

Westminster Shorter Catechism in Modern English

with Scripture Proofs and Comments*



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Life's Purpose and Holy Scripture – Questions 1 to 3

Q. 1. What is the chief purpose for which man is made?

The chief purpose for which man is made is to glorify God,^[a] and to enjoy him for ever.^[b]

[a]. [Psa 86:9](#); [Isa 60:21](#); [Rom 11:36](#); [1 Cor 6:20](#); [1 Cor 10:31](#); [Rev 4:11](#)

[b]. [Psa 16:5-11](#); [Psa 144:15](#); [Isa 12:2](#); [Luk 2:10](#); [Phil 4:4](#); [Rev 21:3-4](#)

Comment on Q. 1.

The opening question brings us at once to the subject of true religion – what it requires and what it gives. God has made us for a purpose just as everything made by man is made for a purpose. Only as we fulfil the purpose for which God made us can we be happy. Now God made us to glorify him. Of course we cannot add to God's glory because he is entirely perfect, but we can show his glory by doing everything in life as service to him. This means that God must be first in our lives; only as we know and love him can we truly please him. That is why, since sin entered the human race, we can only be brought back into God's family through Jesus Christ. Then we can have real joy in our lives, and look forward to knowing joy that never ends after this life. Looking for happiness apart from your Maker – 'doing your own thing' – is a dead end.

Q. 2. What rule has God given to direct us how to glorify and enjoy him?

The Word of God, which consists of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,^[a] is the only rule to direct us how to glorify and enjoy him.^[b]

[a]. [Mat 19:4-5](#) with [Gen 2:24](#); [Luk 24:27, 44](#); [1 Cor 2:13](#); [1 Cor 14:37](#); [2 Pet 1:20-21](#); [2 Pet 3:2, 15-16](#)

[b]. [Deu 4:2](#); [Psa 19:7-11](#); [Isa 8:20](#); [John 15:11](#); [John 20:30-31](#); [Acts 17:11](#); [2 Tim 3:15-17](#); [1 John 1:4](#)

Comment on Q. 2.

God has given us definite instructions in writing. As God's book, the Bible is the best book, and we should study it more often than any other. God promises his Holy Spirit to help us understand it. We must never presume to add to it. The original languages of the Bible are Hebrew (in the Old Testament) and Greek, but common English translations give us the meaning in a form that we can understand.

Q. 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God,^[a] and what duty God requires of man.^[b]

[a]. [Gen 1:1](#); [John 5:39](#); [John 20:31](#); [Rom 10:17](#); [2 Tim 3:15](#)

[b]. [Deu 10:12-13](#); [Jos 1:8](#); [Psa 119:105](#); [Mic 6:8](#); [2 Tim 3:16-17](#)

Comment on Q. 3.

We must never forget that right belief and right behaviour go together, and that right behaviour arises from right belief. God is pleased with our conduct only when it arises from trust in him and his word.

The One and Triune God – Questions 4 to 6

Q. 4. What is God?

God is a Spirit,^[a] infinite,^[b] eternal,^[c] and unchangeable^[d] in his being,^[e] wisdom,^[f] power,^[g] holiness,^[h] justice,^[i] goodness,^[j] and truth.^[k]

[a]. [Deu 4:15-19](#); [Luk 24:39](#); [John 1:18](#); [John 4:24](#); [Acts 17:29](#)

[b]. [1 Ki 8:27](#); [Psa 139:7-10](#); [Psa 145:3](#); [Psa 147:5](#); [Jer 23:24](#); [Rom 11:33-36](#)

[c]. [Deu 33:27](#); [Psa 90:2](#); [Psa 102:12](#); [Psa 102:24-27](#); [Rev 1:4](#); [Rev 1:8](#)

[d]. [Psa 33:11](#); [Mal 3:6](#); [Heb 1:12](#); [Heb 6:17-18](#); [Heb 13:8](#); [Jam 1:17](#)

[e]. [Exo 3:14](#); [Psa 115:2-3](#); [1 Tim 1:17](#); [1 Tim 6:15-16](#)

[f]. [Psa 104:24](#); [Rom 11:33-34](#); [Heb 4:13](#); [1 John 3:20](#)

[g]. [Gen 17:1](#); [Psa 62:11](#); [Jer 32:17](#); [Mat 19:26](#); [Rev 1:8](#)

[h]. [Heb 1:13](#); [1 Pet 1:15-16](#); [1 John 3:3](#); [1 John 3:5](#); [Rev 15:4](#)

[i]. [Gen 18:25](#); [Exo 34:6-7](#); [Deu 32:4](#); [Psa 96:13](#); [Rom 3:5](#); [Rom 3:26](#)

[j]. [Psa 103:5](#); [Psa 107:8](#); [Mat 19:17](#); [Rom 2:4](#)

[k]. [Exo 34:6](#); [Deu 32:4](#); [Psa 86:15](#) vs [Psa 117:2](#); [Heb 6:18](#)

Comment on Q. 4.

The Catechism does not try to prove God is, but takes it for granted as the Bible does. This answer tells us that God does not have a physical body such as limits us. He cannot be seen by the physical eye or touched by our hands. When the Bible speaks of God as having human qualities (eyes, ears and so on), this language is to help us understand about him and does not mean that God has a body. Next, we learn that God is not limited by space or time or anything else, nor does he change, for he is perfect. Finally, seven important qualities of God's character are stated, all of which are in harmony with each other (for example, his *power* is used with *wisdom*), and all of which are qualified by the three adjectives (for example, God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his *wisdom* as well as in his *being*). His goodness includes his mercy, grace, compassion and love. His *truth* means he is utterly reliable and can be trusted to keep his word. So God is very different from us, but we can know him because he has told us about himself through what he has made, and especially through the Bible.

Q. 5. Are there more Gods than one?

There is only one God,^[a] the living and true God.^[b]

[a]. [Deu 6:4](#); [Isa 44:6](#); [Isa 45:21-22](#); [1 Cor 8:4-6](#)

[b]. [Jer 10:10](#); [John 17:3](#); [1 Thes 1:9](#); [1 John 5:20](#)

Comment on Q. 5.

God is called the *living* God because he has life in himself and is able to give life and help to others. He is the *true* God because he really is, whereas other gods exist only in the minds of those who worship them. In [Deuteronomy 6:4](#) God is described by a Hebrew word which means a *united one* not an only one, and so is perfectly consistent with the truth of personal distinctions within the Divine nature (see [Q. 6](#)).

Q. 6. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;^[a] and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.^[b]

[a]. [Mat 3:16-17](#); [Mat 28:19](#); [2 Cor 13:14](#); [1 Pet 1:2](#)

[b]. [Psa 45:6](#); [John 1:1](#); [John 17:5](#); [Acts 5:3-4](#); [Rom 9:5](#); [Col 2:9](#); [Jud 1:24-25](#)

Comment on Q. 6.

This answer states briefly what is called the doctrine of the Trinity. ‘Trinity’ is not a word found in the Bible, but it is a kind of shorthand in order to describe what the Bible teaches about the Divine nature. There is only one God, but God exists in three persons who live in intimate relationship one to the other. We use the word *persons*, not because it is adequate, but because the Bible speaks of the relationship of the three in a manner similar to that which we know between human persons. The Trinity means that God is not lonely, but has a fullness of life and fellowship in himself. When Jesus said, ‘The Father is greater than I’ ([John 14:28](#)), he was referring to his position as the Servant of the Lord who had come into this world for our salvation, and not to his own essential equality with the Father (as in [John 10:30](#)). The subject of the Trinity is a great mystery, as we would expect, and there is no adequate illustration of it. God is unique! Three errors could be mentioned. The first (*modalism*) teaches that God is but one person, who has played different roles at different times, calling himself successively, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But the Three persons are shown as together at the same time, [Matthew 3:16-17](#). The second error (*Arianism*), found especially in sects such as ‘Jehovah’s Witnesses’, also teaches God is but one person and that Jesus is a created being, and the Holy Spirit merely a name for the power of God. A third error is *polytheism* (belief in many gods), which is a perversion of the truth of the richness of God’s life. It is found in forms ranging from Mormonism to Hinduism.

God's Eternal Plan – Questions 7 to 8

Q. 7. What are the decrees of God?

The decrees of God are his eternal plan, according to the purpose of his will, by which, for his own glory, he has foreordained whatever comes to pass;^[b] /yet in such a manner as to be in no way the author of sin./

[a]. [Psa 33:11](#); [Isa 14:24](#); [Acts 2:23](#); [Eph 1:11-12](#)

Comment on Q. 7.

What happens in the world is not a matter of mere chance or luck, nor is it a matter of blind fate – ‘what will be will be’. The living God is the God who governs and rules. He has a perfect plan, and he makes everything fit together to fulfil this plan. God has decided everything which will happen, including the means to be used to reach particular ends. For example, to maintain life we need food; to be saved we must believe to the Lord Jesus. God’s plan and decision does not mean that we are puppets, for God’s plan includes human freedom to act as we desire. Of course some things we do not desire left to ourselves. If such a lack of desire or ability is our own fault we are still responsible. So we are responsible to love and serve God even though through sin we cannot do so until renewed by God’s Holy Spirit. Many people only think of God when something goes wrong, and blame him for it. The catechism reminds us that God is not the author of sin, although he is so great that he can even bring good out of it (for example, the crucifixion was both a wicked act of men and the predetermined purpose of God, [Acts 2:23](#)).

Q. 8. How does God carry out his decrees?

God carries out his decrees in the works of creation and providence.^[a]

[a]. [Psa 148:8](#); [Isa 40:26](#); [Dan 4:35](#); [Acts 4:24-28](#); [Rev 4:11](#)

Comment on Q. 8.

The universe and what occurs in it is the outworking of God’s plan.

Creation – Questions 9 to 10

Q. 9. What is the work of creation?

The work of creation is the making by God of all things from nothing, by his powerful word,^[a] in the space of six days, and all very good.^[b]

[a]. [Gen 1:1](#); [Psa 33:6, 9](#); [Heb 11:3](#)

[b]. [Gen 1:31](#)

Comment on Q. 9.

When God made the worlds he did not make them from himself (as religions like Hinduism teach), nor did he make them from already existing materials (for there were none), but he made them from nothing simply by willing they should be. [Genesis 1:1](#) states the fundamental fact of creation; the following verses concentrate on God's work in making this world a fit home for man. We should remember that the bringing into existence of something and the modification of something which already exists are two quite different things. How long does it take to turn water into wine? Given creative power it can be done instantly ([John 2:7-9](#)).

Q. 10. How did God create man?

God created man, male and female, in his own image,^[a] in knowledge,^[b] righteousness, and holiness,^[c] with rule over the creatures.^[d]

[a]. [Gen 1:27](#)

[b]. [Col 3:10](#)

[c]. [Eph 4:24](#)

[d]. [Gen 1:28](#); see [Psa 8:1-9](#)

Comment on Q. 10.

God used a pattern when he created man, and that pattern was himself, *his own image*! Man was made to be like God on the creaturely level. Man as created knew God, thought and acted righteously, and was pure in heart and full of love for his Maker. Man is the special creation of God. Man is made as a *race* – a creature reproducing itself through successive generations. It is our descent from Adam and Eve that gives us kinship by blood with all other human beings on earth ([Acts 17:26](#)).

Providence – Questions 11 to 12

Q. 11. What are God's works of providence?

God's works of providence are his most holy,^[a] wise,^[b] and powerful^[c] preservation^[d] and control^[e] of all his creatures, and all their actions.^[f]

[a]. [Psa 145:17](#)

[b]. [Psa 104:24](#)

[c]. [Heb 1:3](#)

[d]. [Neh 9:6](#)

[e]. [Eph 1:19-22](#)

[f]. [Psa 36:6](#); [Pro 16:33](#); [Mat 10:30](#)

Comment on Q. 11.

God not only made the worlds but continues to maintain them, otherwise they could not continue to exist. It is *in God* that all things live, and move, and have their being ([Acts 18:28](#)). God governs everything, and because he is all-powerful his plan is fulfilled. Not even a sparrow can die without his will. Yet in everything he is *holy* and *wise*. The actions of men are under his control but the sinfulness of the sinful acts of men belongs entirely to themselves.

Q. 12. What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the state in which he was created?

When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, on condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil on penalty of death.^[a]

[a]. [Gen 2:16-17](#); [Jas 2:10](#)

Comment on Q. 12.

A *covenant* is a solemn agreement. We call the agreement God made with Adam a covenant of *life* because if it had been kept by man a higher form of life from which he could never fall would have resulted. The threat of death was conditional and implied the promise of 'life' if he did not disobey, not just continued existence but immortal glory. The other special tree in the garden, the tree of life, was a symbol of this. By the law of nature written on his heart at creation, man was bound to give perfect obedience to God. This special covenant would show if man was willing to take the word of his Maker or to please himself. The word 'covenant' is not mentioned in Scripture in connection with Adam (unless [Hosea 6:7](#) is an exception) but the elements of a covenant (parties, promise, condition, penalty) are present and an original creation covenant is implied in [Genesis 6:18](#). The parallel with the covenant of grace and Christ's position of headship as 'the last Adam' ([1 Cor 15:45](#) cf. [Rom 5:12](#) ff) requires the covenant arrangement with Adam.

Sin in the Human Race – Questions 13 to 19

Q. 13. Did our first parents continue in the state in which they were created?

Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the state in which they were created by sinning against God.^[a]

[a]. [Gen 3:6-8](#); [Gen 3:13](#); [2 Cor 11:3](#)

Q. 14. What is sin?

Sin is any failure to measure up to what God requires, or any disobedience to his commands.^[a]

[a]. [Lev 5:17](#); [Jas 4:17](#); [1 John 3:4](#)

Comment on Q. 14.

There are things we omit to do and things we do that we should not. But all must be measured by God's standard not by our feelings. Sin is not just a matter of actions but extends to our thoughts and desires as well.

Q. 15. What was the sin by which our first parents fell from the state in which they were created?

The sin by which our first parents fell from the state in which they were created, was their eating the fruit^[a] that God had forbidden.

[a]. [Gen 3:6](#)

Comment on Q. 15.

What made eating the fruit sinful was the fact that God had forbidden it, not that there was anything in the fruit itself that was necessarily evil.

Q. 16. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first disobedience?

Since the covenant of life was made with Adam^[a] for his descendants as well as for himself, all mankind descending from him in the ordinary manner, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.^[b]

[a]. [Gen 2:16-17](#); [Jas 2:10](#)

[b]. [Rom 5:12-21](#); [1 Cor 15:22](#)

Comment on Q. 16.

Adam was the natural head and parent of the race, and it was fitting that in the test God set he should act as a representative person, and not as a mere individual. He was like a mountain climber to whom we're roped so as best to reach the top. But when he fell we fell too. The words *sinned in him*, and *fell with him* do not mean that we personally committed Adam's sin, but rather that his sin is reckoned to us according to the representative principle, so that we

are justly charged with its penalty and are involved in its consequences. Jesus, as true man, is descended from Adam as we are, but not *in the ordinary manner* (see [Q. 22](#)).

Q. 17. Into what state did the fall bring mankind?

The fall brought mankind into a state of sin and misery.^[a]

[a]. [Gen 3:16-19, 23](#); [Rom 3:16](#); [Rom 5:12](#); [Eph 2:1](#)

Q. 18. What is the sinfulness of that state into which man fell?

The sinfulness of the state into which man fell includes the guilt of Adam's first sin,^[a] the lack of the righteousness^[b] which he had at first, and the corruption of every part of his nature,^[c] which is commonly called Original Sin; together with all actual sins which flow from it.^[d]

[a]. [Rom 5:12, 19](#)

[b]. [Rom 3:10](#); [Col 3:10](#); [Eph 4:24](#)

[c]. [Psa 51:5](#); [John 3:6](#); [Rom 3:18](#); [Rom 8:7-8](#); [Eph 2:3](#)

[d]. [Gen 6:5](#); [Psa 53:1-3](#); [Mat 15:19](#); [Rom 3:10-18, 23](#); [Gal 5:19-21](#); [Jas 1:14-15](#)

Comment on Q. 18.

Sinfulness consists of two parts – the sin of our *natures* and the sins of our *lives*. When we do wrong there is something wrong behind it. Our nature is wrong, and so we think, say, and do wrong things. A bad tree bears bad fruit.

Q. 19. What misery did the fall bring upon mankind?

The fall brought upon mankind loss of communion with God,^[a] and his wrath^[b] and curse,^[c] so that we are justly liable to all miseries in this life,^[d] to death^[e] itself, and to punishment in hell for ever.^[f]

[a]. [Gen 3:8, 24](#); [John 8:34, 42, 44](#); [Eph 2:12](#); [Eph 4:18](#)

[b]. [John 3:36](#); [Rom 1:18](#); [Eph 2:3](#); [Eph 5:6](#)

[c]. [Gal 3:10](#); [Rev 22:3](#)

[d]. [Gen 3:16-19](#); [Job 5:7](#); [Ecc 2:22-23](#); [Rom 8:18-23](#)

[e]. [Eze 18:4](#); [Rom 5:12](#); [Rom 6:23](#)

[f]. [Mat 25:41, 46](#); [2 Thes 1:9](#); [Rev 14:9-11](#)

Comment on Q. 19.

Doing wrong can break fellowship with our parents for friends, but how much more with God! This is really what death is about. Love for God has ended and we cannot stay with him any more. We don't even want to. Physical death follows, and judgement after that.

God's covenant of Grace – Question 20

Q. 20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery?

God, solely out of his love and mercy, from all eternity elected some to everlasting life,^[a] and entered into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the state of sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer.^[b]

[a]. [Acts 13:48](#); [Eph 1:4-5](#); [2 Thes 2:13-14](#)

[b]. [Gen 3:15](#); [Gen 17:7](#); [Exo 19:5-6](#); [Jer 31:31-34](#); [Mat 20:28](#); [1 Cor 11:25](#); [Heb 9:15](#)

Comment on Q. 20.

Here we see the origin and foundation of the remedy God has provided for human sin and need. God has chosen some, indeed, a great number, to be saved. He has his reasons for his choice, but these reasons are in him not in us. We are not chosen because of anything in us or because we have some claim on God. It is *solely of his love and mercy*, and we do not deserve, nor can we earn, his favour. God's choice was made in his own mind before creation, and a covenant made with Christ on behalf of elect sinners. Christ undertook the part of a Redeemer, that is, he agreed to place himself in the position of those the Father had given him, and to meet their obligations. In this way he would redeem them, that is, buy them back from bondage.

Christ The Mediator : The Person and natures of the Mediator – Questions 21 to 22

Q. 21. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ,^[a] who, being the eternal Son of God^[b] became man,^[c] and so was and continues to be God and man, in two distinct natures and one person for ever.^[d]

[a]. [John 14:6](#); [Acts 4:12](#); [1 Tim 2:5-6](#)

[b]. [Psa 2:7](#); [Mat 3:17](#); [Mat 17:5](#); [John 1:18](#)

[c]. [Isa 9:6](#); [Mat 1:23](#); [John 1:14](#); [Gal 4:4](#)

[d]. [Acts 1:11](#); [Heb 7:24-25](#)

Comment on Q. 21.

We cannot get salvation on our own terms but on God's terms. Christ is the *only* Redeemer. The Son of God voluntarily came into this world and without ceasing to be what he always was (the second person of the Trinity) he became also what he was not (a true man). We call this the *incarnation*, Jesus is not someone halfway between God and man, but he is *both* God and man. And in our nature, Christ is now in heaven as our ever-living Saviour.

Q. 22. How did Christ, the Son of God, become man?

Christ, the Son of God, became man by taking to himself a body and a soul^[a] like ours, being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her,^[b] yet without sin.^[c]

[a]. [Php 2:7](#); [Heb 2:14, 17](#)

[b]. [Luk 1:27, 31, 35](#)

[c]. [2 Cor 5:21](#); [Heb 4:15](#); [Heb 7:26](#); [1 John 3:5](#)

Comment on Q. 22.

The Divine person took to himself a true human nature. Jesus' humanity was a *true* humanity because he was born of a true, human mother. It was a *perfect* humanity, not because Mary was different from other women, but because it was made for him by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was a real man. He was born a helpless baby, and grew up like other children. The only difference was that he never did wrong.

Christ The Mediator : The three offices of Christ – Questions 23 to 26

Q. 23. What offices does Christ fill as our Redeemer?

Christ as our Redeemer fills the offices of a prophet,^[a] of a priest,^[b] and of a king,^[c] in his states both of humiliation and exaltation.

[a]. [Deu 18:18](#); [Acts 2:33](#); [Acts 3:22-23](#); [Heb 1:1-2](#)

[b]. [Heb 4:14-15](#); [Heb 5:5-6](#)

[c]. [Isa 9:6-7](#); [Luk 1:32-33](#); [John 18:37](#); [1 Cor 15:25](#)

Comment on Q. 23.

The name Christ is the Greek form of the Hebrew word Messiah, meaning Anointed One. Old Testament prophets, priests and kings were anointed with oil when they entered on their work. This points to the way Jesus was specially helped by the Holy Spirit from the beginning of his public ministry.

Q. 24. How does Christ fill the office of a prophet?

Christ fills the office of a prophet in revealing to us by his Word^[a] and Spirit^[b] the will of God for our complete salvation.^[c]

[a]. [Luk 4:18-19, 21](#); [Acts 1:1-2](#); [Heb 2:3](#)

[b]. [John 15:26-27](#); [Acts 1:8](#); [1 Pet 1:11](#)

[c]. [John 4:41-42](#); [John 20:30-31](#)

Comment on Q. 24.

A prophet is a person who speaks for God, not only about the future but about the present too.

He makes plain what God requires. We need a prophet because we are *ignorant* of God's way. Though Christ is now in heaven, he teaches us by his written word (the Bible), and has promised the Holy Spirit to remove the darkness of our minds.

Q. 25. How does Christ fill the office of a priest?

Christ fills the office of a priest in his once offering up of himself to God as a sacrifice, to satisfy divine justice^[a] and reconcile us to God;^[b] and in making constant intercession for us.^[c]

[a]. [Isa 53:1-12](#); [Acts 8:32-35](#); [Heb 9:26-28](#); [Heb 10:12](#)

[b]. [Rom 5:10-11](#); [2 Cor 5:18](#); [Col 1:21-22](#)

[c]. [Rom 8:34](#); [Heb 7:25](#); [Heb 9:24](#)

Comment on Q. 25.

A priest is a person appointed by God from among men to represent them before God. He offers sacrifice and speaks to God (intercedes) for them. We need a priest because we are *guilty*. Christ gave himself for us. His was a perfect sacrifice, and fully adequate to satisfy God's wrath, so it occurred *once* only and cannot be repeated. Now, in the virtue of his sacrifice, he appears in heaven for us. It is not necessary to suppose an audible pleading – his presence is enough.

Q. 26. How does Christ fill the office of a king?

Christ fills the office of a king in making us his willing subjects, in ruling and defending us,^[a] and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.^[b]

[a]. [Psa 110:3](#); [Mat 28:18-20](#); [John 17:2](#); [Col 1:13](#)

[b]. [Psa 2:6-9](#); [Psa 110:1-2](#); [Mat 12:28](#); [1 Cor 15:24-26](#); [Col 2:15](#)

Comment on Q. 26.

A king is the chief authority over a people and a country, and in earlier times was no mere figurehead. We need a king because we are in *bondage to sin*. To truly receive Christ, we take him not only as our Teacher and our Saviour, but as our King as well. We accept his word, and we keep his commandments out of gratitude and love. Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. He is able to win us to himself, care for us in our weakness, and bring us at last, by his grace, into our eternal home.

Christ The Mediator : Christ's state of humiliation – Question 27

Q. 27. In what did Christ's humiliation consist?

Christ's humiliation consisted in being born, and that in a poor circumstance;^[a] in being subject to God's law;^[b] in undergoing the miseries of this life,^[c] the wrath of God^[d] and the curse of death on the cross;^[e] in being buried; and in continuing under the power of death for a time.^[f]

[a]. [Luk 2:7](#); [2 Cor 8:9](#); [Gal 4:4](#)

[b]. [Gal 4:4](#)

[c]. [Isa 53:3](#); [Luk 9:58](#); [John 4:6](#); [John 11:35](#); [Heb 2:18](#)

[d]. [Psa 22:1 \(Mat 27:46\)](#); [Isa 53:10](#); [1 John 2:2](#)

[e]. [Gal 3:13](#); [Php 2:8](#)

[f]. [Mat 12:40](#); [1 Cor 15:3-4](#)

Comment on Q. 27.

Humiliation means being brought low down. As God's Son, Christ came to this earth from heaven, and by taking our nature he made himself nothing. 'He accepted a dramatic reduction in status, undergoing a demotion and degradation so complete that at last his identity was totally obscured and all that could be seen was a man disgraced and damned, his death throes intensified by his terrible sense of alienation from God.' (Prof Donad Macleod). Notice [in the answer] the past tense – *consisted*.

Christ The Mediator : Christ's state of exaltation – Question 28

Q. 28. In what does Christ's exaltation consist?

Christ's exaltation consists in his rising again from the dead on the third day;^[a] in ascending into heaven;^[b] in sitting at the right hand^[c] of God the Father; and in coming to judge the world at the last day.^[d]

[a]. [1 Cor 15:4](#)

[b]. [Psa 68:18](#); [Acts 1:11](#); [Eph 4:8](#)

[c]. [Psa 110:1](#); [Acts 2:33-34](#); [Heb 1:3](#)

[d]. [Mat 16:27](#); [Acts 17:31](#)

Comment on Q. 28.

Exaltation means being raised up from a low position to a high one, and this Christ received as a reward for his obedience in our place. It is the state in which our Saviour is now hence the present tense, *consists*. The ascension meant the end of Christ's personal presence until he returns at the last day. The *right hand* of the Father means the *position or authority*. This has been given to Christ by the Father.

God's Effective Call – Questions 29 to 31

Q. 29. How are we made to share in the redemption purchased by Christ?

We are made to share in the redemption purchased by Christ by the effective application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.^[a]

[a]. [Tit 3:4-7](#)

Comment on Q. 29.

Christ has purchased redemption for us, but it is the Holy Spirit who actually puts us in possession of it.

Q. 30. How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ by producing faith in us,^[a] and by this uniting us to Christ in our effective calling.^[b]

[a]. [Rom 10:17](#); [1 Cor 2:12-16](#); [Eph 2:8](#); [Php 1:29](#)

[b]. [John 15:5](#); [1 Cor 1:9](#); [Eph 3:17](#)

Comment on Q. 30.

Faith in Christ means *trust* in Christ, and brings about *union* with him. The faith by which we commit ourselves to Christ, is the result of the work of God's Spirit in our hearts.

Q. 31. What is effective calling?

Effective calling is the work of God's Spirit, by which he convinces us of our sin and misery, enlightens our minds in the knowledge of Christ,^[a] and renews our wills,^[b] and so persuades and enables us to embrace Jesus Christ,^[c] freely offered to us in the gospel.^[d]

[a]. [Acts 26:18](#); [1 Cor 2:10, 12](#); [2 Cor 4:6](#); [Eph 1:17-18](#)

[b]. [Deu 30:6](#); [Eze 36:26-27](#); [John 3:5](#); [Tit 3:5](#)

[c]. [John 6:44-45](#); [Acts 16:14](#)

[d]. [Isa 45:22](#); [Mat 11:28-30](#); [Rev 22:17](#)

Comment on Q. 31.

God calls or invites men to be saved by the outward call of his word and providence, but because of our evil hearts this call is not heeded without the inward call of the Holy Spirit. He makes us feel our sin, makes the way of salvation plain, and makes us turn from our sin to willingly trust in Christ.

Benefits in this life – Question 32

Q. 32. What benefits in this life are shared by those who are effectively called?

In this life those who are effectively called share in justification, adoption and sanctification, and the further benefits in this life which accompany or flow from them.^[a]

[a]. [Rom 8:30](#); [1 Cor 1:30](#); [1 Cor 6:11](#); [Eph 1:5](#)

Benefits in this life : Justification – Question 33

Q. 33. What is justification?

Justification is an act of God's free grace^[a] in which he pardons all our sins^[b] and accepts us as righteous in his sight^[c] for the sake of the righteousness of Christ alone, which is credited to us^[d] and received by faith alone.^[e]

[a]. [Rom 3:24](#)

[b]. [Rom 4:6-8](#); [2 Cor 5:19](#)

[c]. [2 Cor 5:21](#)

[d]. [Rom 4:6, 11](#); [Rom 5:19](#)

[e]. [Gal 2:16](#); [Php 3:9](#)

Comment on Q. 33.

Justification is a term from the law courts. It means pronouncing a person righteous or not guilty; it is the opposite of condemnation or the sentence of 'guilty'. It is an *act*, and thus occurs once. We do not deserve this treatment. The cause is Christ, whose righteousness is credited to us through faith. Faith has no merit in it to gain a right standing with God, but is the means by which we take to ourselves God's free gift. Works flowing from faith are fruits of a right relationship, not means of establishing it.

Benefits in this life : Adoption – Question 34

Q. 34. What is adoption?

Adoption is an act of God's free grace^[a] by which we are received into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.^[b]

[a]. [1 John 3:1](#)

[b]. [John 1:12](#); [Rom 8:17](#)

Comment on Q. 34.

The believer is not only declared righteous; he is also brought into God's family, and once so brought by God's grace he is there for ever.

Benefits in this life : Sanctification – Question 35

Q. 35. What is sanctification?

Sanctification is the work of God's free grace^[a] by which we are renewed throughout in the image of God^[b] and are enabled more and more to die to sin and live to righteousness.^[c]

[a]. [Eze 36:27](#); [Php 2:13](#); [2 Thes 2:13](#)

[b]. [2 Cor 5:17](#); [Eph 4:23-24](#); [1 Thes 5:23](#)

[c]. [Eze 36:25-27](#); [Rom 6:4, 6, 12-14](#); [2 Cor 7:1](#); [1 Pet 2:24](#)

Comment on Q. 35.

Sanctification means making a person holy. It is called a *work* because, although the believer has made a definite break with his old life, his being made actually holy is carried on by degrees. It is a *renewal* because it restores us so as to be like God made us in the beginning.

Further Benefits : In this life – Question 36

Q. 36. What benefits in this life accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification?

The benefits in this life which accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification are: assurance of God's love,^[a] peace of conscience,^[b] joy in the Holy Spirit,^[c] progress in holiness,^[d] and perseverance in it to this life's end.^[e]

[a]. [Rom 5:5](#)

[b]. [Rom 5:1](#)

[c]. [Rom 14:17](#)

[d]. [2 Pet 3:18](#)

[e]. [Php 1:6](#); [1 Pet 1:5](#)

Further Benefits : At death – Question 37

Q. 37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?

The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness^[a] and immediately pass into glory;^[b] and their bodies, being still united to Christ,^[c] rest in their graves until the resurrection.^[d]

[a]. [Heb 12:23](#)

[b]. [Luk 23:43](#); [2 Cor 5:6, 8](#); [Php 1:23](#)

[c]. [1 Thes 4:14](#)

[d]. [Dan 12:2](#); [John 5:28-29](#); [Acts 24:15](#)

Further Benefits : At the resurrection – Question 38

Q. 38. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

At the resurrection Christ will immediately raise up in glory all believers;^[a] he will openly acknowledge and acquit them in the day of judgement,^[b] /graciously rewarding them according to their works of faith, / and they will enter into the full enjoyment of God^[c] for all eternity.^[d]

[a]. [1 Cor 15:42-43](#)

[b]. [Mat 25:33-34, 46](#)

[c]. [Rom 8:29](#); [1 John 3:2](#)

[d]. [Psa 16:11](#); [1 Thes 4:17](#)

Comment on Q. 38.

At the resurrection the believer's soul will be reunited with his body which will be fitted to be with God in the new heavens and new earth where righteousness has its home ([2 Pet 3:13](#)).

The Moral Law – Questions 39-40

Q. 39. What is the duty which God requires of man?

The duty which God requires of man is obedience to his revealed will.^[a]

[a]. [Deu 29:29](#); [Mic 6:8](#); [1 John 5:2-3](#)

Q. 40. What rule did God at first reveal to man for his obedience?

The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience was the moral law.^[a]

[a]. [Rom 2:14-15](#); [Rom 10:5](#)

The Moral Law : Brief Summary – Questions 41-42

Q. 41. Where is the moral law set out briefly?

The moral law is set out briefly in the Ten Commandments.^[a]

[a]. [Deu 4:13](#); [Mat 19:17-19](#)

Q. 42. What is the sum of the Ten Commandments?

The sum of the Ten Commandments is to love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.^[a]

[a]. [Mat 22:37-40](#)

The Moral Law : Exposition of the ten commandments – Questions 43-81

Q. 43. What is the preface to the Ten Commandments?

The preface to the Ten Commandments is: *I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*^[a]

[a]. [Exo 20:2](#); [Deu 5:6](#)

Q. 44. What does the preface to the Ten Commandments teach us?

The preface to the Ten Commandments teaches us that because God is the LORD and our God and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.^[a]

[a]. [Luk 1:74-75](#); [1 Pet 1:14-19](#)

Comment on Q. 44.

This answer shows us that the motive for keeping God's commandments is gratitude and love springing from faith and trust in God as our Saviour.

Q. 45. Which is the first commandment?

The first commandment is: *You shall have no other gods before me.*^[a]

[a]. [Exo 20:3](#); [Deu 5:7](#)

Q. 46. What is required in the first commandment?

The first commandment requires us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.^[a]

[a]. [1 Chr 28:9](#); [Isa 45:20-25](#); [Mat 4:10](#)

Q. 47. What is forbidden in the first commandment?

The first commandment forbids the denial of,^[a] or failure to worship and glorify, the true God as God^[b] and our God;^[c] and it forbids giving that worship and glory to any other which is due to God alone.^[d]

[a]. [Psa 14:1](#)

[b]. [Rom 1:20-21](#)

[c]. [Psa 81:10-11](#)

[d]. [Eze 8:16-18](#); [Rom 1:25](#)

Q. 48. What do the words “before me” in the first commandment teach us?

These words “before me” in the first commandment teach us that God, who sees all things, takes notice of and is much displeased with the sin of having any other God.^[a]

[a]. [Deu 30:17-18](#); [Psa 44:20-21](#); [Eze 8:12](#)

Comment on Q. 48.

In their sinful rebellion against their Maker some people deny that God exists. A far larger number of people do not deny God exists, but they act as if he did not since their lives are taken up with themselves. But God is, and we are to get to know him through the Bible; we are to confess him openly as the true God, and trust in him. We are to love and serve him in thought, word, and deed, so that he is honoured in everything.

Q. 49. Which is the second commandment?

The second commandment is: *You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to thousands who love me and keep my commandments.*^[a]

[a]. [Exo 20:4-6](#); [Deu 5:8-10](#)

Comment on Q. 49.

The commandment is not opposed to art and sculpture as such, indeed, the tabernacle had such items in it by God’s command. Notice that the Bible does not give us a description of the physical appearance of Jesus who is the exact likeness of God ([Heb 1:3](#)), for it is Christ’s character we are to think of, not his appearance. ‘You will always be wrong in trying to think what God is like, except when you look for him in the thoughts and words and works of Jesus Christ, his Son.’ (Rev. P.J. Murdoch).

Q. 50. What are the duties required in the second commandment?

The second commandment requires us to receive, observe, and keep pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances as God has appointed in his Word.^[a]

[a]. [Deu 12:32](#); [Mat 28:20](#)

Q. 51. What is forbidden in the second commandment?

The second commandment forbids the worship of God by images,^[a] or any other way not appointed in his Word.^[b]

[a]. [Deu 4:15-19](#); [Rom 1:22-23](#)

[b]. [Lev 10:1-2](#); [Jer 19:4-5](#); [Col 2:18-23](#)

Q. 52. What are the reasons attached to the second commandment?

The reasons attached to the second commandment are God's authority as our lawgiver,^[a] the fact that we belong to him,^[b] and the zeal he has for his own worship.^[c]

[a]. [Psa 95:2-3, 6-7](#); [Psa 96:9-10](#)

[b]. [Exo 19:5](#); [Psa 45:11](#); [Isa 54:5](#)

[c]. [Exo 34:14](#); [1 Cor 10:22](#)

Comment on Q. 52.

God is our Sovereign (*I, the LORD*), our Owner (*your God*), and zealous for his worship (*am a jealous God*).

Q. 53. Which is the third commandment?

The third commandment is: *You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.*^[a]

[a]. [Exo 20:7](#); [Deu 5:11](#)

Comment on Q. 53.

By God's *name* is meant everything by which he is made known to us. *To take God's name in vain* is to dishonour God. Cursing and swearing is not just bad taste, but *sin*. If we think of God as we should – as the Creator, Judge, and Saviour; if we think of Christ's love for us, and the Holy Spirit's gracious influences, we cannot use God's name lightly or speak of him or his work loosely or irreverently.

Q. 54. What is required in the third commandment?

The third commandment requires the holy and reverent use of God's name, titles,^[a] attributes,^[b] ordinances,^[c] Word,^[d] and works.^[e]

[a]. [Deu 10:20](#); [Psa 29:2](#); [Mat 6:9](#)

[b]. [1 Chr 29:10-13](#); [Rev 15:3-4](#)

[c]. [Acts 2:42](#); [1 Cor 11:27-28](#)

[d]. [Psa 138:2](#); [Rev 22:18-19](#)

[e]. [Psa 107:21-22](#); [Rev 4:11](#)

Q. 55. What is forbidden in the third commandment?

The third commandment forbids all unworthy use of anything by which God makes himself known.^[a]

[a]. [Lev 19:12](#); [Mat 5:33-37](#); [Jas 5:12](#)

Q. 56. What is the reason attached to the third commandment?

The reason attached to the third commandment is that though the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the LORD your God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgement.^[a]

[a]. [Deu 28:58-59](#); [1 Sam 3:13](#); [1 Sam 4:11](#)

Q. 57. Which is the fourth commandment?

The fourth commandment is: *Remember the sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien/stranger within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, but he rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the seventh day and made it holy.*^[a]

[a]. [Exo 20:8-11](#); [Deu 5:12-15](#)

Comment on Q. 57.

The word *sabbath* means rest, not seventh.

Q. 58. What is required in the fourth commandment?

The fourth commandment requires the keeping holy to God such set times as he has appointed in his Word, in particular, one whole day in seven.^[a]

[a]. [Exo 31:13, 16-17](#)

Q. 59. Which day of the seven has God appointed to be the weekly sabbath?

From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly sabbath,^[a] but thereafter he appointed the first day of the week, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian sabbath /or Lord's Day/.^[b]

[a]. [Gen 2:2-3](#); [Exo 20:11](#)

[b]. [Mark 2:27-28](#); [Acts 20:7](#); [1 Cor 16:2](#); [Rev 1:10](#)

Q. 60. How is the sabbath to be sanctified?

The sabbath /or Lord's Day, which is given for man's good and as a pointer to his eternal destiny,^[a] is to be kept holy by resting all that day from our work and recreations,^[b] and spending the whole time in the public and private worship,^[c] except the time spent in works of necessity and mercy.^[d]

[a]. [Mark 2:27](#); [Heb 4:4-5, 9-11](#)

[b]. [Exo 20:10](#); [Neh 13:15-22](#); [Isa 58:13-14](#)

[c]. [Exo 20:8](#); [Lev 23:3](#); [Luk 4:16](#); [Acts 20:7](#)

[d]. [Mat 12:1-13](#)

Comment on Q. 60.

The weekly sabbath for man is an earthly sign of God's heavenly rest following the work of creation. That is not a rest of inactivity but of contemplation and satisfaction. The rest day reminds us of our higher destiny – a never ending fellowship with God. Sin forfeited this destiny, but through Christ this glory is gained for all believers. We are to worship God each day as individuals and families, but the Lord's Day provides the opportunity for public worship. God's word directs us not to give up meeting together ([Heb 10:25](#)). Parents who love the Saviour should love his Day, and they should strive to ensure it is a day to be looked forward to by the children. Special books and Bible aids can be set aside for use on the Lord's Day, and time spent together in learning about the things of God.'Works of mercy and charity are very proper and acceptable to Christ on this day. They especially become the Christian Sabbath, because it is a day kept in commemoration of the greatest work of mercy and love towards us that ever was wrought.' (Jonathan Edwards (1703-1875), famous American theologian)

Q. 61. What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?

The fourth commandment forbids the omission or careless performance of the duties required, and the misuse of the day by idleness, sinful acts, or unnecessary thoughts, words or works about our worldly affairs and recreations.^[a]

[a]. [Neh 13:15-22](#); [Isa 58:13-14](#); [Amos 8:4-6](#)

Q. 62. What are the reasons attached to the fourth commandment?

The reasons attached to the fourth commandment are God's allowance of six days for worldly tasks,^[a] his claim to special ownership of the seventh, his own example, and his blessing of the sabbath day.^[b]

[a]. [Exo 20:9](#); [Exo 31:15](#); [Lev 23:3](#)

[b]. [Gen 2:2-3](#); [Exo 20:11](#); [Exo 31:17](#)

Q. 63. Which is the fifth commandment?

The fifth commandment is: *Honour your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.*^[a]

[a]. [Exo 20:12](#); [Deu 5:16](#)

Q. 64. What is required in the fifth commandment?

The fifth commandment requires us to preserve the honour and perform the duties belonging to everyone in their different positions and relationships in life.^[a]

[a]. [Rom 13:1, 7](#); [Eph 5:21-22, 24](#); [Eph 6:1, 4-5, 9](#); [1 Pet 2:17](#)

Comment on Q. 64.

True obedience means prompt and willing obedience. Children! Your parents are set over you by God; whatever they tell you, you must do quickly and willingly, so long as it is not sinful, just as Jesus obeyed Mary and Joseph. Fathers! Your children will learn much of what God is like through you. Be a wise, firm and loving father and don't exasperate your children. There can only be respect for authority in our society, if there is true respect in the home.

Q. 65. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

The fifth commandment forbids us to neglect or to do anything against the honour and duty which belongs to everyone in their various positions and relationships in life.^[a]

[a]. [Mat 15:4-6](#); [Rom 13:8](#)

Q. 66. What is the reason attached to the fifth commandment?

The reason attached to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity (so far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all those who keep this commandment.^[a]

[a]. [Exo 20:12](#); [Deu 5:16](#); [Eph 6:2-3](#)

Q. 67. Which is the sixth commandment?

The sixth commandment is: *You shall not murder.*^[a]

[a]. [Exo 20:13](#); [Deu 5:17](#)

Q. 68. What is required in the sixth commandment?

The sixth commandment requires all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life and the life of others.^[a]

[a]. [Eph 5:28-29](#)

Q. 69. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

The sixth commandment forbids us to take our own life or to take unjustly the life of our neighbour, or anything tending to these ends.^[a]

[a]. [Gen 9:6](#); [Mat 5:22](#); [1 John 3:15](#)

Comment on Q. 69.

Hatred and anger are murdered. They are the evil seeds from which the actual deeds arise.

‘The boy who gives hatred a home in his heart, or who permits anger to flame up in him unchecked; the girl who nurses envy and spite, we can see in them the making of murderers.

God says they are murderers already.’ (P.J. Murdoch). The Hebrew word translated *murder*, is not the same as the simple word *kill*. God has given the animals to us for food ([Gen 9:3](#); [1 Tim 4:3](#)), and reasonable self-defence against an aggressor is not wrong. The taking of the life of the unborn child (abortion) is common in many countries today, and in nearly every case is against God’s commandment.

Q. 70. Which is the seventh commandment?

The seventh commandment is: *You shall not commit adultery.*^[a]

[a]. [Exo 20:14](#); [Deu 5:18](#)

Q. 71. What is required in the seventh commandment?

The seventh commandment requires us to preserve our own and our neighbour’s chastity in heart, speech, and behaviour.^[a]

[a]. [1 Cor 7:2-3, 5](#); [1 Thes 4:3-5](#)

Q. 72. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

The seventh commandment forbids all impure thoughts, words, and actions.^[a]

[a]. [Mat 5:28](#); [Eph 5:3-4](#)

Comment on Q. 72.

What kind of computer games do you play? What kind of television or video programmes do you watch? What kind of books do you read? What about off-colour stories, or the way you dress? We need to watch very carefully that we do nothing that is impure. God means for most boys and girls to grow up and marry. Those who break God's rule of purity, by sex before marriage, heavy petting or watching provocative films, 'do unspeakable damage to their future life in this world, not to speak of that which is to come. They rob their own manhood or womanhood of joys God meant for them, and lay up for themselves a store of unhappy memories and deep regrets. *And they sin against God.*' (P.J. Murdoch)

Q. 73. Which is the eighth commandment?

The eighth commandment is: *You shall not steal.*^[a]

[a]. [Exo 20:15](#); [Deu 5:19](#)

Q. 74. What is required in the eighth commandment?

The eighth commandment requires us to obtain lawfully, and to further, the wealth and material well-being of ourselves and others.^[a]

[a]. [Lev 25:35](#); [Eph 4:28](#) b; [Phil 2:4](#)

Q. 75. What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

The eighth commandment forbids whatever does or may unjustly hinder our own or our neighbour's wealth and material well-being.^[a]

[a]. [Pro 28:19-20, 22, 24, 27](#); [Eph 4:28](#) a; [2 Thes 3:10](#); [1 Tim 5:8](#)

Comment on Q. 75.

It is God's plan that we have property – things of our own, so that by using them in the right way we may develop character. Property can be rightly transferred to others in exchange for something else of fair value, or by gift. If we hide the faults in something we exchange or sell, we are really stealing. If we gamble we really steal. If we are 'smart' and cheat on our taxation return, it is still stealing. If we don't pay our debts promptly it is also stealing. For some kinds of theft you may not be punished by men – *but what will God think of you?* If you have stolen, restore what you have taken and follow [Ephesians 4:28](#).

Q. 76. Which is the ninth commandment?

The ninth commandment is: *You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.*^[a]

[a]. [Exo 20:16](#); [Deu 5:20](#)

Q. 77. What is required in the ninth commandment?

The ninth commandment requires us to maintain and promote truth between men, and our own and our neighbour's good name,^[a] especially when called upon to bear witness.^[b]

[a]. [Zec 8:16](#); [Acts 25:10](#); [3 John 1:12](#)

[b]. [Pro 14:5, 25](#)

Q. 78. What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?

The ninth commandment forbids whatever misrepresents truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbour's good name.^[a]

[a]. [Lev 19:16](#); [Psa 15:3](#); [Pro 6:16-19](#); [Luk 3:14](#)

Comment on Q. 78.

Sins of the tongue are very common, and very harmful. In [Psalm 27:2](#), David speaks of wicked men who sought to eat his flesh like wild beasts, words which really refer to slander and false accusations. A person's good name can be taken from him by false words. The Bible lists gossiping, deceit, malice, and slander along with murder and depravity (e.g. [Romans 1:29](#) ff), so serious are sins of the tongue. Therefore avoid being careless with words or talkative. Speak more about principles and facts than people and personalities; never tell a lie to cover yourself or hurt someone else; and don't keep a score of others' wrong doing.

Q. 79. Which is the tenth commandment?

The tenth commandment is: *You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or his donkey, or anything which belongs to your neighbour.*^[a]

[a]. [Exo 20:17](#); [Deu 5:21](#)

Q. 80. What is required in the tenth commandment?

The tenth commandment requires full contentment with our own condition,^[a] and a right and charitable attitude toward our neighbour and all that is his.^[b]

[a]. [Psa 34:1](#); [Php 4:11](#); [1 Tim 6:6](#); [Heb 13:5](#)

[b]. [Luk 15:6, 9, 11-32](#); [Rom 12:15](#); [Php 2:4](#)

Q. 81. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

The tenth commandment forbids all discontent with our own state;^[a] envying and grieving at the good of our neighbour, together with all ungoverned longings and desires for things that belong to him.^[b]

[a]. [1 Cor 10:10](#); [Jas 3:14-16](#)

[b]. [Gal 5:26](#); [Col 3:5](#)

Comment on Q. 81.

We are to seek to please God in everything we do. Covetousness comes from not being satisfied with what God has given us, and anxiously and eagerly seeking to get more however we can, even though we may stop short of actual theft. Envy and jealousy, sinful wishes, desires, and motives, constant complaining – these are *sins* which need God’s forgiveness.

The Moral Law : Transgression and Penalty – Questions 82-84

Q. 82. Is any man able to keep the commandments of God perfectly?

No mere human person, since the fall, is able to keep the commandments of God perfectly in this life, but breaks them daily in thought, word, and deed.^[a]

[a]. [Gen 8:21](#); [Rom 3:9-18, 23](#)

Comment on Q. 82.

One man kept the law – the God-Man, Christ Jesus. In this life no other has or can keep God’s law, but in the life to come the saved will. Take the best day you have ever had. Think about your thoughts – were they all pure and good? Your words? Your actions? So we need to pray each day for our Father’s forgiveness.

Q. 83. Are all transgressions of the law equally sinful?

Some sins, because of their nature and the circumstances, are more sinful in the sight of God than others.
[a]

[a]. [Eze 8:6, 13, 15](#); [Mat 11:20-24](#); [John 19:11](#)

Q. 84. What does every sin deserve?

/Although some sins will be more severely punished than others,^[a] yet every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life and the life that is to come.^[b]

[a]. [Mat 11:21-24](#); [Luk 12:47-48](#)

[b]. [Mat 25:41](#); [Gal 3:10](#); [Eph 5:6](#); [Jas 2:10](#)

Comment on Q. 84.

If you are tempted to think that maybe God can overlook sin or that it will not be punished, then look at the death of Christ. God did not give his Son because we were worth saving, but because there was no other way we could be saved except at such a cost. God's wrath fell on Christ and so does not fall on those who belong to Christ. But those who do not find refuge in Christ will find God's wrath will come on them. If God did not spare his Son ... how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

God's command in the gospel – Question 85

Q. 85. What does God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse, due to us for sin?

To escape the wrath and curse due to us for sin, God requires of us faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and repentance leading to life^[a] together with the diligent use of all the outward means by which Christ gives to us the benefits of redemption.^[b]

[a]. [Mark 1:15](#); [Acts 20:21](#)

[b]. [Acts 2:38](#); [1 Cor 11:24-25](#); [Col 3:16](#)

God's command in the gospel : Faith – Question 86

Q. 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ?

Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace^[a] by which we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is freely offered to us in the gospel.^[b]

[a]. [Eph 2:8-9](#); cf. [Rom 4:16](#)

[b]. [John 20:30-31](#); [Gal 2:15-16](#); [Php 3:3-11](#)

God's command in the gospel : Repentance Leading to Life – Question 87

Q. 87. What is repentance unto life?

Repentance leading to life is a saving grace,^[a] by which a sinner having truly realised his sin and grasped the mercy of God in Christ,^[b] turns from his sin with grief and hatred and turns to God^[c] with full resolve and effort after new obedience.^[d]

[a]. [Acts 11:18](#); [2 Tim 2:25](#)

[b]. [Psa 51:1-4](#); [Joel 2:13](#); [Luk 15:7, 10](#); [Acts 2:37](#)

[c]. [Jer 31:18-19](#); [Luk 1:16-17](#); [1 Thes 1:9](#)

[d]. [2 Chr 7:14](#); [Psa 119:57-64](#); [Mat 3:8](#); [2 Cor 7:10](#)

Comment on Q. 87.

Suppose a child goes beyond the safety mark when swimming to reach a brightly coloured piece of wood, gets into difficulties, and is about to drown – despite desperately clinging to the wood. About to sink, the child hears its father's voice, 'Let go [of] that toy, hold tight to me, and I will save you.' The child does so, and is saved. This story can illustrate repentance and faith. We have been put into this world to serve God, but we have gone beyond the limits set for us after other things that are no true help to us. In fact, if we hold on to them we will be lost. We must give up the ways God has forbidden – we call this *repentance*, and we must truly rely upon Christ to save us – we call this *faith*. Although explained separately in the catechism, repentance and faith cannot be separated in our experience, for each is involved in the other. *Whoever truly repents, believes; and whoever truly believes, repents.*

The Means of Grace – Question 88

Q. 88. What are the outward and ordinary means by which Christ gives to us the benefits of redemption?

The outward and ordinary means by which Christ gives to us the benefits of redemption are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer, and all these are made effective in the salvation of the elect.^[a]

[a]. [Mat 28:18-20](#); [Acts 2:41-42](#)

Comment on Q. 88.

In the story in the preceding comment, the father could have used any number of different ways to gain hold of the sinking child – an oar or a rope, for example. In the same way God uses various methods (*outward and ordinary means*) to bring the inward graces of repentance and faith to our hearts.

The Means of Grace : The Word of God – Questions 89-90

Q. 89. How is the Word of God made effective to salvation?

The Spirit of God makes the reading but especially the preaching of the Word, an effective means of convincing and converting sinners, and building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, to salvation.^[a]

[a]. [Neh 8:8-9](#); [Acts 20:32](#); [Rom 10:14-17](#); [2 Tim 3:15-17](#)

Q. 90. How is the Word to be read and heard, that it may become effective to salvation?

We must attend to the Word with diligence, preparation and prayer,^[a] receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practise it in our lives,^[b] so that it may become effective to salvation.

[a]. [Deu 6:16-18](#); [Psa 119:18](#); [1 Pet 2:1-2](#)

[b]. [Psa 119:11](#); [2 Thes 2:10](#); [Heb 4:2](#); [Jas 1:22-25](#)

Comment on Q. 90.

Many people read the Bible but do not gain help from it because they do not put time or effort into it, nor do they seek God's help to understand and obey its teaching. This is to be like the person who wants to pass an exam without preparing for it. Do not be like that!

The Means of Grace : The Sacraments – Questions 91-93

Q. 91. How do the sacraments become effective means of salvation?

The sacraments become effective means of salvation not because of any power in them or in him who administers them, but only by the blessing of Christ and the working of his Spirit in those who receive them in faith.^[a]

[a]. [1 Cor 3:7](#); cf. [1 Cor 1:12-17](#)

Comment on Q. 91.

The sacraments are not converting but confirming rites. They do not themselves contain the grace they signify, nor are they channels of spiritual blessing where true faith is absent. The sacraments rest on the authority of Christ, and profit those of faith, so they are of value even if the minister is not all he ought to be.

Q. 92. What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is a holy ordinance appointed by Christ,^[a] by which, by visible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed and applied to believers.^[b]

[a]. [Mat 28:19](#); [Mat 26:26-28](#); [Mark 14:22-25](#); [Luk 22:19-20](#); [1 Cor 1:22-26](#)

[b]. [Gal 3:27](#); [1 Cor 10:16-17](#)

Comment on Q. 92.

To the observer, the sacraments are *visible signs*, declaring and bringing to the mind the leading truths which are revealed in Scripture concerning the way of salvation. They are thus *seals*, confirming the truth of God, just as a seal is affixed to a document so that it may be known to be genuine. To the properly qualified participant (a believer), the sacraments are signs and seals confirming his or her interest in Christ and applying or exhibiting Christ and all his benefits to the soul. Thus the Holy Spirit enables the more vigorous exercise of faith, and enjoyment of the benefits of the Christian life (see [Q. 36](#)).

Q. 93. Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?

The sacraments of the New Testament are, two only, Baptism,^[a] and the Lord's Supper,^[b] /and these take the place of Circumcision and the Passover in the Old Testament./

[a]. [Mat 28:19](#)

[b]. [1 Cor 11:23-26](#)

Comment on Q. 93.

Circumcision was the initiatory rite of the Old Testament church, and the Passover was the often repeated rite that spoke of deliverance from divine wrath through the life of a lamb. Jesus is the true Lamb of God.

The Means of Grace : The Sacraments : Baptism – Questions 94-95

Q. 94. What is Baptism?

Baptism is the sacrament /of solemn admission into the church on earth/ in which the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,^[a] signifies and seals our being grafted into Christ, and having a share in the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our pledge to be the Lord's.^[b]

[a]. [Mat 28:19](#)

[b]. [Acts 2:38-42](#); [Acts 22:16](#); [Rom 6:3-4](#); [Gal 3:26-27](#); [1 Pet 3:21](#)

Comment on Q. 94.

Baptism is not a private thing but it is given by Christ to his church. Water speaks of cleansing, and this is what the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together do for us. The precise

mode of baptism is not described in detail in the New Testament. After all, the water is a symbol of a change beyond the power of water, and so the quantity used is not of much importance. The positive teaching of Scripture is that baptism involves putting water on the person, not putting the person into water, and the parallel with Holy Spirit baptism confirms this ([Mat 3:11](#) compare [Acts 2](#)). A simple mode suitable to all kinds of people and situations is implied by the New Testament descriptions. Total immersion lacks Old Testament precedent or clear New Testament justification. Sprinkling/pouring has a very adequate basis in the Bible (see also [Eze 36:24-27](#) with [Heb 10:11-18](#)).

Q. 95. To whom is Baptism to be administered?

Baptism is not to be administered to any outside membership of the church on earth, until they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him;^[a] but infants descending from parents (one or both) professing faith in Christ and obedience to him, /are, for that reason, within the covenant and/ are to be baptised.^[b]

[a]. [Acts 2:41](#); [Acts 8:12, 36, 38](#); [Acts 18:8](#)

[b]. [Gen 17:7, 9-11](#); [Acts 2:38-39](#); [Acts 16:32-33](#); [Col 2:11-12](#)

Comment on Q. 95.

God has always administered his covenant promise on the ‘family descent’ principle: his commitment is ‘to you and your children’. God’s gracious activity works against sin, not against the family. Covenant children have obligations along with their parents. Though children may be ‘cut off’ from God’s family because of unbelief, the expectation of the parent who seeks to honour the Lord in bringing up the children should be that they will accept the obligations of God’s covenant as they are trained in God’s ways.

The Means of Grace : The Sacraments : The Lord’s Supper – Questions 96-97

Q. 96. What is the Lord’s Supper?

The Lord’s Supper is a sacrament in which, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to Christ’s appointment, his death is proclaimed,^[a] and those who receive rightly are by faith (and not by the mouth in a physical manner) made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.^[b]

[a]. [Luk 22:19-20](#); [1 Cor 11:23-26](#)

[b]. [1 Cor 10:16-17](#)

Comment on Q. 96.

The Roman, Greek, and Lutheran churches teach that Christ is present in a *bodily* way in the Supper. Rome teaches that the bread and wine become the literal body and blood of Christ though retaining the appearance of bread and wine (this is called *transubstantiation*). The

preacher becomes a priest, the rite become a bloodless repetition of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, and the elements are worshipped. All of this is unscriptural. The Lutheran church rejects the sacrifice idea, but affirms a bodily presence of the whole Christ in, with, or under the bread and wine. This is called *consubstantiation*, but among other objections implies views inconsistent with the [spacial](#) limitation of Christ's humanity. Christ is now in heaven, but he is truly present among his people through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is a spiritual feeding, and *faith* is the receptive faculty of the soul.

Q. 97. What is required to receive rightly the Lord's Supper?

It is required of those who would receive rightly the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves as to their knowledge of the meaning and object of this sacrament, their faith to feed upon Christ, and their repentance, love and new obedience; for coming in an unworthy manner would bring judgement on themselves.^[a]

[a]. [1 Cor 11:27-32](#)

Comment on Q. 97.

Although baptism marks entry into membership of the church, only those old enough to discern its meaning may participate in the Lord's Supper. Hence arises the distinction between baptised members and members in full communion.

The Means of Grace : Prayer – Questions 98-99

Q. 98. What is prayer?

Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God,^[a] for things agreeable to his will,^[b] in the name of Christ,^[c] with confession of our sins^[d] and thankful acknowledgement of his mercies.^[e]

[a]. [Psa 10:17](#); [Psa 62:8](#); [Mat 7:7-8](#)

[b]. [1 John 5:14](#)

[c]. [John 16:23-24](#)

[d]. [Psa 32:5-6](#); [Dan 9:4-19](#); [1 John 1:9](#)

[e]. [Psa 103:1-5](#); [Psa 136:1-26](#); [Php 4:6](#)

Comment on Q. 98.

Prayer does not have to be audible to be true prayer. John Calvin (1509-1564), the great church reformer, describes prayer as 'an intimate conversation of the pious with God.' That is not prayer in which the heart is not engaged. We cannot truly call on God if we do not know him. Only in the gospel does his grace and mercy become known so that we may approach him with confidence.

Q. 99. What rule has God given for our direction in prayer?

The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer,^[a] but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer.^[b]

[a]. [1 John 5:14](#)

[b]. [Mat 6:9-13](#)

Comment on Q. 99.

The whole Bible can help us in prayer since it is the revelation of God's will. It also includes many examples of prayer. What is *truly* the Lord's Prayer is found in [John 17](#). But in what is *commonly called* the Lord's Prayer we have a pattern to guide us in our prayer. It is not a rigid form or *liturgy*, and the early church prayed freely ([Acts 1:24, 25](#); [Acts 4:24-30](#)). But we may use it as a prayer in its own right, and as a help in framing our own prayers.

The Means of Grace : Prayer : Exposition of the Lord's Prayer – Questions 100-107

Q. 100. What does the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

The preface of the Lord's Prayer (which is, *Our Father in heaven*) teaches us firstly to draw near to God with all holy reverence^[a] and confidence^[b] as children to a father^[c] able and ready to help us;^[d] and secondly, that we should pray with and for others.^[e]

[a]. [Psa 95:6](#)

[b]. [Eph 3:12](#)

[c]. [Mat 7:9-11](#), cf. [Luk 11:11-13](#); [Rom 8:15](#)

[d]. [Eph 3:20](#)

[e]. [Eph 6:18](#); [1 Tim 2:1-2](#)

Comment on Q. 100.

Our Father includes others in the family of God. The church of Jesus Christ is a community not a mere collection of individuals. We are members of Christ's Body. While there is a real sense in which all men are children of God their Creator, yet we are rebellious, estranged children until we become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. As children by adoption, *Father* has a special meaning. God cannot be confined to any place, but *heaven* is where his glory is specially present where Christ now is.

Q. 101. What do we pray for in the first request?

In the first request (which is, *Hallowed be your name*) we pray that God may enable us and others to glorify him in all in which he makes himself known;^[a] and that he would overrule all things for his own glory.^[b]

[a]. [Psa 67:1-3](#); [Psa 99:3](#); [Psa 100:3-4](#)

[b]. [Rom 11:33-36](#); [Rev 4:11](#)

Comment on Q. 101.

The *name* of God stands for his character and everything which [the] mention of his name calls to our minds – his word and works. To *hallow* God’s name means to honour and praise God and his word and works. In praying in this way we are praying for eyes to see and hearts to appreciate his glory – for ourselves and others. In true prayer we are following out the chief purpose for which man is made – to glorify God (cf. [Q. 1](#)). David Brainerd (1718-1747), the missionary to the American Indians, put it this way. ‘My heaven is to please God, and to glorify him, and give all to him, and to be wholly devoted to his glory: that is the heaven I long for, that is my religion, and that is my happiness ... I do not go to heaven to be advanced, but to give honour to God.’

Q. 102. What do we pray for in the second request?

In the second request (which is, *Your kingdom come*) we pray that Satan’s kingdom may be destroyed,^[a] that the kingdom of grace may be advanced^[b] and ourselves and others brought into it and kept in it;^[c] and that /Christ’s return and/ the kingdom of glory may come quickly.^[d]

[a]. [Mat 12:25-28](#); [Rom 16:20](#); [1 John 3:8](#)

[b]. [Psa 72:8-11](#); [Mat 24:14](#); [1 Cor 15:24-25](#)

[c]. [Psa 119:5](#); [Luk 22:32](#); [2 Thes 3:1-5](#)

[d]. [Rev 22:20](#)

Comment on Q. 102.

There are only two kingdoms on earth from the spiritual viewpoint: the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of God’s dear Son ([Col 1:13](#)). All who belong to the Lord Jesus are in the *kingdom of grace* which will become the *kingdom of glory* when Christ returns at the end of the *age* to destroy death (see [Q. 38](#)). We cannot pray for God’s kingdom to advance without praying for the kingdom of Satan to be overthrown. You can read of the progress and triumph of God’s kingdom in many passages such as [Daniel 2](#) and [Matthew 13](#), and its climax in [Revelation 21](#) & 22.

Q. 103. What do we pray for in the third request?

In the third request (which is, *Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*) we pray that God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey and submit to his will in all things,^[a] as the angels do in heaven.^[b]

[a]. [Psa 19:14](#); [Psa 119](#); [1 Thes 5:23](#); [Heb 13:20-21](#)

[b]. [Psa 103:20-21](#); [Heb 1:14](#)

Comment on Q. 103.

God's *will* as mentioned is not his secret plan ([Deut 29:29](#)), but his will as revealed or made plain in the Bible. The Scriptures tell us all we need to know in order to please God ([2 Tim 3:16-17](#)). Most problems of guidance arise because we are not prepared to follow Scripture teaching, or we are not prepared to do a bit of hard thinking and careful reflection as to what is for God's glory. The angels are created beings without bodies like ours. They serve God without sin. Sometimes they appear in human form among men, but not much is told us in the Bible about them, and we must not try to be wiser than what is revealed.

Q. 104. What do we pray for in the fourth request?

In the fourth request (which is, *Give us today our daily bread*) we pray that by God's free gift we may receive a sufficient share of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.^[a]

[a]. [Pro 30:8-9](#); [Mat 6:31-34](#); [Php 4:11, 19](#); [1 Tim 6:6-8](#)

Comment on Q. 104.

God cares about our whole life, even the food we need each day. As sinners we have no right to God's gifts but can have them only because of his mercy. Receiving good things from our heavenly Father, we should enjoy them and thank him for them.

Q. 105. What do we pray for in the fifth request?

In the fifth request (which is, *Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors*) we pray that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins;^[a] and we are encouraged to ask this because, by his grace, we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.^[b]

[a]. [Psa 51:1-2, 7, 9](#); [Dan 9:17-19](#); [1 John 1:7](#)

[b]. [Mat 18:21-35](#); [Eph 4:32](#); [Col 3:13](#)

Comment on Q. 105.

Jesus teaches us that sins are like debts – there is an obligation incurred that remains until payment is made. Jesus, by his sacrifice, has made the payment on behalf of his people. If we belong to Christ we will continue to confess our sins and we will learn to forgive others because we ourselves have been freely forgiven a much greater debt by God (see [Mat 18:23-25](#)).

Q. 106. What do we pray for in the sixth request?

In the sixth request (which is, *And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one*) we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin,^[a] or support and deliver us when we are tempted.^[b]

[a]. [Psa 19:13](#); [Mat 26:41](#); [John 17:15](#)

[b]. [Luk 22:31-32](#); [1 Cor 10:13](#); [2 Cor 12:7-9](#); [Heb 2:18](#)

Comment on Q. 106.

God does not directly tempt any person ([James 1:13](#)) since he is pure and holy. However, God is in sovereign control of all things and so we can be brought into situations where Satan and our own evil hearts can tempt us ([James 1:14](#)). Now we must never think lightly of temptation, and we need to avoid situations where we may fall into sin. Hence this request.

Q. 107. What does the conclusion attached to the Lord's Prayer teach us?*

The conclusion attached to the Lord's Prayer (which is, *For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever, Amen*) teaches us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only,^[a] and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power and glory to him.^[b] And in testimony of our desire and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen.^[c]

* The conclusion does not appear in Luke's record of the Lord's Prayer ([Luke 11](#)), and it is omitted in several important Greek manuscripts of [Matthew 6](#). However, it is a perfectly scriptural kind of conclusion – see the texts cited.

[a]. [Dan 9:4, 7-9, 16-19](#); [Luk 18:1, 7-8](#)

[b]. [1 Chr 29:10-13](#); [1 Tim 1:17](#); [Rev 5:11-13](#)

[c]. [1 Cor 14:16](#); [Rev 22:20](#)

Comment on Q. 107.

The word *amen* is from a Hebrew root word meaning stability, and could be translated: So be it! Let us ensure that we carry through into every area of life the meaning of this conclusion. Let us endeavour to render to God his rights in everything we do. Remember the first catechism: The chief purpose for which man is made is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever.

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