

Westminster Larger Catechism

Question 113 c

Irreverence for what God Does or Says

Halifax, 19 September 2010

Introduction

Today we continue our study of the third commandment:

- Exodus 20:7: "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

This is our eighth sermon on the third commandment, and our third sermon on the sins that are forbidden in this commandment.

- The sins forbidden are spelled out for us in Question 113 of the Larger Catechism.
 - Take a look at it with me...

Q. 113 What are the sins forbidden in the third commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the third commandment are, the not using of God's name as is required; and the abuse of it in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious, or wicked mentioning, or otherwise using his titles, attributes, ordinances, or works, by blasphemy, perjury; all sinful cursings, oaths, vows, and lots; violating of our oaths and vows, if lawful; and fulfilling them, if of things unlawful; *murmuring and quarrelling at, curious prying into, and misapplying God's decrees and providences; misinterpreting, misapplying, or any way perverting the Word, or any part of it, to profane jests, curious or unprofitable questions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines; abusing it, the creatures, or anything contained under the name of God, to charms, or sinful lusts and practices; the maligning, scorning, reviling, or anywise opposing of God's truth, grace, and ways; making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends; being ashamed of it, or a shame to it, but unconformable, unwise, unfruitful, and offensive walking, or backsliding from it.*

- We have learned from this study that the third commandment is not only about sinful cursing and swearing,
 - though last week, we saw that it certainly does include that.
 - We saw that whenever we curse, even if it is a minced curse (like darn or heck or gosh), we are bringing God into the matter because He is the only one who can curse something.
 - The same is true when we swear to be telling the truth, even if we don't actually say, "I swear to God," because He is the only one who can affirm that we have spoken sincerely.
 - We are only to curse and swear when we are authorised by God to do so.
 - To do so in everyday speech to take His name in vain...
 - It is to treat the Most High God with irreverence and disrespect.

- We have seen along the way that it is our duty to treat everything that is associated with God with the highest esteem and reverence,
 - And that to do less than this is to be guilty of taking His name in vain.
- Today, we come to consider in particular the violation of the third commandment that has to do with the disrespect of what God says or does.
 - This is the part of Answer 113 that says:
 - **murmuring and quarrelling at, curious prying into, and misapplying God's decrees and providences; misinterpreting, misapplying, or any way perverting the Word, or any part of it, to profane jests, curious or unprofitable questions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines;**

For our scripture reading this afternoon, I have selected Deuteronomy 29.

- READ> Deuteronomy 29:1-29

To start off our study this afternoon,

- I want you to consider, as is shown in Deuteronomy 29, how...

I. Our gracious God gives His word to us for a specific purpose.

A. His tenderness for you is sweetly presented in this chapter...

1. First, in that He tells us all that He has done for us as His people...(three things)
 - a. First, that He has redeemed us
 - For Israel at that time, He speaks of all that He did to bring them out of Egypt (v. 2-3),
 - which brings to mind the plagues and the parting of the Red Sea...
 - He did all this that they might become His people, devoted to Him.
 - He came and rescued them from their bondage to another lord.
 - For us, He comes to us each Lord's Day through the ministry of the gospel in the word and sacrament that He has appointed...
 - And He reminds us how He redeemed us from our spiritual thralldom that we might serve Him and love Him and be His people.
 - He has sent His Son to bear the curse for us so that we might be justified, completing forgiven and declared righteous in His sight.
 - We are no longer slaves to sin and to the world, but to righteousness and to our Father in heaven who loves us.
 - b. Second, that He is the one who has provided us with all that we need...
 - Having taken us to be His people, He provides for us.
 - For Israel, this meant that He gave them water and manna in the wilderness—and preserved their clothing...(v. 5-6)

- But notice that He says in verse 4 that He has not yet given them a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear the meaning of all that He has done—
 - but the implication is clear—He intends to do so...
 - In fact, He offers to do so right here in chapter 29 and 30 if they will believe—
 - See especially in chapter 30, verse 6, how He promises to circumcise their hearts!
- And for us who live now, we have been shown how the rock from which they drank was Christ, and the manna was Christ, the bread of life.
 - Christ has now been revealed to us...
 - And He feeds us so that we will be able to serve Him in His kingdom,
 - giving us His word and Spirit to transform us into the image of Christ.
 - He has given us all that we need for life and godliness—to be His people.
- c. Third, that He is the one who enables us to overcome our enemies so that we can serve Him.
 - At this juncture in Israel’s history, they had just begun to see His hand in removing their enemies—
 - Now we conquer lands and kingdoms for Christ by the proclamation of the gospel until Christ has conquered all.
 - We go forth in His name,
 - with His word,
 - at His command,
 - by His power,
 - until every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

TRANS> Those are the three things that our God has done for us as His people, showing His tender regard for us...

- But there is a second way He shows His tenderness in this passage...
2. He shows us tenderness for us in pleading with us to keep His covenant.
- You can see this gracious pleading from verse 9 to the end of the chapter.
- a. He calls us to keep His words, to do them by believing them and obeying them.
- In verse 9, He says,

- "Therefore keep the words of this covenant, and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do."
 - He speaks of how His covenant is for all of them,
 - all classes and all ages—even the strangers who have been joined to them...
 - He calls all of them to enter into His covenant, and to know that in doing so, He is their God and they are His people!
 - He encourages them that it will go well with them if only they will keep this covenant—and have Him for their God.
- b. And then you see how He earnestly warns them against departing from Him...
- Against setting up idols in addition to Him and assuming it will go well with them!
 - He tells them that His wrath and curse will fall upon them in the sight of all the nations...
 - and that He will even blot out from among those who utterly reject Him.
 - He lovingly pleads with them and warns them, all so that they will continue with Him and in Him as His people.
 - He has taken them to be His own.
- c. Of course He does the very same with us who live in these last days, after the coming of Jesus Christ...
- How full the New Testament is with pleadings and warning that we would come to Christ,
 - that we would continue in Him,
 - that we guard ourselves against a heart that would depart from Him for idols and lose everything.
 - He takes us from all ages and all classes to be His people and He tenderly pleads with us to continue in His grace.
 - Some will quickly say,
 - "But He promises to keep us"
 - Indeed He does promise to keep His elect who have truly come to Him by His grace through faith...
 - But there are many who are in the church, who enter into His covenant by profession, but who are strangers to His grace.
 - These are the ones that depart from Him.
 - It was that way in Israel, and it is that way for us.

- But He pleads with all us who are in the covenant, warning us that if we would be saved, we must persevere to the end,
 - and that if any of us depart, he will have no pleasure in us.
- For those who are truly His by saving faith, these warnings work effectually to keep us from departing...
 - but for those who have never truly come to Him, the warnings fail to preserve them from ruin.

TRANS> What great love this is!

- That the Creator of Heaven and Earth should take a people out of this sinful, fallen world and redeem them and give them all that they need for life with Him...
 - That He should make a covenant with them, promising to be their God and to have them as His people...
 - And then that He should also urge them and plead with them continually to continue in that covenant so that it might go well with them!
 - How the divine heart yearns for His people!
 - How could anyone resist such a gracious call?

B. And now I want to draw your attention to Deuteronomy 29:29—the last verse in the chapter.

1. Here we are told in very simple terms why God has revealed Himself to us...

- He tells us in verse 29,
 - "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."
- His revelation is made up of His acts for us and His word to us.
 - He has revealed Himself to us in these ways so that *we may do all the words of this law*
 - It is that we may do what He has been urging us to do...
 - continue in His covenant,
 - believing Him and walking in His ordinances that continually set before us His grace and His promises.
 - He has revealed Himself in word and deed so that we might live as His people!

2. But notice that there are also things that He has not revealed...

- a. Notice that verse 29 tells us that the things revealed belong to us and our children,
 - but that there are "secret things" that belong to Him...
 - Things that He does not reveal to us—

- He is God and there are things that we do not need to know and things that we cannot understand.
- b. But here we are given the reason that He has revealed what He has revealed...
 - That we might be enabled to serve Him.
 - He has revealed all that we need to know in order that we might be His people.
 - This gives us tremendous insight about what we are to expect from God's revelation!
 - It is not given to answer all of our curious questions about God or His work.
 - It is given to enable us to serve Him and to continue in His grace.
 - The word belongs to us for *this* purpose—not for some other purpose.
 - It is God's gracious gift to us and to our children and we must receive it and reverence it and respect it as such.
 - We must not take His revelation in vain by misusing it.
 - It is given to benefit us in our service to Him, not for some other purpose.

II. So now let us look at some of the ways that we misuse God's gracious revelation according to the Larger Catechism.

- A. First, let's look at the misuse of what His acts—of what He has planned and done...
- In the Catechism, it refers to what He has planned and done as His decrees and providences.
 - His decree is His overall plan, part of which is revealed to us, and part of which is not.
 - For example, He has told us that Jesus Christ is going to return, but He has not told us when.
 - Both Jesus return and the time of it are decreed by Him,
 - but both are not revealed.
 - And His providence is the outworking of His decrees in history—what He has actually done.
 - For example, that He sent Jesus and that Jesus came and died on the cross and was raised again for our justification...
 - That is His providence...
 - So also, it is His providence that you have a cold, or that you just found a great new job.

1. We show irreverence for God's decrees and providence when we murmur and quarrel about them.
 - a. This is what Israel did when they were tried in the wilderness...
 - God had redeemed them,
 - He had taken them as His people,
 - He had provided for them...
 - and they had the audacity to say that it would have been better for them if they had remained in Egypt!
 - This was a very wicked thing to say!
 - No doubt there were many unpleasant things they had to bear,
 - but the creator of the universe against whom they (and all the world) had rebelled had graciously taken them to be His people!
 - And by His wisdom, He was working out His gracious plan to shape them into a people of His own!
 - That involved hardships of various kinds.
 - It was not their place to quarrel about the way He was going about doing that!
 - They were in need of many lessons, and as a wise teacher, He was carrying out His plan for them...
 - He did all this in love that they might be His people! shaped by Him for Him!
 - b. This fully applies to you too!
 - It is not for you to complain if you should be diagnosed with cancer...
 - or if you should have a difficult husband or a difficult wife...or difficult parents.
 - or that you should happen to be less gifted than your neighbour—or less intelligent—or have less opportunity.
 - or that there should be an economic slow down in our society with enemies gaining in power and influence.
 - This is what God has appointed for you according to His wise plan... and you must leave it with Him.
 - Nor is it for you to murmur and complain about the big things...
 - that God has decreed that there should be a fall and that many should ultimately perish in Hell.
 - You may think you have a better plan, but you are not God and you need to shut your mouth.
 - You remember the sharp rebuke that Peter received when He contented with the LORD for saying that He was going up to Jerusalem to be crucified...

- Peter said, “God forbid”
 - And Jesus said,
 - Mat 16:23: “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”
 - The LORD is the potter and you are the clay.
 - It is not your place to contend with Him.
 - He has graciously acted for you (by sending Christ and His Spirit) and He is working all things out in order that He might bring forth a glorious kingdom of righteousness...
 - It is for you to receive what He has done with extreme gratitude,
 - not to pick at Him about how things might have been done better.
 - What He has revealed is for you and your children,
 - that you might do all that He has called you to do in His gracious covenant.
2. Secondly, we show irreverence for God’s decrees and providences by curiously prying into them.
- a. This is what we might call an irreverent curiosity about the LORD.
 - The LORD has not revealed *everything* to us...
 - He has revealed what we need to know in order that we might serve Him as His people!
 - As I keep stressing, this is His purpose in His revelation to us.
 - So it is wrong when you try to go beyond what He has revealed.
 - b. There are all sorts of examples of this irreverent curiosity...
 - 1) There is a very instructive example of this in Acts 1:6-8
 - It was after the resurrection and the disciples were with Jesus and they said:
 - Acts 1:6-8: "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
 - And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
 - Do you see?
 - They wanted to know about something that would not help them in their service to God.
 - Jesus tells them that it is not for them to know—it is a secret thing that belongs to the Lord...

- He tells them to go and do what has been revealed for them to do—preach the gospel!
- 2) You need to be eager to know *in order that you may serve*, not just that you may know.
- It is not for you know many details about heaven, about the nature of our resurrected bodies, and such things...
 - It is not for you to know who is going to be saved...
 - I have met people who claimed that the LORD had given them a revelation that a loved one would be saved...
 - but God does not make such information available to us—we are to keep on witnessing, not to try to discover who will be saved.
 - And there is that whole area of irreverence that involves trying to discern specific things that God has not revealed...
 - for example, what specific job you are to take or what specific person you are to marry.
 - You are responsible to do his will in choosing a job or a spouse by applying all that He has said in His word,
 - (for example, you may not marry an unbeliever or work for an organised crime ring),
 - but He does not reveal to you a specific person or job.
 - To look for such revelation is to go beyond what He has given you.
 - It is irreverent because you are not respecting what He has given you—but demanding more.
- Let us then show our respect for what God has revealed rather than seeking to discover things He has not revealed.
- He has given us all that we need for life and godliness.
 - It is enough to keep you busy to follow and understand what He has revealed.
 - Don't distract yourself by seeking what He has not revealed.
3. Third, the catechism speaks of misapplying God's decrees and providences.
- a. This has to do with drawing unwarranted assumptions from something that God has done...
- For example, you must not be like Job's friends who automatically assumed that Job's troubles were God's punishment of him for some great transgression.

- While trials are the result of sin—that we are in a fallen world that has been cursed,
 - they are not always God’s punishment for some specific sin that we have committed.
- Often they are, and we need to examine ourselves to see if this is so...
 - It is also wrong to misapply what is truly chastisement.
 - If you are living a double life and you get in a serious accident,
 - it would be wrong of you to assume that you are just being tested like Job because you weren’t living like Job.
 - Or when we have wasting storms, enemies, and economic troubles in our land and we are aborting babies, ignoring God, and living in immorality,
 - it would be a gross misapplication of these providences to assume that they were anything but chastisement!
 - Only a people deeply hardened in sin could assume it to be any thing else!
- b. We might also see misapplication of God’s decrees in the way of guidance...
 - For example, if someone assumes that working on the Lord’s Day must be a fine thing to do because they know a very prosperous Christian who does it...
 - God has blessed them so it must be right...
 - Or to use another example, if a church introduces idolatrous worship and their attendance and their finances go up,
 - it would be wrong for them to assume that their idolatry pleases God.
 - Aaron found Israel to be very committed when he set up the golden calf, but God certainly was not pleased.
 - Related to this are those who rely on “opened and closed doors” or “impressions” to guide them in decision making.
 - A person will say that they know God wants them to take a job because “He clearly opened the door!”
 - You must remember, as Jay Adams says, that opened doors sometimes lead to elevator shafts.
 - Just because the door is opened does not mean that you are meant to walk through it...
 - and if you are a fireman, a closed door may very well be a door that you are supposed to break through!
 - The same may be said about “having peace” about a decision.

- That language is not necessarily wrong if you mean that you have sorted everything out and as best as you can understand, it is a wise and godly decision you have come to...
- but if you rely on a feeling of peace, you are misapplying providence.
- A feeling of peace does not determine the will of God.
 - I have known people who had “peace” about getting a divorce when they had no Biblical grounds to divorce.
 - You need to evaluate if your decision is based on His word.

TRANS> So there you have three irreverent abuses of God’s plan and acts (His decrees and providences)

- murmuring and quarrelling at them...
- curious prying into them...
- and misapplying of them...

Now let us look at:

B. Ways of showing irreverence for His word

- which is also given to us and our children that we might serve the LORD.
1. First we have misinterpreting.
 - a. This may seem a bit surprising... assuming that our misinterpretation is not intentional.
 - There are things in God’s word that are hard for us to understand, and while we try to do our best, we certainly cannot claim to have perfect understanding.
 - Even our teachers cannot agree on many particulars of the scriptures.
 - But nobody said you could have perfect understanding...
 - Still, it is a sin and a violation of the third commandment to misinterpret the word.
 - b. Do you not understand why it is that you misinterpret the word?
 - It is because you are a sinner, and sin darkens our understanding.
 - People will misinterpret what the Bible says about women’s ordination.
 - It says that women are not to teach or exercise authority in the church—they are not to be ordained as elders or ministers.
 - But there are many in our day who don’t like this, and because they don’t like it, they misinterpret it!

- They feel that it must be wrong—so they convince themselves of another way to interpret things.
 - A person will wrongly interpret what the Bible says about sexuality or the Lord's Day because it seems too restrictive...
 - or a man will misinterpret a wife's call to submit to her husband because he wants to have justification for oppressing his wife...
 - or about tithing because he wants to excuse himself...
 - or about God's promises to our children because promises make me responsible...
 - Remember when Israel questioned God's promise to give them the land?
 - They did not want the responsibility the promise gave them to go in and take the land.
 - Parents don't want the responsibility that goes along with God's promise to bless their children.
 - But this is also true about even the more difficult things... like eschatology.
 - One of the reasons we have a hard time figuring out what scripture says is because there are things we don't want it to say or things we don't believe could be possible.
 - We all have many misinterpretations... and it is all because of sin!
- c. But don't let this discourage you.
- Let it rather remind you how important it is to be like the Bereans and to search the scriptures to see what is true...
 - And let it remind you of how much you need a Saviour!
 - You are not justified because your interpretation of scripture is flawless.
 - If that was required, none could be justified!
 - We are sinners as long as we are in this world and we stand in constant need of God's mercy in Christ.
 - Let no one think himself to be without sin.
 - You break the third commandment all the time... when you misinterpret the scripture.
 - God is holy and it is a sinful misuse of His word.
 - But His mercy is greater than our sin.

TRANS> Closely related to this is the next item on the list...

2. The misapplication of God's word is a sinful abuse of it.
 - a. One form of misapplication occurs when we apply what was written to others as if it were written to us—when it is not warranted for us to do so.
 - An extreme version of this would be the Judaizers in the early church who wanted to impose the Jewish holy days, the food laws, and circumcision on the Gentiles.
 - We see this done today by those who have introduced priests, musical instruments, the burning of incense, and such things into New Testament worship.
 - b. But we equally err when we do apply to ourselves what ought to be applied.
 - Many completely disregard the Old Testament as irrelevant.
 - But instead we ought to follow the example of the apostles in their use of the Old Testament.
 - Jesus and Paul and the other apostles continually expound the Old Testament scriptures in their teaching...
 - They do not apply ceremonies, which are fulfilled in Christ, but they apply the principles that set forth Christ.
 - Jesus makes it clear in His teaching that He did not come to abolish the OT, but to fulfill it.
 - He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
 - He also expounds the moral law, applying it to his hearers.
 - c. Another form of misapplication relates to the moral law...
 - It is the tendency of legalism...
 - Legalism has a funny way of making lots of rules, but missing the very heart of the law...
 - Jesus did a splendid job of exposing this kind of thing when He explained, for example, that one who violates a minced oath is no better than one who violates an oath that actually uses God's name...
 - or that hating your brother in your heart was the same as murder...
 - and that the Sabbath was violated by those who made so many rules in a superstitious way that they missed that the day was made for man to worship God... that it was meant to be a blessed day with His Creator.
 - d. And then there are those who misapply the whole teaching of scripture about salvation.
 - They use the Bible as a mere moral book...

- They see it as just the same as other religious books.
- They miss the very heart of the message that God is in the business of redeeming a people out of this sinful fallen world as His own.
 - They see Jesus as a moral teacher and an example,
 - but they do not see Him as a redeemer who bears the curse of His Father for His people.
 - Such persons will say that there is really no difference between Christianity and all the other religions...
 - that all are aimed at helping us to become better people and that all have their place.
 - This is a complete misuse of scripture!
 - It is a fatal violation of the third commandment because it is a misapplication of the Word of God.

TRANS> Such a misapplication sends many to hell because it keeps them from having Jesus as the Saviour He was sent to be.

- e. But of course we are all guilty of misapplying the word at some level.
- Just as we saw with misinterpretation, we are not justified because of our perfect application.
 - We are saved by the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
 - But we must see to it that we have at least understood the gospel so that we are indeed resting on Him as the Saviour of our sins.
 - And if we have, we will be eager to endeavour to apply His word rightly, all the while resting in His mercy for whatever failings we have.
 - Do not be silly with your use of scripture...
 - I have known those who will take something random, like the story of Jacob and his twelve sons,
 - and then say that God has promised to give them twelve elders for their congregation... or twelve leaders for their new ministry.
 - Or who read how Job's fortunes were restored and take it as a promise to them that God will restore their business that has failed.
 - Or there are those teachers who take the book of revelation and find Russian spies and apache helicopters...
 - It makes for interesting talks, but it is an abuse of scripture...

- And there are those who take passages addressed to the apostles and apply them in a wooden way to themselves...
 - for example, those in our day who claim to speak in tongues which was a special sign of the apostles,
 - even though their modern version of tongues are languages that no one understands.

TRANS> History is filled with sad examples of how God's word has been misapplied.

- But we must move on to the third way that the word is abused...
3. The perverting of God's word to profane jests, curious or unprofitable questions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines.
- God's word is holy because it is given to us and to our children from God, as we have seen in Deuteronomy 29, that we may live in His gracious covenant.
 - We pervert it when we use it for other purposes.
 - Several such perversions are listed in the Catechism...
- a. First, the word is sometimes perverted to profane jests.
- 1) There is a lot of humour in scripture, and it is right for us to join in the laughter.
 - You have the account of the man born blind whom Jesus healed, asking the Pharisees if they want to be his disciples—
 - and telling them that it is a curious thing that here a man has given sight to a man born blind and they don't know where he is from.
 - You have Jesus asking His disciples "who touched me" when there is a crowd pressing in from all sides,
 - or asking His disciples to feed the multitude when they have no food.
 - Or you have Isaiah's humorous descriptions of idolatry that we saw recently.
 - There is nothing wrong laughing at the humour in the Bible.
 - 2) But profane jests involve making a mockery of God's holy word.
 - I have heard men mock at the account of Noah and the ark because they think the story to be preposterous.
 - There are those who ridicule the teaching of the Virgin Birth or of the Resurrection because they are too sophisticated to believe such accounts.

- 3) Profane jests would also involve jokes about Hell, as if it were a laughing matter.
 - There is a grey area about which we may not agree when it comes to the appropriateness of certain religious jokes—
 - but suffice it to say that care must be exercised—and we must love and respect our brothers where there are smaller differences.
 - Certainly it is not proper to pervert the word to crude or sexually inappropriate jests.
 - And when this is done, a rebuke is in order!

- b. Second, God's holy word is sometimes perverted to curious or unprofitable questions.
 - 1) There are those who have a love for theology as a mere scholastic game, who enjoy asking questions about such things as
 - the nature of angels—
 - How many can dance on the head of pin?
 - I remember at a creation seminar some of us attended,
 - there was a man there who kept asking about Ezekiel's vision and insisting that this was an alien visitation.
 - He was not looking to know God or serve God by raising this issue—it was just a curious matter of interest to him that was a diversion from what was really important.

 - 2) It is one thing to have honest questions...
 - But there are men who just live to speculate...
 - In the early church, a lot of heresies arose by those in the east who began to speculate about the trinity...
 - While the scriptures clearly teach that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Spirit is God,
 - And that there is only one God...
 - And that the three persons are distinct persons,
 - These men could not accept this teaching and began to speculate and come up with theories that denied something that was clearly taught...
 - While the doctrine of the Trinity is largely settled in our day,
 - There are many who speculate about the Bible's teaching that God is 100% sovereign and that man is 100% responsible.
 - Because it does not make sense to them, they speculate and become confused.

- We may answer questions of those who are struggling to understand with a view to serving God,
 - but the word is abused when it is reduced to a subject of sport for vain speculation.

- c. Closely related to this, God's holy word is perverted to vain janglings
 - Vain janglings are arguments and debates about these curious questions or about matters that are not important.

- d. And then lastly, there are those who pervert the word to maintain their false doctrines.
 - 1) We may think of the Roman Catholic Church and their doctrine of transubstantiation...
 - the view that the bread and wine is turned into the actual body and blood of Jesus at the Lord's Supper...
 - They base this on a false interpretation of Jesus' declaration when He took the bread and said, "This is my body, given for you."
 - This is a perversion of scripture.

 - 2) Cults will often take hold of obscure passages and make significant doctrines out of them...
 - Such as the Mormons with their teachings on the Baptism of the dead... they develop a whole doctrine out of one obscure verse.
 - This gives them the appearance of wisdom because they claim to understand what others do not understand...
 - but their perverse doctrine is easily overthrown by the clear teachings of scripture—those who have died cannot be rescued.

 - 3) But here again, we must be humble and apply this to ourselves.
 - For we have all maintained doctrine that we thought was scriptural, only to find out later that we were maintaining error...
 - And it is certain that every one of us maintains various errors at this very hour—in ignorance—but still, it is error...

 - This is still sin!
 - This means that we need to be humble and teachable,
 - realising that we may have misunderstood...
 - We need to be eager to learn from others and to hear what they have to say.

 - And it means that we need to be patient with those who may not understand what God has made clear to us.

- It is important to distinguish between seriousness of various misinterpretations.
 - There are some errors that would exclude a person from church membership—such as a denial of the deity of Christ—or a denial of Christ as the only way of salvation.
 - There are other errors that would exclude a person from eldership, for an elder must be one who, according to Titus 1:9:
 - Titus 1:9: holds fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.
 - And there are errors that need to be addressed right away, and others that we may bear with until there is more growth in a person.
 - Whatever the case, we should all be like the Bereans who searched the scriptures to see that what they were taught was true.

Conclusion

My dear brothers and sisters,

- God has been very gracious to us, to reveal Himself to us by His mighty acts for us and by His word.
 - Let us see to it that we receive this precious revelation from our heavenly Father with gratitude and eagerness to serve.
 - It is given to us so that we may know how to live in our Father's wonderful house.
 - It is holy and pure revelation.
 - See that you do not receive it in vain or pervert it to vain uses.
 - It is for you and your children that you may do His will.