

commanded it.” Therefore, everybody—no matter what he has to say in prayer—should always come before God in obedience to this commandment. ...

Besides this, we should be moved and drawn to prayer. For in addition to this commandment and promise, God expects us and He Himself arranges the words and form of prayer for us. He places them on our lips for how and what we should pray [Psalm 51:15], so that we may see how heartily He pities us in our distress [Psalm 4:1], and we may never doubt that such prayer is pleasing to Him and shall certainly be answered. This ‘the Lord’s Prayer’ is a great advantage indeed over all other prayers that we might compose ourselves. For in our own prayers the conscience would ever be in doubt and say, “I have prayed, but who knows if it pleases Him or whether I have hit upon the right proportions and form?” Therefore, there is no nobler prayer to be found upon earth than the Lord’s Prayer. We pray it daily [Matthew 6:11], because it has this excellent testimony, that God loves to hear it. We ought not to surrender this for all the riches of the world.

The Lord’s Prayer has also been prescribed so that we should see and consider the distress that ought to drive and compel us to pray without ceasing [1 Thessalonians 5:17]. For whoever would pray must have something to present, state, and name, which he desires. If he does not, it cannot be called a prayer.

Large Catechism 1.62-64, 1.109-111, 2.9-11, 3.4-9, 3.12-13, 3.22-24; Concordia: *The Lutheran Confessions: A Reader’s Edition of the Book of Concord* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2006).

Rogate

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

Now you understand what it means to take God’s name in vain. In sum it means (a) to use His name simply for purposes of falsehood, (b) to assert in God’s name something that is not true, or (c) to curse, swear, use spells, and, in short, to practice whatever wickedness one may.

Besides this you must also know how to use God’s name rightly. For when He says, “You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain,” He wants us to understand at the same time that His name is to be used properly. For His name has been revealed and given to us so that it may be of constant use and profit. So it is natural to conclude that since this commandment forbids using the holy name for falsehood or wickedness, we are, on the other hand, commanded to use His name for truth and for all good, like when someone takes an oath truthfully when it is needed and it is demanded [Numbers 30:2]. This commandment also applies to right teaching and to calling on His name in trouble or praising and thanking Him in prosperity, and so on. All of this is summed up and commanded in Psalm 50:15, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” For all this is bringing God’s name into the service of truth and using it in a blessed way. In this way His name is hallowed, as we pray in the Lord’s Prayer [Matthew 6:9].

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

Learn, therefore, what is the honor towards parents that this commandment requires. (a) They must be held in distinction and esteem above all things, as the most precious treasure on earth. (b) In our words we must speak modestly toward them [Proverbs 15:1]. Do not address them roughly, haughtily, and defiantly. But yield to them and be silent, even though they go too far. (c) We must show them such honor also by works, that is, with our body and possessions. We must serve them, help them, and provide for them when they are old, sick, infirm, or poor. We must do all this not only gladly, but with humility and reverence, as doing it before God [Ephesians 6:6-7]. For the child who knows how to regard parents in his heart will not allow

them to do without or hunger, but will place them above him and at his side and will share with them whatever he has and possesses.

THE APOSTLES' CREED – THE FIRST ARTICLE

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

This shows and sets forth most briefly what is God the Father's essence, will, activity, and work. The Ten Commandments have taught that we are to have not more than one God [Deuteronomy 6:4]. So it might be asked, "What kind of a person is God? What does He do? How can we praise, or show and describe Him, that He may be known?" Now, that is taught in this and in the following article. So the Creed is nothing other than the answer and confession of Christians arranged with respect to the First Commandment. It is as if you were to ask a little child, "My dear, what sort of a God do you have? What do you know about Him?" The child could say, "This is my God: first, the Father, who has created heaven and earth. Besides this One only, I regard nothing else as God. For there is no one else who could create heaven and earth."

THE LORD'S PRAYER – THE INTRODUCTION

But before we explain the Lord's Prayer part by part, it is most necessary first to encourage and stir people to prayer, as Christ and the apostles also have done [Matthew 6:5–15]. And the first thing to know is that it is our duty to pray because of God's commandment. For that's what we heard in the Second Commandment, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain" [Exodus 20:7]. We are required to praise that holy name and call upon it in every need, or to pray. To call upon God's name is nothing other than to pray [e.g., 1 Kings 18:24]. Prayer is just as strictly and seriously commanded as all other commandments: to have no other God, not to kill, not to steal, and so on. Let no one think that it makes no difference whether he prays or not. Common people think this, who grope in such delusion and ask, "Why should I pray? Who knows whether God heeds or will hear my prayer? If I do not pray, someone else

will." And so they fall into the habit of never praying. They build a false argument, as though we taught that there is no duty or need for prayer, because we reject false and hypocritical prayers [Matthew 6:5].

But it is certainly true that the prayers that have been offered up till now, when men were babbling and bawling in the churches [Matthew 6:7], were not prayers. Such outward matters of prayer, when they are properly done, may be a good exercise for young children, scholars, and simple persons. They may be called singing or reading, but not really praying. But praying, as the Second Commandment teaches, is to call upon God in every need. He requires this of us and has not left it to our choice. But it is our duty and obligation to pray, if we would be Christians, just as it is our duty and obligation to obey our parents and the government. For by calling upon God's name and praying, His name is honored and used well. This you must note above all things, so that you may silence and reject thoughts that would keep and deter us from prayer. It would be useless for a son to say to his father, "What good does my obedience do me? I will go and do what I can. It makes no difference." But there stands the commandment, "You shall and must obey." So here prayer is not left to my will to do it or leave it undone, but it shall and must be offered at the risk of God's wrath and displeasure. ...

Now, from the fact that prayer is so solemnly commanded, you are to conclude and think that no one should in any way despise his prayer. Instead, he should count on prayer. He should always turn to an illustration from the other commandments. A child should in no way despise his obedience to father and mother, but should always think, "This work is a work of obedience. What I do I do for no other reason than that I may walk in the obedience and commandment of God. On this obedience I can settle and stand firm, and I can value it as a great thing, not because of my worthiness, but because of the commandment." So here also, we should think about the words we pray and the things we pray for as things demanded by God and done in obedience to Him. We should think, "On my account this prayer would amount to nothing. But it shall succeed, because God has