

49. The Chief Parts of Christian Doctrine.

These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.
Deut. 6, 6. 7.

Our Lutheran Catechism, in the First Chief Part, treats of the Ten Commandments, the divine Law, and in the Second Chief Part of the Gospel, or the doctrine of faith. The Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. No one can truly believe in Christ unless he has previously, by the Law, come to a true knowledge of his sin and the divine curse resting upon sin, which the Law proclaims to all transgressors. Only the penitent sinner is willing to accept Christ as his Redeemer and to seek forgiveness in and through Him. So the Small Catechism shows us from the beginning that it does not teach us a dry, scientific system of doctrines, but points out to us a way of salvation answering the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" It pictures to us living Christianity as it is felt and experienced in the heart of all true Christians.

In the Third Chief Part we learn how we may approach the heavenly Fountain of divine love and take from it blessings and grace in abundance. In the Fourth Chief Part we hear of Baptism, which means so much to us. Through it God received us into His Kingdom of Grace. When we were baptized, Christ covered us with the robe of His righteousness, and the Triune God made a covenant with us and we with Him. Baptism is a source of strength and comfort to us when sin and conscience oppose us. The Fifth Chief Part is the Office of the Keys, which tells us of the functions and the power of the Church: "to forgive the sins of penitent sinners unto them, but to retain the sins of the impenitent as long as they do not repent." And finally in the Sixth Chief Part of our Christian doctrine, in the Lord's Supper, God strengthens our weak faith by giving us Christ's body and blood as a seal of the forgiveness of our sins. Thus we see that our daily Christian life is a continual repetition and living over again of the chief parts of the Christian doctrines as contained in our Lutheran Catechism.

Prayer.

O dearest Lord Jesus, I render Thee heartfelt thanks that Thou hast revealed Thyself unto me in the writings of the holy prophets and apostles, to the end that I might believe in Thee and through faith in Thee have eternal life. Let me daily and earnestly consider the chief parts of Christian doctrine, which, indeed, are no child's play. Let each one take heed and likewise consider it a serious matter, for Thou wilt not be mocked. Keep me, I beseech Thee, steadfast in the true faith unto life eternal. Amen.

Word of the everlasting God,
Will of His glorious Son,
Without Thee, how could earth be trod
Or heaven itself be won?

Lord, grant us all aright to learn
The wisdom it imparts
And to its heavenly teachings turn
With simple, childlike hearts.

This devotion is one of 318 taken from *Daily Bread* by F. E. Pasche, published by CPH in 1926, but now in the public domain. They have been copied and reformatted by Rev. Bruce G. Ley and made available for distribution by pastors and missionaries.

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