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Doctrinal Theology.

BIBLIOLOGY.

This chapter of theology was by our earlier dogmatists commonly dealt with in their *Prolegomena*, where they treated of the nature and the principles and source of theology. It was not unreasonable to dwell on the source of doctrine before exhibiting the substance of Christian doctrine as comprised in *Theology proper*, *Anthropology*, *Christology*, *Soteriology*, and *Eschatology*. This was the more pertinent as the principal positions of Bibliology, especially the divine origin and authority of the Bible, were generally conceded, and to impugn the inspiration of the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments would have been looked upon as preposterous by theologians of all churches and schools. The great ancestors of modern Protestant theology, Zwingli, Calvin, Melancthon, never theoretically or dogmatically assailed this stronghold of scriptural theology. Even Calixt, the Noah of the present generation of neologists in what is called the Lutheran Church, did no more than plant the first germs of unscriptural Bibliology for future development and would probably have been amazed and appalled at the growth of thorns and thistles gone into seed in these latter days.

A SHORT EXPOSITION
of the
Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther,

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

(Concluded.)

Part III.

The Lord's Prayer.

OF PRAYER IN GENERAL.

208. What is prayer?

It is an act of worship wherein we with our hearts and lips bring our petitions before God and offer up praise and thanks to Him.

209. What should induce us to pray?

God's command and promise as well as our own and our neighbor's need.

210. To whom should we pray?

Only to the true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, since to Him alone such honor is due and He alone is able and willing to hear our prayer.

211. What should we ask of God in our prayers?

Everything that tends to the glory of God and to our own and our neighbor's welfare, both spiritual and temporal blessings.

212. What distinction should we observe in our prayers?

Such spiritual blessings as are necessary for our salvation we should ask without condition; all other gifts, with the condition that God would grant them to us if they tend to His glory and our welfare.

213. How should we pray?

In Jesus' name and with firm confidence.

214. For whom should we pray?

For ourselves and for all other men; but not for the dead.

215. Where should we pray?

Everywhere, and especially in the closet and in public worship.

216. When should we pray?

At all times, and especially in times of trouble.

217. Which is of all prayers the most excellent and model prayer?

The Lord's prayer, "*Our Father, who art in heaven,*" etc.

218. Into what parts may the Lord's prayer be divided?

The Introduction, the Seven Petitions, and the Conclusion.

THE INTRODUCTION.

219. Which is the introduction?

Our Father, who art in heaven.

220. What does this mean?

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

221. Why would God have us accost Him "Father"?

God would by this winning name encourage us to pray without fear or doubt.

222. Why are we to say "*Our Father*"?

Because all believers are in Christ the children of one Father and should, therefore, pray for and with each other.

223. Why are we to add, "*Who art in heaven*"?

To remember that our Father is Lord over all and able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. Eph. 3, 20.

224. What do we ask in the seven petitions?

In the first three petitions we ask for spiritual blessings, in the fourth petition, for temporal gifts, and in the last three petitions, for the averting of evil.

THE FIRST PETITION.

225. Which is the first petition?

Hallowed be Thy Name.

226. What does this mean?

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

227. How is this done?

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

228. What is God to grant us according to this petition?

Pure doctrine and holy life.

229. From what is He to preserve us?

From false doctrine and ungodly life.

230. How is God's name hallowed among us by pure doctrine and holy life?

God's name is not thereby rendered holy, but held sacred among us and others, and thus His glory is magnified on earth.

THE SECOND PETITION.

231. Which is the second petition?

Thy kingdom come.

232. What does this mean?

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

233. When is this effected?

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

234. What kingdom is here understood?

Not the kingdom of power, but the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory.

235. What do we ask in this petition?

We ask that God would graciously grant us true faith and godly life, that He would extend His kingdom of grace on earth and hasten the advent of His kingdom of glory.

THE THIRD PETITION.

236. Which is the third petition?

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

237. What does this mean?

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

238. How is this done?

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

239. What is the good and gracious will of God?

All that He would do by us according to His promise, and all that we are to do, forbear, or suffer according to His good pleasure.

240. What evil counsel and will is opposed to this will of God?

The will of the devil, the world, and our flesh.

241. What, then, do we here ask of God?

That He would break and hinder such evil counsel and will, and strengthen and preserve us steadfast in His word and faith, so that we, even as the angels in heaven, may gladly do His will and in all sufferings remain patient unto our end.

THE FOURTH PETITION.

242. Which is the fourth petition?

Give us this day our daily bread.

243. What does this mean?

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

244. What, then, is meant by daily bread?

Every thing that belongs to the support and wants of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, field, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, pious and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

245. Why do we Christians ask for daily bread, though God gives it even to all the wicked, who do not ask it in prayer?

In order that God would lead us to know it as His gift, so that we may receive it with thanksgiving.

246. Why do we say "*our* bread"?

Because we should not be desirous of bread which would not honestly come to us, and because we should also pray for our neighbor and communicate unto him.

247. Why do we say "*daily*" and "*to-day*"?

Because to have what we need each day should be sufficient unto us, and because it is foolish and heathenish to torture ourselves with care for the future.

THE FIFTH PETITION.

248. Which is the fifth petition?

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

249. What does this mean?

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look upon our sins, nor on their account deny our prayer; for we are worthy of none of the things for which we pray, neither have we deserved them; but that He would grant them all to us by grace; for we daily sin

much, and indeed deserve nothing but punishment: so will we also heartily forgive and readily do good to those who sin against us.

250. What do we ask in this petition?

That the Father in heaven would not look upon our sins nor impute them unto us, but graciously for Christ's sake forgive them.

251. What special cause have we for praying thus?

We are worthy of none of the things for which we pray, neither have we deserved them; for we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment.

252. What do we promise in grateful acknowledgment of forgiveness received?

We will also heartily forgive those who offend us, and readily do good to those who sin against us.

253. Can any one who will not forgive his neighbor obtain forgiveness of God?

Never; he will rather by his fifth petition invoke upon himself the wrath of God.

THE SIXTH PETITION.

254. Which is the sixth petition?

And lead us not into temptation.

255. What does this mean?

God indeed tempts no one; but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh, may not deceive us, nor seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice; and though we be assailed by them, that still we may finally overcome, and obtain the victory.

256. Of how many kinds is temptation?

Of two kinds, temptation for good and temptation for evil.

257. Wherein does temptation for good consist?

In this, that God tries His children in order to purify and strengthen their faith.

258. Wherein does temptation for evil consist?

In this, that the devil, the world, and our flesh, would deceive or seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice.

259. What, then, do we ask in this petition?

That God would guard us, so that temptation may not come upon us, or, if He permit it to come, that He would strengthen and preserve us, so that we may finally overcome and obtain the victory.

THE SEVENTH PETITION.

260. Which is the seventh petition?

But deliver us from evil.

261. What does this mean?

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

262. What do we finally ask here?

That God would entirely spare us from many evils, or that, when He has inflicted the cross upon us, He would either take it from us, or help us to bear it, and turn it to our benefit, and that He would finally by a blessed end fully deliver us from all evil.

THE CONCLUSION.

263. Which is the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer?

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

264. What is meant by the word "Amen"?

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

265. What do we by this conclusion submit to our heavenly Father?

That He alone is the Lord and King with whom we should seek help; that He alone has the power to grant our petitions, and that, likewise, all glory, honor, and praise accruing therefrom shall be His alone.

266. Why may we be certain that our petitions are acceptable to Him, and heard?

Because He has Himself commanded us so to pray, and has promised to hear us.

267. Whence is it that many complain of their prayers being unheard?

Because they ask foolish or hurtful things, or prescribe to God the time and manner when and how He should help; or because under the weight of tribulation they do not at once observe the helping hand of God.

268. Does, then, God really hear every proper prayer?

Yes, but in His peculiar manner and at His appointed time.

Part IV.

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

269. What do we mean by a Sacrament?

A sacred act, ordained of God, wherein He by certain external means, connected with His word, offers, conveys, and seals unto men the grace which Christ has earned.

270. How many Sacraments are there?

Two, holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

First, what Baptism is.

271. What is Baptism?

Baptism is not simple water only, but it is the water comprehended in God's command and connected with God's Word.

272. Which is that word of God?

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

273. Why is not Baptism simple water only?

Because it is instituted of God and thus comprehended in God's command, and because it is to be performed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and is thus connected with God's word.

274. Who, then, has instituted holy Baptism?

God Himself; for Christ our Lord has in the last chapter of St. Matthew charged His church to baptize all nations.

275. Who is to administer Baptism?

Ordinarily the called ministers of Christ, but in cases of necessity, every Christian.

276. What is the meaning of the word "baptize"?

Applying water by washing, pouring, sprinkling or immersing.

277. What is baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?

It is receiving into communion with the triune God by Baptism according to Christ's command.

278. Who is to be baptized?

All nations, that is, all human beings, young and old.

279. Are, then, all men to be baptized without distinction?

No; those who can be instructed are to be baptized after they have been previously instructed in the principal doctrines of the Christian religion; but little children should be baptized when they have been born within the Christian church or are brought to baptism by those who have authority over them.

280. How do you prove that infants also are to be baptized?

1. They too are included in "all nations." 2. They are flesh born of the flesh and are, therefore, in need of regeneration. 3. Regeneration can in little children ordinarily be wrought by baptism only. 4. Little children also can believe.

281. For what purpose have sponsors been introduced?

They are to testify that the children have been properly baptized, and also to assist in caring for their Christian education, and to pray for them.

Secondly, what Baptism gives and profits.

282. What does Baptism give or profit?

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

283. Which are such words and promises of God?

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

284. What three great things, then, does Baptism give and profit?

1, It works forgiveness of sins; 2, it delivers from death and the devil; and 3, it gives eternal salvation.

285. But has not Christ by His suffering and death redeemed us from all sins, from death and the power of the devil and earned for us eternal salvation?

Certainly; but holy Baptism is the means whereby the Holy Ghost appropriates to us all these great things.

286. To whom does Baptism give all this?

To all who believe it, as the words and promises of God declare: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

287. But why does not Christ, our Lord, say: "He that believeth not and is not baptized shall be damned"?

Because it is unbelief only that condemns, and though saving faith can not exist with the contempt of Baptism, it can exist with the lack of Baptism.

Thirdly, what the power of Baptism is.

288. How can water do such great things?

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

By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through

Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying.

289. Has water by itself the power to do such great things?

No, it is not mere water indeed that does them.

290. Whence is it, then, that by the water of Baptism forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death and the devil, and eternal salvation, are obtained?

The word of God which is in and with the water conveys these great things into Baptism; for without the word of God the water is simple water, and no Baptism; but faith, which trusts such word of God in the water, takes them out of Baptism and appropriates them unto itself.

291. Why does Scripture call Baptism the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost?

Because the Holy Ghost in Baptism works faith and, therewith, new spiritual life.

Fourthly, what Baptism signifies.

292. What does such baptizing with water signify?

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

293. Where is this written?

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

294. What is the old Adam?

Our entire sinful depravity, which has come upon us by the fall of Adam and is ours by birth.

295. How is this old Adam to be drowned in us?

By daily contrition and repentance, as we withstand the evil desires and suppress them.

296. What is the new man?

The new spiritual being and life, created in us by the washing of regeneration.

297. How is this new man to come forth and arise?

As we from day to day walk and grow before God in good works.

298. How does Baptism signify the daily drowning of the old man and coming forth of the new man?

By baptism we are made partakers in Christ. Even as He has buried our sins, so we too may and should daily bury and shun them; and as He is risen from the dead and lives, even so we too may and should daily walk in newness of life.

299. What should especially induce us to live and walk in true holiness?

Our baptismal vow, since in Baptism we have renounced the devil and all his works and all his pomp, and promised to serve the triune God, and Him only.

Part V.

The Office of the Keys and Confession.

300. What is the Office of the Keys?

It is the peculiar church power which Christ has given to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of penitent sinners unto them, but to retain the sins of the impenitent, as long as they do not repent.

301. Where is this written?

Thus writes the holy Evangelist John, chapter twentieth: The Lord Jesus breathed on the disciples, and said

unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.

302. Why is the Office of the Keys called a peculiar church power?

Because it is not a temporal, but a spiritual power, which Christ has given to His church on earth and, more particularly, to every local congregation.

303. What does this power comprise?

Being the power of the Word, it comprises the power to preach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments, especially, the power to remit and to retain sins.

304. Why, then, is this power called the Office of the Keys?

Because by the remission of sins heaven is opened, and by the retention of sins heaven is closed.

305. To whom are sins to be remitted, and to whom are they to be retained?

To penitent sinners, that is, to those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ, they are to be remitted; to the impenitent, they are to be retained as long as they do not repent.

306. In what manner are Christian congregations to exercise the public administration of the Office of the Keys?

By choosing and calling special ministers of the Word, who are in their name to perform the functions of this office.

307. What, then, do you believe according to these words?

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

308. What do you believe in general according to these words?

I believe that whatever the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command is as valid and certain, in heaven also, as if Christ, our dear Lord, dealt with us Himself.

309. In what particular cases is this of such validity and certainty?

When they exclude manifest and impenitent sinners from the Christian congregation, and, again, when they absolve those who repent of their sins and are willing to amend.

310. In what manner is excommunication from the Christian church to be performed?

In this manner that, when an offender has been duly admonished according to Christ's precept and established order, and nevertheless remains impenitent, the congregation declares him a heathen man and a publican, and such judgment is publicly announced by the minister of Christ.

311. How is an excommunicated person to be dealt with when he appears penitent?

If he confesses his sin to the congregation and promises to amend, the congregation is to receive him as a brother, and the called minister should make public announcement thereof. For excommunication is not intended for the perdition, but for the salvation, of the soul.

How the unlearned should be taught to confess.

312. What is confession?

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

313. Do hypocrites also receive forgiveness of sins, when with their mouths they confess their sins, but are impenitent at heart?

No; for they do not accept the grace of God offered also to them in absolution.

314. What sins should we confess?

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

315. How should we confess before *God*?

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even of those which we do not know, as we do in the Lord's Prayer and in general confession.

316. Should not a Christian also confess his sin to his neighbor whom he has offended and grieved, and ask his pardon?

Yes; for he who is not willing to do this, thereby clearly shows that neither before God he is truly penitent of his sin.

317. But how is it with confession before the Confessor?

No one should indeed be forced or urged to private confession; but in it a Christian obtains the comfort that to him especially absolution is pronounced, and on such occasion he may ask remission of such particular sins as may before others weigh upon his heart and burden his conscience.

318. What instruction does Dr. Luther give us for examining ourselves before confession?

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

319. What are the words of the general confession?

O Almighty God, merciful Father, I a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto Thee all my sins and iniquities, with which I have offended Thee and merited temporal and eternal punishment. I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray Thee, for the sake of Thine infinite mercy and of the holy, innocent, and bitter sufferings and death of Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

Part VI.

The Sacrament of the Altar.

320. By what other names is this Sacrament known?

The Lord's Table, the Breaking of Bread, the Lord's Supper, the Holy Supper, the Eucharist, holy Communion.

First, what the Lord's Supper is.

321. What is the Sacrament of the altar?

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

322. Where is it so written?

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

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

After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying,

Drink ye all of it; this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you, for the remission of sins: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

323. Why are these words of institution found four times in the Scriptures?

In order to increase unto us their clearness, sureness, and importance.

324. Who has ordained and instituted this Sacrament?

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man, who is true, all-wise, and almighty.

325. Which are the visible, external signs in this Sacrament?

Bread, prepared of flour, and Wine, of the fruit of the vine.

326. What does Christ give us under these external signs in the Holy Supper?

In, with, and under the bread He gives us His true body; in, with, and under the wine He gives us His true blood.

327. Why is it inadmissible to take the words, "This is my body," and, "This is my blood," in an improper, figurative sense?

1. Because Christ expressly says that He distributes to us that body which is given for us and that blood which is shed for us.

2. Because, furthermore, St. Paul expressly says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the *communion* of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" 1 Cor. 10, 16; and, "Whosoever shalt eat this bread, and drink this cup, unworthily, shall be guilty of the *body* and *blood* of the Lord," 1 Cor. 11, 27.

3. Because they are the words of institution of a divine ordinance and words of a divine testament.

For these reasons we must take these words as they stand.

328. Do bread and wine remain in the Lord's Supper, or are they changed into the body and blood of Christ?

They are not changed, but remain; for St. Paul expressly teaches that while the Lord's Supper is being eaten and drunk, the bread is still bread and the wine is still wine.

329. For what use does Christ our Lord give us Christians His body and blood under the bread and wine?

To eat and to drink; not *only* to eat, as if in distributing and eating the body the blood, too, were distributed and received; neither for adoration; nor as an unbloody sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead.

330. What manner of eating and drinking takes place in the Holy Supper?

Not only natural, nor only spiritual, but *sacramental*, eating and drinking; that is, the earthly elements, bread and wine, and the heavenly gifts, Christ's body and blood, are at the same time taken with the mouth of the body, but the former in a natural, the latter in a supernatural manner.

331. What does Christ, our Lord, enjoin when he says: "This do in remembrance of me"?

That this sacrament should forever be administered in His church, and under the consecrated bread and wine His body be eaten and His blood be drunk.

332. When only is our Supper truly the Lord's Supper?

When it is administered according to Christ's institution.

333. Are we to receive the Lord's Supper but once, as we do Holy Baptism?

No; we should receive it frequently; and hereto we should be prompted by Christ's command and promise and by the trouble that lies heavy upon us.

Secondly, what is the benefit of the Lord's Supper.

334. What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?

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

335. What words teach us that such eating and drinking is of benefit to us?

The words, "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins."

336. What do these words tell us?

That unto every one who eats and drinks Christ here extends, as a seal of the remission of his sins, that same body and blood wherewith He has upon the cross earned and procured the forgiveness of sins.

337. But do these words speak of life and salvation?

"Where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation."

338. For what purpose, then, do we approach the Lord's table?

Chiefly for the strengthening of our faith in the forgiveness of our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ; for our furtherance in holiness of life, and in testimony of the communion of faith.

Thirdly, what is the power of the Lord's Supper.

339. How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?

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

340. Has bodily eating and drinking in itself the power of doing such great things?

No; it is not the eating and drinking, indeed, that does them.

341. When is it, then, that by bodily eating and drinking forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are obtained?

It is because by virtue of these words, "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins", these great things are contained and offered in the holy Supper. These words, therefore, are, beside the bodily eating and drinking, as the chief thing in the Sacrament.

342. Does every one receive this benefit?

No; although every one to whom the sacrament is imparted according to Christ's institution receives the body and blood of Christ under the bread and wine: yet only he receives the benefit who believes the word of promise, "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins."

Fourthly, of the salutary use of the Lord's Supper.

343. Who, then, receives such Sacrament worthily?

Fasting and bodily preparation is, indeed, a fine outward training; but he is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words, "*Given and shed for you for the remission of sins.*"

But he that does not believe these words, or doubts, is unworthy and unprepared; for the words, "*For you,*" require all hearts to believe.

344. Why is it proper that we should here consider the true worthiness of a communicant?

Because St. Paul expressly admonishes us: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." 1 Cor. 11, 28. 29.

345. Wherein does true worthiness consist?

Only and solely in faith in these words: "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins."

346. Can any one render himself worthy by his own preparation, thoughts, and works?

No; to appear with modesty and reverence at the Lord's table is, indeed, due decency and a praiseworthy custom, but withal no more than an external thing of which even an unbeliever is capable.

347. But who is unworthy and unprepared?

He who does not believe, or doubts, the words, "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins." For the words, "For you," require none but believing hearts.

348. How should he who would eat of that bread and drink of that cup examine himself?

He should examine, 1, whether he truly repent of his sins; 2, whether he believe in Jesus Christ; 3, whether he have the good and earnest purpose with the aid of God the Holy Ghost henceforth to mend his sinful life.

349. May those who are weak of faith approach the Lord's table?

Yes indeed; they particularly should come to the Lord's Supper, that their weak faith may grow stronger.

350. To whom must the Lord's supper be denied?

1. To such as are known to be impious and impenitent, since they would eat and drink damnation to themselves; 2, to the heterodox, since the holy Supper is a token and testimony of the unity of faith; 3, to such as have given offense and not yet made amends; 4, to such as are not able to examine themselves, as, f. ex., children, and persons lying in a state of unconsciousness.

351. What custom is, therefore, observed among us?

The custom of admitting to the Sacrament those only who have been previously explored. Hence also those who are contemplating their first communion do previously and in the presence of the congregation render account of their faith and profess adherence to the orthodox church. (*Confirmation.*)¹⁾

A. G.

1) The translator would gratefully welcome whatever suggestions and recommendations for improvements the reader may kindly communicate to him.

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