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A Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith

By Rev. P. B. FRASER, M.A.

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In Christo Credo Vivo Vinco.

A Brief Catechism OF THE Christian Life

Suitable for use in Schools and in
Christian Homes of Australia
and New Zealand

BY

REV. P. B. FRASER, M.A.
DUNEDIN

AUTHOR OF

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In Christo Credo Vivo Vinco.

1. *What is naturally every man's chief desire?*
Everyone desires to be happy.
2. *Which is the way to true happiness?*
True religion is the way to true happiness.
3. *What is true religion?*
True religion is true and personal knowledge of the Only True God, and of Him Whom He has sent, Jesus Christ.
4. *Whence is this knowledge to be learned?*

All the works of God declare His being, His wisdom, and His glory; but the saving knowledge of Himself and of His Son Jesus Christ, is to be learned from His own Word, contained in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; given by inspiration, to be the only faithful and reliable Record of Revelation, and the sure witness to Christ. Rightly interpreted

to us by the Holy Spirit, and by its fruit in Christian experience; remembering that the whole Revelation is the context of all its parts; the Bible is our only authoritative, intelligent, safe, and infallible guide, which we should prayerfully, diligently, and gratefully read.

5. *What do those Scriptures teach us concerning God?*

The Scriptures teach us that God is one infinite, eternal Spirit, personal and most free, most wise and holy, and just and merciful; and the all-powerful Maker, Sustainer, and Ruler of the world; distinct from all His works, yet in them all.

6. *What do they further teach concerning Him?*

The Scriptures teach that God is Three in One, and One in Three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

7. *What will that personal knowledge of God effectually work in us?*

Personal knowledge of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, will cause us to believe Him, and in Him, as our Heavenly Father, Who sees in secret; to confess our sin to Him, and to love Him above all things, even above ourselves; to adore and worship Him, to pray to Him and to praise Him, and to exalt Him with all our might; and to yield up ourselves to the obedience of all His commandments, as having both made us, and made Himself known to us, for that very end. To Him be thanksgiving and glory for ever.

8. *Rehearse some articles of our Belief.*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ His only 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 died for our sins; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on 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; the Holy Catholic or Universal Church; the fellowship of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

9. *Rehearse the Ten Commandments of the Law, which are the rules of our obedience, and so the trial of our love.*

God spake all these words to the children of Israel, saying:

I am the Lord thy God Which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth genera-

tion of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments.

3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

4. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: Wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

5. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

6. Thou shalt not kill.

7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

8. Thou shalt not steal.

9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's.

10. *What is the summary our Saviour has given us of this Law?*

The summary of Law given by our Saviour is: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. And, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

11. *What is the effectual means of obtaining increase of faith and power to obey, and generally all graces and blessings at the hand of God?*

We receive all blessings by Prayer in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

12. *Rehearse then the Prayer that our Saviour taught His disciples to pray in His name.*

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

13. *In what estate was man created?*

God made man in His own image, with a reasonable and immortal soul, meet for fellowship with Him, upright, free and able to choose between good and evil, and responsible to his Maker and his Lord.

14. *Did man continue in that estate?*

No. Being tempted of Satan, man disbelieved God, broke the commandment his Maker gave him, sinned against God, became conscious

of guilt, and made himself and his whole posterity subject to pain, fear, and doubt; to levity, pride, and evil ambition; to indiscipline, temptation, and wicked thoughts; to sorrow, and sinful mortality.

15. *Has God left man in this state without all means and hopes of recovery?*

No. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

16. *Rehearse also the Old Testament summary announcement of the Gospel.*

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the guilt of us all.

17. *Who is the only-begotten Son of God?*

The only-begotten Son of God is the Lord Jesus Christ, Who from all eternity was with God, and is God; and Who, apart from sin, took our nature to become our Saviour, and called Himself the Son of Man. Full of grace and truth, His life, His teaching, and His deeds, taken together, are His own evidence of Divine Personality, sufficient to invite the faith and command the supreme allegiance, loyalty, and worship of all men: The Lord of Glory, Whom having not seen we love. To Him be thanksgiving and glory for ever.

18. *What is the great doctrine of the Gospel?*

The great doctrine of the Gospel is the Coming of the Son of God in our nature, and

giving Himself to the death of the Cross, to take away the sin of the world; His rising again from the dead, and ascending into glory; and now High Priest and Advocate, while He governs nations, and providentially guides His people. He appears in the presence of God for all who receive Him as Saviour.

19. *What is the great revelation of Christ about God?*

Our Lord Jesus Christ, by His life, His teaching, and His Sacrifice, has revealed God as the Holy, Righteous, and Loving Father, yearning over His erring, lost, and perishing children, and sending His Son to seek and to save them; Who for Christ's sake forgives sin.

20. *What is revealed to us of the Holy Spirit?*

The Holy Spirit, Whom the Father is ever willing to give to all who humbly ask, moves on the hearts of men to lead them to believe the Gospel. He is the Divine source of Revelation and of the soul's Renewal therewith, and of everything beautiful, lovely, and of good report in the world. Indwelling believers in Christ, He is the great Sanctifier, Strengtheners, and Beautifier of souls, rendering them by His presence all glorious within. To Him be thanksgiving and glory for ever.

21. *What does the Gospel mainly teach and really persuade all the followers of it to do?*

The Gospel teaches us to deny ungodliness and sinful pleasures, and to live thoughtfully, righteously, and reverently in this present world.

22. *How has the Lord Jesus Himself expressed the great and necessary duty of all His disciples?*

Our Lord's primary rule of duty to His disciples is: If any man would come after Me, let him disown himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

23. *Rehearse then some of the chief points wherein we are to follow our Lord Jesus Christ.*

i. To follow our Lord, we are to surrender ourselves to our Heavenly Father, and His good pleasure in all things, even in the sharpest afflictions and sufferings: and not at all to do our own will, or design our own praise or advantage; but in all things to do His will and intend His glory, as the chief end of our being and our highest happiness.

ii. Further, we are to be spotless, chaste, and holy in our whole behaviour.

Add a third.

iii. We are to be gentle and humble, veracious and courteous, not to envy, slander or reproach, to mock or despise any; and if any do so to us, to bear it patiently; yea, to rejoice in it, when we suffer for our Master's sake.

Add a fourth.

iv. Unfeignedly and earnestly we are to love our Christian brethren; and to be charitably and kindly affected towards all men; to be gracious to our enemies, forgiving them, yea, and praying for them, and, as occasion offers, returning

them good for evil; to comfort the afflicted and relieve the poor, and to do good for all as we are able.

24. *Rehearse our Master's Golden Rule of conduct towards all our fellow men.*

Our Master's Golden Rule is: As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them likewise.

25. *What special duty have children to their parents?*

As children to our parents, we are to honour and obey them, to love and cherish them, and to pray for blessing upon them.

26. *Is it necessary that all Christians live according to the rule of Christ?*

To live according to the rule of Christ, is so necessary, that they who do not so, in some good measure, whatsoever they profess, do not really believe in Jesus Christ, nor have any portion in Him.

27. *What is the Christian Church?*

We acknowledge one holy Universal Church, the innumerable company of saints of every age and nation; who being united by the Holy Spirit to Christ their Head, are one Body and sacred Brotherhood in Him; and have fellowship with their Lord and with one another.

28. *What is our duty to the Christian Church?*

It is our duty to love the Christian Church; to respect its universal testimony, and to labour and pray for its purity, extension and well-being;

to join in the worship of the church to which we belong, and by our prayer and offerings to give our help, in some good measure, in its work at home, and throughout the world.

29. *What is our duty to the State?*

It is our duty to uphold the just authority of the State, and to labour and pray for its defence and well-being.

30. *What is our duty to our country and to other peoples?*

While steadfastly loyal to our Sovereign and country, we ought to respect the aspirations, rights, and destiny of other peoples; and we ought ardently to pray that our nation, in the fear of God, may ever stand for righteousness and peace among the nations.

31. *What is our duty to the Lord's Day?*

One day of rest in seven is our Creator's sympathetic gift to toilful humanity. Assured of immortality by the Resurrection of Christ, our grateful duty to the Lord's Day is, to observe it as a Day of thoughtful Rest and Worship; a Day also of brotherly kindness, in which we avoid unnecessary work for ourselves and others, and refrain from indulging in unseemly pleasures; affording in our use of the Day, as in other things, a wholesome example.

32. *What is a Sacrament?*

A Sacrament is a means of grace appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ, wherein by visible and tangible tokens, and the words of Christ, inward and spiritual blessings are set forth, and are bestowed by the Holy Spirit upon those who rightly receive the Sacrament.

33. *What are the Sacraments appointed by Christ?*

The Sacraments appointed by Christ are Baptism and Communion or the Lord's Supper.

34. *What are the words of Christ appointing the Sacrament of Baptism, and our duty also to the world?*

Our Master said: All authority has been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and remember, I am with you always, day by day, until the Close of the Age.

35. *What, then, is our duty in respect to Missions?*

With our Master's Golden Rule united to a sympathetic knowledge of missionary lands, we ought joyfully to obey our Saviour's last command, to go forth to evangelise those for whom He died; and by our prayer and offerings, we ought to give loving sympathy and discerning support to missionaries who go forth in His name.

36. *What are the words of Christ appointing the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper?*

The Lord Jesus, in the same night that He was betrayed, took Bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is My Body which is given for you: Do this in remembrance

of Me. Likewise after supper He took the Cup; and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them saying, Drink ye all of this; for this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins: Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of Me. And St. Paul adds, For as often as ye eat this Bread and drink the Cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come.

37. *What is required to make true Christians and fit communicants?*

To be true Christians and fit communicants of the Lord's Supper, we require faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance towards God, and charity towards all men.

38. *What, then, is faith in our Lord Jesus Christ?*

Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, is the grace by which we both believe His whole doctrine, and trust in Him as the Redeemer and Saviour of the world; and entirely surrender ourselves to Him, to be taught and saved and ruled by Him as our Prophet, Priest, and King.

39. *What is Repentance?*

Repentance toward God is the change in mind, heart, and life, wrought by the Holy Spirit in our Renewal; when, as conscious centre of thought, life, and worship, with humility of mind, we receive Christ as He is offered to us in the Gospel; and confessing and forsaking our sin, turn from it, in mingled grief and gladness, unto God in Christ.

40. *How are we enabled to repent and believe?*

In thoughtfully hearing or reading the Word of God, by providential experience and Christian testimony, we are prepared and enabled to repent and believe by the Holy Spirit, for Whose help we ought to pray.

41. *What is the character of the new nature of the Spirit, given to renewed children of God, in answer to prayer?*

The character or fruit of the new nature, given by the Spirit to renewed children of God, is love, joy, peace, patience with others, kindness, goodness, fidelity, forbearance in wrong, self-control, and such like. And Christian character thus formed increasingly manifests itself by intelligent decision and untiring vigilance; in loyalty, endurance, and courage; in sympathetic service, blameless prudence, and sweet reasonableness; in Christian conscience and moral excellence, worthy of our Master.

42. *Rehearse those gracious words of Christ about children.*

The Lord Jesus said: Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them. Again He said: See that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven, their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven.

43. *Rehearse some gracious words of Christ to all.*

Our Saviour said: I am the Light of the World: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. Again, He said, Believe in God; in Me also believe. I and the Father are one. He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. And He said: Come unto Me all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest to your souls. For My yoke is kindly, and my burden is light. And this is Life Eternal that they should get to know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent. To those who believe Him, He said, Abide in Me, and I in you. I am the vine, you are the branches. Apart from Me, you can do nothing. And the Gospel adds: As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God, even to them that believe in His name. And there is the confession of St. Paul which, by faith, we make our own: I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me, and the life I now live on earth, I live by the fidelity of the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me. Wherefore, we praise God for His abounding Grace that reigns through righteousness unto Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

44. *What is revealed as to the lot of unbelieving and unrepentant sinners?*

The Lord Jesus Himself, at His Second Coming, when He shall sit on the throne of His glory, shall judge the world in righteousness, and shall assign to each one his eternal award.

45. *What is the immediate state of those who die in the Lord?*

In the life to come, the spirits of those who die in the Lord are made free from sin, and are in a state of rest and felicity at home with the Lord; which state includes all who die in infancy and all others known unto God; and their bodies, being wonderfully united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the Resurrection.

46. *What is the blessed hope of His people at the Lord's Return?*

At the Lord's Return in glory, of which we should continue expectant, the bodies of those who sleep in Christ, as well as of His people who are then alive, shall be fashioned in likeness of the glorious body of their Lord. They shall see His face, reflect His character, do Him service, give Him thanks; and they shall live and love and reign with Him in light and truth for ever and ever.

47. *What are the final promise and glorious hope of the children of God?*

The final promise and glorious hope of the redeemed children of God, is their entrance, at the decisive hour, into the security and full possession of Eternal Life. United in the joy of

mutual recognition, they shall be perfectly blessed in the presence and service of God, Whom they shall see and enjoy and thankfully glorify for ever and ever.

**In this Faith we live :
In this Love we serve :
In this Hope we pray,
Eben so, Come, Lord Jesus.**

*The Christian Epitaph:
In Christo
Vixi Vici Resurgam.*

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

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