

## 35. Our Small Catechism.

**As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby. 1 Pet. 2,2.**

God's Word is the only guide and norm, — this is the standpoint of the Lutheran Church. Why, then, the creeds and various confessional writings of the *Book of Concord* of 1580? Because the truth of the apostles' doctrine is in these writings emphasized against particular errors which, in the course of years, arose and therefore had to be refuted. These errors are widely taught to the present time. The Bible we accept because it is God's Word; the confessional writings, because they are in harmony with God's Word. Our confessional teachings, embodied in the *Book of Concord*, discarded all human doctrines and emphatically point to the Scriptures. Also in Luther's Catechism we have naught but a joyful response to the Bible.

From Luther's Catechism we instruct our children in the rudiments of our Christian religion. The Bible teaches us the way of salvation in such a simple form that a child can understand it; and it speaks of mysteries which the wisest cannot search out. The former is milk, the latter is meat. To desire the sincere milk of the Word is to desire to learn and love to hear over and over again those simple truths which our Catechism has taken from the Word of God and which, therefore, can make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The Small Catechism has fitly been styled the "Child's Bible," because from it many millions of children have been taught the way to everlasting life. When Luther published this booklet in 1529, he gave to the world a model religious text-book. Men never can outgrow the Catechism nor the need of hearing sermons on the Catechism. It is deservedly held in high esteem. In simple and condensed form it states the chief parts of the Christian doctrine. The very order and arrangement are admirable. Many men of rank have found the Catechism the most excellent book ever written and vie with one another in bestowing upon it words of highest praise.

## Prayer.

O gracious God and Father, awaken in me a heartfelt desire for the sincere milk of the Word. Grant that my greatest pleasure and delight may ever be to read, and search, and grow in the know- ledge of, Thy Word. May nothing be dearer to me in this world than Thy Word; may I love it more than gold and much fine gold, ever considering it my best treasure. Guard and keep me from error and false doctrine. Preserve me in Thy truth — Thy Word is truth. Let me remain steadfast in it to my last hour. Amen.

God's Word alone was made the stone  
On which the Church is founded;  
And grace alone, by faith alone,  
The rock on which is grounded  
The Christian's trust, on which he must  
Be built by faithful preaching  
On God's pure Word in clear accord  
With the apostles' teaching.

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