sacraments he assures us
that our entire salvation
rests on Christ's one sacrifice for us on
the cross.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*277 Q But why does God add visible signs
to the Word
when by them, he offers and assures us
of nothing other than that which is in the Word?*

A First and foremost,
because of our weakness,
he wants to promise us
the same things in many different ways
and to testify that they belong to us,
so that he might assure us all the more of our
faith
and, as it grows, continually add
to us all the spiritual gifts.

Second, so that
these signs may remind us throughout our lives
of the love for God and our neighbor
to which we obligated ourselves
in the covenant established with God.

Third, so that
they may be marks of the confession
which distinguish the church
from all other peoples and sects.

Fourth, so that
the memory of Christ's blessings
may be clearer, longer lasting,
and publicly celebrated.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

278 Q How can the sacraments make us more certain of receiving internal and spiritual things since they are external and physical?

A It is not by virtue of the act itself, nor by any power infused or attached to the elements, that they accomplish this, but because God promises his grace to us by these ceremonies, as visible words, just as truly as he does by the Word of the gospel; and he wants them to be visible pledges of his promise which he himself gives publicly to everyone who uses them in faith, and because, by means of these instruments, the Holy Spirit confirms faith in the hearts of the elect.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*279 Q Then is God's grace given and sealed
to all who use the sacraments?*

A No, only to those who have been born again
by the Spirit of Christ,
and who use the ceremonies
commanded by God
as a mutual ratification of the covenant.
But, the unholy,
by their abuse of the signs of God's covenant,
heap God's anger on themselves,
make public their ingratitude and dishonesty,
and pass sentence on themselves
by acknowledging the truth of Christian doctrine.

*280 Q But doesn't it take away something
from divine truth
if not all who receive these symbols
at the same time receive
the things they represent?*

A No, these things were promised
and the sacraments were instituted
for believers only.
Therefore,
in order that divine truth
and the divine institution of the sacraments
may be consistent,
believers cannot receive the signs
without receiving the things promised,
nor can unbelievers receive the things promised
by receiving these signs.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

281 Q Can anyone share in or be certain of the divine covenant and eternal salvation without the use of the sacraments?

A Those who do not make use of the sacraments, when it is possible, show that they have no faith and exclude themselves from the communion of saints and God's covenant. Nevertheless the promise made to believers is valid for those deprived of the sacraments against their will.

282 Q Can humans institute sacraments?

A No, because the testimonies of God's will for us can be given by no one but God alone.

283 Q How many sacraments did Christ institute?

A Two: baptism and the holy supper.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

55 Q Can anyone share in or be certain of salvation without the use of the sacraments?

A No one who continues to despise them, can. For such a one lacks true faith and excludes himself from God's people and covenant. But, one deprived of the sacraments against his will still shares in the grace promised believers and their seed.

56 Q How many sacraments did Christ institute?

A Two: baptism and the supper.

The Heidelberg Catechism

68 Q How many sacraments did Christ institute in the New Testament?

A Two: baptism and the Lord's supper.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

Baptism

284 Q What is baptism?

A It is washing done with water in the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, instituted by Christ, so that it might be a testimony that the one who is so baptized has been received by God into the covenant of grace, because of Christ, and has been sanctified by the Holy Spirit for eternal life.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

Baptism

57 Q What is baptism?

A It is washing done with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, instituted by Christ so that by this visible pledge and public testimony, he may, through our whole life remind and assure us all who believe in him, that not only for others but also for each one of us our sins have been washed away by his blood and Spirit, and we on our part might be obligated to advance each day in true conversion.

The Heidelberg Catechism

Baptism

69 Q How does baptism remind you and assure you that Christ's one sacrifice on the cross is for you personally?

A In this way:
Christ instituted this outward washing and with it gave the promise that, as surely as water washes away the dirt from the body, so certainly his blood and his Spirit wash away my soul's impurity, in other words, all my sins.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

285 Q What does this washing signify?

A That just as water removes the dirt of the body, so we are washed from our sins by the blood and Spirit of Christ.

286 Q How are we washed by Christ's blood?

A When God forgives our sins because of Christ's poured-out blood.

287 Q How are we washed by the Holy Spirit?

A When we are regenerated by him to new life.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

58 Q What does it mean to be washed by Christ's blood and Spirit?

A It means, that because of Christ's poured-out blood, we receive the remission of our sins and are given the Holy Spirit by whose power we earnestly desire and are able more and more to resist sins and to serve God in newness and holiness of life.

The Heidelberg Catechism

70 Q What does it mean to be washed with Christ's blood and Spirit?

A To be washed with Christ's blood means that God, by grace, has forgiven my sins because of Christ's blood poured out for me in his sacrifice on the cross.

To be washed with Christ's Spirit means that the Holy Spirit has renewed me and set me apart to be a member of Christ so that more and more I become dead to sin and increasingly live a holy and blameless life.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

288 Q What benefit do we receive from this washing?

A In every true conversion to God through our whole life, we are certain of the covenant established with God and of this spiritual washing done with Christ's blood and Spirit.

289 Q Why does the bodily washing make us more certain of the spiritual washing?

A Because Christ promised it in the institution of baptism.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

59 Q How can it be that the external, bodily washing with water makes us more certain of this internal, spiritual washing?

A Because the Holy Spirit moves our hearts to believe more firmly through this promise of Christ, that a washing away of sins most certainly comes to all who believe and are baptized.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

290 Q *What is that institution?*

A At the end of Matthew and Mark *
the Lord speaks to the disciples as follows:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations
baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.”

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved;
but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

* Latin text varies slightly.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

60 Q *Where is this promised to us?*

A In the institution of baptism
at the end of Matthew and Mark *
when the Lord speaks as follows:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all
nations,
baptizing them in the name of the
Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.”

“He who believes and is baptized will
be saved;
but he who does not believe will be
condemned.”

The same thing is promised elsewhere
in sacred Scripture where baptism is called
the washing of regeneration
and the washing away of sins.

The Heidelberg Catechism

71 Q *Where does Christ promise
that we are washed with his blood and Spirit
as surely as we are washed
with the water of baptism?*

A In the institution of baptism where he says:
“Go therefore and make disciples of all
nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.”

“He who believes and is baptized will be
saved;
but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

This promise is repeated when Scripture calls
baptism
the washing of regeneration and
the washing away of sins.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

291 Q What does it mean to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit?

A It means,
in accordance with God's command,
to testify through this ceremonial action
that the one who is so baptized
is received in grace by the eternal Father
because of the Son
and is sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

292 Q Is this ceremony then a testimony of salvation to all who are baptized with water?

A No, only to believers;
for the one who does not believe
will be condemned
even if he has been baptized,
says the Lord.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

61 Q But does water wash away sin?

A By no means.
This is done
only by Christ's blood and Spirit.

The Heidelberg Catechism

72 Q Does this outward washing with water itself wash away sins?

A No, only Jesus Christ's blood and the Holy Spirit
cleanse us from all sins.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

62 Q Why then is this washing of water called regeneration and the washing away of sins?

A Because it is a sure pledge and sign whereby Christ testifies to all of us who believe in him that our souls have been cleansed from sin by his blood and Spirit as surely as we are washed with visible water which ordinarily removes dirt from the body.

The Heidelberg Catechism

73 Q Why then does the Holy Spirit call baptism the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins?

A God has good reason for these words. He wants to teach us that the blood and Spirit of Christ wash away our sins just as water washes away dirt from our bodies.

But more important, he wants to assure us, by this divine pledge and sign, that the washing away of our sins spiritually is as real as physical washing with water.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

293 Q Then are infants rightly baptized since they have not yet been given faith?

A Yes.
For in adults faith and its confession are required before baptism because they cannot be included in the covenant of grace in any other way.
But for infants it is enough to be sanctified by the Spirit of Christ in proportion to their age.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

63 Q Why must infants be baptized since they have not yet been given faith?

A First, since the Holy Spirit is effective even in them, he moves them to believe and obey God even though they do not yet believe in the same way adults do.
Second, because they also are in God's kingdom and covenant and in Christ's church, and therefore must be marked with the sign of divine grace.
Third, because infants were circumcised in the Old Testament and baptism replaces circumcision.

The Heidelberg Catechism

74 Q Should infants, too, be baptized?

A Yes.
Infants as well as adults are in God's covenant and are his people. They, no less than adults, are promised the forgiveness of sin through Christ's blood and the Holy Spirit who produces faith.

Therefore, by baptism, the mark of the covenant, infants should be received into the Christian church and should be distinguished from the children of unbelievers.
This was done in the Old Testament by circumcision, which was replaced in the New Testament by baptism.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

294 Q But why is it necessary that they be baptized?

A First, because God requires that whomever he embraces in his covenant be marked with baptism.

And the children of believers are and remain members of the covenant of grace if they do not exclude themselves from it by their unbelief when they get older.

For God affirms that he will be their God also and Christ affirms that the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Second, because baptism replaces circumcision; therefore, since infants were circumcized in the Old Testament, and since the grace of God was not restricted by the coming of Christ but was poured out more fully, they also ought to be baptized now.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

The Lord's Supper

295 Q What is the Lord's supper?

A It is the giving and partaking of bread and wine in the congregation of believers done in remembrance of Christ, instituted by Christ so that by this sign he may testify that he most certainly communicates his body and blood for eternal life to believers who partake of this bread and wine, so that the covenant, established with God in baptism, may be valid for them forever.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

The Lord's Supper

64 Q What is the Lord's supper?

A It is the breaking and eating of the bread of the Lord, and the giving of his cup in the assembly of believers, with the proclamation of his death, instituted by Christ; so that by this visible pledge and public testimony, he might remind and assure us all, who do this in true faith, that his body was broken on the cross and his blood poured out, not only for others but also for each one of us and that it is eaten and drunk by us as the true food and drink of eternal life; and so that we, on our part, will be obligated to seek life in him alone, to live as is fitting for his members, and to love one another.

The Heidelberg Catechism

The Lord's Supper

75 Q How does the Lord's supper remind you and assure you that you share in Christ's one sacrifice on the cross and in all his gifts?

A In this way:
Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat this broken bread and to drink this cup. With this command he gave this promise:

First,
as surely as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me and the cup given to me, so surely his body was offered and broken for me and his blood poured out for me on the cross.

Second,
as surely as I receive from the hand of him who serves, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, given me as sure signs of Christ's body and blood, so surely he nourishes and refreshes my soul for eternal life with his crucified body and poured-out blood.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

296 Q How does the Lord's supper differ from baptism?

A They are signs of the same covenant and the same grace.
Baptism, however, testifies that the covenant has truly been established by God with us, while the supper continually renews the covenant and assures us that it will be valid forever. Therefore God wants baptism to be received once in life, and the supper to be repeated often.

297 Q What does the breaking of the bread mean?

A That, just as the bread is broken for each one of us, so also Christ was broken and died on the cross for each one of us.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*298 Q What does the partaking
of bread and wine mean?*

A First,
that just as the bread and wine
sustain bodily life,
so also the body and blood of Christ,
which we eat and drink,
nourishes us for eternal life.

Second,
just as the one loaf which we share
comes from many grains,
and the wine which we drink
from many grapes,
so also believers
become one body in Christ.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*299 Q What does it mean
to eat the body of Christ
and to drink his blood?*

A It means to believe in Christ and,
through faith and the Spirit of Christ
who dwells in us,
to become a member of the body of Christ
so that we receive the forgiveness of sins
because of that body
given over to death,
and so that we drink,
from that blood as the fount and source,
the same eternal life and righteousness
which is in him
through the pouring out on us
of the Holy Spirit who dwells in him.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*65 Q What does it mean
to eat the body of Christ
and to drink his blood?*

A It means to receive from God
by true faith in Christ
the remission of sins and righteousness
because of the body of Christ
given over to death
and his poured-out blood;
and to be united with Christ our head
through the Holy Spirit
who at the same time dwells
in the body of Christ,
which is and remains in heaven,
and in us who are on earth
in such a way
that we are bone of his bone
and flesh of his flesh
and with him live and are governed
by one Spirit,
as members of our body by one soul.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*76 Q What does it mean
to eat the crucified body of Christ
and to drink his poured-out blood?*

A It means
to accept with a believing heart
the entire suffering and death of Christ
and by believing
to receive forgiveness of sins and eternal
life.

But it means more.
Through the Holy Spirit, who lives both in
Christ and in us,
we are united more and more to Christ's
blessed body.
And so, although he is in heaven and we are
on earth,
we are flesh of his flesh and bone of his
bone.
And we forever live on and are governed
by one Spirit,
as members of our body are by one soul.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*300 Q Does eating Christ's body mean only
that we share in Christ's merit
and in the Holy Spirit's gifts?*

A It is not only this,
but also a communion
of the person and substance of Christ himself.
For his divinity dwells in us.
And his body is joined to our bodies,
in such a way,
that we are one with him.

*301 Q How can that be
since the body of Christ is in heaven
and we are on earth?*

A The Holy Spirit,
who at the same time dwells
in the soul and body of Christ in heaven
and in the souls and bodies
of the saints on earth
is a bond between the two,
joining the bodies of Christ and believers,
even though they are separated
by a very great distance,
much better and more firmly
than the members of our bodies
are connected to the head,
or the branches
are connected to the vine.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

302 Q Don't all these things come to us even apart from the Lord's supper?

A Of course.

When we believe the gospel and are sanctified by the Holy Spirit, we certainly receive all these blessings.

303 Q Then how does the partaking of this bread and wine benefit us?

A First, it is a testimony and seal of an internal and spiritual eating. Second, this communion with Christ and all his blessings is increased in us through faith, so that we daily become more closely united with Christ until we are perfectly one with him in eternal life.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*304 Q Why does this ceremony assure us
of communion with Christ?*

A Because,
in the institution of the supper,
Christ promised believers
this communion with him.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*66 Q How can it be
that the external, physical
breaking and eating of bread
and drinking of wine
make us more certain
of this internal, spiritual eating?*

A Because the Holy Spirit
moves our hearts to believe more firmly
through this promise of Christ,
that all believers who eat this broken bread
and drink this given cup
are most certainly given food and drink
by the body of Christ himself
which was broken on the cross
and by his poured-out blood.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

305 Q *What is that institution?*

A It is described in this way
by the Evangelists and the apostle Paul:

“The Lord Jesus on the night when he was
betrayed
took bread and when he had given thanks,
he broke it, and said,
‘Take, eat, this is my body which is broken
for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.’
In the same way also the cup, after supper
saying,
‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this in remembrance of me.’
For as often as you eat this bread and drink
the cup,
you proclaim the Lord’s death
until he comes.”

“For, whoever eats this bread or drinks the cup
of the Lord in an unworthy manner,
will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.
But let a man prove himself, and
so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.
For, he who eats and drinks in an unworthy
manner,
eats and drinks judgment unto himself
for he discerns not the body of the Lord.”

Ursinus: Small Catechism

67 Q *Where is this promised to us?*

A In the institution of the Lord’s supper
where Christ calls the bread and the wine
his body and blood.

It is described in this way
by the Evangelists and the apostle Paul:

“Our Lord Jesus Christ on the night when
he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks,
he broke it and gave it to the disciples
and said,
‘Take, eat, this is my body
which was broken for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.’
In the same way he also took the
cup, after supper, and he gave thanks
and he gave it to them saying,
‘Drink of it, all of you.
This cup is the new covenant in my
blood which is poured out for you and for
many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.’
For as often as you eat this bread and
drink this cup
you proclaim the Lord’s death
until he comes.”

This same promise is given
when Paul calls the bread which we break
and the cup of blessing which we bless
a communion in the body and blood of Christ.

The Heidelberg Catechism

77 Q *Where does Christ promise
to nourish and refresh believers
with his body and blood
as surely as
they eat this broken bread
and drink this cup?*

A In the institution of the Lord’s supper:

“The Lord Jesus on the night when he was
betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks,
he broke it, and said,
‘Take, eat, this is my body which is for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.’
In the same way also the cup, after supper,
saying,
‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.’
For as often as you eat this bread and drink
the cup,
you proclaim the Lord’s death
until he comes.”

This promise is repeated by Paul in these words:

“The cup of blessing which we bless,
is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?
The bread which we break,
is it not a participation in the body of Christ?
Because there is one bread, we who are many are
one body,
for we all partake of the one bread.”

Ursinus: Small Catechism

68 Q But do the bread and wine become the real body and blood of Christ?

A No.

For Christ has one true human body,
which was
born of the virgin Mary,
crucified for us,
died, was buried, raised,
lifted up to heaven,
and is there now at God's right hand,
and not on the earth
until he returns from heaven
to judge the living and dead.

The Heidelberg Catechism

78 Q Are the bread and wine changed into the real body and blood of Christ?

A No.

Just as the water of baptism
is not changed into Christ's blood
and does not itself wash away sins
but is simply God's sign and assurance,
so too the bread of the Lord's supper
is not changed into the actual body of Christ
even though it is called the body of Christ
in keeping with the nature and language
of sacraments.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

306 Q In what way does the Lord say that the bread is his body and the wine his blood?

A In the same way that a sign is said to be that which it represents and confirms. For thus a crown or scepter stands for the kingdom, circumcision for the covenant between God and Abraham, killing and eating of the lamb for the passover of the Lord, the levitical sacrifice for the expiation of sins, baptism for the washing of regeneration, and so also in general a sacrament is said to be the thing God signifies and seals through it.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

69 Q Why then is this bread and this cup called the body and blood of Christ, or a communion in the body and blood of Christ and a new testament?

A Because the breaking and eating of this bread and the partaking of this cup is a certain pledge and sign whereby Christ testifies to us all, who believe in him, that as certainly as we eat this bread which was broken for us and drink this cup which was given to us which nourish our bodily, temporal life, so certainly are his body which was broken for us and his blood which was poured out for us the spiritual food and drink of eternal life, and so certainly do we have communion in them and share in the new testament.

The Heidelberg Catechism

79 Q Why then does Christ call the bread his body and the cup his blood, or the new covenant in his blood? (Paul uses the words, a participation in Christ's body and blood.)

A Christ has good reason for these words. He wants to teach us that as bread and wine nourish our temporal life, so too his crucified body and poured-out blood truly nourish our souls for eternal life.

But more important, he wants to assure us, by this visible sign and pledge, that we, through the Holy Spirit's work, share in his true body and blood as surely as our mouths receive these holy signs in his remembrance, and that all of his suffering and obedience are as definitely ours as if we personally had suffered and paid for our sins.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*307 Q What does scripture mean
by this manner of speaking?*

A That these visible and bodily things
are also signs and testimonies
of God's invisible and spiritual gifts.

The Heidelberg Catechism

80 Q How does the Lord's supper differ from the Roman Catholic Mass?

A The Lord's supper declares to us that our sins have been completely forgiven through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ which he himself finished on the cross once for all.

It also declares to us that the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ, who with his very body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father where he wants us to worship him.

But the Mass teaches that the living and the dead do not have their sins forgiven through the suffering of Christ unless Christ is still offered for them daily by the priests.

It also teaches that Christ is bodily present in the form of bread and wine where Christ is therefore to be worshiped. Thus the Mass is basically nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ and a condemnable idolatry.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*308 Q What then is the meaning
of Christ's words
when he says that the bread is his body
and the wine is his blood?*

A That this broken bread
which we eat,
and this wine which we drink
are, for believers,
a sign and testimony
that the body of Christ was given
and his blood poured out for us,
and that they are communicated
to us through faith,
just as certainly
as we take the bread and wine
through the mouth of the body.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*309 Q Where is this explanation
given in scripture?*

A Paul gives it in 1 Corinthians 10:
For, after he says
that the bread is the participation in
the body of Christ,
he adds this reason:
because believers who share in the one bread
become one body.

And Christ himself teaches it
when he calls the cup
a new testament in his blood
which is the remission of sins
and the gift of righteousness and eternal life
because of his poured-out blood.

For the Christian faith does not permit
this to be understood in any other way
than that the cup
is a sign and a testimony
of this testament.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

310 Q But why does the Lord say it that way?

A First, so that he might teach
what these visible signs represent.
Second, so that he might impress on believers
that as certainly as
they see themselves using external signs,
so certainly does the communion
of his body and blood
come to them.

311 Q Why did Christ want two signs to be used?

A To teach us that he is
not only our spiritual food
but also our spiritual drink,
that is,
that he gives us all things
necessary for our salvation.

*312 Q What does it mean to partake of
this bread and cup in remembrance of Christ?*

A It means that
we are reminded by means of this ceremony
of redemption through Christ
and our union with him,
and are encouraged by this visible pledge
with stronger faith
to accept, reflect on, confess,
and publicly proclaim these blessings.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

*313 Q Is the communion of Christ
extended and sealed to all
who partake of this bread and cup?*

A No, only to believers.
For unbelievers,
since they are participants with demons,
cannot be participants at the Lord's table.

*314 Q Who eat this bread and drink this cup
in a worthy manner?*

A Those who examine themselves
before they come.

315 Q And how will we examine ourselves?

A By testing whether we are
true members of Christ.

*316 Q How do we know
that we are members of Christ?*

A If within ourselves we feel
true faith,
conversion to God,
and love for neighbor.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*70 Q Who come to this supper
rightly and with benefit?*

A Those who are truly converted to God
and who desire
to confirm their faith
and to celebrate the blessings of Christ.
For one who does not come in this way,
acts contrary to Christ's institution
and despises Christ and his blessings,
and therefore eats and drinks
judgment on himself.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*81 Q Who are to come
to the Lord's table?*

A Those who are displeased with themselves
because of their sins,
but who nevertheless trust
that their sins are pardoned
and that their continuing weakness is
covered
by the suffering and death of Christ,
and who also desire more and more
to strengthen their faith
and to lead a better life.

Hypocrites and those who are unrepentant,
however,
eat and drink judgment on themselves.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

317 Q But as long as we find that these things are not perfect in us, should we keep ourselves from the supper of the Lord?

A No, as long as these things are genuine and not feigned in us. For Christ receives the weak, and he instituted his supper because of our weakness.

318 Q Who should administer the sacraments?

A Ministers of the gospel; for the administration of the sacraments is part of the public ministry which God wants no one to be engaged in unless called by him.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

319 Q And who are to be admitted to them?

A To baptism,
both adults,
who rightly confess the basics
of the Christian faith
and lead a life
worthy of a Christian,
and also infants
who are born to those
whom the church recognizes
as believers.
To the Lord's supper, however,
only adults
who are able to examine themselves
and who demonstrate this
in confession and life.

*320 Q What must be done with those
who lead a life unworthy of a Christian?*

A They must be corrected
by church discipline.

Ursinus: Small Catechism

*71 Q But whom should the church
admit to the Lord's supper?*

A Those who have been baptized in Christ
and who, by their confession and life,
can be considered Christians.
But, according to the command of Christ,
the church ought to separate from itself
those who are not such,
until they reform,
so that God's covenant not be dishonored
and the whole church guilty
for their sin and condemnation.

The Heidelberg Catechism

*82 Q Are those to be admitted
to the Lord's supper
who show by what they say and do
that they are unbelieving and ungodly?*

A No, that would dishonor God's covenant
and bring down God's anger upon the entire
congregation.
Therefore, according to the instruction of
Christ and his apostles,
the Christian church is duty-bound to exclude
such people,
by the official use of the keys of the
kingdom,
until they reform their lives.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

Church Discipline

321 Q What should the form of church discipline be?

A Elders must be appointed who are to watch over the conduct of the church. To them must be pointed out, after a first and a second private admonition, those who are living wickedly so that the elders may also admonish them.

If they do not obey them, they must be excluded, by agreement of the elders, from the communion of the Lord's supper, until they not only promise with their words, but also show by their deeds a correction of their ways.

The Heidelberg Catechism

83 Q What are the keys of the kingdom?

A The preaching of the holy gospel and Christian discipline toward repentance. Both preaching and discipline open the kingdom of heaven to believers and close it to unbelievers.

84 Q How does preaching the gospel open and close the kingdom of heaven?

A According to the command of Christ:

The kingdom of heaven is opened by proclaiming and publicly declaring to each and every believer that, as often as he accepts the gospel promise in true faith, God, because of what Christ has done, truly forgives all his sins.

The kingdom of heaven is closed, however, by proclaiming and publicly declaring to unbelievers and hypocrites that, as long as they do not repent, the anger of God and eternal condemnation rest on them.

God's judgment, both in this life and in the life to come, is based on this gospel testimony.

Ursinus: Large Catechism

322 Q How does church discipline differ from the responsibility of a civil magistrate?

A First and foremost, the difference is that a magistrate punishes and restrains wrongdoers with physical force, but the church only warns verbally and excludes from communion.

Second, the magistrate is satisfied with punishing in the pursuit of justice, but the church seeks the correction and salvation of those whom it admonishes.

Third, the magistrate proceeds at once to punishment; the church admonishes in a brotherly way so that the punishment of magistrates may be avoided by timely correction.

Fourth, the magistrate does not punish many sins which are evil to the church and must be condemned by it.

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