CATECHISM

OR

Christian Instruction

AS THIS IS CARRIED ON IN CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS OF THE ELECTORAL PALATINATE

PRINTED IN THE ELECTORAL CITY OF HEIDELBERG BY JOHN MAYER 1563
We, Frederic, Archcarver and Elector of the Holy Roman Empire, Duke in Bavaria, by the grace of God, Elector Palatine on the Rhine, &c., present to all and each of our Superintendents, Pastors, Preachers, Officers of the Church, and Schoolmasters, throughout our Electorate of the Rhenish Palatinate, our grace and greeting, and do them herewith, to wit:

Inasmuch as we acknowledge that we are bound by the admonition of the Divine word, and also by natural duty and
relation, and have finally determined to order and administer our office, calling, and government, not only for the promotion and maintenance of quiet and peaceable living, and for the support of upright and virtuous walk and conversation among our subjects, but also and above all, constantly to admonish and lead them to devout knowledge and fear of the Almighty and His holy word of salvation, as the only foundation of all virtue and obedience, and to spare no pains, so far as in us lies, with all sincerity to pro-
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mote their temporal and eternal welfare, and to contribute to the defence and maintenance of the same:

And, although apprised on entering upon our government, how our dear cousins and predecessors, Counts Palatine, Electors, &c., of noble and blessed memory, have instituted and proposed divers Christian and profitable measures and appliances for the furtherance of the glory of God and the upholding of civil discipline and order:

Notwithstanding this purpose was not in every respect prosecuted with the appropriate zeal, and the expected and de-
sired fruit did not accrue therefrom—we are now induced not only to renew the same, but also, as the exigencies of the times demand, to improve, reform, and further to establish them. Therefore we also have ascertained that by no means the least defect of our system is found in the fact, that our blooming youth is disposed to be careless in respect to Christian doctrine, both in the schools and churches of our principality—some, indeed, being entirely without Christian instruction, others being unsystematically taught, without any established, certain, and clear catechism, but merely according to individual plan or
furnished and getrûchsen an-
gehalten und vnderwiesen wor-
den. Daraus den neben andern 
vießfaltigen grossen vurichig-
keiten erfolgt, dass sie offterma-
en ohne Gottes fürcht und er-
fantnuß seines Wort's auffge-
wachsen, keine eintrechte vnder-
weisung gehabt, oder sonst 
mit weßfaltigen vnnurtrûchti-
gen frägen, auch bisweilen mit 
vinderwertiger Lite beschwwert 
worden ist.

Wen nun hebd Christliche vnd 
weltliche ämpter, Regiment vnd 
haußhaltungen, anderst nit bes-
ßendiglichen erhalten werden, 
auß zucht und erbarkeit nit alle 
andere gute tugente bey den un-
a iiij dertha-

judgment; from which, among other 
great defects, the consequence has en-
sued, that they have, in too many in-
stances, grown up without the fear of 
God and the knowledge of His word, 
having enjoyed no profitable instruction, 
or otherwise have been perplexed with 
irrelevant and needless questions, and at 
times have been burdened with unsound 
doctrines.

And now, whereas both temporal and 
spiritual offices, government and family 
discipline, cannot otherwise be main-
tained—and in order that discipline and 
obedience to authority and all other vir-
tudes may increase and be multiplied among subjects—it is essential that our youth be trained in early life, and above all, in the pure and consistent doctrine of the holy Gospel, and be well exercised in the proper and true knowledge of God:

Therefore, we have regarded it as a high obligation, and as the most important duty of our government, to give attention to this matter, to do away with this defect, and to introduce the needful improvements:

And accordingly, with the advice and cooperation of our entire theological faculty in this place, and of all Super-
intendents and distinguished servants of the Church, we have secured the preparation of a summary course of instruction or catechism of our Christian Religion, according to the word of God, in the German and Latin languages; in order not only that the youth in churches and schools may be piously instructed in such Christian doctrine, and be thoroughly trained therein, but also that the Pastors and Schoolmasters themselves may be provided with a fixed form and model, by which to regulate the instruction of youth, and not, at their option, adopt daily changes, or introduce erro-
We do herewith affectionately admonish and enjoin upon every one of you, that you do, for the honour of God and our subjects, and also for the sake of your own soul's profit and welfare, thankfully accept this proffered Catechism or course of instruction, and that you do diligently and faithfully represent and explain the same according to its true import, to the youth in our schools and churches, and also from the pulpit to the common people, that you teach, and act, and live in accordance with it, in the assured hope, that if our youth in
early life are earnestly instructed and educated in the word of God, it will please Almighty God also to grant reformation of public and private morals, and temporal and eternal welfare. Desiring, as above said, that all this may be accomplished, we have made this provision.

"Given at Heidelberg, Tuesday, the nineteenth of January, in the year 1563 after the birth of Christ, our dear Lord and Saviour."