

EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GOVERNING DOCUMENTS VOLUME 2

**WESTMINSTER
CONFESSION OF
FAITH AND
CATECHISMS
IN MODERN ENGLISH**

AND

**THE ESSENTIALS
OF OUR FAITH**





The Westminster Confession of Faith

in Modern English

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PREFACE

The Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church consists of two books, the first being the **Book of Order** (comprised of The Book of Government, The Book of Discipline, and The Book of Worship), and the second contains **The Essentials of our Faith** and the **Westminster Confession of Faith** (including the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. The first book contains that which pertains to the governance of the EPC, and the second contains matters of doctrine that provide the foundation for that governance. All these documents are subordinate to the Scripture, which is “the supreme and final authority on all matters on which it speaks.”

You have in your possession the second volume of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. On the recommendation of the Christian Education & Publication Committee, the 28th General Assembly (2008) approved publishing the EPC Governing Documents in a more convenient and affordable format. What was once the loose leaf “Blue Book” will now be available as:

The Constitution: Volume 1 – *The Book of Order* (including Rules for Assembly, Acts of Assembly, and Forms for Discipline)

The Constitution: Volume 2 – *The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms* (In Modern English) and *The Essentials of our Faith*

The *Service Forms*, which were originally part of the “Blue Book”, are available online for individual download at www.epconnect.org/downloads, easily used by those presiding at the Sacraments or the ordination and installation of officers.

Having the Westminster standards as our doctrinal foundation since our beginning in 1981, the EPC adopted the modern English edition of the Confession in 1984. Subsequently the modern English Shorter Catechism came into popular use in the EPC, and the 24th General Assembly (2004) approved the modern English Larger Catechism.

According the act of the 5th General Assembly (1985), **Essentials of Our Faith** is published herein along with the “Explanatory Statement” added by the 22nd General Assembly (2002).



Rev. Dr. D. Dean Weaver
Stated Clerk, Evangelical Presbyterian Church
January, 2025

Essentials of Our Faith

All Scripture is self-attesting and being Truth, requires our unreserved submission in all areas of life. The infallible Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is a complete and unified witness to God's redemptive acts culminating in the incarnation of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible, uniquely and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the supreme and final authority on all matters on which it speaks.

On this sure foundation we affirm these additional Essentials of our faith.

1. We believe in one God, the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To Him be all honor, glory and praise for ever!
2. Jesus Christ, the living Word, became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. He who is true God became true man united in one Person forever. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. On the third day He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Mediator.
3. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of sin and draws us to the Savior. Indwelling our hearts, He gives new life to us, empowers and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth, and seals us for the day of redemption.
4. Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God's free grace. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, and thereby justifies them in His sight. Only such as are born of the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus Christ become children of God and heirs of eternal life.
5. The true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit are united together in the body of Christ. The Church finds her visible, yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered in their integrity, where scriptural discipline is practiced, and where loving fellowship is maintained. For her perfecting, she awaits the return of her Lord.
6. Jesus Christ will come again to the earth—personally, visibly, and bodily—to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” (Rev. 22:20)
7. The Lord Jesus Christ commands all believers to proclaim the gospel throughout the world and to make disciples of all nations. Obedience to the Great Commission requires total commitment to “Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.” He calls us to a life of self-denying love and service. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (Eph. 2:10)

These Essentials are set forth in greater detail in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

In Essentials Unity
In Non-Essentials Liberty
In All Things Charity

Explanatory Statement to The Essentials of Our Faith

The **Westminster Confession of Faith** is a confessional statement of orthodox Presbyterianism. The **Westminster Confession of Faith** is our standard of doctrine as found in Scripture. It is a positive statement of the Reformed Faith. The **Westminster Confession of Faith** constitutes a system of biblical truth that an officer of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is required to believe, acknowledging that each individual court has the freedom to allow exceptions which do not infringe upon the system of doctrine in the **Westminster Confession of Faith**.

Essentials of Our Faith is an irenic statement of historic evangelicalism. The purpose of **Essentials of Our Faith** is to define core beliefs of the Christian Faith. It expresses historic Christian beliefs common to all true believers and churches throughout the world. **Essentials of Our Faith** is not intended to be the exclusive test of orthodoxy for ordination. It is not intended to be used as an explicit standard for minimal core beliefs for candidates, ordination or ministerial examinations. It is not to be construed as a substitute for the **Westminster Confession of Faith**.

Both the **Westminster Confession of Faith** and **Essentials of Our Faith** are important documents in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The **Westminster Confession of Faith** and **Essentials of Our Faith** are not alternative statements of truth, nor are they competitive statements of truth. They each serve important and harmonious purposes within the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The **Westminster Confession of Faith** preserves our commitment to the historic orthodoxy of the Reformed Faith. **Essentials of Our Faith** preserves our commitment to historic evangelicalism.

Proof Texts

This edition contains a composite of all the proof texts ever cited to support the positions articulated in the British and American editions of the Westminster standards. There have been three major versions of the proof texts for the Confession of Faith: (a) the 1647 British edition, (b) a revision by the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) in 1894, and (c) an equally extensive revision by the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) in 1910. The two revisions have hundreds of additions and deletions. None of the deletions are indicated in the notes here, but all of the additions are, along with the original proof texts. For the Larger Catechism of 1648, PCUSA also did an extensive revision in 1894, which was largely followed by PCUS. The briefer proof texts for the Shorter Catechism have basically remained the same. Scriptural references are cited by book, chapter, and verse, using abbreviations according to The Chicago Manual of Style.

In its 1910 revision of the proof texts, PCUS added the following for both the Confession and Larger Catechism:

General Note: At several points the Confession of Faith [or Larger Catechism] is more specific in its statements than the Scriptures. These statements are inferences drawn from the Scriptures or from statements based on the Scriptures, or from the experience and observation of the Church. In such cases, no texts are cited, but reference is made to this General Note.

The proof texts to the new, American Chapters 34 and 35 were simply grouped by sections.

The
Westminster
Confession of
Faith

Chapter 1

Holy Scripture

1. Our natural understanding and the works of creation and providence so clearly show God's goodness, wisdom, and power that human beings have no excuse for not believing in him.¹ However, these means alone cannot provide that knowledge of God and of his will which is necessary for salvation.² Therefore it pleased the Lord at different times and in various ways to reveal himself and to declare that this revelation contains his will for his church.³ Afterwards it pleased God to put this entire revelation into writing so that the truth might be better preserved and transmitted and that the church, confronted with the corruption of the flesh and the evil purposes of Satan and the world, might be more securely established and comforted.⁴ Since God no longer reveals himself to his people in those earlier ways,⁵ Holy Scripture is absolutely essential.⁶
 1. Rom 2.14-15, 1.19-20, Ps 19.1-4, Rom 1.32, 2.1.
 2. 1 Cor 1.21, 2.13-14, 2.9-12, Acts 4.12, Rom 10.13-14.
 3. Heb 1.1-2, Gal 1.11-12, Dt 4.12-14.
 4. Prv 22.19-21, Lk 1.3-4, Rom 15.4, Mt 4.4,7,10, Is 8.19-20, Lk 24.27, 2 Tm 3.16, 2 Pt 3.15-16.
 5. Heb 1.1-2, see General Note.
 6. 2 Tm 3.15-16, 2 Pt 1.10, Lk 16.29-31, Heb 2.1-3.
2. What we call Holy Scripture or the written word of God now includes all the books of the Old and New Testaments which are:

The Old Testament:

Genesis	2 Chronicles	Daniel
Exodus	Ezra	Hosea
Leviticus	Nehemiah	Joel
Numbers	Esther	Amos
Deuteronomy	Job	Obadiah
Joshua	Psalms	Jonah
Judges	Proverbs	Micah
Ruth	Ecclesiastes	Nahum
1 Samuel	Song of Solomon	Habakkuk
2 Samuel	Isaiah	Zephaniah
1 Kings	Jeremiah	Haggai
2 Kings	Lamentations	Zechariah
1 Chronicles	Ezekiel	Malachi

The New Testament:

Matthew	Ephesians	Hebrews
Mark	Philippians	James
Luke	Colossians	1 Peter
John	1 Thessalonians	2 Peter
Acts	2 Thessalonians	1 John
Romans	1 Timothy	2 John
1 Corinthians	2 Timothy	3 John
2 Corinthians	Titus	Jude
Galatians	Philemon	Revelation

Holy Scripture

All of these books are inspired by God and are the rule of faith and life.⁷

7. Lk 16.29,31, Eph 2.20, Rv 22.18-19, 2 Tm 3.16, Mt 11.27.

3. The books usually called the Apocrypha are not divinely inspired and are not part of the canon of Scripture. They therefore have no authority in the church of God and are not to be valued or used as anything other than human writings.⁸

8. Lk 24.27,44, Rom 3.2, 2 Pt 1.21. The Canon of Scripture is not established by explicit passages, but by the testimony of Jesus and his apostles; of ancient manuscripts and versions; of ancient Christian writers and church councils, and by the internal evidence exhibited in the separate books.

4. The Bible speaks authoritatively and so deserves to be believed and obeyed. This authority does not depend on the testimony of any man or church but completely on God, its author, who is himself truth. The Bible therefore is to be accepted as true, because it is the word of God.⁹

9. 2 Pt 1.19,21, 2 Tm 3.16, 1 Jn 5.9, 1 Thes 2.13, Gal 1.11-12.

5. We may be influenced by the testimony of the church to value the Bible highly and reverently, and Scripture itself shows in so many ways that it is God's word; for example, in its spiritual subject matter, in the effectiveness of its teaching, the majesty of its style, the agreement of all its parts, its unified aim from beginning to end (to give all glory to God), the full revelation it makes of the only way of man's salvation, its many other incomparably outstanding features, and its complete perfection. However, we are completely persuaded and assured of the infallible truth and divine authority of the Bible only by the inward working of the Holy Spirit, who testifies by and with the word in our hearts.¹⁰

10. 1 Tm 3.15, 1 Jn 2.20,27, Jn 16.13-14, 1 Cor 2.10-12, Isa 59.21, 1 Cor 2.6-9.

6. The whole purpose of God about everything pertaining to his own glory and to man's salvation, faith, and life is either explicitly stated in the Bible or may be deduced as inevitably and logically following from it.¹¹ Nothing is at any time to be added to the Bible, either from new revelations of the Spirit or from traditions of men.¹² Nevertheless we do recognize that the inward illumination of the Spirit of God is necessary for a saving understanding of the things which are revealed in the word.¹³ We also recognize that some provisions for the worship of God and the government of the church are similar to secular activities and organizations; these are to be directed according to our natural understanding and our Christian discretion and should conform to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed.¹⁴

11. Mk 7.5-7.

12. 2 Tm 3.15-17, Gal 1.8-9, 2 Thes 2.2. This statement is an inference from the sufficiency of the Scriptures.

13. Jn 6.45, 1 Cor 2.9-10, 12.

14. 1 Cor 11.13-14, 14.26,40.

7. The meanings of all the passages in the Bible are not equally obvious, nor is any individual passage equally clear to everyone.¹⁵ However, everything which we have to know, believe, and observe in order to be saved is so clearly presented and revealed somewhere in the Bible that the uneducated as well as the educated can sufficiently understand it by the proper use of the ordinary means of grace.¹⁶

15. 2 Pt 3.16, Jn 6.60, 16.17.

16. Ps 119.105, 130, Acts 17.11-12.

Holy Scripture

8. The Old Testament in Hebrew (the native language of the ancient people of God) and the New Testament in Greek (the language most widely known internationally at the time the New Testament was written) were directly inspired by God¹⁷ and have been kept uncontaminated throughout time by his special care and providence. They are therefore authentic and are to be the church's ultimate source of appeal in every religious controversy.¹⁸ The original languages of the Bible, however, are not understood by all of God's people. But all of God's people have a right to an interest in the Bible and God himself commands them to read it thoroughly with awe and reverence for him.¹⁹ Consequently the Bible should be translated into the native language of every people to whom it is introduced. Then, the word of God will live fully in everyone; everyone will be able to worship God in an acceptable way; and all believers may have hope through the endurance and the encouragement of the Bible.²⁰

17. See note under Section 3 above.

18. Mt 5.18, Is 8.20, Acts 15.14-18, Jn 5.9,46.

19. Jn 5.39, 2 Tm 3.14-15, 2 Pt 1.19, Acts 17.11.

20. 1 Cor 14.6, 9, 11-12, 24, 27-28, Col 3.16, Rom 15.4, Mt 28.19-20.

9. The infallible standard for the interpretation of the Bible is the Bible itself. And so any question about the true and complete sense of a passage in the Bible (which is a unified whole) can be answered by referring to other passages which speak more plainly.²¹

21. 2 Pt 1.20-21, Acts 15.15, Jn 5.46, Mt 4.5-7, 12.1-7.

10. The Holy Spirit speaking in the Bible is the supreme judge of all religious controversies, all decisions of religious councils, all the opinions of ancient writers, all human teachings, and every private opinion.²² We are to be satisfied with the judgment of him who is and can be the only judge.

22. Mt 22.29,31, Eph 2.20, Acts 28.25, Lk 10.26, Gal 1.10, 1 Jn 4.1-6.

Chapter 2

God and the Holy Trinity

1. There is only one living and true God,¹ who is infinite in being and perfection,² a completely pure spirit,³ invisible,⁴ without body, parts, or emotions,⁵ unchangeable,⁶ immensely vast,⁷ eternal,⁸ limitless,⁹ almighty,¹⁰ completely wise,¹¹ completely holy,¹² completely free,¹³ and completely absolute.¹⁴ He works everything according to the purpose of his own unchangeable and completely righteous will¹⁵ for his own glory.¹⁶ He is completely loving,¹⁷ gracious, merciful, and long-suffering. He overflows with goodness and truth. He forgives wickedness, transgression, and sin,¹⁸ and rewards those who diligently seek him.¹⁹ His judgments are completely just and awesome;²⁰ he hates all sin²¹ and will not acquit the guilty.²²

1. Dt 6.4, 1 Cor 8.4,6, 1 Thes 1.9, Jer 10.10
2. Jb 11.7-9, 26.14, Jer 23.24, Ps 147.5, 1 Kgs 8.27, Ps 139.
3. Jn 4.24.
4. 1 Tm 1.17.
5. Dt 4.15-16, Jn 4.24, Lk 24.39, Acts 14.11,15.
6. Jas 1.17, Mal 3.6.
7. 1 Kgs 8.27, Jer 23.23-24.
8. Ps 90.2, 1 Tm 1.17.
9. Ps 145.3, Rom 11.33.
10. Gn 17.1, Rv 4.8.
11. Rom 16.27.
12. Is 6.3, Rv 4.8.
13. Ps 115.3.
14. Ex 3.14, Is 44.6, Acts 17.24-25.
15. Eph 1.11.
16. Prv 16.4, Rom 11.36, Rv 4.11.
17. 1 Jn 4.8-10, 16, Jn 3.16.
18. Ex 34.6-7.
19. Heb 11.6.
20. Neh 9.32-33, Heb 10.28-31.
21. Ps 5.5-6, Heb 1.13.
22. Na 1.2-3, Ex 34.7.

2. God has all life, glory, goodness, and blessedness in and of himself.²³ He alone is all-sufficient in and unto himself, nor does he need any of his creations or derive any glory from them. Rather, he manifests his own glory in, by, unto, and on them.²⁴ He is the only source of all being, by whom, through whom, and to whom everything exists.²⁵ He has completely sovereign dominion over all things and does with, to, or for them whatever he pleases.²⁶ Everything is revealed and completely open to him.²⁷ His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and does not depend on any created being,²⁸ so that to him nothing is conditional or uncertain.²⁹ He is completely holy in all his purposes, works, and commands.³⁰ To him is due whatever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require from angels, human beings, and all other creatures.³¹

23. Jn 5.26, Acts 7.2, Ps 119.68, 1 Tm 6.15, Rom 9.5.
24. Acts 17.24-25, Jb 22.2,23, Ps 50.12, Is 4.12-17.
25. Rom 11.36, Is 40.12-17.
26. Rv 4.11, 1 Tm 6.15, Dn 4.25, 35, Eph 1.11.
27. Heb 4.13.
28. Rom 11.33-34, Ps 147.5.
29. Acts 15.18, Ez 11.5, Is 46.9-11, Prv 15.3.
30. Ps 145.17, Rom 7.12.
31. Rv 5.12-14, 7.11-12.

God and the Holy Trinity

3. In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, having one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.³² The Father exists. He is not generated and does not come from any source. The Son is eternally generated from the Father,³³ and the Holy Spirit eternally comes from the Father and the Son.³⁴

32. 1 Jn 5.7, Mt 3.16-17, 28.19, 2 Cor 13.14, Eph 2.18.

33. Jn 1.14,18, 17.24, Heb 1.2-6, Col 1.15-17.

34. Jn 15.26, Gal 4.6.

Chapter 3

God's Eternal Decrees

1. From all eternity and by the completely wise and holy purpose of his own will, God has freely and unchangeably ordained whatever happens.¹ This ordainment does not mean, however, that God is the author of sin (he is not),² that he represses the will of his created beings, or that he takes away the freedom or contingency of secondary causes. Rather, the will of created beings and the freedom and contingency of secondary causes are established by him.³

1. Eph 1.11, Rom 11.33, Heb 6.17, Rom 9.15,18, Acts 4.27-28, Mt 10.29-30, Eph 2.10, Is 45.6-7.

2. Jas 1.13-14, 17, 1 Jn 1.5, Eccl 7.29, Ps 5.4.

3. Acts 2.23, Mt 17.12, Acts 4.27-28, Jn 19.11, Prv 16.33, Acts 27.23-24, 34, 44.

2. Although God knows whatever may or can happen under all possible circumstances,⁴ he has not ordered anything because he foresaw it in the future as something which would happen under such circumstances.⁵

4. Acts 15.18, 1 Sm 23.11-12, Mt 11.21,23, Ps 139.1-4, Prv 16.33.

5. Rom 9.11,13, 15-16, 18, 2 Tm 1.9, Eph 1.4-5.

3. In order to manifest his glory God has ordered that some men and angels should be predestined to everlasting life⁶ and that others should be foreordained to everlasting death.⁷

6. 1 Tm 5.21, Mt 25.31,41, Acts 13.48, Rom 8.29-30, Jn 10.27-29, Mk 8.38, Jude 6.

7. Rom 9.22-23, Eph 1.5-6, Prv 16.4, Mt 25.41, Jude 4.

4. This predestination and foreordination of angels and men are precise and unchangeable. The number and identity of angels and men in each group are certain, definite, and unalterable.⁸

8. 2 Tm 2.19, Jn 13.18, 10.14-16,27-29, 6.37-39, Acts 13.48, Jn 17.2,6,9-12.

5. Before the creation of the world,⁹ according to his eternal, unchangeable plan¹⁰ and the hidden purpose and good pleasure of his will,¹¹ God has chosen in Christ¹² those of mankind who are predestined to life and to everlasting glory.¹³ He has done this solely out of his own mercy and love and completely to the praise of his wonderful grace.¹⁴ This choice was completely independent of his foreknowledge of how his created beings would be or act. Neither their faith nor good works nor perseverance had any part in influencing his selection.¹⁵

9. Eph 1.4.

10. Eph 1.11.

11. Eph 1.9.

12. 2 Tm 1.9.

13. Rom 8.30, 1 Thes 5.9, 1 Pt 5.10.

14. Eph 1.5-6, 12.

15. Rom 9.11, 13, 15-16, Eph 1.4,6,9, 2 Tm 1.9, Eph 2.8-9.

God's Eternal Decrees

6. Just as God has determined that the elect shall be glorified, so, too, in the eternal and completely free purpose of his will he has foreordained all the means by which that election is accomplished.¹⁶ And so, those who are chosen, having fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ.¹⁷ They are effectually called to faith in Christ by his Spirit working in them at the right time,¹⁸ and they are justified,¹⁹ adopted,²⁰ sanctified,²¹ and kept by his power through faith unto salvation.²² Only the elect, and no others, are redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved.²³

16. 1 Pt 1.2, Eph 1.4-5, 2.10, 2 Thes 2.13.

17. 1 Thes 5.9-10, Ti 2.14, Rom 5.19.

18. Rom 9.11, 2 Thes 2.13-14, 1 Cor 1.9.

19. Rom 8.30.

20. Eph 1.5.

21. 2 Thes 2.13, Eph 1.4, 1 Thes 4.3.

22. 1 Pt 1.5, Jn 10.28.

23. Jn 17.9, Rom 8.28-39, Jn 6.64-65, 8.47, 10.26, 1 Jn 2.19, Acts 13.48.

7. According to the hidden purpose of his own will, by which he offers or withholds mercy at his pleasure, and for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, it pleased God not to call the rest of mankind²⁴ and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin²⁵ to the praise of his glorious justice.²⁶

24. Mt 11.25-26, 1 Pt 2.8.

25. Rom 9.14-22, Jude 4, Rom 2.8-9, 2 Thes 2.10-12.

26. 2 Tm 2.19-20, Rv 15.3-4.

8. This important and mysterious doctrine of predestination must be treated with special discretion and care, so that, paying attention to and obeying the will of God revealed in his word, men may be assured that they have been eternally chosen from the certainty of their effectual calling. In this way the doctrine of predestination will elicit not only our praise, reverence, and admiration for God, but also a humble and diligent life, fully supporting everyone who sincerely obeys the gospel.²⁷

27. Rom 9.20, 11.33, Dt 29.29, 2 Pt 1.10, Eph 1.6, Rom 11.5-6, 20, 8.33, Lk 10.20, see General Note.

Chapter 4

Creation

1. In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ¹ to create the world out of nothing in order to reveal the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness.² He made everything in the world, visible and invisible, in the space of six days, and it was very good.³

1. Heb 1.2, Jn 1.2-3, Gn 1.1-3, Jb 26.13, 33.4, Rom 11.36, 1 Cor 8.6.

2. Rom 1.20, Jer 10.12, Ps 104.24, 33.5-6.

3. Gn 1, Heb 11.3, Col 1.16, Acts 17.24, Ex 20.11.

2. After God had made all the other creatures, he created man, male and female,⁴ with reasoning, immortal souls.⁵ He endowed them with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness in his own image⁶ and wrote his law in their hearts.⁷ God also gave them the ability to obey his law and the potential to disobey it; i.e., he gave them freedom of their own will, which could change.⁸ In addition to this law written in their hearts, they were commanded not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.⁹ As long as they obeyed God's law and kept this commandment, they were happy in fellowship with God¹⁰ and had dominion over the other creatures.¹¹

4. Gn 1.27.

5. Gn 2.7, Eccl 12.7, Lk 23.43, Mt 10.28, Ps 8.5-6, Gn 2.19-20.

6. Gn 1.26, Col 3.10, Eph 4.24.

7. Rom 2.14-15.

8. Eccl 7.29, Gn 3.6, 17, 2.16-17, Col 3.10, Eph 4.24.

9. Gn 2.16-17.

10. Gn 2.17, 3.8-11, 23.

11. Gn 1.26, 28, Ps 8.6-8, Gn 1.29-30.

Chapter 5

Providence

1. God, who created everything, also upholds everything. He directs, regulates, and governs every creature, action, and thing, from the greatest to the least,¹ by his completely wise and holy providence.² He does so in accordance with his infallible foreknowledge³ and the voluntary, unchangeable purpose of his own will,⁴ all to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.⁵
 1. Heb 1.3, Dn 4.34-35, Ps 135.6, Acts 17.25-26,28, Jb 38-41, Mt 10.29-31, 6.26,30, Neh 9.6, Ps 114.14-16.
 2. Prv 15.3, 2 Chr 16.9, Ps 104.24, Ps 145.17.
 3. Acts 15.18, Ps 94.8-11.
 4. Eph 1.11, Ps 33.10-11.
 5. Is 63.14, Eph 3.10, Rom 9.17, Gn 45.7, Ps 145.7.
2. God is the first cause, and in relationship to him everything happens unchangeably and infallibly.⁶ However, by this same providence, he orders things to happen from secondary causes. As a result of these secondary causes, some things must inevitably happen;⁷ others may or may not happen depending on the voluntary intentions of the agents involved; and some things do not have to happen but may, depending on other conditions.⁸
 6. Acts 2.23, see under figures 3 and 4 above, Jer 32.19.
 7. Gn 8.22, Jer 31.35.
 8. Ex 21.13, Dt 19.5, 1 Kgs 22.28,34, Is 10.6-7, Gn 50.19-20.
3. God uses ordinary means to work out his providence day by day.⁹ But, as he pleases,¹⁰ he may work without,¹¹ beyond,¹² or contrary to these means.
 9. Acts 27. 24, 31, 44, Is 55.10-11, Hos 2.21-22.
 10. 2 Kgs 6.6, Dn 3.27, 1 Kgs 18.17-39, Jn 11.43-45, Rom 1.4.
 11. Hos 1.7, Mt 4.4, Jb 34.10.
 12. Rom 4.19-21.
4. God's providence reveals his almighty power, unknowable wisdom, and infinite goodness. His providence extends even to the fall¹³ and to all other sins of angels and men.¹⁴ These sins are not simply allowed by God, but are bound,¹⁵ ordered, and governed by him in the fullness of his wisdom and power so that they fulfill his own holy purposes.¹⁶ However, the sinfulness still belongs to the creature and does not proceed from God, whose holy righteousness does not and cannot cause or approve sin.¹⁷
 13. This statement is sustained by the doctrines of God's decrees and providence. See citations under Chapter 3 and Chapter 5, Sections 1, 2, 3.
 14. Rom 11.32-34, 2 Sm 24.1, 1 Chr 21.1, 1 Kgs 22.22-23, 1 Chr 10.4, 13-14, 2 Sm 16.10, Acts 2.23,4.27-28, see citations under Chapter 3 and Chapter 5, Sections 1, 2, 3, Is 45.7.
 15. Acts 14.16, Ps 76.10, 2 Kgs 19.28, Is 10.5-7, 12, 15.
 16. Gn 50.20, Is 10.6-7, 12-15, see under figure 15 above.
 17. Jas 1.13-14, 17, 1 Jn 2.16, Ps 50.21.

Providence

5. In the fullness of his wisdom, righteousness, and grace God often allows his own children to be tempted in various ways and for a time to pursue the corruption of their own hearts. God does this to chastise them for their previous sins and to reveal to them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness in their hearts, so that they may be humbled.¹⁸ In addition to various other just and holy results, believers are thereby raised to a closer and more constant dependence on God for their support and are also made more alert in detecting and resisting opportunities to sin.¹⁹

18. 2 Chr 32.25,26,31, 2 Sm 24.1,25, Dt 8.2, Lk 22.31-32.

19. 2 Cor 12.7-9, Ps 73, 77.1-12, Mk 14.66-72, Jn 21.15-19.

6. It is different for the wicked and the ungodly. As punishment for their previous sins, God, the righteous judge, spiritually blinds and hardens them in their own sinfulness.²⁰ From them God not only withdraws his grace, by which they might have been spiritually enlightened,²¹ but sometimes he also withdraws whatever gift of spiritual understanding they already had²² and deliberately exposes them to the opportunities for sinning which their corrupt nature naturally seeks.²³ He thereby gives them over to their own desires, to the temptations of the world, and to the power of Satan,²⁴ and so it happens that they harden themselves even under those circumstances which God uses to soften others.²⁵

20. Rom 1.24-26,28, 11.7-8, 2 Thes 2.11-12.

21. Dt 29.4, Mk 4.11-12.

22. Mt 13.12, 25.29, Acts 13.10-11, 2 Cor 11.13,15.

23. Dt 2.30, 2 Kgs 8.12-13.

24. Ps 81.11-12, 2 Thes 2.10-12, 2 Cor 2.11, 11.3.

25. Ex 7.3, 8.15,32, 2 Cor 2.15-16, Is 8.14, 1 Pt 2.7-8, Is 6.9-10, Acts 28.26-27

7. Just as the providence of God in general extends to every creature, so, in a very special way it takes care of his church and orders all things for its good.²⁶

26. 1 Tm 4.10, Am 9.8-9, Rom 8.28, Is 43.3-5,14, Eph 1.22, Mt 16.18.

Chapter 6

The Fall of Man, Sin, and the Punishment for Sin

1. Our first parents were led astray by the cunning temptation of Satan and sinned in eating the forbidden fruit.¹ It pleased God to allow them to sin, because in his wisdom and holiness he planned to order their sin to his own glory.²
 1. Gn 3.13, 2 Cor 11.3, Gn 3.1-14.
 2. Rom 11.32, 5.19-21.
2. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and fellowship with God,³ and so became dead in sin⁴ and completely polluted in all their faculties and parts of body and soul.⁵
 3. Gn 3.6-8, Eccl 7.29, Rom 3.23, Gn 2.17.
 4. Gn 2.17, Eph 2.1-3, Rom 5.12,
 5. Ti 1.15, Gn 6.5, Jer 17.9, Rom 3.10-19, 8.6-8, Ps 58.1-5.
3. Since Adam and Eve are the root of all mankind, the guilt for this sin has been imputed to all human beings,⁶ who are their natural descendants and have inherited the same death in sin and the same corrupt nature.⁷
 6. Gn 1.27-28, 2.16-17, Rom 5.12,15-19, Acts 17.26, 1 Cor 15.21-22,45,49.
 7. Ps 51.5, Gn 5.3, Jb 14.4, 15.14, Jn 3 and 6, Rom 3.10-18.
4. This original corruption completely disinclines, incapacitates, and turns us away from every good, while it completely inclines us to every evil.⁸ From it proceed all actualized sins.⁹
 8. Rom 5.6, 7.18, 8.7, Col 1.21, Jn 3.6, Gn 6.5, 8.21, Rom 3.10-19.
 9. Jas 1.14-15, Eph 2.2-3, Mt 15.19.
5. During life on earth this corrupt nature remains in those who are regenerated,¹⁰ and, although it is pardoned and deadened in Christ, yet it and all its impulses are truly and properly sinful.¹¹
 10. 1 Jn 1.8,10, Rom 7.14, 17-18, 21-23, Jas 3.2, Prv 20.9, Eccl 7.20.
 11. Rom 7.5, 7-8, 25, Gal 5.17.
6. Every sin, both original and actual, transgresses the righteous law of God and brings guilt on the sinner.¹² Every sinner is consequently subjected to the wrath of God,¹³ the curse of the law,¹⁴ and death,¹⁵ with all the resultant miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal.¹⁶
 12. 1 Jn 3.4, Rom 2.15, 3.9,19.
 13. Eph 2.3, Rom 5.12.
 14. Gal 3.10.
 15. Rom 6.23, Gn 2.17.
 16. Eph 4.18, Rom 8.20, Lam 3.39, Mt 25.41, 2 Thes 1.9, Rom 1.21-28, Lv 26.14ff, Dt 28.15ff.

Chapter 7

God's Covenant with Man

1. The distance between God and his creation is so great, that, although reasoning creatures owe him obedience as their creator, they nonetheless could never realize any blessedness or reward from him without his willingly condescending to them. And so it pleased God to provide for man by means of covenants.¹

1. Is 40.13-17, Jb 9.32-33, 1 Sm 2.25, Ps 100.2-3, 113.5-6, Jb 22.2-3, 35.7-8, Lk 17.10, Acts 17.24-25, see General Note.

2. The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works.² In it life was promised to Adam and through him to his descendants,³ on the condition of perfect, personal obedience.⁴

2. Hos 6.7, Gn 2.16-17, Gal 3.10, Rom 5.12,19, 1 Cor 15.22,47, Gal 3.12.

3. Rom 5.12-20, 10.5.

4. Gn 2.17, Gal 3.10; Compare Gn 2.16-17 with Rom 5.12-14, 10.5, Lk 10.25-28, and with the covenants made with Noah and Abraham.

3. By his fall, man made himself incapable of life under that covenant, and so the Lord made a second, the covenant of grace.⁵ In it he freely offers sinners life and salvation through Jesus Christ. In order to be saved he requires faith in Jesus⁶ and promises to give his Holy Spirit to all who are ordained to life so that they may be willing and able to believe.⁷

5. Gal 3.21, Rom 3.20-21, 8.3, Gn 3.15, Is 42.6, Mt 26.28, Heb 10.5-10.

6. Mk 16.15-16, Jn 3.16, Rom 10.6,9, Gal 3.11, Acts 16.30-31, Mt 28.18-20, Rom 1.16-17.

7. Ez 36.26-27, Jn 6.37,44-45, 5.37, 3.5-8, Acts 13.48, Lk 11.13, Gal 3.14.

4. This covenant of grace is frequently identified in Scripture as a testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ, the testator, and to the everlasting inheritance and everything included in that legacy.⁸

8. Heb 9.15-17, 7.22, Lk 22.20, 1 Cor 11.25.

5. This covenant was administered differently in the time of the law and in the time of the gospel.⁹ Under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances given to the Jewish people, all foreshadowing Christ.¹⁰ For that time the covenant administered under the law through the operation of the Spirit was sufficient and effective in instructing the elect and building up their faith in the promised Messiah,¹¹ by whom they had full remission of their sins and eternal salvation. This administration is called the Old Testament.¹²

9. 2 Cor 3.6-9, Heb 1.1-2.

10. Heb 8-10, Rom 4.11, Col 2.11-12, 1 Cor 5.7, Col 2.17.

11. 1 Cor 10.1-4, Heb 11.13, Jn 8.56, Gal 3.6-8.

12. Gal 3.7-9, 14, Acts 15.11, Rom 3.30.

God's Covenant with Man

6. Under the gospel Christ himself, the substance¹³ of God's grace, was revealed. The ordinances of this New Testament are the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper.¹⁴ Although these are fewer in number and are administered with more simplicity and less outward glory, yet they are available to all nations, Jews and Gentiles,¹⁵ and in them the spiritual power of the covenant of grace is more fully developed.¹⁶ There are not then two essentially different covenants of grace, but one and the same covenant under different dispensations.¹⁷

13. Gal 2.17, Col 2.17.

14. Mt 28.19-20, 1 Cor 11.23-25, 2 Cor 3.7-11.

15. Mt 28.19, Eph 2.15-19, see under figure 11 above, Lk 2.32, Acts 10.34-35.

16. Heb 12.22-28, Jer 31.33-34, Heb 8.6-13, 2 Cor 3.9-11.

17. Lk 22.20, Heb 8.7-9, Gal 3.14,16, Acts 15.11, Rom 3.21-23,30, Ps 32.1, Rom 4.3,6,16-17,23-24, Heb 13.8, Gal 3.17,29, see context and citations under figure 10 above, Heb 1.1-2.

Chapter 8

Christ the Mediator

1. In his eternal purpose it pleased God to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the mediator between God and man.¹ Jesus is the prophet,² priest,³ and king,⁴ the head and savior of his church,⁵ the heir of all things,⁶ and judge of the world.⁷ From all eternity God gave him a people to be his seed⁸ and to be in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified by him.⁹

1. Is 42.1, 1 Pt 1.19-20, Jn 3.16, 1 Tm 2.5.
2. Acts 3.20-22, Dt 18.15.
3. Heb 5.5-6.
4. Ps 2.6, Lk 1.33, Is 9.6-7.
5. Eph 5.23.
6. Heb 1.2.
7. Acts 17.31, 2 Cor 5.10.
8. Jn 17.6, Ps 22.30, Is 53.10, Eph 1.4, Jn 6.37,39.
9. 1 Tm 2.5-6, Is 55.4-5, 1 Cor 1.30, Mk 10.45, Rom 8.30.

2. The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, is truly the eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father. In the fullness of time he took on himself the nature of man,¹⁰ with all the essential qualities and ordinary frailties of man—except that he was sinless.¹¹ Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary out of her substance.¹² These two complete, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in the one person of Jesus without being altered, disunited or jumbled.¹³ The person Jesus is truly God and truly man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.¹⁴

10. Jn 1.1,14, 1 Jn 5.20, Phil 2.6, Gal 4.4, Heb 2.14.
11. Heb 2.14, 16-17, 4.15.
12. Lk 1.27,31,35, Gal 4.4, see under figure 10 above.
13. Lk 1.35, Col 2.9, Rom 9.5, 1 Pt 3.18, 1 Tm 3.16, Mt 16.16, see under figure 12 above.
14. Rom 1.3-4, 1 Tm 2.5.

3. His human nature being thus united to the divine, the Lord Jesus was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit beyond all measure.¹⁵ He had in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,¹⁶ and in him it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell.¹⁷ God's purpose was that Jesus, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, should be completely equipped to execute the office of mediator and guarantor.¹⁸ Jesus did not take this office himself but was called to it by his Father,¹⁹ who gave and commanded him to use all power and judgment.²⁰

15. Ps 45.7, Jn 3.34, Lk 4.18-19, 21, Acts 10.38, Heb 1.8-9.
16. Col 2.3.
17. Col 1.19.
18. Heb 7.26, Jn 1.14, Acts 10.38, Heb 12.24, 7.22, Lk 4.18-21.
19. Heb 5.4-5.
20. Jn 5.22,27, Mt 28.18, Acts 2.36.

Christ the Mediator

4. The Lord Jesus undertook this office completely voluntarily.²¹ In order to discharge it, he was made under²² and perfectly fulfilled the law.²³ He endured extremely severe torment in his soul²⁴ and extremely painful suffering in his body.²⁵ He was crucified and died.²⁶ He was buried and remained under the power of death, but his body did not decay.²⁷ On the third day he arose from the dead²⁸ with the same body in which he suffered²⁹ and with which he also ascended into heaven. There he sits at the right hand of his Father,³⁰ interceding for believers.³¹ He will return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.³²

21. Ps 40.7-8, Heb 10.5-10, Jn 10.18, Phil 2.5-8, Jn 4.34.

22. Gal 4.4.

23. Mt 3.15, 5.17, Jn 17.4.

24. Mt 26.37-38, Lk 22.44, Mt 27.46.

25. Mt 26 and 27.

26. Phil 2.8.

27. Acts 2.23-24, 27, Acts 13.37, Rom 6.9, Mt 27.60.

28. 1 Cor 15.3-4.

29. Jn 20.25, 27.

30. Mk 16.19, Lk 24.50-51, Acts 1.9, 2.33-36, 1 Pt 3.22, Rom 8.34.

31. Rom 8.34, Heb 9.24, 7.25.

32. Rom 14.9-10, Acts 1.11, 10.42, Mt 13.40-42, Jude 6, 2 Pt 2.4, Mt 16.27, 25.31-33, 2 Tm 4.1, Jn 5.28-29.

5. By his perfect obedience and sacrifice, offered up to God once and for all through the eternal Spirit, the Lord Jesus has completely satisfied the justice of his Father³³ and purchased not only reconciliation but also an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for everyone whom the Father has given to him.³⁴

33. Rom 5.19, Heb 9.14, 16, 10.14, Eph 5.2, Rom 3.25-26.

34. Dn 9.24, 26, Col 1.19-20, Eph 1.11, 14, Jn 17.2, Heb 9.12, 15, Rom 5.10-11, 2 Cor 5.18, 20.

6. Although the work of redemption was not actually done by Christ until after his incarnation, yet the power, effectiveness, and benefits of it were given to the elect in all ages from the beginning of the world by means of those promises, types, and sacrifices which revealed him and indicated that he would be the seed of the woman, would bruise the serpent's head, and was the lamb slain from the beginning of the world. Jesus Christ is yesterday and today and forever the same.³⁵

35. Gal 4.4-5, Gn 3.15, Rv 13.8, Heb 13.8; see citations under Chapter 7, Section 5, figures 9 and 10.

7. In the work of mediation Christ acts according to both his natures, each nature doing what is proper to each.³⁶ However, because of the unity of his person Scripture sometimes attributes what is proper to one nature to the person indicated by the other nature.³⁷

36. Heb 9.14, 1 Pt 3.18, Jn 10.17-18.

37. Acts 20.28, Jn 3.13, 1 Jn 3.16.

Christ the Mediator

8. Christ insures with absolute certainty that everyone for whom he purchased redemption actually accepts and receives it.³⁸ He makes intercession for them,³⁹ reveals the mysteries of salvation to them in and by the word,⁴⁰ and effectively persuades them to believe and obey by his Spirit. He governs their hearts by his word and Spirit⁴¹ and overcomes all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom in such ways as are most in agreement with his wonderful and unknowable administration of things.⁴²

38. Jn 6.37,39, 10.15-16,27-28.

39. 1 Jn 2.1-2, Rom 8.34.

40. Jn 15.13,15, Eph 1.7-9, Jn 17.6, Gal 1.11-12.

41. Jn 14.16, Heb 12.2, 2 Cor 4.13, Rom 8.9,14, 15.18-19, Jn 17.17, Ti 3.4-5.

42. Ps 110.1, 1 Cor 15.25-26, Mal 4.2-3, Col 2.15, Lk 10.19.

Chapter 9

Free Will

1. God has given man a will, which by nature is free, i.e., it is not forced or necessarily inclined toward good or evil.¹

1. Mt 17.12, Jas 1.14, Dt 30.19, Jn 5.40, 7.17, Rv 22.17, Acts 7.51, Jas 4.7.

2. In his state of innocence man had complete freedom and the natural ability to will and to do what is good and pleasing to God.² God also made man so that he could lose that freedom.³

2. Eccl 7.29, Gn 1.26, see under figure 1 above, Col 3.10.

3. Gn 2.16-17, 3.6.

3. Man fell into a state of sin by his disobedience and so completely lost his ability to will any spiritual good involving salvation.⁴ Consequently fallen man is by nature completely opposed to spiritual good,⁵ is dead in sin,⁶ and is unable by his own strength either to convert himself or to prepare himself for conversion.⁷

4. Rom 5.6, 8.7, Jn 15.5.

5. Rom 3.9-10, 12, 23, 8.7.

6. Eph 2.1,5, Col 2.13.

7. Jn 6.44,65, 1 Cor 2.14, Eph 2.2-5, Ti 3.3-5, Rom 8.8.

4. When God converts a sinner and brings him into a state of grace, he frees him from his natural enslavement to sin. By God's grace alone, freely given, sinful man is enabled to will and to do what is spiritually good.⁸ However, since the old sinful nature also remains, the believer cannot consistently or perfectly will to do what is good but also wills evil.⁹

8. Col 1.13, Jn 8.34,36, Phil 2.13, Rom 6.18,22.

9. Gal 5.17, Rom 7.15,18-19,21-23, 1 Jn 1.8,10.

5. The will of man is perfectly free and permanently inclined to good alone only in the state of glory.¹⁰

10. Eph 4.13, Heb 12.23, 1 Jn 3.2, Jude 24, Rv 22.3-4, 2 Chr 6.36, 1 Jn 1.8-10, 2.1-6, Ps 17.15.

Chapter 10

Effectual Calling

1. At the right time, appointed by him, God effectually calls all those and only those whom he has predestined to life. He calls them by his word and Spirit out of their natural state of sin and death into grace and salvation through Jesus Christ.¹ He enlightens their minds spiritually with a saving understanding of the things of God.² He takes away their heart of stone and gives them a heart of flesh.³ He renews their wills and by his almighty power leads them to what is good.⁴ And so he effectually draws them to Jesus Christ.⁵ But they come to Jesus voluntarily, having been made willing by God's grace.⁶

1. Rom 8.28,30, 11.7, Eph 1.5,10-11, 2 Thes 2.13-14, 2 Cor 3.3,6, Rom 8.2, 2 Tm 1.9-10, Jn 15.16, Acts 13.48, 1 Thes 5.9, Jas 1.18, 1 Cor 2.12, Eph 2.1-10.
2. Acts 26.18, 1 Cor 2.10,12, Eph 1.17-18, 2 Cor 4.6.
3. Ez 36.26.
4. Ez 11.19, Phil 2.13, Dt 30.6, Ez 36.27, Phil 4.13, Jn 3.5, Gal 6.15, Ti 3.5, 1 Pt 1.23.
5. Eph 1.19, Jn 6.44-45.
6. Sg 1.4, Ps 110.3, Jn 6.37, Rom 6.16-18, Mt 11.28, Rv 22.17; see under figure 5 above.

2. This effectual call is freely made by God and is entirely an act of his special grace. It does not depend on anything God foreknew or foresaw about the person called, ⁷ who is completely passive. God himself gives life and renewal by the Holy Spirit.⁸ He thereby enables each person to answer his call and to accept the grace he offers and actually gives.⁹

7. 2 Tm 1.9, Ti 3.4-5, Eph 2.4-5, 8-9, Rom 9.11.
8. 1 Cor 2.14, Rom 8.7-9, Eph 2.5.
9. Jn 6.37, Ez 36.27, Jn 5.25.

3. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ, through the Spirit,¹⁰ who works when, where, and how he pleases.¹¹ The same is true of all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word.¹²

10. Lk 18.15-16, Acts 2.38-39, Jn 3.3,5-6, 1 Jn 5.12, Rom 8.9, Gn 17.7, Ps 105.8-10, Ez 16.20-21, Gal 3.29, Acts 16.15,31-33, 1 Cor 1.16.
11. Jn 3.8.
12. 1 Jn 5.12, Acts 4.12, Jn 3.8, 16.7-8.

4. Others, not elect, may be called by the ministry of the word, and the Spirit may work in them in some of the same ways he works in the elect. However, they never truly come to Christ and therefore cannot be saved.¹³ And, of course, people, not professing the Christian religion, cannot be saved in any other way at all,¹⁴ no matter how hard they try to live a moral life according to their own understanding or try to follow the rules of some other religion. To say they can be saved is extremely harmful and should be denounced.¹⁵

13. Mt 22.14, 7.22, 13-15, 20-21, Heb 6.4-6, Jn 6.64-66, 8.24, 1 Jn 2.19, Acts 28.24.
14. Acts 4.12, Jn 14.6, Eph 2.12-13, Jn 4.22, 17.3.
15. 2 Jn 9-11, 1 Cor 16.22, Gal 1.6-8.

Chapter 11

Justification

1. Those whom God effectually calls he also freely justifies.¹ He does not pour righteousness into them but pardons their sins and looks on them and accepts them as if they were righteous—not because of anything worked in them or done by them, but for Christ’s sake alone. He does not consider their faith itself, the act of believing, as their righteousness or any other obedient response to the gospel on their part. Rather, he imputes to them the obedience and judicial satisfaction earned by Christ.² For their part, they receive and rest on Christ and his righteousness by faith (and this faith is not their own but is itself a gift of God).³
 1. Rom 8.30, 3.24.
 2. Rom 4.5-8, 2 Cor 5.19,21, Rom 3.22,24-25,27-28, Ti 3.5,7, Eph 1.7, Jer 23.6, 1 Cor 1.30-31, Rom 5.17-19.
 3. Acts 10.43-44, Gal 2.16, Phil 3.9, Acts 13.38-39, Eph 2.7-8, Jn 1.12, 6.44-45, Phil 1.29.
2. Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the only means of justification.⁴ In the person justified, however, it is always accompanied by all the other saving graces and is not a dead faith, but works by love.⁵
 4. Jn 1.12, Rom 3.28, 5.1, Jn 3.16,18,36.
 5. Jas 2.17,22,26, Gal 5.6.
3. By his obedience and death Christ completely discharged the debt of all those who are so justified, and he made the correct, real, and full satisfaction to his Father’s justice on their behalf.⁶ Since Christ was voluntarily given by the Father for them,⁷ and since his obedience and satisfaction were accepted in their place⁸ and not for anything in them, their justification is the result only of his free grace⁹—so that both the perfect justice and the rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.¹⁰
 6. Rom 5.8-10,18-19, 1 Tm 2.5-6, Heb 10.10,14, Dn 9.24,26, Is 53.4-6,10-12, 1 Cor 15.3, 2 Cor 5.21, 1 Pt 2.24, 3.18.
 7. Rom 8.32, Jn 3.16.
 8. 2 Cor 5.21, Mt 3.17, Eph 5.2, Is 53.6.
 9. Rom 3.24, Eph 1.7, Rom 6.23, Eph 2.6-9.
 10. Rom 3.26, Eph 2.7.
4. From all eternity God decreed the justification of all the elect,¹¹ and in the fullness of time Christ died for their sins and rose again for their justification.¹² Nevertheless, the elect are not justified until the Holy Spirit in due time does actually apply Christ to them.¹³
 11. Gal 3.8, 1 Pt 1.2,19-20, Rom 8.30.
 12. Gal 4.4, 1 Tm 2.6, Rom 4.25, 1 Pt 1.21.
 13. Col 1.21-22, Gal 2.16, Ti 3.4-7, Jn 3.5,18,36.
5. God continues to forgive the sins of those who are justified.¹⁴ Although they can never fall from the state of justification,¹⁵ they may by their sins come under God’s fatherly displeasure and not have a sense of his presence with them until they humble themselves, confess their sins, ask for forgiveness, and renew their faith in repentance.¹⁶
 14. Mt 6.12, 1 Jn 1.7,9, 2.1-2.
 15. Lk 22.32, Jn 10.28, Heb 10.14, Phil 1.6, 1 Jn 2.19; see proofs under Chapter 17.
 16. Ps 89.31-33, 51.7-12, 32.5, Mt 26.75, 1 Cor 11.30,32, Lk 1.20.

Justification

6. The justification of believers under the Old Testament was in all these respects identical with the justification of believers under the New Testament.¹⁷

17. Gal 3.6-9,13-14, Rom 4.22-24, Heb 13.8, 11.13, Jn 8.56, Acts 15.11, Rom 3.30.

Chapter 12

Adoption

1. God guarantees the adoption of all those who are justified in and for the sake of his only son, Jesus Christ.¹ Those adopted enjoy the liberties and privileges of God's children,² have his name put on them,³ receive the Spirit of adoption,⁴ have access to the throne of grace with boldness,⁵ and are enabled to cry, Abba, Father.⁶ They are pitied,⁷ protected,⁸ provided for,⁹ and disciplined by him as a father.¹⁰ They are never cast off, however,¹¹ and are sealed until the day of redemption¹² and inherit the promises¹³ as heirs of everlasting salvation.¹⁴

1. Eph 1.5, Gal 4.4-5.
2. Rom 8.17, Jn 1.12.
3. Jer 14.9, 2 Cor 6.18, Rv 3.12.
4. Rom 8.15.
5. Eph 3.12, Rom 5.2, Heb 4.16.
6. Gal 4.6.
7. Ps 103.13.
8. Prv 14.26, Ps 27.1-3.
9. Mt 6.30,32, 1 Pt 5.7.
10. Heb 12.6.
11. Lam 3.31-32, Heb 13.5.
12. Eph 4.30.
13. Heb 6.12.
14. 1 Pt 1.3-4, Heb 1.14.

Chapter 13

Sanctification

1. Those who are effectually called and regenerated have a new heart and a new spirit created in them. They are additionally sanctified, actually and personally, by the power of Christ's death and resurrection and by his word and Spirit dwelling in them.¹ The power of sin ruling over the whole body is destroyed,² and the desires of the old self are more and more weakened and killed.³ At the same time the ability to practice true holiness, without which no one will see the Lord,⁴ is brought to life and strengthened by all the saving graces.⁵

1. 1 Cor 6.11, Acts 20.32, Phil 3.10, Rom 6.5-6, Jn 17.17,19, Eph 5.26, 2 Thes 2.13, 1 Cor 1.30.

2. Rom 6.6,14.

3. Gal 5.24, Rom 8.13, Col 3.5.

4. 2 Cor 7.1, Heb 12.14, Col 1.28, 4.12.

5. Col 1.10-11, Eph 3.16-19, 2 Pt 3.13-14.

2. This sanctification works in the whole person,⁶ but not completely or perfectly in this life. The old sinful nature retains some of its control in body, mind, and spirit. And so a continual and irreconcilable war goes on in every believer. The old nature tries to get its way in opposition to the Spirit, and the Spirit fights to assert its authority over the flesh.⁷

6. 1 Thes 5.23.

7. 1 Jn 1.10, Rom 7.18,23, Phil 3.12, Gal 5.17, 1 Pt 2.11.

3. Although the old nature temporarily wins battles in this warfare,⁸ the continual strengthening of the sanctifying Spirit of Christ enables the regenerate nature in each believer to overcome.⁹ And so the saints grow in grace,¹⁰ perfecting holiness in the fear of God.¹¹

8. Rom 7.23.

9. Rom 6.14, 1 Jn 5.4, Eph 4.15-16.

10. 2 Pt 3.18, 2 Cor 3.18.

11. 2 Cor 7.1.

Chapter 14

Saving Faith

1. The gift of faith makes it possible for the souls of the elect to be saved by believing in Jesus Christ. This gift is the work of the Spirit of Christ in the hearts of the elect¹ and is ordinarily accomplished by the ministry of the word.² It is also increased and strengthened by the word, by prayer, and by the administration of the sacraments.³

1. Heb 10.39, 2 Cor 4.13, Eph 1.17-20, 2.8, 1 Cor 12.3, Heb 12.2; see proofs under Chapter 11.

2. Rom 10.14,17, Mt 28.19-20, 1 Cor 1.21.

3. 1 Pt 2.2, Acts 20.32, Rom 4.11, Lk 17.5, Rom 1.16-17, Mt 28.19, 1 Cor 11.23-29, 2 Cor 12.8-10, Lk 22.19, Jn 6.54-56, Lk 22.32.

2. By this faith a Christian believes whatever is revealed in the word to be the true, authentic, authoritative statement of God himself.⁴ By this faith the believer also acts according to what particular passages in the word say. By faith the believer humbly submits to and obeys God's various commands.⁵ He trembles at God's awesome threats,⁶ and eagerly embraces his promises about this life and the life to come.⁷ But the chief actions of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting on Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, in the power of the covenant of grace.⁸

4. Jn 4.42, 1 Thes 2.13, 1 Jn 5.10, Acts 24.14.

5. Rom 16.26, Mt 22.37-40.

6. Is 66.2.

7. Heb 11.13, 1 Tm 4.8.

8. Jn 1.12, Acts 16.31, Gal 2.20, Acts 15.11.

3. This faith has different degrees of strength and weakness.⁹ It may be attacked and weakened often and in many ways, but it gets the victory.¹⁰ In many believers it matures and becomes completely assured through Christ,¹¹ who both creates and perfects our faith.¹²

9. Heb 5.13-14, Rom 4.19-20, Mt 6.30, 8.10.

10. Lk 22.31-32, Eph 6.16, 1 Jn 5.4-5, 1 Cor 10.13.

11. Heb 6.11-12, 10.22, Col 2.2, 2 Tm 1.12; see proofs under Chapter 18.

12. Heb 12.2.

Chapter 15

Repentance Leading to Life

1. Repentance which leads to life is the blessed product of the gospel working in believers' lives.¹ Along with the doctrine of faith in Christ, it is a doctrine to be preached by every minister of the gospel.²

1. Zec 12.10, Acts 11.18.
2. Lk 24.47, Mk 1.15, Acts 20.21.

2. In this repentance the sinner is able to see his sins as God sees them, as filthy and hateful, and as involving great danger to the sinner, because they are completely contrary to the holy nature and righteous law of God. Understanding that God in Christ is merciful to those who repent, the sinner suffers deep sorrow for and hates his sins, and so he determines to turn away from all of them. And turning to God,³ he tries to walk with him according to all his commandments.⁴

3. Ez 18.30-31, 36.31, Is 30.22, Ps 51.4, Jer 31.18-19, Jl 2.12-13, Am 5.15, Ps 119.128, 2 Cor 7.11.
4. Ps 119.6,59,106, Lk 1.6, 2 Kgs 23.25, Jn 14.23, Mt 21.28-29.

3. Although repentance is not any satisfaction for sin and does not cause the forgiveness of sins⁵ (since forgiveness is an act of God's voluntary grace in Christ⁶), yet it is necessary to all sinners, and no one may expect to be forgiven without it.⁷

5. Ez 36.31-32, 16.61-63, Ti 3.5, Acts 5.31.
6. Hos 14.2,4, Rom 3.24, Eph 1.7.
7. Lk 13.3,5, Acts 17.30-31.

4. Just as there is no sin so small that it does not deserve damnation,⁸ so there is no sin so great that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent.⁹

8. Rom 6.23, 5.12, Mt 12.36, Jas 2.10.
9. Is 55.7, Rom 8.1, Is 1.16,18.

5. Believers should not be satisfied with general repentance. Rather, it is everyone's duty to try to repent of every individual sin individually.¹⁰

10. Ps 19.13, Lk 19.8, 1 Tm 1.13,15, Dn 9, Neh 9.

6. Everyone is also bound to confess privately his sins to God and to pray for forgiveness for them.¹¹ Confession, prayer for forgiveness, and the forsaking of sins which have been forgiven will find God's mercy.¹² Similarly, anyone who sins against his spiritual brother or the church should be willing to confess, privately or publicly, to demonstrate sorrow for his sin, and openly to state his repentance to those whom he has hurt.¹³ They in turn are to be reconciled to him and to receive him in love.¹⁴

11. Ps 51.4-5,7,9,14, 32.5-6.
12. Prv 28.13, 1 Jn 1.9.
13. Jas 5.16, Lk 17.3-4, Jos 7.19, Ps 51.
14. 2 Cor 2.7-8, Gal 6.1-2.

Chapter 16

Good Works

1. Good works are only those works identified as good by God and commanded by him in his holy word.¹ They do not include other works, no matter how well-intentioned in design or zealously promoted by men.²

1. Mi 6.8, Rom 12.2, Heb 13.21, Dt 12.32, Ps 119.9, Mt 28.20, Lk 10.25-26, 2 Pt 1.19.
2. Mt 15.9, Is 29.13, 1 Pt 1.18, Rom 10.2, Jn 16.2, 1 Sm 15.21-23, Col 2.16-17, 20-23, Dt 10.12-13.

2. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruit and evidence of a true and living faith.³ By them believers show their thankfulness,⁴ strengthen their assurance of salvation,⁵ edify their brothers in the Lord,⁶ and become ornaments of all those who profess the gospel.⁷ Good works in believers silence the criticism of the enemies of the gospel.⁸ They also glorify God⁹ by showing that believers are the workmanship and creation of Jesus Christ,¹⁰ because their aim is that holiness of living which leads to eternal life.¹¹

3. Jas 2.18, 22.
4. Ps 116.12-13, 1 Pt 2.9, Col 3.17, 1 Chr 29.6-9.
5. 1 Jn 2.3, 5, 2 Pt 1.5-10.
6. 2 Cor 9.2, Mt 5.16, 1 Tm 4.12.
7. Ti 2.5, 9-12, 1 Tm 6.1.
8. 1 Pt 2.15.
9. 1 Pt 2.12, Phil 1.11, Jn 15.8.
10. Eph 2.10.
11. Rom 6.22.

3. Believers get the ability to do good works entirely from the Spirit of Christ.¹² In addition to the other particular effects of God's grace already received, believers must be directed by the Holy Spirit in order to will and to do what pleases God.¹³ However, they are not therefore to grow spiritually lazy, waiting for some special guidance from the Spirit before doing anything commanded by God. Rather, they should diligently attempt to identify what good works God has commanded in his word and then try their best to do all of them, praying earnestly and daily for the empowering and enabling of the Holy Spirit, who lives in them.¹⁴

12. Jn 15.4-6, Ez 36.26-27, Lk 11.13.
13. Phil 2.13, 4.13, 2 Cor 3.5, Eph 3.16.
14. Phil 2.12, Heb 6.11-12, 2 Pt 1.3, 5, 10-11, Is 64.7, 2 Tm 1.6, Acts 26.6-7, Jude 20-21.

4. Those believers who do the best that can be done in obeying God in this life can never do more or even as much as he requires. Indeed they fall short of much which they are bound to do.¹⁵

15. Lk 17.10, Neh 13.22, Jb 9.2-3, Gal 5.17.

Good Works

5. We cannot, of course, by our best works deserve to be forgiven for our sins and to receive eternal life from God. There is that great disproportion between our best works in this life and the glory which is going to be revealed in us, and there is the infinite distance between us and God, who does not profit from our best works and is not satisfied by them for the debt of our previous sins.¹⁶ When we have done all we can, we have only done our duty and are unprofitable servants.¹⁷ Since the goodness of our best works in fact proceeds from his Spirit¹⁸ and since, insofar as they are done by us, our best works are defiled and mixed with our weakness and imperfection, they cannot therefore even stand the scrutiny of God's judgment.¹⁹

16. Rom 3.20, 4.2,4,6, Eph 2.8-9, Ti 3.5-7, Rom 8.18,22-24, Ps 16.2, Jb 22.2-3, 35.7-8.

17. Lk 17.10; see citations under 15 above.

18. Gal 5.22-23.

19. Is 64.6, Gal 5.17, Rom 7.15,18, Ps 143.2, 130.3.

6. Nevertheless, since the persons of believers are accepted through Christ, their good works in this life are also accepted in him.²⁰ It is not as though they were perfect in God's sight²¹ but that God, looking on them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward what is sincerely done, even though accompanied by much weakness and imperfection.²²

20. Eph 1.6, 1 Pt 2.5, Ex 28.38, Gn 4.4, Heb 11.4.

21. Jb 9.20, Ps 143.2, 1 Cor 4.3-4.

22. Heb 13.20-21, 2 Cor 8.12, Heb 6.10, Mt 25.21,23.

7. Works done by people who have not been spiritually reborn may be the same as those commanded by God and may be of good use to them and to others.²³ However, since they do not proceed from a heart purified by faith,²⁴ are not done in the right way, i.e., in response to God's word,²⁵ and are not done for the right purpose, the glory of God,²⁶ they are therefore sinful and cannot please God or make a person fit to receive grace from God.²⁷ Nevertheless, it is more sinful and displeasing to God not to do such works than to do them.²⁸

23. 2 Kgs 10.30-31, 1 Kgs 21.27,29, Phil 1.15-16,18.

24. Gn 4.3-5, Heb 11.4,6.

25. 1 Cor 13.3, Is 1.12, Mk 10.20-21.

26. Mt 6.2,5,16, Rom 14.23.

27. Hg 2.14, Ti 1.15, Am 5.21-22, Hos 1.4, Rom 9.16, Ti 3.5, Prv 15.8, 28.9, Mk 7.6-7.

28. Ps 14.4, 36.3, Jb 21.14-15, Mt 25.41-45, 23.23, 25.24-28.

Chapter 17

The Perseverance of the Saints

1. Those whom God has accepted in his Son and has effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit can never completely or finally fall out of their state of grace. Rather, they shall definitely continue in that state to the end and are eternally saved.¹

1. Phil 1.6, 2 Pt 1.10, Jn 10.28-29, 1 Jn 3.9, 1 Pt 1.5,9, Jb 17.9, Jer 32.40.

2. This endurance of the saints does not depend on their own free will but on God's unchangeable decree of election, flowing from his voluntary, unchangeable love.² It also depends on the effectiveness of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ,³ on the indwelling Spirit and indwelling seed of God in the saints,⁴ and on the nature of the covenant of grace.⁵ All these establish the certainty and infallibility of their preservation.⁶

2. 2 Tm 2.18-19, Jer 31.3, Eph 1.4-5, Jn 13.1, Rom 8.35-39.

3. Heb 10.10,14, 13.20-21, 9.12-15, Rom 8.32-39, Jn 17.11,24, Lk 22.32, Heb 7.25.

4. Jn 14.16-17, 1 Jn 2.27, 3.9.

5. Jer 32.40, Heb 8.10-12.

6. Jn 10.28, 2 Thes 3.3, 1 Jn 2.19, 1 Thes 5.23-24, Heb 6.17-20.

3. Nevertheless, the temptations of Satan, the world, and their old carnal nature, along with neglect of the means of their preservation, may lead believers to commit serious sins and to continue in them for a time.⁷ They consequently displease God⁸ and grieve his Holy Spirit,⁹ have some of the fruit of God's grace and his comforts taken away from them,¹⁰ have their hearts hardened¹¹ and their consciences wounded,¹² hurt and offend others,¹³ and bring temporal judgments on themselves.¹⁴

7. Mt 26.70,72,74, Ps 51.Title and verse 14, 2 Sm 12.9,13.

8. Is 64.5,7,9, 2 Sm 11.27.

9. Eph 4.30.

10. Ps 51.8,10,12, Rv 2.4, Sg 5.2-4, 6.

11. Is 36.17, Mk 6.52, 16.14, Ps 95.8.

12. Ps 32.3-4, 51.8.

13. 2 Sm 12.14, Ez 16.54.

14. Ps 89.31-32, 1 Cor 11.32, 2 Sm 12.10.

Chapter 18

The Assurance of Grace and Salvation

1. Hypocrites and other unregenerate men may deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions about their being in God's favor and about their being saved.¹ Their presumptions will die with them.² However, those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus, who honestly love him and try to walk in good conscience before him, may in this life be assured with certainty that they are in a state of grace.³ They may also rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, and they will never be ashamed of that hope.⁴

1. Jb 8.13-14, Mi 3.11, Dt 29.19, Jn 8.41.
2. Mt 7.22-23, Jb 8.13.
3. 1 Jn 2.3, 3.14, 18-19, 21, 24, 5.13, 2 Tm 1.12.
4. Rom 5.2, 5; see citations under 3 above; 2 Tm 4.7-8.

2. This certainty is not based on the fallible hope of guesswork or probabilities. Rather, it is the infallible assurance of faith,⁵ established on the divine truth of the promises of salvation.⁶ There is also the inner evidence of spiritual insight, given to us by God, to which these promises are directed.⁷ And there is the testimony of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God.⁸ This Spirit is the pledge of our inheritance. By him we are sealed until the day of redemption.⁹

5. Heb 6.11-12, 19; see citations under 3 and 4 above.
6. Heb 6.17-18, 2 Pt 1.4-5.
7. 2 Pt 1.4-5, 10-11, 1 Jn 2.3, 3.14, 2 Cor 1.12.
8. Rom 8.15-16.
9. Eph 1.13-14, 4.30, 2 Cor 1.21-22.

3. This infallible assurance is not so essential to faith that a true believer may not have doubts and conflicts about it, possibly wait some time for it, and grow into it.¹⁰ But since the Spirit enables believers to know the things which are freely given to them by God, every believer may come to a full assurance of salvation by the ordinary working of the Spirit without unusual revelation.¹¹ Therefore it is every believer's duty to establish the certainty of his calling and election¹² so that his heart may be filled with peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, with love and thankfulness to God, and with strength and cheerfulness of obedience. These are the true products of assurance,¹³ which is never conducive to an undisciplined life.¹⁴

10. 1 Jn 5.13, Is 50.10, Mk 9.24, Ps 88, 77.1-20, 73.
11. 1 Cor 2.12, 1 Jn 4.13, Heb 6.11-12, Eph 3.17-19, Ps 77.10-20, 73, see citations under Section 2 above.
12. 2 Pt 1.10.
13. Rom 5.1-2, 5, 14.17, 15.13, Eph 1.3-4, Ps 4.6-7, 119.32.
14. 1 Jn 2.1-2, Rom 6.1-2, Ti 2.11-12, 14, 2 Cor 7.1, Rom 8.1, 12, 1 Jn 3.2-3, Ps 130.4, 1 Jn 1.6-7, 2 Pt 1.10.

The Assurance of Grace and Salvation

4. The assurance true believers have of their salvation may be shaken, lessened, or interrupted for various reasons: from neglecting to preserve it; from committing some particular sin, which wounds the conscience and grieves the Spirit; from some sudden or strong temptation; or from God's withdrawing the sense of his presence and allowing them to walk in darkness.¹⁵ Nevertheless, they are never completely without God's seed, the life of faith, the love of Christ and of other believers, and the sincere heart and obedient conscience, out of which the Spirit may revive this assurance in due time¹⁶ and by which they are in the meantime kept from complete despair.¹⁷

15. Sg 5.2-3, 6, Ps 51.8,12,14, Eph 4.30-31, Ps 77.1-10, Mt 26.69-72, Ps 31.22, Ps 88, Is 50.10.

16. 1 Jn 3.9, Lk 22.32, Jb 13.15, Ps 73.15, Ps 51.8,12, Is 50.10.

17. Mi 7.7-9, Jer 52.40, Is 54.7-10, Ps 22.1, 88, 2 Cor 4.8-10.

Chapter 19

The Law of God

1. God gave Adam a law as a covenant of works. He required Adam and all his descendants to obey this law, individually, completely, perpetually, and in precise accordance with its provisions. God promised life for keeping it and threatened death for disobeying it, and he gave man the power and ability to keep it.¹

1. Gn 1.26-27, 2.17, Rom 2.14-15, 10.5, 5.12,19, Gal 3.10,12, Eccl 7.29, Jb 28.28, Eph 4.24.

2. After the fall this law continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness and was given, as such, by God on Mount Sinai in the Ten Commandments, written on two tablets.² The first four commandments establish our obligations to God and the remaining six our obligations to human beings.³

2. Jas 1.25, 2.8,10-12, Rom 13.8-9, Dt 5.32, 10.4, Ex 34.1, Rom 3.19, Gal 3.12, Hos 6.7, Gn 2.16-17; compare Rom 5.12-14, 1 Cor 15.22, Lk 10.25-28, and the covenants made with Noah and Abraham; Gn 1.26, Dt 30.19, Jn 7.17, Rv 22.17, Jas 1.14.

3. Mt 22.37-40, Ex 20.3-18.

3. In addition to this law, ordinarily called the moral law, it pleased God to give the people of Israel, as a pre-Christian assembly of believers, ceremonial laws, containing many typical ordinances. Some of these ordinances pertain to worship and foreshadow Christ, his grace, actions, suffering, and the benefits to be had from believing in him.⁴ The rest of these ordinances contain various instructions about moral duties.⁵ All of these ceremonial laws are now nullified under the New Testament.⁶

4. Heb 9, 10.1, Gal 4.1-3, Col 2.17.

5. 1 Cor 5.7, 2 Cor 6.17, Jude 23; see Lv 5.1-6, 6.1-7, and similar passages, Ex 12.14.

6. Col 2.14,16-17, Dn 9.27, Eph 2.15-16, Mk 7.18-19, Gal 2.4.

4. God also gave the Israelites, as a political body, various judicial laws. These expired with the state of Israel and make no further obligation on God's people than seems appropriate in contemporary legal codes.⁷

7. Ex 21, 22.1-29, Gn 49.10, 1 Pt 2.13-14, Mt 5.17,38-39, 1 Cor 9.8-10.

5. The moral law, however, does pertain to everyone, saved and unsaved, forever, not just with respect to its content but also in relationship to the authority of God, the Creator, who gave it.⁸ In the gospel Christ does not in any way remove this obligation, but rather strengthens it.⁹

8. Rom 13.8-10, Eph 6.2, 1 Jn 2.3-4,7-8, Rom 3.31, 6.15, Jas 2.8,10-11; see citations under Section 2 above, Rom 3.19.

9. Mt 5.17-19, Jas 2.8, Rom 3.31.

The Law of God

6. Although true believers are not justified or condemned by the law as a covenant of works,¹⁰ the law is nevertheless very useful to them and to others. As a rule of life, it informs them of God's will and of their obligation to obey it.¹¹ It also reveals to them the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts, and lives,¹² so that, examining themselves from its point of view, they may become more convinced of the presence of sin in them, more humiliated on account of that sin, and hate sin the more.¹³ Thus they gain a better awareness of their need for Christ and for the perfection of his obedience.¹⁴ The prohibitions against sin¹⁵ in the law are also useful in restraining believers from pursuing the desires of their old nature, and the punishments for disobedience in the law show them what their sins deserve and what afflictions they may expect for them in this life, even though they have been freed from the curse threatened in the law.¹⁶ The promises of the law similarly show them that God approves obedience and that blessings may be expected for obedience,¹⁷ although not as their due from the law as a covenant of works.¹⁸ The fact that the law encourages doing good and discourages doing evil does not mean that a person who does good and refrains from evil is under the law and not under grace.¹⁹

10. Rom 6.14, Gal 2.16, 3.13, 4.4-5, Acts 13.39, Rom 8.1.

11. Rom 7.12,22,25, Ps 119.4-6, 1 Cor 7.19, Gal 5.14,16,18-23.

12. Rom 7.7, 3.20.

13. Jas 1.23-25, Rom 7.9,14,24.

14. Gal 3.24, Rom 7.24-25, 8.3-4.

15. Jas 2.11, Ps 119.101,104,128.

16. Ezr 9.13-14, Ps 89.30-34.

17. Lv 26.1-14, 2 Cor 6.16, Eph 6.2-3, Ps 37.11, Mt 5.5, Ps 19.11.

18. Gal 2.16, Lk 17.10.

19. Rom 6.12,14, 1 Pt 3.8-12, Ps 34.12-16, Heb 12.28-29.

7. None of these uses of the law is contrary to the grace of the gospel. They rather beautifully comply with it,²⁰ because the Spirit of Christ subdues and enables the will of man to do voluntarily and cheerfully what the will of God, revealed in the law, requires to be done.²¹

20. Gal 3.21, Ti 2.11-14; see citations under Section 6 above.

21. Ez 36.27, Heb 8.10, Jer 31.33; see citations under Chapter 10 Section 1, Gal 3.13.

Chapter 20

Christian Freedom and Freedom of Conscience

1. Christ has purchased for believers under the gospel freedom from the guilt of sin, from the condemning wrath of God, and from the curse of the moral law.¹ He has also freed them from the evil world we live in, from enslavement to Satan, from the dominion of sin,² the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the grave, and from everlasting damnation.³ In Christ believers have free access to God⁴ and can obey him, not out of slavish fear, but with a childlike love and a willing mind.⁵ All these freedoms were also held by believers under the law.⁶ However, under the New Testament, the liberty of Christians has been enlarged to include freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish church was subjected.⁷ Christians also have greater boldness of access to the throne of grace⁸ and a fuller gift of the Spirit of God than believers ordinarily had under the law.⁹

1. Ti 2.14, 1 Thes 1.10, Gal 3.13, Rom 8.1.
2. Gal 1.4, Col 1.13, Acts 26.18, Rom 6.14, 1 Jn 1.7.
3. Rom 8.28, Ps 119.71, 1 Cor 15.54-57, Rom 8.1.
4. Rom 5.1-2, Eph 2.18, 3.12, Heb 10.19.
5. Rom 8.14-15, 1 Jn 4.18, Eph 2.18, Gal 4.6, Heb 10.19.
6. Gal 3.9, 14; see citations under Chapter 8, Section 6.
7. Gal 4.1-3, 6-7, 5.1, Acts 15.10-11.
8. Heb 4.14, 16, 10.19-22.
9. Jn 7.38-39, 2 Cor 3.13, 17-18, Rom 5.5.

2. God alone is Lord of the conscience and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any way contrary to or different from his word in matters of faith or worship.¹⁰ And so, believing any such teachings or obeying any such commandments of men for conscience's sake actually betrays true freedom of conscience.¹¹ Requiring implicit or absolute, blind obedience also destroys freedom of conscience as well as the free use of reason.¹²

10. Jas 4.12, Rom 14.4, 10, Acts 4.19, 5.29, 1 Cor 7.23, Mt 23.8-10, 2 Cor 1.24, Mt 15.9.
11. Col 2.20-23, Gal 1.10, 5.1, 2.3-5, Ps 5.1, Gal 4.9-10.
12. Rom 10.17, 14.23, Is 8.20, Acts 17.11, Jn 4.22, Hos 5.11, Rv 13.12, 16-17, Jer 8.9, 1 Pt 3.15.

3. Those who practice any sin or nourish any sinful desire on the pretext of Christian freedom destroy the whole purpose of Christian freedom, which is, that, having been rescued out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear and in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives.¹³

13. Gal 5.13, 1 Pt 2.16, 2 Pt 2.19, Jn 8.34, Lk 1.74-75, Rom 6.15, 2 Pt 3.15.

Christian Freedom and Freedom of Conscience

4. God intends that the authorities he has ordained on earth and the freedom Christ has purchased should not destroy but mutually uphold and preserve each other. And so, those who oppose any lawful power or the lawful exercise of power, whether civil or ecclesiastical, on the pretext of Christian freedom, are actually resisting God.¹⁴ The support, promotion, or practice of such opposition, which contradicts natural understanding or the known principles of Christianity on matters of faith, worship, and associations, which denies the power of godliness, or which disrupts the peace and unity among believers, should lawfully be called to account and proceeded against by the church.¹⁵

14. Mt 12.25, 1 Pt 2.13-14,16, Rom 13.1-8, Heb 13.17.

15. Rom 1.32, 1 Cor 5.1,5,11-13, 2 Jn 5.10-11, 2 Thes 3.14, 1 Tm 6.3-5, Ti 1.10-11,13, 3.10, Mt 18.15-18, 1 Tm 1.19-20, Rv 2.14-15,20, 3.9, Rom 16.17, 2 Thes 3.6, Dt 13.6-12, Rom 13.3-4, 2 Jn 5.10-11, Ezr 7.23-28, Rv 17.12,16-17, Neh 13.15,17,21- 22,25,30, 2 Kgs 23.5-6,9,20-21, 2 Chr 34.33, 15.12-13,16, Dn 3.29, 1 Tm 2.2, Is 49.23, Zech 13.2-3.

Chapter 21

Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

1. Natural understanding reveals that there is a God, who is lord and sovereign over everything, who is good and does good to everyone, and who is therefore to be held in awe, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served with all our heart, soul, and might.¹ The acceptable way of worshiping the true God is established by God himself. God's revealed will so defines and outlines proper worship that neither the imaginations and devices of men nor the suggestions of Satan are to be followed. God is not to be worshiped under any visible representation or in any other way than that prescribed in Holy Scripture.²

1. Rom 1.19-20, Acts 17.24, Ps 119.68, Jer 10.7, Ps 31.23, 18.3, Rom 10.12, Ps 62.8, Jos 24.14, Mk 12.33, Ps 19.1-6, Acts 14.17.
2. Dt 12.32, Mt 15.9, Acts 17.24-25, Mt 4.9-10, Dt 4.15-20, Ex 20.4-6, Col 2.20-23, Jn 4.23-24.

2. Religious worship is to be given to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and only to him,³ not to angels, saints, or any other creature.⁴ Since the fall this worship must involve a mediator, and there is no other mediator than Christ alone.⁵

3. Mt 4.10, Jn 5.23, 2 Cor 13.14, Rv 5.11-14, Mt 28.19.
4. Col 2.18, Rv 19.10, Rom 1.25.
5. Jn 14.6, 1 Tm 2.5, Eph 2.18, Col 3.17.

3. Prayer with thanksgiving is one part of religious worship⁶ and is required by God from all men.⁷ In order for prayer to be accepted, it must be made in the name of Jesus,⁸ by the help of his Spirit,⁹ according to his will,¹⁰ with understanding, reverence, humility, fervor, faith, love, and perseverance,¹¹ and, if vocal, in a known tongue.¹²

6. Phil 4.6, 1 Tm 2.1, Col 4.2.
7. Ps 65.2, Lk 18.1, 1 Tm 2.8, Ps 67.3, 1 Thes 5.17-18.
8. Jn 14.13-14, 1 Pt 2.5.
9. Rom 8.26, Eph 6.18.
10. 1 Jn 5.14.
11. Ps 47.7, Eccl 5.1-2, Heb 12.28, Gn 18.27, Jas 5.16, 1.6-7, Mk 11.24, Mt 6.12, 14-15, Col 4.2, Eph 6.18.
12. 1 Cor 14.14.

4. Prayer is to be made for lawful things¹³ and for people who are alive or may be born,¹⁴ but not for the dead,¹⁵ nor for those who are known to have committed the sin unto death.¹⁶

13. 1 Jn 5.14, Mt 26.42.
14. 1 Tm 2.1-2, Jn 17.20, 2 Sm 7.29, Ru 4.12.
15. 2 Sm 12.21-23, Lk 16.25-26, Rv 14.13; this statement is based on the absence of any command to pray for the dead, and of any example in the Scripture of such prayer, 1 Jn 5.14.
16. 1 Jn 5.16.

Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

5. The ordinary worship of God includes: the reverent and attentive reading of the Scriptures,¹⁷ the sound preaching¹⁸ and conscientious hearing of the word in obedience to God with understanding and faith;¹⁹ singing of psalms with grace in the heart;²⁰ and the proper administration and right receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ.²¹ Then there are religious oaths²² and vows,²³ solemn fasting,²⁴ and thanksgiving on special occasions.²⁵ Worship should include these at appropriate times, and they should be performed in a holy and religious manner.²⁶

17. Acts 15.21, Rv 1.3, Acts 17.11.

18. 2 Tm 4.2.

19. Jas 1.22, Acts 10.33, Mt 13.19, Heb 4.2, Is 66.2.

20. Col 3.16, Eph 5.19, Jas 5.13, Acts 16.25.

21. Mt 28.19, 1 Cor 11.23-29, Acts 2.42.

22. Dt 6.13, Neh 10.29.

23. Is 19.21, Eccl 5.4-5, Acts 18.18, Ps 116.14, Neh 10.29.

24. Jl 2.12, Est 4.16, Mt 9.15, 1 Cor 7.5, Mt 6.17-18.

25. Ps 107, Est 9.22, Neh 12.31-43.

26. Heb 12.28, Jn 4.24, Heb 10.22.

6. Under the gospel neither prayer nor any other part of religious worship is tied to or made more acceptable by being performed in any particular place.²⁷ God is to be worshiped everywhere²⁸ in spirit and in truth;²⁹ in private families³⁰ daily;³¹ privately by individuals daily;³² and regularly in solemn public gatherings, which are not to be carelessly or willfully neglected or forsaken, since God calls us to join other believers in public worship.³³

27. Jn 4.21.

28. Mal 1.11, 1 Tm 2.8.

29. Jn 4.23-24.

30. Jer 10.25, Dt 6.6-7, Jb 1.5, 2 Sm 6.8-18, 20, 1 Pt 3.7, Acts 10.2.

31. Mt 6.11, Jos 24.15, Dn 6.10.

32. Mt 6.6, Eph 6.18, Neh 1.4-11.

33. Is 56.7, Heb 10.25, Prv 1.20-21, 24, 8.34, Acts 13.42, Lk 4.16, Acts 2.42.

7. It is a law of our natural, earthly life that some appropriate amount of time be set aside for the worship of God. In his word God has similarly commanded all men in every age to keep one day in seven holy unto him as a Sabbath.³⁴ From the beginning of the world up to the resurrection of Christ, this Sabbath was the last day of the week. Since the resurrection of Christ it has been changed to the first day of the week, called the Lord's day in Scripture, and is to be continued until the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath.³⁵

34. Ex 20.8-11, Is 56.2,4,6-7.

35. Gn 2.2-3, 1 Cor 16.1-2, Acts 20.7, Rv 1.10, Ex 20.8,10, Mt 5.17-18; these texts are cited in connection with the example of the apostles and the early church.

8. The Sabbath is kept holy unto the Lord when men prepare their hearts for it; arrange for their daily affairs to be taken care of beforehand; rest the whole day from their own works and words, and from thoughts about their worldly activities and recreations;³⁶ and take up the whole time in public and private worship and in the duties of necessity and mercy.³⁷

36. Ex 20.8, 16.23, 25-26,29-30, 31.15-17, Is 58.13, Neh 13.15-22, Lk 23.56.

37. Is 58.13, Mt 12.1-13.

Chapter 22

Lawful Oaths and Vows

1. Lawful oaths are part of religious worship.¹ On proper occasions believers may solemnly swear and call God to witness that what they assert or promise is true, and they may ask God to judge them according to the truth or falsehood of what they swear.²

1. Dt 10.20.

2. Ex 20.7, Lv 19.12, 2 Cor 1.23, 2 Chr 6.22-23

2. The name of God is the only name by which men should swear, and that name is to be used with holy awe and reverence.³ Therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and mighty name or to swear at all by any other name is sinful and to be abhorred.⁴ Just as in important matters an oath is warranted by the word of God, under the New as well as the Old Testament, so a lawful oath, required by legitimate authority in such matters ought to be taken.⁵

3. Dt 6.13.

4. Ex 20.7, Jer 5.7, Mt 5.34,37, Jas 5.12.

5. Heb 6.16, 2 Cor 1.23, Is 65.16, 1 Kgs 8.31, Neh 13.25, Ezr 10.5, Mt 26.63-64.

3. Whoever takes an oath ought to consider fully the importance of such a solemn act, and so he should swear to nothing but what he is completely convinced is true. No one may bind himself by an oath to anything but what is good and just, to what he believes to be true, and to what he is able and determined to perform. It is a sin to refuse to swear an oath about anything good and just, when it is required by lawful authority.⁶

6. Ex 20.7, Jer 4.2, Gn 24.2-3,5-6,8-9, Nm 5.19,21, Neh 5.12, Ex 22.7-11; see citations under Section 2 above.

4. An oath is to be taken in the plain, ordinary sense of the words used, without any equivocation or mental reservation.⁷ It cannot obligate one to sin; but once taken about anything not sinful, it must be performed, even to one's own harm,⁸ and must not be broken, even if made to heretics or atheists.⁹

7. Jer 4.2, Ps 24.4, Ex 20.7.

8. 1 Sm 25.22, 32-34, Ps 15.4.

9. Ez 17.16,1 8-19, Jos 9.18-19, 2 Sm 21.1.

5. A vow is similar to an oath promising something and should be made with similar religious care and performed with similar faithfulness.¹⁰

10. Is 19.21, Eccl 5.4-6, Ps 61.8, 66.13-14, Dt 23.21,23.

6. A vow should be made to no one but God.¹¹ In order to be accepted it should be made voluntarily in a faithful and conscientious way as thanks for mercy received or as means of getting what we want. A vow binds us more strictly to necessary duties or to other things to such an extent and for as long as is appropriate.¹²

11. Ps 76.11, Jer 44.25-26.

12. Dt 23.21,23, Ps 50.14, Gn 28.20-22, 1 Sm 1.11, Ps 66.13-14, 132.2-5.

Lawful Oaths and Vows

7. No one may vow to do anything forbidden in the word of God, anything hindering a duty commanded in the word, or anything not in his own power, which he has neither the ability nor warrant from God to perform.¹³ In this respect monastic vows of perpetual celibacy, professed poverty, and consistent obedience do not perfect us but are actually superstitious, sinful traps, in which no Christian should entangle himself.¹⁴

13. Acts 23.12,14, Mk 6.26, Nm 30.5, 8, 12-13.

14. Mt 19.11-12, 1 Cor 7.2,9, Eph 4.28, 1 Pt 4.2, 1 Cor 7.23, 1 Thes 4.11-12.

Chapter 23

Civil Authorities

1. God, the supreme Lord and King of the whole world, has ordained civil authorities to be over people under him for his own glory and the public good. For this purpose he has armed civil authorities with the power of the sword to defend and encourage those who are good and to punish wrongdoers.¹

1. Rom 13.1-4, 1 Pt 2.13-14

2. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute offices of civil authority when that is their calling.² In the administration of such offices they should take care to support true religion, justice, and peace, according to the beneficial laws of each government,³ and in so doing they may lawfully under the New Testament wage war on just and necessary occasions.⁴

2. Prv 8.15-16, Rom 13.1-4; see citations under Section 1 above.

3. Ps 2.10-12, 1 Tm 2.2, Ps 82.3-4, 2 Sm 23.3, 1 Pt 2.13, Ps 101; see citations under Section 1 above.

4. Lk 3.14, Rom 13.1-4, Mt 8.9-10, Acts 10.1-2, Rv 17.14,16.

3. Civil authorities may not take on themselves the ministering of God's word and the sacraments, the administration of spiritual power, or any interference with matters of faith.⁵ Nevertheless it is the duty of civil authorities to protect the church of our Lord, without giving preference to any denomination of Christians, so that every person with church affiliations or duties will be able to function with complete and unquestioned freedom. Since Jesus Christ has directed the establishment of regular government and discipline in his church, no law of any civil government should interfere with, abridge, or hinder the proper exercise of church government among the voluntary members of Christian denominations, acting in accordance with their own professed beliefs. It is the duty of civil authorities to protect the person and good name of everyone so that none are abused, injured, or insulted on account of religious faith or lack of it.⁶ It is also their duty to see to it that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies are held without disturbance.⁷

5. 2 Chr 26.18, Mt 18.17, 16.19, 1 Cor 12.28-29, Eph 4.11-12, 1 Cor 4.1-2, Rom 10.15, Heb 5.4, Jn 18.36, Acts 5.29.

6. Is 49.23, Ps 122.9, Ezr 7.23-28, Lv 24.16, Dt 13.5-6,12, 2 Kgs 18.4, 1 Chr 13.1-9, 2 Kgs 23.1-26, 2 Chr 34.33, 15.12-13, Rom 13.1-6, Ps 105.15, Acts 18.14-16.

7. 2 Chr 19.8-11, 29 and 30, Mt 2.4-5, 2 Sm 23.3, Rom 13.4; see General Note.

Civil Authorities

4. It is people's duty to pray for those in authority,⁸ to honor them,⁹ to pay them taxes and whatever is owed them,¹⁰ to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to them for conscience's sake.¹¹ Unbelief or different religious views on the part of civil authorities does not mean that they are to be disobeyed by believers, including clergymen,¹² in the legitimate pursuit of their duties.¹³ The Pope, of course, has no power or jurisdiction over civil authorities or the people under them in secular affairs. The Pope never has any right to usurp secular authority, particularly capital punishment in cases of what is judged to be heresy or any other fault.¹⁴

8. 1 Tm 2.1-3.

9. 1 Pt 2.17.

10. Rom 13.6-7, Mt 22.21.

11. Rom 13.5, Ti 3.1.

12. Rom 13.1, 1 Kgs 2.35, Acts 25.9-11, 2 Pt 2.1, 10-11, Jude 8-11.

13. 1 Pt 2.13-14, 16; this is an inference from the duties just stated.

14. 2 Thes 2.4, Rv 13.15-17, 2 Tm 2.24, 1 Pt 5.3; this is an inference from the doctrine of the civil magistrate, and from duties incumbent on believers with respect to him.

Chapter 24

Marriage and Divorce

1. Marriage is a union between one man and one woman, designed of God to last so long as they both shall live.¹

1. Gn 2.23-24, 1 Cor 7.2,39, Mt 19.4-6, Eph 5.28,31,33, 1 Cor 13.8,13, Mt 5.31-32, Mk 10.5-9, Rom 7.2-3.

2. Marriage is designed for the mutual help of husband and wife;² for the safeguarding, undergirding, and development of their moral and spiritual character;³ for the propagation of children and the rearing of them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.⁴

2. Gn 2.18,24.

3. Gn 1.27-28, Eph 5.22-23, Col 3.18-19, Gn 2.18-25, 1 Cor 7.3-5, 9, 36.

4. Gn 1.27-28, 9.1, Mal 2.15, Mt 18.5-6,10,14, 19.14, Eph 6.1-4, Col 3.20-21, Mk 10.13-16, Lk 18.15-17.

3. All persons who are able with judgment to give their consent may marry,⁵ except within the limits of blood relationship forbidden by Scripture,⁶ and such marriages are valid before God in the eyes of the church.⁷ But no marriage can be fully and securely Christian in spirit or in purpose unless both partners are committed to a common Christian faith and to a deeply shared intention of building a Christian home. Evangelical Christians should seek as partners in marriage only persons who hold in common a sound basis of evangelical faith.⁸

5. Gn 1.27-28.

6. Mk 6.18, 1 Cor 5.1, Lv 18.6-18.

7. Mk 1.30, Jn 2.1-2, 1 Tm 5.14, Heb 13.4, 1 Cor 7.7,36, 9.5, 1 Tm 4.3.

8. 1 Cor 7, esp. v. 39, 2 Cor 6.14-15.

4. Marriage for the Christian has religious as well as civil significance.⁹ The distinctive contribution of the church in performing the marriage ceremony is to affirm the divine institution of marriage;¹⁰ to invoke God's blessing upon those who enter into the marital relationship in accordance with his word;¹¹ to hear the vows of those who desire to be married; and to assure the married partners of God's grace within their new relationship.¹²

9. Prv 18.22, Mt 19.6, Eph 5.29-30, 32, Mk 10.9, 11-12.

10. Gn 1.27-28.

11. Mk 10.9.

12. Eph 5.22-23.

5. It is the divine intention that persons entering the marriage covenant become inseparably united, thus allowing for no dissolution save that caused by the death of either husband or wife.¹³ However, the weaknesses of one or both partners may lead to gross and persistent denial of the marriage vows; yet only in cases of extreme, unrepented-of, and irremediable unfaithfulness (physical or spiritual) should separation or divorce be considered. Such separation or divorce is accepted as permissible only because of the failure of one or both of the partners, and does not lessen in any way the divine intention for indissoluble union.¹⁴

13. Gn 2.23-24, Mt 5.31-32, Mk 10.5-9, Rom 7.2-3, 1 Cor 7.2, 10-11,39, Eph 5.28,31,33, Mt 19.4-9, 1 Cor 13.4-13.

14. Mk 10.4-9, 1 Cor 7.12-13, 15, Mt 19.7-9.

Marriage and Divorce

6. The remarriage of divorced persons may be sanctioned by the church in keeping with the redemptive gospel of Christ, when sufficient penitence for sin and failure is evident, and a firm purpose of and endeavor after Christian marriage is manifested.¹⁵

15. 2 Sm 12.13, Neh 9.17, Ps 32.5, 130.4, Mt 12.31a, 21.31-32, Jn 8.3,11, Rom 3.23, Gal 6.1, 1 Tm 2.4, Heb 7.25, 1 Jn 1.9, 2.1-2, Lk 7.36-50, 15.11-32, Jn 3.16-17, Rom 10.9-10.

7. Divorced persons should give prayerful thought to discover if God's vocation for them is to remain unmarried, since one failure in this realm raises serious questions as to the rightness and wisdom of undertaking another union.¹⁶

16. Mt 5.31-32, 1 Cor 7.10-11, 20, 32-35, Mk 10.11, Lk 16.18.

Chapter 25

The Church

1. The catholic or universal church is invisible and consists of all the elect who have been, are, or ever will be gathered into one under Christ, the head. The church is his body and spouse, the fullness of God, who fills all in all.¹

1. Eph 1.10, 22-23, 5.23,27,32, Col 1.18.

2. The visible church is also catholic or universal under the gospel, i.e., it is not confined to one nation as previously under the Mosaic Law. It consists of everyone in the world who professes the true religion² together with their children.³ The visible church is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ⁴ and the house and family of God,⁵ outside of which people cannot ordinarily be saved.⁶

2. 1 Cor 1.2, 12.12-13, Ps 2.8, Rv 7.9, Rom 15.9-12.

3. 1 Cor 7.14, Acts 2.39, Ez 16.20-21, Rom 11.16, Gn 3.15, 17.7, Gal 3.7,9,14, Rom 4, Mk 10.13-16.

4. Mt 13.47, Is 9.7, Col 1.13, Mt 13.31, Ps 72.

5. Eph 2.19, 3.15, Prv 29.18.

6. Acts 2.47, Mt 28.19, Acts 2.38, 1 Cor 12.13, Mt 26.26-28,10.32-33.

3. In order to gather and perfect the saints in this life until the end of the world Christ has given the ministry, Scriptures, and ordinances of God to this universal visible church, and by his own presence and Spirit he enables the church to function in this way according to his promise.⁷

7. 1 Cor 12.23, Eph 4.11-13, Mt 28.19-20, Is 59.21.

4. This universal church has been sometimes more and sometimes less visible.⁸ Particular churches, which are members of it, are also more or less pure, depending on how the gospel is accepted and taught, how the ordinances of God are administered, and how public worship is performed.⁹

8. Rom 11.3-4, Rv 12.6,14, Acts 9.31.

9. Rv 2 and 3, 1 Cor 5.6-7, Acts 2.41-42.

5. The purest churches under heaven are subject both to impurity and error.¹⁰ Some churches have so degenerated that they are not churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan.¹¹ Nevertheless, there will always be a church on earth to worship God according to his will.¹²

10. 1 Cor 5, 13.12, Rv 2 and 3, Mt 13.24-30, 47-48, 1 Cor 1.2.

11. Rv 18.2, Rom 11.18-22, Rv 2.9.

12. Mt 16.18, Ps 102.28, Mt 28.19-20, Ps 72, 17.

6. There is no other head of the church than the Lord Jesus Christ.¹³

13. Col 1.18, Eph 1.22.

Chapter 26

The Fellowship of the Saints

1. All believers are united to Jesus Christ, their head, by his Spirit and by faith, and have fellowship with him in his grace, suffering, death, resurrection, and glory.¹ United to one another in love the saints have fellowship in each other's gifts and grace² and are obliged to perform those public and private duties which nourish their mutual good, both spiritually and physically.³

1. 1 Jn 1.3, Eph 3.16-19, Jn 1.16, Eph 2.5-6, Phil 3.10, Rom 6.5-6, 2 Tm 2.12, Rom 8.17.

2. Eph 4.15-16, 1 Cor 12.7, 3.21-23, Col 2.19, 1 Jn 1.3,7.

3. 1 Thes 5.11,14, Rom 1.11-12, 14, 1 Jn 3.16-18, Gal 6.10.

2. By their profession of faith saints are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion with each other in the worship of God and in the performance of other spiritual services for their mutual improvement.⁴ They are also bound to help each other in material things according to their different abilities and needs. This fellowship is to be offered, as God gives the opportunity, to everyone in every place who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus.⁵

4. Heb 10.24-25, Acts 2.42,46, Is 2.3, 1 Cor 11.20.

5. Acts 2.44-45, 1 Jn 3.17, 2 Cor 8 and 9, Acts 11.29-30.

3. This communion which the saints have with Christ in no way means that they share in his godhead or are equal with him in any respect—to affirm either is impious and blasphemous.⁶ Neither does their communion with each other take away or infringe the right each person has to own and possess goods and property.⁷

6. Col 1.18-19, 1 Cor 8.6, Is 42.8, 1 Tm 6.15-16, Ps 45.7, Heb 1.8-9, Ps 14.7.

7. Ex 20.15, Eph 4.28, Acts 5.4.

Chapter 27

The Sacraments

1. Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace. They were instituted by God along with that covenant¹ to represent Christ and his benefits, to confirm our position with and in him,² to demonstrate a visible difference between those who belong to the church and the rest of the world,³ and solemnly to engage believers in the service of God in Christ according to his word⁴

1. Rom 4.11, Gn 17.7, 9-11, Mt 28.19, 1 Cor 11.23, Ex 13.9-10, 12.3-20.

2. 1 Cor 10.16, 11.25-26, Gal 3.27.

3. Rom 15.8, Ex 12.48, Gn 34.14, 1 Cor 10.21, Heb 13.10, 1 Cor 11.27-29.

4. Rom 6.3-4, 1 Cor 10.2, 14-16, 21; see context.

2. In every sacrament there is a spiritual relationship or sacramental union between the sign and the thing signified. And so the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.⁵

5. Gn 17.10, Mt 26.27-28, Ti 3.5.

3. The grace revealed in or by sacraments in their right use does not come from any power in them. Neither does the effectiveness of a sacrament depend on the devoutness or the intention of whoever administers it. Rather the power and effectiveness of the sacraments are the result of the work of the Spirit⁶ and rest on God's word instituting them, since his word authorizes their use and promises benefits to worthy receivers of them.⁷

6. Rom 2.28-29, 1 Pt 3.21, Mt 3.11, 1 Cor 12.13, 3.7, 6.11, Jn 3.5, Acts 8.13-23.

7. Mt 26.27-28, 28.19-20, Jn 6.63, Lk 22.19-20, 1 Cor 11.26.

4. There are only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospel: baptism and the Lord's supper.⁸ Ordinarily, neither of these may be administered by anyone but a lawfully ordained minister of the word.⁹

8. Mt 28.19, 1 Cor 11.20,23, 4.1, Heb 5.4.

9. See General Note.

5. The sacraments of the Old Testament signify and reveal in substance the same spiritual things as those of the New.¹⁰

10. 1 Cor 10.1-4, 5.7-8, Col 2.11-12.

Chapter 28

Baptism

1. Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ.¹ By baptism a person is solemnly admitted into the visible church.² Baptism is also a sign and seal of the covenant of grace,³ of the believer's engrafting into Christ,⁴ of rebirth,⁵ of remission of sins,⁶ and of the believer's yielding to God through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life.⁷ By Christ's own direction this sacrament is to be continued in his church until the end of the world.⁸

1. Mt 28.19, Mk 16.16.
2. 1 Cor 12.13, Gal 3.27-28, Acts 2.41, 10.47.
3. Rom 4.11, Col 2.11-12, Gal 3.29.
4. Gal 3.27, Rom 6.3-5.
5. Ti 3.5.
6. Mk 1.4, Acts 2.38, 22.16.
7. Rom 6.3-4.
8. Mt 28.19-20.

2. The physical substance to be used in this sacrament is water. The person is to be baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit⁹ ordinarily by a lawfully called minister of the gospel.¹⁰

9. Mt 3.11, Jn 1.33, Mt 28.19-20, Acts 8.36,38, 10.47, Eph 4.11-13.
10. See General Note.

3. Dipping the person into the water is not necessary. Baptism is correctly administered by pouring or sprinkling water on the person.¹¹

11. Heb 9.10,19-22, Acts 2.41, 16.33, Mk 7.4, Acts 1.5, 2.3-4,17, 11.15-16, 10.46-47, 1 Cor 10.2.

4. Not only those who actually profess faith in and obedience to Christ are to be baptized¹² but also the infants of one or both believing parents.¹³

12. Mk 16.15-16, Acts 8.37-38; see citations under Section 1 above, Acts 9.18.
13. Gn 17.7,9-10, Gal 3.9,14, Col 2.11-12, Acts 2.38-39, Rom 4.11-12, 1 Cor 7.14, Mt 28.19, Mk 10.13-16, Lk 18.15-16, Acts 16.14-15,33.

5. Although it is a great sin to condemn or neglect this sacrament,¹⁴ baptism is not inseparably connected with God's grace and salvation. One can be saved and reborn without baptism,¹⁵ and, on the other hand, everyone who is baptized is not therefore unquestionably reborn.¹⁶

14. Lk 7.30, Ex 4.24-26, Gn 17.14, Dt 28.9.
15. Rom 4.11, Acts 10.2, 4, 22, 31, 45-47, Lk 23.40-43.
16. Acts 8.13,23.

6. The effectiveness of baptism is not tied to that moment in time in which it is administered.¹⁷ However, by the correct use of this sacrament the grace promised in it is not only offered but actually embodied and conferred by the Holy Spirit to everyone (adult or infant) to whom that grace is given, according to the purpose of God's own will and in his appointed time.¹⁸

17. Jn 3.5,8, Rom 4.11.
18. Gal 3.27, Ti 3.5, Eph 5.25-26, Acts 2.38-41, Eph 1.4-5, Acts 16.31,33.

7. The sacrament of baptism should be administered only once to a person.¹⁹

19. Ti 3.5; there is no command, and no adequate example for the repetition of baptism.

Chapter 29

The Lord's Supper

1. The night Jesus was betrayed he instituted the sacrament of his body and blood, called the Lord's supper, to be observed in his church until the end of the world as a perpetual remembrance of his sacrifice in death and as the seal of all the benefits of that sacrifice for true believers. It also signifies the spiritual nourishment and growth of believers in Jesus and their additional commitment to perform all the duties they owe him. Finally it is a bond and pledge of believers' communion with Jesus and with each other as members of his mystical body.¹

1. 1 Cor 11.23-26, 10.16-17, 21, 12.13, Mt 26.26-27, Lk 22.19-20.

2. In this sacrament Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor is any actual sacrifice made for the remission of sins of the living or the dead.² Rather, this sacrament commemorates Christ's offering up of himself, by himself, on the cross once for all, and it spiritually offers up to God every possible praise for that sacrifice.³ Consequently the so-called sacrifice of the Roman Catholic mass does detestable injustice to Christ's one sacrifice, which is the only propitiation for all the sins of the elect.⁴

2. Heb 9.22, 25-26, 28.

3. 1 Cor 11.24-26, Mt 26.26-27, Lk 22.19-20.

4. Heb 7.23-24, 27, 10.11-12, 14, 18.

3. In the administration of the Lord's supper Jesus has directed his ministers to declare to the congregation his words instituting this sacrament, to pray, and to bless the bread and wine, which are thus set apart from their ordinary use and put to holy use. His ministers are to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and (communicating themselves, too) to give both to the communicants—but not to anyone else not present at that time in the congregation.⁵

5. Mt 26.26-28, Mk 14.22-24, Lk 22.19-20, 1 Cor 11.23-27; see citations under Sections 1 and 2, Acts 20.7, 1 Cor 11.20.

4. Practices contrary to the nature of this sacrament and to the institution of it by Christ are private masses or receiving the sacrament alone from a priest or anyone else;⁶ denying the cup to the congregation;⁷ and worshiping the bread and wine themselves by lifting them up or carrying them around for adoration or reserving them for any counterfeit religious use.⁸

6. 1 Cor 10.6, 1 Tm 1.3-4.

7. Mk 4.23, 1 Cor 11.25-29.

8. Mt 15.9; there is not the least appearance of a warrant for any of these things, either in precept or example, in any part of the word of God; see all the places in which the ordinance is mentioned.

5. The bread and wine in this sacrament, properly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, so relate to him crucified that truly and yet only sacramentally they are sometimes called by the name of what they represent, that is, the body and blood of Christ.⁹ Even so, they still remain in substance and nature only bread and wine, as they were before their sacramental use.¹⁰

9. Mt 26.26-28.

10. 1 Cor 11.26-28, Mt 26.29.

6. The teaching that the substance of the bread and wine is changed into the substance of Christ's body and blood (usually called transubstantiation) by the consecration of a priest or any other means is objectionable not only to Scripture but even to common sense and reason. Such

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teaching overturns the nature of the sacrament and has been and is the cause of much superstition and indeed flagrant idolatry.¹¹

11. Acts 3.21, 1 Cor 11.24-26, Lk 24.6, 39; these statements are inferences from the doctrine of the sacraments and do not require specific Scripture proofs.

7. Worthy receivers, physically partaking of the visible substances of this sacrament, do then also by faith actually and in fact, but not physically or bodily, spiritually receive and feed on Christ crucified and on all the benefits of his death. The body and blood of Christ are not then bodily or physically in, with, or under the bread and wine; but they are actually spiritually present to the faith of believers in the administration of this sacrament, just as the bread and wine are physically present.¹²

12. 1 Cor 11.28, 5.7-8, 10.16,3-4, Jn 6.53,58; see note under Section 6 above.

8. Although ignorant or wicked men may partake of the physical substances in this sacrament, they do not receive what is signified by them. However, by their unworthy coming to the Lord's table they are guilty of his body and blood and bring judgment upon themselves. Therefore, just as the ignorant and ungodly are not fit to enjoy communion with Christ, neither are they worthy to come to the Lord's table, and, as long as they remain ignorant and ungodly, they cannot and must not be allowed to partake of the holy mystery of communion without committing a great sin against Christ.¹³

13. 1 Cor 11.27-29, 2 Cor 6.14-16, 1 Cor 10.21, 5.6-7,13, 2 Thes 3.6,14-15, Mt 7.6.

Chapter 30

Condemnation by the Church

1. As king and head of his church, the Lord Jesus has directed the establishment of church government, separate from civil authority, which is to be administered by officers of the church.¹

1. Is 9.6-7, 1 Tm 5.17, 1 Thes 5.12, Acts 20.17,28, Heb 13.7,17,24, 1 Cor 12.28, Mt 28.18-20, Ps 2.6-9, Jn 18.36.

2. To these officers are committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven, which empower them to free people from the guilt of sin or to bind them to it; to close the kingdom of heaven to the unrepentant by the word and condemnation; and to open the kingdom to repentant sinners by the ministry of the gospel and by withdrawing condemnation as the occasion demands.²

2. Mt 16.19, 18.17-18, Jn 20.21-23, 2 Cor 2.6-8.

3. Condemnation by the church is necessary in order to reclaim and regain spiritual brothers who have committed some serious offense; to deter others from committing similar offenses; to purge that leaven which might contaminate the whole lump; to vindicate the honor of Christ and the holy profession of the gospel; and to avoid the wrath of God, which might justly fall on the church, should it allow his covenant and the sacraments to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.³

3. 1 Cor 5, 1 Tm 5.20, Mt 7.6, 1 Tm 1.20, 1 Cor 11.27-34, Jude 23, 2 Sm 12.14.

4. The best way to accomplish these purposes is for the officers of the church to act in accordance with the severity of the offense and the guilt of the offender by warning the offender, excluding him from the sacrament of the Lord's supper for a time, or excommunicating him from the church.⁴

4. 1 Thes 5.12, 2 Thes 3.6,14-15, 1 Cor 5.4-5,13, Mt 18.17, Ti 3.10.

Chapter 31

Synods and Councils

1. The assemblies which are generally called synods or councils ought to be held for the better government and continuing improvement of the church. By virtue of their office and the power Christ has given them to build up and not destroy, the leaders of particular churches should arrange for such assemblies and meet together in them as often as is judged necessary for the good of the church. 1
 1. Acts 15.1-41, Rv 2.1-6, Acts 20.17,28, Is 49.23, 1 Tm 2.1-2, 2 Chr 19.8-11, 29-30, Mt 2.4-5, Prv 11.14, Acts 15, 20.17.
2. As far as the ministry is concerned, it is the responsibility of synods and councils to settle controversies of faith and cases relating to matters of conscience, to set down rules and directions for the better administration of the public worship of God and of church government, and to hear complaints in cases of maladministration and authoritatively to settle them. If these decisions conform to the word of God, they are to be accepted reverently and submissively, not only because they agree with the word but also because they rest on authority ordained and arranged by God in his word.2
 2. Acts 15.15,19,24,27-31, 16.4, Mt 18.17-20,29.
3. Since apostolic times all synods and councils, whether general or local, may make mistakes, and many have. Consequently synods and councils are not to be made a final authority in questions of faith and living but are to be used as an aid to both.3
 3. Eph 2.20, Acts 17.11, 1 Cor 2.5, 2 Cor 1.24; see General Note.
4. Synods and councils should consider and settle only ecclesiastical questions. They are not to meddle in civil affairs which concern the state except in extraordinary cases of modest petitions or in an advisory capacity prompted by religious conscience, when requested by civil authorities.4
 4. Lk 12.13-14, Jn 18.36, Mt 22.21.

Chapter 32

The Condition of Man after Death and the Resurrection of the Dead

1. After death the bodies of human beings decompose and return to dust,¹ but their souls, which do not die or sleep, have an immortal existence and immediately return to God who created them.² The souls of the righteous are then perfected in holiness and are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory and wait for the full redemption of their bodies.³ The souls of the wicked are thrown into hell, where they remain in torment and complete darkness, set apart for the great day of judgment.⁴ Scripture recognizes only these two places, and no other, for souls separated from their bodies.

1. Gn 3.19, Acts 13.36.

2. Lk 23.43, Eccl 12.7, Phil 1.23, 2 Cor 5.6-8.

3. Heb 12.23, 2 Cor 5.1,6,8, Phil 1.23, Acts 3.21, Eph 4.10, 1 Jn 3.2, Lk 16.23, Rom 8.23; see under figure 2 above, Rv 7.4,15.

4. Lk 16.23-24, Acts 1.25, Jude 6-7, 1 Pt 3.19, 2 Pt 2.9.

2. Those who are alive at the last day will not die but will be changed.⁵ At that time all the dead will be raised with the very same bodies and no other than the same bodies they had before, although with different characteristics, which will be united again to their souls forever.⁶

5. 1 Thes 4.17, 1 Cor 15.51-52.

6. Jb 19.26-27, 1 Cor 15.42-44; see preceding context.

3. By the power of Christ the bodies of the unjust shall be raised to dishonor, but by his Spirit the bodies of the just will be raised to honor and be made according to the pattern of his own glorious body.⁷

7. Acts 24.15, Jn 5.28-29, 1 Cor 15.42, Phil 3.21.

Chapter 33

The Last Judgment

1. God the Father has ordained a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ,¹ to whom he has given all power and judgment.² In that day not only will the apostate angels be judged, but all the people who have lived on earth will appear before the court of Christ to give an account of their thoughts, words, and actions, and be judged according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.³

1. Acts 17.31, Mt 25.31-34.

2. Jn 5.22,27.

3. 1 Cor 6.3, Jude 6, 2 Pt 2.4, 2 Cor 5.10, Eccl 12.14, Rom 2.16, 14.10,12, Mt 12.36-37, 1 Cor 3.13-15.

2. God's purpose in arranging for this day is to show forth the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect⁴ and the glory of his justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient.⁵ At that time the righteous will go into everlasting life and receive that fullness of joy and refreshment which will come from the presence of the Lord.⁶ But the wicked, who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, will be thrown into eternal torment and punished with everlasting destruction away from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.⁷

4. Rom 9.23, Mt 25.21, Eph 2.4-7.

5. Rom 2.5-6, 2 Thes 1.7-8, Rom 9.22.

6. Mt 25.31-34, Acts 3.19, 2 Thes 1.7, Ps 16.11.

7. Mt 25.41,46, 2 Thes 1.9, Is 66.24, Mk 9.47-48.

3. Christ wants us to be completely convinced that there is going to be a day of judgment, as a deterrent to sin for everyone and as an added consolation for the godly in their suffering.⁸ He has also made sure that no one knows when that day will be, so that we may never rest secure in our worldly surroundings, but, not knowing what hour the Lord will come, we must always be alert and may always be ready to say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."⁹ Amen.

8. 2 Pt 3.11,14, 2 Cor 5.10-11, 2 Thes 1.5-7, Lk 21.27-28, Rom 8.23-25.

9. Mt 24.36, 42-44, Mk 13.35-37, Lk 12.35-36, Rv 22.20.

Chapter 34

The Holy Spirit

1. The Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, proceeding from the Father and the Son, of the same substance and equal in power and glory, is, together with the Father and the Son, to be believed in, loved, obeyed, and worshiped throughout all ages.

2 Cor 13.14, Jn 15.26, Mt 28.19, 3.16-17, Lk 1.35, Eph 4.30, Heb 10.29, 1 Cor 10.10-11, Rv 22.17, Eph 2.18-20,22, Jn 14.26, 16.7, Gal 4.4-6, Acts 5.3-4, 16.6-7, Mk 3.29, Rom 8.26-27, 1 Jn 2.20-27, Acts 2.33, Jn 20.22, Rom 8.14, 1 Thes 5.19, Jn 4.24.

2. He is the Lord and giver of life, everywhere present, and is the source of all good thoughts, pure desires, and holy counsels in men. By him the prophets were moved to speak the word of God, and all the writers of the Holy Scriptures inspired to record infallibly the mind and will of God. The dispensation of the gospel is especially committed to him. He prepares the way for it, accompanies it with his persuasive power, and urges its message upon the reason and conscience of men, so that they who reject its merciful offer are not only without excuse, but are also guilty of resisting the Holy Spirit.

Eph 4.30, 5.9, Gn 1.2, Jn 3.5,7, Acts 2.1-21, Gal 5.22-25, Jn 16.8-11, 2 Pt 1.21, 2 Tm 3.16, 1 Cor 2.9-10,13, 1 Pt 1.11, Jn 16.13-15, Acts 7.51, 1 Thes 5.19, Ps 104.30, 139.7, Acts 28.25, 1.8, 2.7, Rom 8.9,14-16, Ti 3.5-6, Rom 5.5, Mt 12.31-32.

3. The Holy Spirit, whom the Father is ever willing to give to all who ask him, is the only efficient agent in the application of redemption. He regenerates men by his grace, convicts them of sin, moves them to repentance, and persuades and enables them to embrace Jesus Christ by faith. He unites all believers to Christ, dwells in them as their comforter and sanctifier, gives to them the spirit of adoption and prayer, and performs all these gracious offices by which they are sanctified and sealed unto the day of redemption.

Jn 3.1-8, Acts 2.38, Lk 11.13, 1 Cor 12.3, Jn 7.37-39, 16.13, 16.7-11, Rv 22.17, Ti 3.5-7, 2 Thes 2.13, Gal 4.6, 1 Jn 4.2, Rom 8.14-17,26-27, Eph 4.30, 1 Cor 2.13-14, Eph 1.13, 1 Thes 1.5, Gal 6.8, Eph 2.18, 5.9, 4.3, Jude 20-21, Rom 15.16, Heb 10.14-15, 1 Cor 6.19, 3.16.

4. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit all believers being vitally united to Christ, who is the head, are thus united one to another in the church, which is his body. He calls and anoints ministers for their holy office, qualifies all other officers in the church for their special work, and imparts various gifts and graces to its members. He gives efficacy to the word and to the ordinances of the gospel. By him the church will be preserved, increased, purified, and at last made perfectly holy in the presence of God.

Eph 2.14-18, 4.1-6,30, 5.18, Acts 2.4, 13.2-3, 1 Cor 12.4-13, 2 Pt 1.19-21, 1 Thes 1.5-6, Jn 20.22-23, Mt 28.19-20, Acts 20.28, 6.3,5-6, Gal 5.16,22-23, 2 Tm 3.16, Jn 16.13-14, 1 Cor 2.10, Rv 2.7, Acts 1.8, Rv 22.17.

Chapter 35

The Gospel of the Love of God and Missions

1. God in infinite and perfect love, having provided in the covenant of grace, through the mediation and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, a way of life and salvation, sufficient for and adapted to the whole lost race of man, freely offers this salvation to all men in the gospel.

Rv 22.17, Jn 3.16, 1 Jn 2.1-2, Acts 2.38-39, Mt 11.28-30, 2 Cor 5.14-19, Ti 2.11, Heb 2.9, Lk 24.46-47, Jer 31.3, 1 Jn 4.9,16, Ti 3.4-5, Heb 13.20-21, 12.22-24, 8.10, Eph 2.8, 1 Tm 2.5-6, Heb 9.26, 1 Cor 15.3, Rom 5.6,8, Jn 10.10-11, 11.25, 14.6,19, Phil 1.21, Acts 4.12, Rom 1.16, Heb 5.9, 2 Pt 3.9, Mt 24.14, Jn 4.42, Rv 11.15, Rom 6.23, 2 Cor 9.15.

2. In the gospel God declares his love for the world and his desire that all men should be saved; reveals fully and clearly the only way of salvation; promises eternal life to all who truly repent and believe in Christ; invites and commands all to embrace the offered mercy; and by his Spirit accompanying the word pleads with men to accept his gracious invitation.

Mt 28.19-20, Acts 4.12, Jn 6.37-40, 17.3, Acts 16.30-31, 2.38, Gal 2.16-20, Rom 1.16-17, 4.5, Acts 13.38-39,48, 2 Pt 3.9, Mt 11.28-30, Mk 1.14-15, Acts 17.30, Rv 22.17, Ez 33.11, Is 1.18, Lk 13.34, Jn 3.16-17, 1 Jn 4.9-10, Is 45.22, Heb 10.19-22, Jn 14.6, Rom 10.9, 1 Pt 1.8-9, Heb 3.7-8, 2 Cor 6.2, Heb 4.16, Rom 5.8, 2 Thes 3.5, Phil 2.12-13, Jn 16.13-14.

3. It is the duty and privilege of everyone who hears the gospel immediately to accept its merciful provisions; and they who continue in impenitence and unbelief incur aggravated guilt and perish by their own fault.

Heb 2.3, 12.25, Acts 13.46, Mt 10.32-33, Lk 12.47-48, Heb 10.29, 1 Thes 5.9-10, Jn 1.12, Heb 4.16, Rv 22.17, 1 Tm 6.12, Jn 3.18, Mt 25.46, Rom 6.23.

4. Since there is no other way of salvation than that revealed in the gospel, and since in the divinely established and ordinary method of grace faith comes by hearing the word of God, Christ has commissioned his church to go into all the world and to make disciples of all nations. All believers are, therefore, under obligation to sustain the ordinances of the Christian religion where they are already established, and to contribute by their prayers, gifts, and personal efforts to the extension of the kingdom of Christ throughout the whole earth.

Acts 4.12, Mt 28.19-20, Acts 1.8, Rom 10.13-17, Heb 10.19-25, Gal 3.28, 1 Cor 16.1-2, Mt 9.36-38, Acts 13.2-4, Col 3.16, Rv 22.17, Col 1.28-29, Acts 16.31, 2 Tm 3.15, Jn 5.39, Mt 24.14, 13.38, Jn 17.18, Acts 20.28, 1 Pt 5.2, Jn 21.15-16, 1 Cor 3.9, 11.24, 2 Cor 1.11, Eph 6.18-19, Heb 13.16, Gal 6.6, Mt 10.8, 2 Cor 9.7, 2 Tm 2.15, Rom 12.11, Col 3.23-24, Mt 6.10,13, Rv 11.15.

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Q. 1. What is the primary and highest purpose of human beings?

A. The primary and highest purpose of human beings is to glorify God¹ and to enjoy him completely forever.²

1. Rom 11.36, 1 Cor 10.31.
2. Ps 73.24-28, Jn 17.21-24.

Q. 2. What evidence is there for God?

A. Our internal, natural understanding along with the external evidence of God's works plainly indicates that there is a God.¹ However, salvation only comes through God's revelation of himself in his word and Spirit.²

1. Rom 1.19-20, Ps 19.1-4, Acts 17.28.
2. 1 Cor 1.21, 2.9-10, 2 Tm 3.15-17, Is 59.21.

Q. 3. What is the word of God?

A. The holy Bible, made up of the Old and New Testaments, is the word of God.¹ It is the only authority for faith and obedience.²

1. 2 Tm 3.15-17, 2 Pt 1.19-21.
2. Eph 2.20, Rv 22.18-19, Is 8.20, Lk 16.29,31, Gal 1.8-9, 2 Tm 3.15-16.

Q. 4. What evidence is there that the Bible is the word of God?

A. The Bible clearly shows that it is the word of God by its majesty¹ and purity,² by the agreement of all its parts,³ by its unified aim to give all glory to God,⁴ and by its illuminating power to convince and convert sinners and to comfort and build up believers unto salvation.⁵ However, only the Spirit of God, testifying by and with the Bible in our hearts, can completely persuade us that it is truly the word of God.⁶

1. Hos 8.12, 1 Cor 2.6-7,13, Ps 119.18,129.
2. Ps 12.6, 119.40.
3. Acts 10.43, 26.22.
4. Rom 3.19,27.
5. See General Note. Acts 18.28, Heb 4.12, Jas 1.18, Ps 19.7-9, Rom 15.4, Acts 20.32.
6. Jn 16.13-14, 1 Cor 2.6-9, 1 Jn 2.20,27, Jn 20.31.

Q. 5. What does the Bible primarily teach?

A. The Bible primarily teaches what we must believe about God and what God requires of us.¹

1. See General Note. 2 Tm 1.13.

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Q. 6. What does the Bible make known about God?

- A. The Bible makes known what God is,¹ the persons in the Godhead,² his decrees,³ and how his decrees are carried out.⁴

1. Jn 4.24, Ex 34.6-7, Heb 11.6.
2. Mt 28.19, 2 Cor 13.14, 1 Jn 5.17.
3. Eph 1.11, Acts 15.14-15,18.
4. Acts 4.27-28, Is 42.9.

Q. 7. What is God?

- A. God is a spirit,¹ who in and of himself is infinite in being,² glory,³ blessedness,⁴ and perfection.⁵ He is all-sufficient,⁶ eternal,⁷ unchangeable,⁸ beyond our full understanding,⁹ present everywhere,¹⁰ almighty,¹¹ knowing everything,¹² completely wise,¹³ completely holy,¹⁴ completely just,¹⁵ completely merciful and gracious, patient, and overflowing with goodness and truth.¹⁶

1. Jn 4.24.
2. 1 Kgs 8.27, Is 40.20, Ex 3.14, Jb 11.7-9.
3. Acts 7.2.
4. 1 Tm 6.15.
5. See General Note. Mt 5.48.
6. Acts 17.24-25, Gn 17.1.
7. Ps 90.2.
8. Mal 3.6, Jas 1.17.
9. 1 Kgs 8.27, Rom 11.33.
10. Jer 23.24, Ps 139.
11. Rv 4.8.
12. Heb 4.13, Ps 147.5.
13. Rom 16.27.
14. Is 6.3, Rv 15.4.
15. Dt 32.4.
16. Ex 34.6.

Q. 8. Is there more than one God?

- A. There is only one, the living and true God.¹

1. Dt 6.4, 1 Cor 8.4,6, Jer 10.10.

Q. 9. How many persons are in the one God?

- A. Three persons are in the one God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Although they are differentiated by their own individual, personal qualities, these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance and equal in power and glory.¹

1. 1 Jn 5.7, Mt 3.16-17, 28.19, 2 Cor 13.14, Jn 10.30.

Q. 10. What are the individual, personal qualities that belong to the three persons of the Godhead?

- A. From all eternity, the Father begets the Son;¹ the Son is begotten by the Father,² and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.³

1. Heb 1.5-6, 8.
2. Jn 1.14,18.
3. Jn 15.26, Gal 4.6.

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Q. 11. What is the evidence that the Son and the Holy Spirit are equal with the Father?

- A. The Bible clearly indicates that the Son and the Holy Spirit are God, equal to the Father, because it assigns to them the same names,¹ attributes,² works,³ and worship⁴ that properly apply only to God.

1. Jer 23.6, Ps 45.6, Is 6.3,5,8, Jn 12.41, Acts 28.25, 1 Jn 5.20, Acts 5.3-4.
2. Jn 1.1, Is 9.6, Jn 2.24-25, 1 Cor 2.10-11, Heb 9.14.
3. Col 1.16, Gn 1.2, Ps 104.30, Jn 1.3.
4. Mt 28.19, 2 Cor 13.14.

Q. 12. What are the decrees of God?

- A. God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy decisions from the purposes of his will.¹ By them, from all eternity and for his own glory, he has unchangeably foreordained everything that happens in time,² and particularly those things that involve angels and human beings.

1. Eph 1.4,11, Rom 11.33, Rom 9.14-15,18.
2. Acts 4.27-28, Rom 9.22-23, Ps 33.11.

Q. 13. What in particular has God decreed about angels and human beings?

- A. By an eternal and unchangeable decree, which originates merely from his love, exists for the praise of his glorious grace, and is to be revealed at the proper time, God has elected some angels for glory¹ and in Christ has chosen some human beings for eternal life, along with the means by which this choice will be accomplished.² Additionally, in accordance with his sovereign power and the hidden purposes of his own will (by which, as he pleases, he extends or withholds favor), God decided not to include the rest and to foreordain them to be inflicted with dishonor and anger for their sin, to the praise of the glory of his justice.³

1. 1 Tm 5.21.
2. Eph 1.4-6, 2 Thes 2.13-14, 1 Pt 1.2.
3. Rom 9.17-18,21-22, Mt 11.25-26, 2 Tm 2.20, Jude 4, 1 Pt 2.8.

Q. 14. How does God carry out his decrees?

- A. God carries out his decrees in creation and providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge and the free and unchangeable purposes of his own will.¹

1. Eph 1.11, 1 Pt 1.1-2.

Q. 15. What is creation?

- A. Creation is this: in the beginning, for himself, and out of nothing, God made the world and everything in it in six days by the word of his power—and all very good.¹

1. Gn 1, Heb 11.3, Prv 16.4, Rv 4.11.

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Q. 16. How did God create angels?

A. God created all the angels¹ as immortal² spirits,³ holy,⁴ with superior knowledge⁵ and mighty power,⁶ to carry out his commands and praise his name;⁷ but they could also change.⁸

1. Col 1.16.
2. Mt 22.30, Lk 20.36.
3. Ps 104.4, Col 1.16.
4. Gn 1.31, Mt 25.31.
5. 2 Sm 14.17, Mt 24.36.
6. 2 Thes 1.7.
7. Ps 103.20-21.
8. 2 Pt 2.4.

Q. 17. How did God create human beings?

A. After he had made all the other creatures, God created humans, male and female.¹ He formed the body of man from the dust of the ground² and the woman from the rib of the man.³ He endowed them with living, reasoning, and immortal souls,⁴ made in his own image⁵ with knowledge,⁶ righteousness, and holiness.⁷ God wrote his law on their hearts⁸ and gave them the ability to obey it.⁹ Along with dominion over the other creatures,¹⁰ they also had the potential to fall.¹¹

1. Gn 1.27.
2. Gn 2.7.
3. Gn 2.22.
4. Gn 2.7, Jb 35.11, Mt 10.28, and Lk 23.43.
5. Gn 1.27.
6. Col 3.10, Gn 2.19-20.
7. Eph 4.24.
8. Rom 2.14-15.
9. Eccl 7.29.
10. Gn 1.28.
11. Gn 2.16-17, 3.6, Eccl 7.29.

Q. 18. What is God's providence?

A. God's providence is his completely holy,¹ wise,² and powerful preserving³ and governing⁴ every creature and every action,⁵ ordering them all to his own glory.⁶

1. Ps 145.17.
2. Ps 104.24, Is 28.29.
3. Heb 1.3.
4. Ps 103.19, Jb 38-41.
5. Mt 10.29-31, Gn 45.7, Ps 135.6.
6. Rom 11.36, Is 63.14.

Q. 19. What is God's providence relating to angels?

A. God providentially allowed some of the angels to fall into sin and damnation by their own choice and without any possibility of recovering their original position;¹ he limited and ordered their fall and all their specific sins for his own glory.² God established the rest of the angels in holiness and happiness,³ using them,⁴ according to his pleasure, as administrative agents of his power, mercy, and justice.⁵

1. Jude 6, 2 Pt 2.4, Heb 2.16, Jn 8.44.
2. Jb 1.12, Mt 8.31, Lk 10.17.
3. 1 Tm 5.21, Mk 8.38, Heb 12.22.
4. Ps 104.4.
5. 2 Kgs 19.35, Heb 1.14.

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Q. 20. What was God's providence relating to the humans he created?

- A. God providentially put Adam and Eve in paradise and assigned them the job of taking care of it. He gave them permission to eat everything that grew,¹ put them in authority over all the creatures,² and established marriage as a help for Adam.³ God allowed them to have fellowship with him,⁴ instituted the Sabbath,⁵ and made a covenant of life with them on the condition of their personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience.⁶ The tree of life was a sign guaranteeing this covenant.⁷ Finally, God told them not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil or they would die.⁸

1. Gn 2.8,15-16.
2. Gn 1.28.
3. Gn 2.18.
4. Gn 1.26-29, 3.8.
5. Gn 2.3.
6. Gal 3.12, Rom 10.5; compare Gn 2.16-17 with Rom 5.12-14, 10.5, Lk 10.25-28, and with the covenants made with Noah and Abraham.
7. Gn 2.9.
8. Gn 2.17.

Q. 21. Did humans remain the way they were created?

- A. Left to the freedom of their own wills, our first parents were tempted by Satan, disobeyed God's command by eating the forbidden fruit, and so fell from their original innocence.¹

1. Gn 3.6-8, 13, Eccl 7.29, 2 Cor 11.3.

Q. 22. Did the whole human race fall in that first disobedience?

- A. Since the covenant was made with Adam as a general representative of humanity, not only for himself but also for his natural descendants,¹ the whole human race sinned in him and fell with him in that first disobedience.²

1. Acts 17.26; see under figure 6 in Q. 20 above.
2. Gn 2.16-17, Rom 5.12-20, 1 Cor 15.21-22.

Q. 23. What happened to the human race in the fall?

- A. Humans fell into a condition of sin and misery.¹

1. Rom 5.12, 3.23, Gal 3.10.

Q. 24. What is sin?

- A. Sin is not conforming to or disobeying any law God has given to direct our lives as reasoning humans.¹

1. Rom 3.23, 1 Jn 3.4, Gal 3.10,12, Jas 4.17.

Q. 25. What is sinful about the fallen condition of humans?

- A. The sinfulness of that fallen condition is twofold. First, in what is commonly called original sin, there is the guilt of Adam's first sin¹ with its lack of original righteousness and the corruption of his nature, by which humans are completely indisposed, incapacitated, and opposed to everything that is spiritually good as well as being completely and continually inclined to everything evil.² Second are all the specific acts of disobedience that come from original sin.³

1. Rom 5.12,19, 1 Cor 15.22.
2. Rom 3.10-20, Eph 2.1-3, Rom 5.6, 8.7-8, Gn 6.5, Ps 51.5, 58.3.

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3. Jas 1.14-15, Mt 15.19.

Q. 26. How is original sin passed from Adam and Eve to their descendants?

A. Original sin passes from Adam and Eve to their descendants by natural procreation, so that all subsequent human offspring are conceived and born in sin.¹

1. Ps 51.5, Jb 14.4, 15.14, Jn 3.6.

Q. 27. What misery did the fall bring on the human race?

A. The fall brought on the human race the loss of fellowship with God¹ along with his displeasure and curse. Consequently, we are children of wrath,² bondslaves of Satan,³ and justly subject to every punishment in this world and the next.⁴

1. Gn 3.8,10,24.
2. Eph 2.2-3.
3. 2 Tm 2.26, Lk 11.21-22, Heb 2.14.
4. Gn 2.17, Lam 3.39, Rom 5.14, 6.23, Mt 25.41,46, Jude 7.

Q. 28. What are the punishments for sin in this world?

A. The punishments for sin in this world are either internal or external. Internal punishments include mental blindness,¹ a sense of being condemned,² powerful delusions,³ a stubborn heart,⁴ a terrified conscience,⁵ and shameful desires.⁶ External punishments include God's curse on the whole creation because of us⁷ and all the other evils that happen to our bodies, our reputations, circumstances, relationships, and work,⁸ including death itself.⁹

1. Eph 4.18.
2. Rom 1.28.
3. 2 Thes 2.11.
4. Rom 2.5.
5. Is 33.14, Gn 4.13, Mt 27.4, Heb 10.27.
6. Rom 1.26.
7. Gn 3.17.
8. Dt 28.15-68.
9. Rom 6.21,23.

Q. 29. What are the punishments for sin in the next world?

A. The punishments for sin in the next world include everlasting separation from the comforting presence of God and the horrible torment of soul and body in hell-fire without interruption forever.¹

1. 2 Thes 1.9, Mk 9.43-44,46,48, Lk 16.24,26, Mt 25.41,46, Rv 14.11, Jn 3.36.

Q. 30. Does God leave the whole human race to die in sin and misery?

A. God does not leave the whole human race to die in the sin and misery¹ that resulted from breaking the first covenant, ordinarily called the covenant of works.² Merely from his love and mercy, God delivers his elect from sin and misery and brings them into salvation by means of the second covenant, ordinarily called the covenant of grace.³

1. 1 Thes 5.9.
2. Gal 3.10,12.
3. Ti 3.4-7, 1.2, Gal 3.21, Rom 3.20-22.

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Q. 31. With whom was the covenant of grace made?

- A. The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam and through him with all the elect as his seed.¹

1. 1 Cor 15.22,45, Eph 1.4, 2 Tm 1.9, Heb 2.10-11,14, Gal 3.16, Rom 5.15 to the end, Is 53.10-11.

Q. 32. How is God's grace revealed in the second covenant?

- A. His grace is revealed in the second covenant by God freely providing and making available to sinners a mediator¹ and through him life and salvation.² God uses faith as the only way for sinners to become united to him;³ he promises and gives his Holy Spirit⁴ to all his elect in order to bring about this faith in them⁵ along with all the other saving graces⁶ and in order to make it possible for them to be holy and obedient,⁷ as proof of the truth of their faith⁸ and thankfulness to God⁹ and as the way he has established for them to be saved.¹⁰

1. 1 Tm 2.5, Gn 3.15, Is 42.6, Jn 6.27.

2. 1 Jn 5.11-12.

3. Jn 3.16,36, 1.12.

4. Prv 1.23.

5. 2 Cor 4.13.

6. Jn 1.12-13, 3.5-6,8, Gal 5.22-23.

7. Ez 36.27.

8. Jas 2.18,22.

9. 2 Cor 5.14-15.

10. Eph 2.10, Ti 2.14, 3.8.

Q. 33. Was the covenant of grace always administered in one and the same way?

- A. The covenant of grace was not always administered in the same way. It was administered differently under the Old Testament and the New Testament.¹

1. 2 Cor 3.6-7,21-22, Heb 1.1-2, 8.7-8 and ff.

Q. 34. How was the covenant of grace administered under the Old Testament?

- A. The covenant of grace was administered under the Old Testament by promises,¹ prophecies,² sacrifices,³ circumcision,⁴ the passover,⁵ and other types and ordinances. All of these foreshadowed the coming of Christ and were sufficient for that time to build up the faith of the elect in the promised Messiah,⁶ by whom they had full remission of their sins and eternal salvation.⁷

1. Rom 15.8, Acts 3.20.

2. Acts 3.20,24.

3. Heb 10.1.

4. Rom 4.11.

5. 1 Cor 5.7, Ex 12.14,17,24.

6. Heb 8-10, 11.13.

7. Gal 3.7-9,14, Heb 11.

Q. 35. How is the covenant of grace administered under the New Testament?

- A. Under the New Testament, Christ is revealed as the substance of the same covenant of grace, which was and still is to be administered in the preaching of the word¹ and in the sacraments of baptism² and the Lord's supper.³ In these the spiritual power of grace and salvation is more fully and clearly developed for all nations.⁴

1. Mt 28.19-20, Mk 16.15.

2. Mt 28.19-20.

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3. 1 Cor 11.23-26.
4. 2 Cor 3.6-9, Heb 8.6-7,10-11, Mt 28.19.

Q. 36. Who is the mediator of the covenant of grace?

- A. The only mediator of the covenant of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ,¹ who is the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father.² In the fullness of time he became human,³ and so he was and continues to be God and man, in two complete and distinct natures, but one person, forever.⁴

1. 1 Tm 2.5.
2. Jn 1.1,14, 10.30, Phil 2.6.
3. Gal 4.4.
4. Lk 1.35, Rom 9.5, Col 2.9, Phil 2.5-11, Heb 7.24-25.

Q. 37. How did Christ, the Son of God, become human?

- A. Christ the Son of God became human by taking a true body and a reasoning soul.¹ He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary out of her substance and was born of her,² but he was sinless.³

1. Jn 1.14, Mt 26.38.
2. Lk 1.27,31,35,42, Gal 4.4.
3. Heb 4.15, 7.26.

Q. 38. Why did the mediator have to be God?

- A. The mediator had to be God so that he might sustain and keep his human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God and the power of death;¹ that he might make his suffering, obedience, and intercession of real value and effect;² and that, in order to satisfy God's justice,³ he might gain God's favor,⁴ purchase his very own people,⁵ give his Spirit to them,⁶ conquer all their enemies,⁷ and bring them to everlasting salvation.⁸

1. See General Note. Acts 2.24-25, Rom 1.4, 4.25, Heb 9.14.
2. Acts 20.28, Heb 9.14, 7.25-28.
3. Rom 3.24-26.
4. Eph 1.6, Mt 3.17.
5. Ti 2.13-14.
6. Gal 4.6.
7. Lk 1.68-69,71,74.
8. Heb 5.8-9, 9.11-15.

Q. 39. Why did the mediator have to be human?

- A. The mediator had to be human so that he might improve human nature,¹ obey the law,² suffer and make intercession for us in our own nature,³ and know first hand what human infirmities feel like;⁴ and so that we might be adopted as sons⁵ and have comfort and access with boldness to the throne of grace.⁶

1. Heb 2.16.
2. Gal 4.4-5, Rom 5.19.
3. Heb 2.14, 7.24-25.
4. Heb 4.15.
5. Gal 4.5.
6. Heb 4.14-16.

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Q. 40. Why did the mediator have to be God and human in one person?

- A. The mediator, who was to reconcile God and humanity, had to be himself both God and human and in one person to make the works appropriate to each nature acceptable to God on our behalf¹ and counted on by us as the works of the whole person.²

1. See General Note. Mt 1.21, 23, 3.17, Heb 9.14.
2. 1 Pt 2.6.

Q. 41. Why was our mediator called Jesus?

- A. Our mediator was called Jesus because he saves his people from their sins.¹

1. Mt 1.21.

Q. 42. Why was our mediator called Christ?

- A. Our mediator was called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Spirit beyond all measure.¹ Consequently, he was set apart and completely equipped with all authority and power² to execute the offices of prophet,³ priest,⁴ and king of his church,⁵ in both his humiliation and his exaltation.

1. Jn 3.34, Ps 45.7, Lk 4.18-21.
2. Lk 4.14, Heb 9.14, Jn 6.27, Mt 28.18-20.
3. Acts 3.21-22, Lk 4.18,21.
4. Heb 5.5-7, 4.14-15.
5. Ps 2.6, Mt 21.5, Is 9.6-7, Phil 2.8-11, Rv 19.16.

Q. 43. How is Christ a prophet?

- A. As prophet, Christ reveals the complete will of God¹ to his church² about everything for the church's edification and salvation.³ He does this throughout the ages in different ways⁴ by means of his Spirit and word.⁵

1. Jn 1.1,4, 15.15.
2. Jn 1.18, 2 Pt 1.21, 2 Cor 2.9-10.
3. Acts 20.32, Eph 4.11-13, Jn 20.31.
4. Heb 1.1-2.
5. 1 Pt 1.10-12.

Q. 44. How is Christ a priest?

- A. As priest, Christ offered himself once for all as a spotless sacrifice to God¹ to reconcile the sins of his people,² and he continually intercedes for them.³

1. Heb 9.14,28.
2. Heb 2.17.
3. Heb 7.25.

Q. 45. How is Christ a king?

- A. As king, Christ calls a people for himself out of the world¹ and gives them officers,² laws,³ and the authority to condemn, by which he visibly governs them.⁴ He bestows saving grace on his elect,⁵ rewards their obedience,⁶ corrects them for their sins,⁷ preserves and supports them in all their temptations and suffering,⁸ restrains and overcomes all their enemies,⁹ and powerfully orders everything for his own glory¹⁰ and their well-being.¹¹ As king, Christ also executes just retribution against all others who neither know God nor obey the gospel.¹²

1. Jn 10. 16,27, Acts 15.14-16, Is 55.4-5, Gn 49.10, Ps 110.3.
2. Eph 4.11-12, 1 Cor 12.28.

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3. Is 33.22, Mt 28.19-20.
4. Mt 18.17-18, 1 Cor 5.4-5, 1 Tm 5.20, Ti 3.10.
5. Acts 5.31.
6. Rv 22.12, 2.10, Mt 25.34-36, Rom 2.7.
7. Rv 3.19, Heb 12.6-7.
8. Is 63.9, 2 Cor 12.9-10, Rom 8.35-39.
9. 1 Cor 15.25, Ps 110, Acts 12.17, 18.9-10.
10. Rom 14.10-11, Col 1.18, Mt 28.19-20.
11. Rom 8.28.
12. 2 Thes 1.8-9, Ps 2.8-9.

Q. 46. How was Christ humiliated?

- A. For our sakes, Christ emptied himself of his own glory and took on the form of a servant, and so was humiliated in all the poor circumstances involving his conception and birth, life on earth, death, and after his death until he was resurrected.¹

1. Phil 2.6-8, Lk 1.31, 2 Cor 8.9, Acts 2.24, Gal 4.4.

Q. 47. How did Christ humble himself in his conception and birth?

- A. Christ humbled himself in his conception and birth in that being from all eternity the Son of God in the bosom of the Father, it pleased him in the fullness of time to become the son of man, born of a woman from a poor family and into conditions that were even worse than ordinary.¹

1. Jn 1.14,18, Gal 4.4, Lk 2.7, Phil 2.6-8, 2 Cor 8.9.

Q. 48. How did Christ humble himself in his life?

- A. Christ humbled himself in his life by subjecting himself to the law,¹ which he perfectly fulfilled,² and by struggling with the indignities of this world,³ the temptations of Satan,⁴ and the frailty of his body, whether common to the natural human condition or particularly associated with his own poor situation.⁵

1. Gal 4.4.
2. Mt 3.15, 5.17, Jn 19.30, Rom 5.19.
3. Ps 22.6, Is 53.2-3, Heb 12.2-3.
4. Mt 4.1-12, Lk 4.1-14.
5. Heb 2.17-18, 4.15, Is 52.13-14.

Q. 49. How did Christ humble himself in his death?

- A. Christ humbled himself in his death by being betrayed by Judas,¹ forsaken by his disciples,² scorned and rejected by the world,³ condemned by Pilate, and tormented with physical persecution.⁴ He struggled with the terrors of death and the powers of darkness; he felt and bore the weight of God's anger.⁵ Finally, enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death on the cross,⁶ he laid down his life as an offering for sin.⁷

1. Mt 27.4.
2. Mt 26.56.
3. Is 53.2-3, Lk 18.32-33.
4. Mt 27.26-50, Jn 19.34, Lk 22.63-64.
5. Lk 22.44, Mt 27.46, Rom 8.32.
6. Phil 2.8, Heb 12.2, Gal 3.13.
7. Rom 4.25, 1 Cor 15.3-4, Is 53.10.

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Q. 50. How was Christ humiliated after his death?

- A. Christ's humiliation after death involved his being buried¹ and continuing in a state of being dead and under the power of death until the third day.² This period is referred to in the words, *He descended into hell*.

1. 1 Cor 15.3-4.
2. Ps 16.10, Acts 2.24-27,31, Rom 6.9, Mt 12.40, Lk 18.33.

Q. 51. How was Christ exalted?

- A. Christ's exaltation includes his resurrection,¹ ascension,² sitting at the right hand of the Father,³ and coming again to judge the world.⁴

1. 1 Cor 15.4.
2. Mk 16.19, Lk 24.51, Acts 1.9-11.
3. Eph 1.20.
4. Acts 1.11, 17.31.

Q. 52. How was Christ exalted in his resurrection?

- A. Christ's exaltation in his resurrection began with his body not decaying, since it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.¹ On the third day, he rose again from the dead by his own power² and in the very same body with all its essential qualities in which he had suffered³ (but it was not subject to death and the other infirmities associated with this life), and it was truly united to his soul.⁴ By his resurrection, he plainly declared himself to be the Son of God,⁵ to have satisfied divine justice,⁶ to have conquered death as well as him who holds the power of death,⁷ and to be Lord of the living and the dead.⁸ He did all this as a general representative of humanity⁹ and as head of his church¹⁰ in order to justify believers,¹¹ make them alive in his grace,¹² support them against their enemies,¹³ and assure them that they too will be resurrected from the dead at the last day.¹⁴

1. Acts 2.24,27, Ps 16.10.
2. Jn 10.18, Rv 1.18.
3. Lk 24.39.
4. Jn 10.18, Rom 6.9, Rv 1.18.
5. Rom 1.4.
6. Rom 4.25, 8.34, 1 Cor 15.17.
7. Heb 2.14, Rv 1.18.
8. Rom 14.9.
9. 1 Cor 15.21-22.
10. Eph 1.20-23, Col 1.18.
11. Rom 4.25.
12. Eph 2.1,5-6, Col 2.12.
13. 1 Cor 15.25-27, Acts 12.17, 18.9-10.
14. 1 Cor 15.20, 1 Thes 4.13-18.

Q. 53. How was Christ exalted in his ascension?

- A. Christ's exaltation in his ascension began after his resurrection when he appeared to the apostles a number of times, talked to them about the kingdom of God,¹ and commissioned them to preach the gospel to all nations.² Forty days after his resurrection, in our human nature and as our head,³ he visibly went up into the highest heavens, triumphing over enemies.⁴ There he receives gifts for men,⁵ raises our minds,⁶ and prepares a place for us,⁷ where he himself is and shall continue to be until his second coming at the end of the world.⁸

1. Acts 1.2-3.
2. Mt 28.19-20, Acts 1.8.

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3. Heb 6.20.
4. Eph 4.8, Acts 1.9.
5. Acts 1.9-11, Eph 4.10, Ps 68.18.
6. Col 3.1-2.
7. Jn 14.2-3.
8. Acts 3.21.

Q. 54. How is Christ exalted by sitting at the right hand of God?

- A. Sitting at the right hand of God exalts Christ as the God-man; he is advanced to the highest favor with God the Father¹ with all the joy,² glory,³ and power of this position over all things in heaven and earth.⁴ There Christ gathers and defends his church, subdues her enemies, provides his ministers and people with gifts and graces,⁵ and intercedes for them.⁶

1. Phil 2.9.
2. Acts 2.28, Ps 16.11.
3. Jn 17.5.
4. Eph 1.22, 1 Pt 3.22.
5. Eph 4.10-12, Ps 110; see citations under Q. 45.
6. Rom 8.34; see citations under Q. 44.

Q. 55. How does Christ intercede?

- A. Christ intercedes by continually appearing in our human nature before the Father in heaven.¹ There he makes his will clear that his own merit of obedience and sacrifice on earth² be applied to all believers;³ he answers all the accusations against believers⁴ and makes sure they have peace of conscience, in spite of their daily failings;⁵ and he welcomes them without hesitation to the throne of grace⁶ and accepts who they are⁷ and what they do for him.⁸

1. Heb 9.12,24.
2. Heb 1.3.
3. Jn 3.16, 17.9,20,24.
4. Rom 8.33-34.
5. Rom 5.1-2, 1 Jn 2.1-2.
6. Heb 4.16.
7. Eph 1.6.
8. 1 Pt 2.5, Rv 8.3-4.

Q. 56. How is Christ exalted by coming again to judge the world?

- A. Coming again to judge the world exalts Christ, who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men.¹ His coming again at the last day in great power² will fully reveal his own and his Father's glory, and with all his holy angels,³ accompanied by a shout of command, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God,⁴ he will judge the world in righteousness.⁵

1. Acts 3.14-15.
2. Mt 24.30.
3. Lk 9.26, Mt 25.31.
4. 1 Thes 4.16.
5. Acts 17.31.

Q. 57. What benefits have been gained by Christ's mediation?

- A. By his mediation, Christ has gained redemption¹ with all the other benefits of the covenant of grace.²

1. Heb 9.12, 1 Cor 1.30.
2. 2 Cor 1.20, Rom 8.32.

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Q. 58. How do we share in the benefits Christ has gained?

A. We share in the benefits Christ has gained, as a particular work of God the Holy Spirit,¹ when they are put into effect in us.²

1. Ti 3.5-6, Jn 3.5-6.
2. Jn 1.11-13.

Q. 59. Who shares in the redemption through Christ?

A. Redemption is inevitably and effectively imparted to all those for whom Christ purchased it,¹ who in the process of time are enabled by the Holy Spirit to believe in Christ as presented in the gospel.²

1. Eph 1.13-14, Jn 6.37,39, 10.15-16, Rom 8.29-30.
2. Eph 2.8, 2 Cor 4.13, 1 Pt 1.2, 2 Thes 2.13.

Q. 60. Can those who have never heard the gospel and so neither know Jesus Christ nor believe in him be saved by living according to their own natural understanding?

A. Those who have never heard the gospel¹ and do not know Jesus Christ² nor believe in him cannot be saved³ no matter how hard they try to live a moral life according to their own natural understanding⁴ or try to obey the rules of some other religion.⁵ Salvation comes from no other than Christ alone,⁶ who is the savior only of his body, the church.⁷

1. Rom 10.14.
2. 2 Thes 1.8-9, Eph 2.12, Jn 1.10-12.
3. Jn 8.24, Mk 16.16, Acts 4.12, Rom 1.18-32.
4. 1 Cor 1.20-24, Rom 1.18-32, 3.9-19.
5. Jn 4.22, Rom 9.31-32, Phil 3.4-10.
6. Acts 4.12.
7. Eph 5.23, Jn 6.39,44, 17.9.

Q. 61. Is everyone saved who hears the gospel and goes to church?

A. Not everyone who hears the gospel and attends a visible church is saved. The saved are only the true members of the invisible church.¹

1. Jn 12.38-40, Rom 9.6, Mt 22.14, 7.21, 13.41-42, Rom 11.7.

Q. 62. What is the visible church?

A. The visible church is all the people all over the world and their children¹ who gather together throughout the ages and profess the true religion.²

1. 1 Cor 7.14, Acts 2.39, Rom 11.16, Gn 17.7, Gal 3.7,9,14, Rom 4, Acts 2.39, Mk 10.13-16.
2. 1 Cor 1.2, 12.12-13, Rom 15.1-12, Rv 7.9, Ps 2.8, 22.27-31, 45.17, Mt 28.19-20, Is 59.21.

Q. 63. What are the special privileges of the visible church?

A. The visible church has the privilege of being under God's special care and government¹ and of being protected and preserved throughout the ages, in spite of the opposition of all her enemies.² The visible church also provides fellowship for God's people, functions as the ordinary means by which people are saved,³ and extends God's grace through Christ to all her members in the ministry of the gospel, testifying that whosoever believes in him will be saved⁴ and excluding no one from fellowship who desires to come to Christ.⁵

1. Is 4.5-6, 49.14-16, 1 Tm 4.10, 1 Cor 12.28, Eph 4.11-12, Acts 13.1-2.
2. Ps 115, Is 31.4-5, Zec 12.2-4,8-9, Mt 16.18.

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3. Acts 2.39,42, Rom 3.1-2.
4. Ps 147.19-20, Rom 9.4, Eph 4.11-12, Mk 16.15-16, Acts 16.31, Rv 22.17.
5. Jn 6.37.

Q. 64. What is the invisible church?

- A. The invisible church consists of all the elect who have been, are, or ever will be gathered into one under Christ, the head.¹

1. Eph 1.10,22-23, Jn 10.16, 11.52.

Q. 65. What are the special benefits for members of the invisible church through Christ?

- A. Through Christ, members of the invisible church experience union and communion with him in grace and glory.¹

1. Jn 17.21,24, Eph 2.5-6, 1 Jn 1.3.

Q. 66. What union do the elect have with Christ?

- A. By their union with Christ, the elect are effectually called¹ by the work of God's grace² so that they are spiritually and mystically, but truly and inseparably, joined to Christ as their head and husband.³

1. 1 Pt 5.10, 1 Cor 1.9.
2. Eph 1.22, 2.6-8.
3. 1 Cor 6.17, Jn 10.28, 15.1-5, Eph 5.23,30.

Q. 67. What is effectual calling?

- A. Effectual calling is the work of God's almighty power and grace,¹ by which he (freely motivated only by his special love for the elect and not from anything inherently in them)² at the right time invites and draws them to Jesus Christ by his word and Spirit.³ God enlightens their minds with a saving understanding,⁴ renews their wills⁵ and by his power makes them (even though they are dead in sin) willing and able to answer his call voluntarily and to accept gladly the grace he offers and actually gives.⁶

1. Jn 5.25, Eph 1.18-20, 2 Tm 1.8-9.
2. Ti 3.4-5, Eph 2.4-10, Rom 9.11.
3. 2 Cor 5.20, 6.1-2, Jn 6.44, 2 Thes 2.13-14.
4. Acts 26.18, 1 Cor 2.10,12.
5. Ez 11.19, 36.26-27, Jn 6.45.
6. Eph 2.5, Phil 2.13, Dt 30.6, Jn 6.45.

Q. 68. Are only the elect effectually called?

- A. All the elect, and only they, are effectually called.¹ Although others may be and often are externally called by the ministry of the word,² and although the Spirit may work in them in some of the same ways he works in the elect,³ from their own willful neglect of and contempt for the grace that is offered them, they are justly allowed to remain in their unbelief and never truly come to Christ.⁴

1. Acts 13.48, Jn 6.39,44, 17.9.
2. Mt 22.14.
3. Mt 7.22, 13.20-21, Heb 6.4-6.
4. Jn 12.38-40, 6.64-65 Acts 28.25-27, Ps 81.11-12, 95.9-11, Prv 1.24-32.

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Q. 69. What communion in grace do members of the invisible church have with Christ?

- A. By their communion in grace with Christ, the members of the invisible church share the dynamic power of his mediation in their justification,¹ adoption,² sanctification, and in all the other ways that show their union with him in this life.³

1. Rom 8.30.
2. Eph 1.5.
3. 1 Cor 1.30.

Q. 70. What is justification?

- A. Justification is the act of God's free grace to sinners,¹ by which he pardons all their sins and accepts and looks on them as if they were righteous,² not because of anything worked in them or done by them³ but because God imputes to them the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ⁴ that can only be appropriated by faith.⁵

1. Rom 3.22, 24-25, 4.5.
2. 2 Cor 5.19,21, Rom 3.22, 24-25,27-28.
3. Ti 3.5,7, Eph 1.6-7, Rom 3.28.
4. Rom 5.17-19, 4.6-8, 3.24-25.
5. Acts 10.43, Gal 2.16, Phil 3.9, Rom 3.25-26, 5.1.

Q. 71. How is justification an act of God's free grace?

- A. By his obedience and death Christ made the correct, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice on behalf of those who are justified.¹ Yet, insofar as this satisfaction is accepted by God as a guarantee of performance, which he might have demanded from the justified, and since God himself provided a guarantor in the person of his only Son,² in justification God imputes righteousness to the justified³ and requires nothing from them in return except faith,⁴ which they also have as a gift from him.⁵ Consequently, justification comes to the justified as an act of God's free grace.⁶

1. Rom 5.8-10, 19.
2. 1 Tm 2.5-6, Heb 10.10, Mt 20.28, Dn 9.24,26, Is 53.4-6, 10-12, Heb 7.22, Rom 8.32, 1 Pt 1.18-19.
3. 2 Cor 5.21.
4. Rom 3.24-25.
5. Eph 2.8.
6. Eph 1.17.

Q. 72. What is justifying faith?

- A. Justifying faith is a saving grace¹ that works in the hearts of sinners by the Spirit² and the word of God.³ By it sinners are convinced of their sinfulness and miserable condition and realize that neither they nor anyone or anything else can get them out of that lost condition,⁴ and by it they give full assent to the truth of the gospel promise;⁵ they receive and rest on Christ and his righteousness for pardon from sin,⁶ as the gospel tells us, and for being accepted and accounted as righteous in the sight of God for salvation.⁷

1. Heb 10.39.
2. 2 Cor 4.13, Eph 1.17-19.
3. Rom 10.14,17, 2 Thes 2.13.
4. Acts 2.37, 16.30, Jn 16.8-9, Rom 6.6, 7.9, Eph 2.1, Acts 4.12.
5. Eph 1.13, Rom 10.8-10.
6. Jn 1.12, Acts 16.31, 10.43, Gal 2.15-16.
7. Phil 3.9, Acts 15.11.

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Q. 73. How does faith justify a sinner in the sight of God?

- A. Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God only as a tool by which the sinner receives Christ and puts Christ's righteousness into effect,¹ not because of any other grace that accompanies faith and not because of any good works that result from faith.² Nor is it the case that the grace of faith or any action springing from it is imputed to the sinner for his justification.³

1. Jn 1.12, Phil 3.9, Gal 2.16.
2. Gal 3.11, Rom 3.28.
3. Rom 4.5-8, 10.10, Ti 3.5-7.

Q. 74. What is adoption?

- A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace¹ in and for his only son, Jesus Christ,² by which all those who are justified become his children,³ have his name put on them,⁴ have the Spirit of his Son given to them,⁵ are provided for under his fatherly care,⁶ are welcomed to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, and are made heirs of all the promises and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory.⁷

1. 1 Jn 3.1.
2. Eph 1.5, Gal 4.4-5.
3. Jn 1.12.
4. 2 Cor 6.18, Rv 3.12.
5. Gal 4.6.
6. Ps 103.13, Prv 14.26, Mt 6.32.
7. Heb 6.12, Rom 8.17.

Q. 75. What is sanctification?

- A. Sanctification is a work of God's grace for those whom God has chosen to be holy before the beginning of the world and to whom in time the powerful operation of the Spirit¹ applies the death and resurrection of Christ.² They are thus renewed in their whole persons after the image of God,³ have the seeds of repentance unto life and all the other saving graces put into their hearts,⁴ and these graces are so aroused, increased, and strengthened⁵ that they more and more die to sin and rise into newness of life.⁶

1. Eph 1.4, 1 Cor 6.11, 2 Thes 2.13.
2. Rom 6.4-6.
3. Eph 4.23-24.
4. Acts 11.18, 1 Jn 3.9, Rom 6.4-6, Eph 4.23-24, Phil 3.10.
5. Jude 20, Heb 6.11-12, Eph 3.16-19, Col 1.10-11.
6. Rom 6.4,6,14, Gal 5.24.

Q. 76. What is repentance unto life?

- A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace¹ worked in the hearts of sinners by the Spirit² and the word of God.³ By it sinners recognize not only how dangerous it is to commit sins⁴ but also how filthy and hateful they are to God.⁵ Understanding that in Christ God is merciful to those who repent,⁶ sinners suffer such deep sorrow for⁷ and hate their sins⁸ so much that they turn away from all of them and turn to God,⁹ attempting to walk continually with him according to this new obedience in every way.¹⁰

1. 2 Tm 2.25, Lk 24.47.
2. Zec 12.10.
3. Acts 11.18,20-21, 2.37.
4. Ez 18.28,30,32, Lk 15.17-18, Hos 2.6-7.
5. Ez 36.31, 16.61,63, Is 30.22.
6. Jl 2.12-13, Lk 22.61-62, Zec 12.10.

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7. Jer 31.18-19.
8. 2 Cor 7.11, Acts 2.37.
9. Acts 26.18, Ez 14.6, 1 Kgs 8.47-48, 1 Sm 7.3.
10. Ps 119.6,59,128, Lk 1.6, 2 Kgs 23.25.

Q. 77. What is the difference between justification and sanctification?

- A. Although sanctification is inseparably joined to justification,¹ the two are distinctly different. In justification God imputes the righteousness of Christ to believers;² in sanctification his Spirit infuses believers with grace and enables them to use it.³ In the former, sin is pardoned;⁴ in the latter, it is subdued.⁵ The one exempts all believers equally and completely from the avenging anger and condemnation of God in this life;⁶ the other does not work equally in all believers,⁷ nor is it completed in any believer in this life,⁸ but only grows toward perfection.⁹

1. 1 Cor 6.11, 1.30, Rom 8.30.
2. Rom 4.6,8, Phil 3.8-9, 2 Cor 5.21.
3. Ez 36.27.
4. Rom 3.24-25.
5. Rom 6.6,14.
6. Rom 8.1,33-34.
7. 1 Jn 2.12-14, Heb 5.12-14, 1 Cor 3.1-2, Mk 4.8,28.
8. 1 Jn 1.8,10.
9. 2 Cor 7.1, Phil 3.12-14, Eph 4.11-15.

Q. 78. Why are believers not completely sanctified?

- A. Believers are not completely or perfectly sanctified because they retain some remnants of sin throughout their whole being and are continually plagued with desires of their old sinful nature that are contrary to the spirit. Consequently believers are frequently defeated by temptation, commit many sins,¹ and are hindered from performing their spiritual obligations,² so that their best works in God's eyes are imperfect and defiled.³

1. Rom 7.18,23, Mk 14.66-72, Gal 2.11-12.
2. Heb 12.1, Gal 5.17.
3. Is 64.6, Ex 28.38, Rom 7.18, 23.

Q. 79. Since true believers are imperfect, are tempted, and commit sin, can they fall out of their state of grace?

- A. Because of God's unchangeable love,¹ he has decreed and made a covenant with believers that they will persevere,² that they are inseparably united to Christ,³ who continually intercedes for them,⁴ and that the Spirit and the seed of God abide in them.⁵ Consequently, they can never completely or finally fall out of their state of grace,⁶ because the power of God preserves their salvation through faith.⁷

1. Jer 31.3, Jn 13.1.
2. 2 Tm 2.19, Heb 6.17, 13.20-21, 2 Sm 23.5, 1 Cor 1.8, Is 54.10.
3. 1 Cor 1.8-9, 12.27, Rom 8.35-39.
4. Heb 7.25, Lk 22.32.
5. 1 Jn 3.9, 2.27.
6. Jer 32.40, Jn 10.28.
7. 1 Pt 1.5, Phil 1.6.

Q. 80. Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are and will remain in a state of grace, persevering to salvation?

- A. Those who truly believe in Christ and try to walk in good conscience before him¹ may be infallibly assured that they are and will remain in a state of grace, persevering to salvation.² This assurance is not the result of any unusual revelation but comes from faith grounded on the truth of

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God's promises and from the Spirit, who gives believers the spiritual insight into their own hearts, to which these promises are directed.³ The Spirit also testifies with their spirits that they are the children of God.⁴

1. 1 Jn 2.3.
2. 1 Jn 5.13.
3. 1 Cor 2.12, 1 Jn 3.14, 18-19, 21, 24, 4.13, 16, Heb 6.11-12.
4. Rom 8.16.

Q. 81. Are all true believers assured all the time that they are saved and are in a state of grace?

- A. Since the assurance of grace and salvation is not essential to faith,¹ true believers may have to wait a long time for it,² and once they have it, their assurance may be weakened and interrupted from being afflicted by all kinds of psychological problems, from sinning, from being tempted, and from losing the sense of God's favor.³ However, the Spirit of God keeps believers from complete despair by never allowing them to be without some inner sense of his presence and support.⁴

1. Eph 1.13.
2. Is 50.10, Ps 88.
3. Sg 5.2-3, 6, Ps 51.8, 12, 31.22, 22.1, 77.1-12, 30.6-7.
4. 1 Jn 3.9, Jb 13.15, Ps 73.13-15, 23, Is 54.7-11.

Q. 82. What is the communion in glory that members of the invisible church have with Christ?

- A. The communion in glory that members of the invisible church have with Christ occurs in this life¹ as well as immediately after death,² and is finally completed at the resurrection and day of judgment.³

1. 2 Cor 3.18.
2. Lk 23.43.
3. 1 Thes 4.17, 1 Jn 3.2, Rv 22.3-5.

Q. 83. What is the communion in glory with Christ that members of the invisible church enjoy in this life?

- A. Since members of the invisible church are part of the body of Christ, who is their head, they have imparted to them in this life the first-fruits of glory with Christ mainly in the form of interest in the glory Christ fully possesses,¹ and, as a down payment on this communion, they enjoy a sense of God's love,² a good conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, and hope of glory.³ In a similar, negative way, the torments the wicked will endure after death begin here on earth with an awareness in them of God's avenging anger, a terrified conscience, and a fearful expectation of judgment.⁴

1. Eph 2.4-6.
2. Rom 5.5, 2 Cor 1.22.
3. Rom 5.1-2, 14.17.
4. Gn 4.13, Mt 27.3-5, Heb 10.27, Rom 2.9, Mk 9.44.

Q. 84. Is everyone going to die?

- A. Since we have been warned that death is the wages of sin,¹ everyone is destined to die once,² because everyone has sinned.³

1. Rom 6.23.
2. Heb 9.27.
3. Rom 5.12.

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Q. 85. Given that death is the wages of sin, why are the righteous not delivered from death, since all their sins are forgiven in Christ?

- A. At the last day, the righteous will be delivered from death itself. In the meantime, even when they die, they are delivered from the sting and curse of death,¹ and God's love² completely frees them from sin and misery,³ enabling them to have a deeper communion with Christ when they enter into his glory after death.⁴

1. 1 Cor 15.26,55-57, Heb 2.15.
2. Is 57.1-2, 2 Kgs 22.20.
3. Rv 14.13, Eph 5.27, Lk 16.25, 2 Cor 5.1-8.
4. Lk 23.43, Phil 1.23.

Q. 86. What is the communion in glory with Christ that members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death?

- A. The communion in glory with Christ that members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death involves their souls being made completely holy¹ and being received into the highest heavens.² There they behold the face of God in light and glory³ as they wait for the full redemption of their bodies,⁴ which even in death continue united to Christ⁵ and rest in the grave as in a bed,⁶ until at the last day body and soul are reunited.⁷ On the other hand, when the wicked die, their souls are thrown into hell. There they remain tormented in complete darkness, while their bodies are kept in the grave as in a prison, until the resurrection and judgment of that great day.⁸

1. Heb 12.23.
2. 2 Cor 5.1,6-8, Phil 1.23, Acts 3.21, Eph 4.10.
3. 1 Jn 3.2, 1 Cor 13.12, Lk 16.23, 23.43, 2 Cor 5.6-8.
4. Rom 8.23, Ps 16.9.
5. 1 Thes 4.14.
6. Is 57.2.
7. Jb 19.26-27, Rom 8.23.
8. Lk 16.23-24, Acts 1.25, Jude 6-7.

Q. 87. What must we believe about the resurrection?

- A. We must first of all believe that at the last day there is going to be a resurrection of all the dead, both the righteous and the wicked.¹ When that happens, those who are still alive on earth will be instantly changed, and the very same bodies of the dead that were buried will be reunited with their souls and raised up by the power of Christ.² Through the Spirit of Christ and by virtue of his resurrection, as their head, the bodies of the righteous will be raised in power, spiritual and imperishable, and made in the likeness of Christ's glorious body.³ Christ will raise up in dishonor the bodies of the wicked, who offend him as judge.⁴

1. Acts 24.15.
2. 1 Cor 15.51-53, 1 Thes 4.15-17, Jn 5.28-29.
3. 1 Cor 15.21-23,42-44, Phil 3.21.
4. Jn 5.27-29, Mt 25.33, Dn 12.2.

Q. 88. What is going to happen immediately after the resurrection?

- A. Immediately after the resurrection, all created beings, angels and humans, will be finally judged.¹ No one knows the exact time this is going to happen so that everyone can anticipate, pray for, and always be ready for the coming of the Lord.²

1. 2 Pt 2.4,6-7,14-15, Mt 25.46, Rv 20.11-13.
2. Mt 24.36,42,44, Lk 21.35-36.

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Q. 89. What will happen to the wicked on the judgment day?

- A. On the judgment day, the wicked will be put on the left of Christ,¹ and with the evidence against them clearly presented and fully recognized by them,² they will be justly and terribly condemned,³ after which they will be expelled from the favorable presence of God and the glorious fellowship with Christ, his people, and his angels, and thrown into hell to be punished forever with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul, along with the devil and his angels.⁴

1. Mt 25.33.
2. Rom 2.15-16.
3. Mt 25.41-43.
4. Lk 16.26, 2 Thes 1.8-9, Mt 25.46, Mk 9.43-44, 14.21.

Q. 90. What will happen to the righteous on the judgment day?

- A. On the judgment day, the righteous will be caught up with Christ in the clouds¹ and placed on his right, where they will be publicly acknowledged and acquitted.² They will join Christ in the judgment of reprobate angels and men³ and be received into heaven.⁴ There they will be completely and forever freed from all sin and misery,⁵ filled with unimaginable joy,⁶ and made perfectly holy and happy in body and soul, in the vast company of each other and the holy angels;⁷ they will be particularly blessed in the visual presence and enjoyment of God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, forever.⁸ Such is the perfect and complete fellowship the members of the invisible church will enjoy with Christ in glory at the resurrection and judgment day.

1. 1 Thes 4.17.
2. Mt 25.33, 10.32.
3. 1 Cor 6.2-3.
4. Mt 25.34, 46.
5. Eph 5.27, Rv 7.17, 14.13.
6. Ps 16.11, 1 Cor 2.9.
7. Heb 12.22-23.
8. 1 Jn 3.2, 1 Cor 13.12, 1 Thes 4.17-18, Rv 22.3-5.

HAVING SEEN WHAT THE BIBLE PRIMARILY TEACHES US TO BELIEVE ABOUT GOD, NEXT COMES WHAT GOD REQUIRES OF HUMANS.

Q. 91. What does God require of human beings?

- A. God requires human beings to obey his revealed will.¹

1. Rom 12.1-2, Mi 6.8, 1 Sm 15.22, Dt 29.29.

Q. 92. In the beginning what did God reveal for humans to obey?

- A. In his innocence, it was revealed to Adam and all humanity in him that he must obey the moral law in addition to a special command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.¹

1. Gn 1.26-27, 2.17, Rom 2.14-15, 10.5.

Q. 93. What is the moral law?

- A. The moral law is the declaration of God's will for humanity, directing and binding every human being to conform to and obey it personally, completely, and perpetually. The moral law applies to the whole human, body and soul,¹ and includes the performance of all those obligations to God

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and our fellow humans to be holy and righteous.² God promised life for keeping it and threatened death for disobeying it.³

1. Dt 5.1-3, 31, 33, Lk 10.26-27, Gal 3.10, 1 Thes 5.23.
2. Jas 2.10, Lk 1.75, Acts 24.16.
3. Rom 10.5, Gal 3.10,12.

Q. 94. Does the moral law apply to human beings after the fall?

A. Although after the fall no one can achieve righteousness and life by means of the moral law,¹ it still applies to all humans generally, whether saved or unsaved.²

1. Rom 8.3, Gal 2.16.
2. 1 Tm 1.8, Gal 3.19,24.

Q. 95. How does the moral law apply to all human beings?

A. The moral law reveals the holy nature and will of God to all humans¹ and obliges them to live by it.² It also reveals to them the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts, and lives, which shows them they are unable to keep it.³ The moral law also humbles human beings with the recognition of their sinfulness and misery⁴ and thereby gives them a better awareness of their need for Christ⁵ and for the perfection of his obedience.⁶

1. Lv 11.44-45, 20.7-8, Rom 7.12.
2. Mi 6.8, Jas 2.10-11, Lk 10.26,28,37.
3. Ps 19.11-12, Rom 3.20, 7.7.
4. Rom 3.9,23, 7.9,13.
5. Gal 3.21-22.
6. Rom 10.4.

Q. 96. How does the moral law apply particularly to the unsaved?

A. The moral law awakens the consciences of the unsaved to flee from the coming wrath¹ and so drives them to Christ.² But, if they continue in their unsaved and sinful condition, the law has left them without excuse³ and under its curse.⁴

1. 1 Tm 1.9-10, Rom 7.9.
2. Gal 3.24.
3. Rom 1.20, 2.15.
4. Gal 3.10.

Q. 97. How does the moral law apply specifically to the saved?

A. Although those who are saved and believe in Christ are freed from the moral law as a covenant of works,¹ so that they are neither justified² nor condemned³ by it, nonetheless, in addition to the general applicability of the moral law to all humans, it specifically shows believers how much they owe to Christ for fulfilling it and for enduring its curse in their place and for their good.⁴ This recognition spurs believers on to a greater thankfulness,⁵ so that they try all the harder to observe the law as their personal standard for living.⁶

1. Rom 6.14, 7.4,6, Gal 4.4-5.
2. Rom 3.20.
3. Gal 5.23, Rom 8.1,34.
4. Rom 7.24-25, Gal 3.13-14, Rom 8.3-4, 2 Cor 5.21.
5. Lk 1.68-69,74-75, Col 1.12-14.
6. Rom 7.22, 12.2, Ti 2.11-14.

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Q. 98. Where is the moral law summarized?

- A. The moral law is summarized in the ten commandments, which were delivered by the voice of God on Mount Sinai and written down by him on two stone tablets;¹ they are recorded in Exodus 20. The first four commandments establish our obligations to God and the remaining six our obligations to human beings.²

1. Dt 10.4, Ex 34.1-4, Mt 19.17-19.
2. Mt 22.37-40.

Q. 99. What are the guidelines for the proper understanding of the ten commandments?

- A. In order to understand the ten commandments properly, these guidelines should be followed.

1. The law is perfect and binds the whole person to observe it completely and, according to its standard, to be completely righteous, and perfectly obey every one of its obligations forever. On the negative side, the law forbids even the slightest or partial commission of any sin.¹

1. Ps 19.7, Jas 2.10, Mt 5.21-22, 28, 37, 44.

2. Since it is spiritual, the law involves our understanding, our will, our emotions and all the other faculties of the soul, as well as our words, actions, and self-expressions.²

2. Rom 7.14, Dt 6.5, Mt 22.37-39, 5.21-22, 27-28, 33-34, 37-39, 43-44, 12.36-37. See also citations under Guidelines above.

3. Different aspects of one and the same thing may be required or forbidden in several different commandments.³

3. Col 3.5, Am 8.5, Prv 1.19, 1 Tm 6.10, Ex 20.3-5.

4. When something is required, the opposite is forbidden,⁴ and where a specific sin is forbidden, its opposite is required.⁵ In the same way, when a requirement of the law adds a promise of some blessing for obeying it, that promise also includes a threat for disobeying it,⁶ and when a threat is added, an opposite promise is included.⁷

4. Is 58.13, Dt 6.13, Mt 4.9-10, 15.4-6.
5. Mt 5.21-25, Eph 4.28.
6. Ex 20.12, Prv 30.17.
7. Jer 18.7-8 Ex 20.7, Ps 15.1, 4-5, 24.4-5.

5. What God forbids must never be done at any time or under any circumstances.⁸ What he commands always remains an obligation,⁹ although every particular obligation of the law does not apply in all circumstances or at all times.¹⁰

8. Jb 13.7-8, Rom 3.8, Job 36.21, Heb 11.25.
9. Dt 4.8-9.
10. Mt 12.7, Mk 14.7.

6. The prohibitions against specific sins and the commandments to observe specific obligations are typical and so cover not just those particular sins or obligations but all others of the same kind. They similarly include all the contributory causes, means, opportunities, and appearances related to these sins and obligations.¹¹

11. Mt 5.21-22, 27-28, 15.4-6, Heb 10.24-25, 1 Thes 5.22, Jude 23, Gal 5.26, Col 3.21.

7. Since the provisions of the law apply not only to us but to everyone else, we must try to help others keep those provisions, in the context of our own position in life and theirs.¹²

12. Ex 20.10, Lv 19.17, Gn 18.19, Jos 24.15, Dt 6.6-7.

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8. Similarly, we must support others in keeping what the law commands them to do or not to do¹³ and particularly by not joining them in doing what is forbidden to them.¹⁴

13. 2 Cor 1.24, Heb 10.24.

14. 1 Tm 5.22, Eph 5.11.

Q. 100. What will our focus be on the ten commandments?

- A. We will focus on the introduction, the content of the commandments themselves, and the various reasons added to some of the commandments emphasizing how important it is to obey them.

Q. 101. What is the introduction to the ten commandments?

- A. The introduction to the ten commandments is: *I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*¹ In these words God reveals his sovereign being as LORD, in and of himself,² eternal, unchangeable, and almighty God,³ who gives being to all his words⁴ and works.⁵ God also points here to his covenantal relationship with the Israelites in ancient times and with all his people,⁶ so that just as he brought the Israelites out of their slavery in Egypt, he delivers us from spiritual enslavement.⁷ Consequently we are bound to accept only him as our God and to keep all his commandments.⁸

1. Ex 20.2.

2. Ex 3.14.

3. Is 44.6.

4. Ex 6.3.

5. Acts 17.24,28.

6. Gn 17.7, Rom 3.29.

7. Lk 1.74-75.

8. 1 Pt 1.15-18, Lv 18.30, 19.37.

Q. 102. What is the essence of the first four commandments that cover our obligations to God?

- A. The essence of these four commandments is to love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength and with all our mind.¹

1. Lk 10.27.

Q. 103. What is the first commandment?

- A. The first commandment is: *You shall have no other gods before me.*¹

1. Ex 20.3.

Q. 104. What does the first commandment require?

- A. The first commandment requires us to know and recognize God as the only true God and our God¹ and to worship and glorify him as such² by valuing,³ meditating on,⁴ remembering,⁵ highly regarding,⁶ honoring,⁷ adoring,⁸ preferring,⁹ loving,¹⁰ desiring,¹¹ fearing,¹² believing,¹³ trusting,¹⁴ hoping,¹⁵ delighting,¹⁶ and rejoicing in him.¹⁷ We must also be zealous for¹⁸ and call on him, giving him all praise and thanks,¹⁹ completely obeying and submitting to him in our whole person.²⁰ Finally, we must walk humbly with him,²¹ being careful to please him in everything we say and do²² and being genuinely sorry when we offend him.²³

1. 1 Chr 28.9, Dt 26.17, Is 43.10, Jer 14.22.

2. Ps 95.6-7, Mt 4.10, Ps 29.2.

3. Mal 3.16.

4. Ps 63.6.

5. Eccl 12.1.

6. Ps 71.19, 18.1-2.

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7. Mal 1.6.
8. Ps 45.23, Ps 96.
9. Jos 24.15,22.
10. Dt 6.5.
11. Ps 73.25.
12. Is 8.13.
13. Ex 14.31, Rom 10.11, Acts 10.43.
14. Is 26.4, Ps 40.4.
15. Ps 130.7.
16. Ps 37.4.
17. Ps 32.11.
18. Rom 12.11, Nm 25.11, Rev 3.19.
19. Phil 4.6.
20. Jer 7.23, Jas 4.7, Rom 12.1.
21. Mi 6.8.
22. 1 Jn 3.22.
23. Jer 31.18-19, Ps 119.136, Neh 13.8, Ps 73.21.

Q. 105. What particular sins does the first commandment forbid?

- A. The first commandment forbids: atheism, denying or not believing in God;¹ idolatry, believing in or worshiping any other gods along with or other than the one true God;² not having and affirming him as God and our God;³ failing or neglecting to do anything this commandment requires relating to God;⁴ ignorance of him;⁵ forgetting him;⁶ misunderstanding him;⁷ untrue opinions about him;⁸ and evil or unworthy thoughts about him;⁹ irreverent curiosity about and inquiry into his secrets;¹⁰ all godless desecration;¹¹ hating God;¹² self-love;¹³ self-interest;¹⁴ and all other disorderly or excessive attention, mental, willful, or emotional, to things that divert our attention partially or completely from God.¹⁵ Also included are: worthless beliefs,¹⁶ lack of faith;¹⁷ heretical beliefs;¹⁸ wrong belief;¹⁹ not trusting God;²⁰ spiritual despair;²¹ refusing correction²² and resisting God's judgment;²³ hardness of heart;²⁴ pride;²⁵ willfulness;²⁶ worldly complacency;²⁷ putting God to the test;²⁸ using unlawful means to an end;²⁹ trusting even in lawful means of grace rather than God;³⁰ indulging in pleasures of the flesh;³¹ depraved, blind, or improperly directed zeal;³² being lukewarm;³³ spiritual deadness;³⁴ deserting and forsaking God;³⁵ praying to or worshiping saints, angels, or any other created being;³⁶ making an agreement with, consulting,³⁷ or following the suggestions of the devil;³⁸ making men the rulers of our faith and conscience;³⁹ slighting and despising God and his commandments;⁴⁰ resisting and grieving his Spirit;⁴¹ and finally being dissatisfied and offended by the things God provides in our lives, ignorantly blaming him for the evils he inflicts on us,⁴² as well as attributing the credit for any good thing we are, have, or can do to luck,⁴³ idols,⁴⁴ ourselves,⁴⁵ or any other created being.⁴⁶

1. Ps 14.1, Eph 2.12.
2. Jer 2.27-28, 1 Thes 1.9.
3. Ps 81.11.
4. Is 43.22-24.
5. Jer 4.22, Hos 4.1,6.
6. Jer 2.32, Ps 50.22.
7. Acts 17.23,29.
8. Is 40.18.
9. Ps 50.21.
10. Dt 29.29.
11. Ti 1.16, Heb 12.16.
12. Rom 1.30.
13. 2 Tm 3.2.
14. Phil 2.21.
15. 1 Jn 2.15-16, 1 Sm 2.29, Col 3.2,5.
16. 1 Jn 4.1.
17. Heb 3.12.
18. Gal 5.20, Ti 3.10.

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19. Acts 26.9.
20. Ps 78.22.
21. Gn 4.13, Ez 37.11.
22. Jer 5.3.
23. Is 42.25.
24. Rom 2.5.
25. Jer 13.15.
26. Ps 19.13.
27. Zep 1.12.
28. Mt 4.7.
29. Rom 3.8.
30. Jer 17.5.
31. 2 Tm 3.4.
32. Gal 4.17, Jn 16.2, Rom 10.2, Lk 9.54-55.
33. Rv 3.16.
34. Rv 3.1.
35. Ez 14.5, Is 1.4-5.
36. Rom 10.13-14, Hos 4.12, Acts 10.25-26, Rv 19.10, Mt 4.10, Col 2.18, Rom 1.25.
37. Lv 20.6, 1 Sm 28.7-11, 1 Chr 10.13-14.
38. Acts 5.3.
39. 2 Cor 1.24, Mt 23.9.
40. Dt 32.15, 2 Sm 12.9, Prv 13.13.
41. Acts 7.51, Eph 4.30.
42. Ps 73.2-3, 13-15, 22, Jb 1.22.
43. 1 Sm 6.7-9.
44. Dn 5.23.
45. Dt 8.17, Dn 4.30.
46. Hb 1.16.

Q. 106. What do the words, *before me*, in the first commandment specifically teach?

- A. The words, *before me*, or “before my face,” in the first commandment teach us that God, who sees everything, takes special note of and is very offended by the sin of having any other god. These words emphasize then how important it is to obey this commandment and how disobeying it insolently provokes God;¹ they also urge us to be just as mindful of the fact that God sees everything we do as we are of doing things in his service.²

1. Ez 8.5-18, Ps 44.20-21.

2. 1 Chr 28.9.

Q. 107. What is the second commandment?

- A. 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 a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.¹

1. Ex 20.4-6.

Q. 108. What does the second commandment require?

- A. The second commandment requires us to receive, respectfully perform, and preserve completely and purely all the regulations for religion and worship that God has established in his word.¹ These include: prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ;² the reading, preaching, and hearing of the word;³ the administration of and receiving the sacraments;⁴ church government and discipline;⁵ the administration and upkeep of the church;⁶ religious fasting;⁷ swearing by the name of God;⁸ and making vows to him.⁹ Also included are disapproving, denouncing, and opposing

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false worship¹⁰ and doing our best, in accordance with our position and calling in life, to eliminate it and all forms of idolatry.¹¹

1. Dt 32.46-47, Mt 28.20, Acts 2.42, 1 Tm 6.13-14.
2. Phil 4.6, Eph 5.20.
3. Dt 17.18-19, Acts 15.21, 2 Tm 4.2, Jas 1.21-22, Acts 10.33.
4. Mt 28.19, 1 Cor 11.23-30.
5. Mt 18.15-17, 16.19, 1 Cor 5, 12.28, Jn 20.23.
6. Eph 4.11-12, 1 Tm 5.17-18, 1 Cor 9.1-15.
7. Jl 2.12,18, 1 Cor 7.5.
8. Dt 6.13.
9. Is 19.21, Ps 76.11, 116.14,18.
10. Acts 17.16-17, Ps 16.4.
11. Dt 7.5, Is 30.22.

Q. 109. What particular sins does the second commandment forbid?

- A. The second commandment forbids: imagining,¹ recommending,² demanding,³ practicing,⁴ or in any way approving any religious worship not established by God himself;⁵ creating any likeness of God as the Trinity or as anyone of his three persons, either internally in our minds or externally in the form of any kind of image or representation of a created being;⁶ any worship of such created likenesses⁷ as if God were in them or as if they were a means to worshipping him;⁸ the creation of any likenesses of invented gods,⁹ any worship of them or service relating to them;¹⁰ and all superstitious contrivances.¹¹ Also forbidden are: any departure from the true worship of God¹² by adding to or taking away from it,¹³ whether by our own invention¹⁴ or received from some other tradition,¹⁵ and whether justified by antiquity,¹⁶ custom,¹⁷ devotional practice,¹⁸ good intentions, or any other excuse;¹⁹ simony²⁰ and anything sacrilegious;²¹ and finally any neglect of,²² contempt for,²³ hindering,²⁴ or opposition to the worship and regulations established by God.²⁵

1. Nm 15.39.
2. Dt 13.6-8.
3. Hos 5.11, Mi 6.16.
4. 1 Kgs 11.33, 12.33.
5. Dt 12.30-32.
6. Dt 4.15-19, Acts 17.29, Rom 1.21-25.
7. Dn 3.18 Gal 4.8.
8. Ex 32.5.
9. Ex 32.8.
10. 1 Kgs 18.26,28, Is 65.11.
11. Acts 17.22, 19.19, Col 2.21-23.
12. Mal 1.7-8,14.
13. Dt 4.2.
14. Ps 106.39.
15. Mt 15.9.
16. 1 Pt 1.18.
17. Jer 44.17.
18. Is 65.3-5, Gal 1.13-14.
19. 1 Sm 13.11-12, 15.21.
20. Acts 8.18.
21. Rom 2.22, Mal 3.8.
22. Ex 4.24-26.
23. Mt 22.5, Mal 1.7,12-13.
24. Mt 23.13.
25. Acts 13.44-45, 1 Thes 2.15-16.

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Q. 110. What reason is added to the second commandment emphasizing how important it is to obey it?

- A. The reason added to this commandment to emphasize its importance is in these words: *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 a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.*¹ In addition to calling attention to the fact that God totally rules over us, so that we belong to him,² these words point to his fervent eagerness to be worshiped correctly,³ and that he is angered and takes vengeance on all false worship, which he sees as spiritual prostitution.⁴ He views breaking this commandment as equivalent to hating him and threatens to punish those who do break it for several generations.⁵ He also equates observing this commandment with loving him and keeping all his commandments, and promises mercy for many generations to those who do it.⁶

1. Ex 20.5-6.
2. Ps 45.11, Rv 15.3-4.
3. Ex 34.13-14.
4. 1 Cor 10.20-22, Jer 7.18-20, Ez 16.26-27, Dt 32.16-20.
5. Hos 2.2-4.
6. Dt 5.29.

Q. 111. What is the third commandment?

- A. 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.*¹

1. Ex 20.7.

Q. 112. What does the third commandment require?

- A. The third commandment requires the holy and reverent use in our thoughts,¹ meditations,² words,³ and writings,⁴ of God's name, titles, qualities,⁵ regulations,⁶ word,⁷ sacraments,⁸ prayer,⁹ oaths,¹⁰ vows,¹¹ casting lots,¹² his works,¹³ and anything else by which he makes himself known. This treatment will be reflected in holy affirmations of our faith¹⁴ and conduct that matches our affirmations,¹⁵ to the glory of God¹⁶ and the good of ourselves¹⁷ and others.¹⁸

1. Mal 3.16.
2. Ps 8.
3. Col 3.17, Ps 105.2,5.
4. Ps 102.18.
5. Mt 6.9, Dt 28.58, Ps 29.2, 68.4, Rv 15.3-4.
6. Mal 1.14, Eccl 5.1.
7. Ps 138.2.
8. 1 Cor 11.24-25,28-29.
9. 1 Tm 2.8.
10. Jer 4.2.
11. Eccl 5.2,4-6, Ps 76.11.
12. Acts 1.24,26.
13. Jb 36.24, Ps 107.21-22.
14. 1 Pt 3.15, Mi 4.5.
15. Phil 1.27.
16. 1 Cor 10.31.
17. Jer 32.39.
18. 1 Pt 2.12.

Q. 113. What particular sins does the third commandment forbid?

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- A. The third commandment forbids: not using God's name as is required;¹ the abuse of it through ignorance,² empty³ or unholy treatment, irreverence,⁴ superstition,⁵ or any wicked reference to his

titles, qualities,⁶ regulations,⁷ or works;⁸ blasphemy;⁹ perjury;¹⁰ all sinful cursing,¹¹ oaths,¹² vows,¹³ and casting lots;¹⁴ violating our oaths and vows, if lawful,¹⁵ and keeping them, if aimed at unlawful things;¹⁶ complaining and quarreling about¹⁷ or misapplication of God's decrees¹⁸ and acts of providence¹⁹ as well as unwarranted curiosity about them;²⁰ misinterpreting²¹ or misapplying²² God's word or perverting all or part of its meaning in any way;²³ blasphemous mockery of his word,²⁴ pointless arguing, meaningless talk, or supporting false doctrines;²⁵ abusing God's name, his creatures, or anything included under his name in the practice of magic²⁶ or to promote sinful desires and activities;²⁷ maligning,²⁸ scorning,²⁹ reviling,³⁰ or opposing in any way God's truth, grace, and actions;³¹ pretending to be religious or using religion for evil purposes;³² being ashamed of God's name³³ or a shame to it by stubbornly refusing to obey him³⁴ and by living unwisely,³⁵ unfruitfully,³⁶ or in such a way as to offend him³⁷ or backslide away from him.³⁸

1. Mal 2.2.
2. Acts 17.23.
3. Prv 30.9.
4. Mal 1.6-7, 12, 3.14.
5. 1 Sm 4.3-5, Jer 7.4, 9-10, 14, 31, Col 2.20-22.
6. 2 Kgs 18.30, 35, Ex 5.2, Ps 139.20.
7. Ps 50.16-17.
8. Is 5.12.
9. 2 Kgs 19.22, Lv 24.11.
10. Zec 5.4, 8.17.
11. 1 Sm 17.43, 2 Sm 16.5, Rom 12.14.
12. Jer 5.7, 23.10.
13. Dt 23.18, Acts 23.12, 14.
14. Est 3.7, 9.24, Ps 22.18.
15. Ps 24.4, Ez 17.16, 18-19.
16. Mk 6.26, 1 Sm 25.22, 32-34.
17. Rom 9.14, 19-20.
18. Rom 3.5, 7, 6.1.
19. Eccl 8.11, 9.3, Ps 39, 73.12-13.
20. Dt 29.29.
21. Mt 5.21 to the end.
22. Ez 13.22.
23. 2 Pt 3.16, Mt 22.23-32.
24. Is 22.13, Jer 23.34, 36, 38, Eph 5.4.
25. 1 Tm 1.4, 6-7, 6.4-5, 20, 2 Tm 2.14, Ti 3.9.
26. Dt 18. 10-14, Acts 19.13.
27. 2 Tm 4.3-4, Rom 13.13-14, 1 Kgs 21.9-10, Jude 4.
28. Acts 13.45, 1 Jn 3.12.
29. Ps 1.1, 2 Pt 3.3.
30. 1 Pt 4.4.
31. Acts 13.45-46, 50, Acts 4.18, 19.9, 1 Thes 2.16, Heb 10.29.
32. 2 Tm 3.5, Mt 23.14, 6.1-3, 5, 16.
33. Mk 8.38.
34. Ps 73.14-15.
35. 1 Cor 6.5-6, Eph 5.15-17.
36. Is 5.4, 2 Pt 1.8-9.
37. Rom 2.23-24.
38. Gal 3.1, 3, Heb 6.6.

Q. 114. What reasons are added to the third commandment?

- A. The reasons are in these words: *The LORD thy God and The LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.*¹ Because he is the LORD and our God, his name must never be treated as

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unholy or misused by us in any way,² particularly since he is so opposed to acquitting or sparing those who break this commandment that he will not allow them to escape his righteous

judgment,³ even though many who do break this commandment escape human condemnation and punishment.⁴

1. Ex 20.7.
2. Lv 19.12.
3. Ez 36.21-23, Dt 28.58-59, Zec 5.2-4.
4. 1 Sm 2.12,17,22,24, 3.13.

Q. 115. What is the fourth commandment?

- A. The fourth commandment is: *Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days shall you labor 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 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 on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*¹

1. Ex 20.8-11.

Q. 116. What does the fourth commandment require?

- A. The fourth commandment requires all men to sanctify or set apart to God the times he has established in his word, and specifically one whole day out of every seven. This was the seventh day from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since. It will continue that way until the end of the world. This is the Christian Sabbath,¹ in the New Testament called *the Lord's day*.²

1. Dt 5.12-14, Gn 2.2-3, 1 Cor 16.1-2, Acts 20.7, Mt 5.17-18, Is 56.2, 4, 6-7, Lk 23.56, Jn 20.19-27.
2. Rv 1.10.

Q. 117. How do we keep the Sabbath or the Lord's day holy?

- A. We keep the Sabbath or the Lord's day holy by resting the whole day,¹ not just from doing things that are inherently sinful at any time, but even from worldly affairs and recreations that are lawful on other days.² Except for necessary works or acts of mercy,³ we should joyfully spend all our time publicly and privately worshiping God.⁴ To that end, we must prepare our hearts and carefully plan ahead so that our worldly business is taken care of beforehand in order that we may more readily spend the day the way God requires.⁵

1. Ex 20.8,10.
2. Ex 16.25-29, Neh 13.15-22, Jer 17.21-22.
3. Mt 11.1-13, 12.1-14.
4. Is 58.13,18, 66.23, Lk 4.16, Acts 20.7, 1 Cor 16.1-2, Ps 92 (title), Lv 23.3.
5. Ex 20.8,56, Lk 23.54,56, Ex 16.22, 25-26, 29, Neh 13.19.

Q. 118. Why is the command to keep the Sabbath specifically directed to heads of families and others in authority?

- A. The command to keep the Sabbath is specifically directed to heads of families and others in authority because the command not only obligates them individually and personally but also makes them responsible for everyone under them. The command also recognizes that those in authority may be inclined to work themselves on the Sabbath day and so hinder the observance of it by those under them.¹

1. Ex 20.10, Jos 24.15, Neh 13.15,17, Jer 17.20-22, Ex 23.12.

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Q. 119. What particular sins does the fourth commandment forbid?

- A. The fourth commandment forbids failing to do anything required by the commandment;¹ or doing it carelessly, negligently, or in such a way as not to benefit from it, and being tired of keeping it;² also treating the day as unholy by loafing, by doing anything in itself sinful,³ and by all useless works, words, and thoughts about our worldly affairs and recreations.⁴

1. Ez 22.26.
2. Acts 20.7,9, Ez 33.30-32, Am 8.5, Mal 1.13.
3. Ez 23.38.
4. Jer 17.24,27, Is 58.13-14.

Q. 120. What reasons are added to the fourth commandment emphasizing the importance of obeying it?

- A. The reasons added to the fourth commandment to emphasize its importance are first of all implied by its inherent fairness; God allows us six days out of every seven for our own affairs and reserves only one for himself, in these words: *Six days shall you labor and do all your work.*¹ God also insists that this day belongs to him, *The seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.*² And there is the example of God himself, who in *six days made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested on the seventh day.* Finally God put a blessing on that day, not just by making it a holy day for serving him but also by establishing that our keeping the Sabbath holy will be a blessing to us as well, *Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*³

1. Ex 20.9.
2. Ex 20.10.
3. Ex 20.11.

Q. 121. Why does the word Remember begin the fourth commandment?

- A. The word *Remember* begins the fourth commandment¹ in one respect, because it is highly beneficial to remember it: the word helps us prepare ourselves to keep the commandment,² and when we do, it helps us to do a better job keeping all the other commandments;³ and the word also reminds us to remain ever thankful for the two great benefits of creation and redemption, which contain the essence of true religion.⁴ In another respect, the word “remember” reminds us how easy it is to forget to keep the Sabbath,⁵ for several reasons. First, keeping the Sabbath is not obvious to our natural, human understanding,⁶ while it additionally restricts our freedom from doing things that are lawful on other days.⁷ And, coming only every seventh day leaves plenty of time for us to become so engrossed with our own worldly affairs that we forget to prepare for the Sabbath or keep it holy.⁸ Finally, Satan himself with the tools at his disposal is hard at work to blot out the glory and even the memory of the Sabbath and so promote the neglect of religion and irreverence.⁹

1. Ex 20.8.
2. Ex 16.23, Lk 23.54,56, Mk 15.42, Neh 13.19.
3. Ps 92.13-14, Ez 20.12, 19-20.
4. Gn 2.2-3, Ps 118.22,24, Acts 4.10-11, Rv 1.10, Heb 4.9.
5. Ez 22.26, Nm 15.37-38,40.
6. Neh 9.14.
7. Ex 34.21.
8. Dt 5.14-15, Am 8.5, Nm 15.37-38,40.
9. Lam 1.7, Jer 17.21-23, Neh 13.15-23.

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Q. 122. What is the essence of the six commandments that cover our obligations to fellow human beings?

A. The essence of these six commandments is to love your neighbor as yourself¹ and to do to others what you would have them do to you.²

1. Mt 22.39.
2. Mt 7.12.

Q. 123. What is the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment is: *Honor your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.*¹

1. Ex 20.12.

Q. 124. To whom does father and mother refer in the fifth commandment?

A. *Father* and *mother* refer not just to our parents¹ but to everyone who is older² or more talented than we are,³ and specifically to those whom God has ordained to be over us in positions of authority, whether in our family,⁴ the church,⁵ or civil government.⁶

1. Prv 23.22,25, Eph 6.1-2.
2. 1 Tm 5.1-2.
3. Gn 4.20-22, 45.8.
4. 2 Kgs 5.13.
5. 2 Kgs 2.12, 13.14, Gal 4.19.
6. Is 49.23.

Q. 125. Why are those over us referred to as father and mother?

A. The terms *father* and *mother* remind those in authority that, like fathers and mothers, they are responsible for and should act in a loving and tender way, appropriately reflecting their particular relationship, toward those under them;¹ and those under them are also encouraged to accept their authority more willingly and cheerfully, as if they were their parents.²

1. Eph 6.4, 2 Cor 12.14, 1 Thes 2.7-8, 11, Nm 11.11-12,16.
2. 1 Cor 4.14-16, 2 Kgs 5.13.

Q. 126. What is the general scope of the fifth commandment?

A. In general, the fifth commandment outlines our obligations to others, depending upon our particular relationship to them, whether over, under, or equal to them.¹

1. Eph 5.21., 1 Pt 2.17, Rom 12.10.

Q. 127. What kind of honor is owed to those over us?

A. Those over us deserve respect in our hearts,¹ our words,² and our actions.³ We must pray and give thanks for them,⁴ emulate their virtues and gifts,⁵ willingly heed and obey their lawful commands and advice,⁶ submit to their correction,⁷ be faithful to them,⁸ and defend⁹ and support their persons and authority, as is appropriate to their rank and position.¹⁰ We must also tolerate their imperfections and infirmities and cover them with our love,¹¹ so that we will be an honor to them and to their authority.¹²

1. Mal 1.6, Lv 19.3.
2. Prv 31.28, 1 Pt 3.6.
3. Lv 19.32, 1 Kgs 2.19.
4. 1 Tm 2.1-2.

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5. Heb 13.7, Phil 3.17.
6. Eph 6.1-2,5-7, 1 Pt 2.13-14, Rom 13.1-6, Heb 13.17, Prv 4.3-4, 23.22, Ex 18.19,24.
7. Heb 12.9, 1 Pt 2.18-20.
8. Ti 2.9-10.
9. 1 Sm 26.15-16, 2 Sm 18.3, Est 6.2.
10. Mt 22.21, Rom 13.6-7, 1 Tm 5.17-18, Gal 6.6, Gn 45.11, 47.12.
11. 1 Pt 2.18, Prv 23.22, Gn 9.23.
12. Ps 127.3-5, Prv 31.23.

Q. 128. What are the particular sins against those in authority by those under them?

- A. The sins of those under authority against those over them are: any failure to perform what is required by them;¹ being envious of,² holding in contempt,³ or rebelling⁴ against their person⁵ or position⁶ as reflected in their lawful advice,⁷ commands, and correction;⁸ cursing at or making fun of them⁹ or any kind of stubborn resistance and disgraceful display that brings shame and dishonor to their person and authority.¹⁰

1. Mt 15.4-6.
2. Nm 11.28-29, Ps 106.16.
3. 1 Sm 8.7, Is 3.5.
4. 2 Sm 15.1-12.
5. Ex 21.15.
6. 1 Sm 10.27.
7. 1 Sm 2.25.
8. Dt 21.18-21.
9. Prv 30.11,17.
10. Prv 19.26.

Q. 129. What is required of those in authority towards those under them?

- A. As is appropriate to the position of power they have received from God and to the particular relationship involved, those in authority should love,¹ pray for,² and bless those under them.³ They should teach,⁴ advise, and warn them,⁵ approving,⁶ praising,⁷ and rewarding those that do well⁸ while disapproving,⁹ blaming, and punishing those who do wrong.¹⁰ They should also protect those under them¹¹ and provide the things they need for soul¹² and body.¹³ Those in authority should also be examples of serious, wise, and holy behavior so as to bring glory to God¹⁴ and honor to themselves¹⁵ and thereby maintain the authority God has bestowed on them.¹⁶

1. Col 3.19, Ti 2.4.
2. 1 Sm 12.23, Jb 1.5.
3. 1 Kgs 8.55-56, Heb 7.7, Gn 49.28.
4. Dt 6.6-7.
5. Eph 6.4.
6. 1 Pt 3.7.
7. 1 Pt 2.14, Rom 13.3.
8. Est 6.3.
9. Rom 13.3-4.
10. Prv 29.15, 1 Pt 2.14, Rom 13.4.
11. Jb 29.12-16, Is 1.10,17.
12. Eph 6.4.
13. 1 Tm 5.8.
14. 1 Tm 4.12., Ti 2.2-14.
15. 1 Kgs 3.28.
16. Ti 2.15.

Q. 130. What are the particular sins of those in authority?

- A. In addition to failing to do what is required of them¹ and using their position for self-aggrandizement² and for their own glory,³ ease, profit, or pleasure,⁴ the sins of those in authority include: commanding things that are unlawful⁵ or that cannot be accomplished by those under

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them;⁶ persuading,⁷ encouraging,⁸ and rewarding those under them for doing evil;⁹ dissuading, discouraging, and not rewarding them for doing good;¹⁰ excessive punishment;¹¹ carelessly exposing or allowing them to do wrong and to be put in the way of temptation or danger;¹² provoking them to anger;¹³ and anything that dishonors themselves or undermines their authority by being unjust, imprudent, too severe, or lax.¹⁴

1. Ez 34.2-4.
2. Phil 2.21.
3. Jn 5.44, 7.18.
4. Is 56.10-11, Dt 17.17.
5. Dn 3.4-6, Acts 4.17-18.
6. Ex 5.10-19, Mt 23.2,4.
7. Mt 14.8, Mk 6.24.
8. 2 Sm 13.28, Jer 5.30-31.
9. 1 Sm 3.13, Jer 6.13-14, Ez 13.9-10.
10. Jn 7.46-49, 9.28, Col 3.21, Ex 5.17.
11. 1 Pt 2.18-20, Heb 12.10, Dt 25.3.
12. Gn 38.11,26, Acts 18.17, Lv 19.29, Is 58.7.
13. Eph 6.4.
14. Gn 9.21, 1 Kgs 12.13-16, 1.6, 1 Sm 2.29-31, 3.13.

Q. 131. What is required of equals?

A. Equals are required to pay attention to the dignity and worth of each other¹ by honoring each other above themselves² and by rejoicing in each others' gifts and success as if their own.³

1. 1 Pt 2.17.
2. Rom 12.10, Phil 2.3.
3. Rom 12.15-16, Phil 2.3-4.

Q. 132. What are the particular sins of equals?

A. In addition to failing to do what is required of them,¹ the sins of equals include undervaluing the worth of each other,² envying their gifts,³ grieving over their success or prosperity,⁴ and trying to lord it over them.⁵

1. Rom 13.8.
2. 2 Tm 3.3, Prv 14.21, Is 65.5.
3. Acts 7.9, Gal 5.26.
4. Nm 12.2, Est 6.12-13, 1 Jn 3.12, Mt 20.15, Lk 15.28-29.
5. 3 Jn 9, Lk 22.24-26, Mt 20.25-27.

Q. 133. What reason is added to the fifth commandment emphasizing how important it is to obey it?

A. The reason added to the fifth commandment is in these words: *so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.*¹ These words expressly promise long life and prosperity to all who keep this commandment, if these glorify God and are for their good.²

1. Ex 20.12.
2. Dt 5.16, 1 Kgs 8.25, Eph 6.2-3.

Q. 134. What is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is: *You shall not murder.*¹

1. Ex 20.13.

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Q. 135. What does the sixth commandment require?

- A. The sixth commandment requires us to do our best to make every lawful effort to preserve our own life¹ and the lives of others.² We do this by not thinking about or planning,³ by controlling our emotions,⁴ and by avoiding all opportunities,⁵ temptations,⁶ or actions that would promote or lead to the unjust taking of someone's life.⁷ In the pursuit of that goal, we must defend others from violence,⁸ patiently endure the afflictions from God's hand,⁹ have a quiet mind¹⁰ and a cheerful spirit,¹¹ practice temperance in the way we eat,¹² drink,¹³ take medications,¹⁴ sleep,¹⁵ work,¹⁶ and play.¹⁷ We should also harbor charitable thoughts,¹⁸ love,¹⁹ compassion,²⁰ meekness, gentleness, and kindness.²¹ Our speech and behavior should be peaceful,²² mild, and courteous.²³ We should be tolerant of others, be ready to be reconciled, patiently put up with and forgive injuries against us, and return good for evil.²⁴ Finally, we should provide aid and comfort to those in distress as well as protect and defend the innocent.²⁵

1. Eph 5.28-29, Mt 10.23.
2. 1 Kgs 18.4, Ps 82.4, Dt 22.8.
3. Jer 26.15-16, Acts 23.12,16-17,21,27, Mt 5.22.
4. Eph 4.26-27.
5. 2 Sm 2.22, Dt 22.8, Prv 22.24-25, 1 Sm 25.32-33.
6. Mt 4.6-7, Prv 1.10,11,15-16.
7. 1 Sm 24.12, 26.9-11, Gn 37.21-22, 1 Kgs 21.9-10,19.
8. Ps 82.4, Prv 24.11-12, 1 Sm 14.45.
9. Jas 5.7-11, Heb 12.5,9, Lk 21.19.
10. 1 Thes 4.11, 1 Pt 3.3-4, Ps 37.8,11.
11. Prv 17.22, 1 Thes 5.16.
12. Prv 25.16,27, 23.20.
13. 1 Tm 5.23, Prv 23.29-30.
14. Is 38.21, Mt 9.12.
15. Ps 127.2.
16. Eccl 5.12, 2 Thes 3.10,12, Prv 16.26.
17. Eccl 3.4,11, Mk 6.31, 1 Tm 4.8.
18. 1 Sm 19.4-5, 22.13-14, 1 Cor 13.4-5.
19. Rom 13.10, Prv 10.12.
20. Lk 10.33-34, Zec 7.9.
21. Col 3.12-13.
22. Jas 3.17, Rom 12.18.
23. 1 Pt 3.8-11, Prv 15.1, Jgs 8.1-3, 1 Cor 4.12-13.
24. Mt 5.24, Eph 4.2,32, Rom 12.17,20-21, Col 3.13, Jas 3.17, 1 Pt 2.20.
25. 1 Thes 5.14, Jb 31.19-20, Mt 25.35-36, Prv 31.8-9, Is 58.7.

Q. 136. What particular sins does the sixth commandment forbid?

- A. The sixth commandment forbids: taking our own¹ or anyone else's² life, except in the pursuit of public justice,³ lawful war,⁴ or necessary defense;⁵ neglecting or withholding the necessary means for the preservation of life;⁶ sinful anger,⁷ hatred,⁸ envy,⁹ or desire for revenge;¹⁰ all excessive emotions¹¹ and distracting anxieties;¹² intemperate eating, drinking,¹³ working,¹⁴ or playing;¹⁵ speaking in a provocative way,¹⁶ oppressing,¹⁷ quarreling with,¹⁸ hitting, or wounding others,¹⁹ and anything else conducive to the destruction of anyone's life.²⁰

1. Acts 16.28, Prv 1.18.
2. Gn 9.6.
3. Nm 35.31,33, Ex 21.14.
4. Jer 48.10, Dt 20.1, Heb 11.32-34.
5. Ex 22.2-3.
6. Mt 25.42-43, Jas 2.15-16, Eccl 6.1-2.
7. Mt 5.22.
8. 1 Jn 3.15, Lv 19.17, Prv 10.12.
9. Prv 14.30.

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10. Rom 12.19.
11. Eph 4.31, Jas 4.1.
12. Mt 6.31,34.
13. Lk 21.34, Rom 13.13.
14. Eccl 12.12, 2.22-23, Ex 20.9-10.
15. Is 5.12, 1 Pt 4.3-4.
16. Prv 15.1, 12.18.
17. Ez 18.18, Ex 1.14, Is 3.15.
18. Gal 5.15, Prv 23.29.
19. Nm 35.16-18, 21.
20. Ex 21.18-36, Prv 28.17

Q. 137. What is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is: *You shall not commit adultery.*¹

1. Ex 20.14.

Q. 138. What does the seventh commandment require?

A. The seventh commandment requires us to be sexually pure in body, mind, inclinations,¹ words,² and actions,³ and to maintain that purity in ourselves and others.⁴ We are to monitor what we look at as well as what we experience with our other senses;⁵ and we are to live temperately,⁶ keeping pure company⁷ and dressing modestly.⁸ Those who cannot control their sexual desires should marry,⁹ loving¹⁰ and living together with their spouses.¹¹ We should also work hard at whatever we are called to do,¹² avoiding all opportunities for indecency, and resisting any temptation to say, think, or do anything indecent or obscene.¹³

1. 1 Thes 4.4-5, Jb 31.1, 1 Cor 7.34.
2. Col 4.6, Eph 4.29.
3. 1 Pt 3.2.
4. 1 Cor 7.2,35-36, Ti 2.4-5.
5. Jb 31.1, Mt 5.28.
6. Acts 24.24-25, Prv 23.31, 33, Jer 5.7.
7. Prv 2.16-20, 1 Cor 5.9.
8. 1 Tm 2.9.
9. 1 Cor 7.2,9.
10. Prv 5.18-20.
11. 1 Pt 3.7, 1 Cor 7.5.
12. Prv 31.11,27-28, 1 Tm 5.13-14.
13. Prv 5.8, Gn 39.8-10.

Q. 139. What particular sins does the seventh commandment forbid?

A. In addition to failing to do what is required,¹ the seventh commandment forbids: adultery, fornication,² rape, incest,³ sodomy, and all unnatural desires;⁴ all impure imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and inclinations;⁵ all corrupt and nasty talk or listening to such,⁶ lewd looks,⁷ shameless or frivolous behavior, and immodest dress;⁸ prohibiting lawful marriages⁹ and allowing unlawful ones;¹⁰ condoning, tolerating, or organizing prostitution and visiting prostitutes;¹¹ restrictive vows of celibacy,¹² unnecessary delays in marrying,¹³ having more than one wife or husband at the same time;¹⁴ unjust divorce¹⁵ or desertion;¹⁶ idleness, gluttony, drunkenness,¹⁷ and keeping impure company;¹⁸ obscene or pornographic songs, books, pictures, dancing, or theatrical presentations;¹⁹ and all other encouragement to or indulgence in impure activities by us or others.²⁰

1. Prv 5.7, 4.23,27.
2. Heb 13.4, Gal 5.19, Eph 5.5.
3. 2 Sm 13.14, 1 Cor 5.1,13, Mk 6.18.
4. Rom 1.24,26-27, Lv 20.15-16.

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5. Mt 5.28, 15.19, Col 3.5.
6. Eph 5.3-4, Prv 7.5,21-22, 19.27.
7. Is 3.16, 2 Pt 2.14.
8. Prv 7.10,13.
9. 1 Tm 4.3.
10. Lv 18.1-21, Mk 6.18, Mal 2.11-12.
11. 1 Kgs 15.12, 2 Kgs 23.7, Dt 23.17-18, Lv 19.29, Jer 5.7, Prv 7.24-27.
12. Mt 19.10-12.
13. 1 Cor 7.7-9, Gn 38.26, 1 Tm 5.14-15.
14. Mal 2.14-15, Mt 19.5, 1 Cor 7.2.
15. Mal 2.16, Mt 5.32.
16. 1 Cor 7.12-13. See citations under Q. 138
17. Ez 16.49, Prv 23.30-33, Jer 5.7.
18. Gn 39.10, Prv 5.8, Eph 5.11.
19. Eph 5.4, Ez 23.14-16, Is 23.15-17, 3.16, Mk 6.22, Rom 13.13, 1 Pt 4.3.
20. 2 Kgs 9.30, Jer 4.30, Ez 23.40, Rom 13.14, 2 Pt 2.17-18.

Q. 140. What is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is: *You shall not steal.*¹

1. Ex 20.15.

Q. 141. What does the eighth commandment require?

A. The eighth commandment requires us to act truthfully, faithfully, and justly in our contractual and business relationships with our fellow human beings so that we give to all what they deserve.¹ We are to make restitution for anything we have unlawfully acquired from its rightful owner;² we should give and lend freely, according to our ability and the needs of others;³ we must moderate our judgment, will, and inclinations about worldly goods;⁴ we must exercise prudence in the acquisition,⁵ maintenance, use, and disposition of the things that we need and are appropriate to sustain us humanly and that match our condition in life;⁶ we should find something lawful to do in life⁷ and work hard at it;⁸ we should be frugal;⁹ and we should avoid unnecessary lawsuits¹⁰ and should not become liable by putting up security for others or by similar commitments.¹¹ Finally, we must do our best, by all just and lawful means, to acquire, preserve, and increase our own and others' money and possessions.¹²

1. Ps 15.2,4, Mi 6.8, Zec 7.4,10, 8.16-17, Rom 13.7.
2. Lv 6.2-5, Lk 19.8.
3. Lk 6.30,38, Eph 4.28, Gal 6.10, Dt 15.7-8, 10.
4. 1 Tm 6.6-9, Gal 6.14.
5. 1 Tm 5.8.
6. Prv 27.23-27, Eccl 2.24, 3.12-13, 1 Tm 6.17-18, Is 38.1, Mt 11.8.
7. 1 Cor 7.20, Gn 2.15, 3.19, Eph 4.28, Rom 12.5-8.
8. Eph 4.28, Prv 10.4, Rom 12.11.
9. Jn 6.12, Prv 21.20, 12.27.
10. 1 Cor 6.1-9.
11. Prv 6.1-6, 11.15.
12. Lv 25.35, Dt 22.1-4, Ex23.4-5, Gn 47.14,20, Phil 2.4, Mt 22.39.

Q. 142. What particular sins does the eighth commandment forbid?

A. In addition to failing to do what is required,¹ the eighth commandment forbids: theft,² robbery,³ kidnapping,⁴ and receiving stolen goods;⁵ fraud,⁶ dishonest scales or measures,⁷ removing boundary markers,⁸ injustice or bad faith in our contractual relationships⁹ or trust agreements;¹⁰ oppression,¹¹ extortion,¹² usury,¹³ bribery,¹⁴ harassing lawsuits,¹⁵ and unjust expropriation and dispossession of others' land;¹⁶ hoarding goods to increase their price,¹⁷ illegal work or activities,¹⁸ and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking, withholding, or enriching ourselves from what belongs to others;¹⁹ avarice;²⁰ excessive attachment to or display of our worldly goods;²¹

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allowing ourselves to become distracted from trusting God in the way that we acquire, maintain, and use worldly goods;²² envying the prosperity of others;²³ and also laziness,²⁴ extravagance, wasteful gambling, and all the other ways that needlessly jeopardize our money and possessions²⁵ and defraud ourselves of the use and comfort of the things God has given us.²⁶

1. Jas 2.15-16, 1 Jn 3.17, Prv 23.21.
2. Eph 4.28.
3. Ps 62.10.
4. 1 Tm 1.10, Ex 21.16.
5. Prv 29.24, Ps 50.18.
6. 1 Thes 4.6.
7. Prv 11.1, 20.10.
8. Dt 19.14, Prv 23.10.
9. Am 8.5, Ps 37.21.
10. Lk 16.10-12.
11. Ez 22.29, Lv 25.17.
12. Mt 23.25, Ez 22.12.
13. Ps 15.5.
14. Jb 15.34, Is 33.15.
15. 1 Cor 6.6-8, Prv 3.29-30.
16. Is 5.8, Mi 2.2.
17. Prv 11.26.
18. Acts 19.19, 24-25.
19. Jb 20.19, Jas 5.4, Prv 21.6.
20. Lk 12.15, Prv 1.19.
21. 1 Tm 6.5, Col 3.2, Prv 23.5, Ps 62.10, 1 Jn 2.15-16.
22. Mt 6.25, 31, 34, Eccl 5.12.
23. Ps 73.3, 37.1, 7, Jas 5.9.
24. 2 Thes 3.11, Prv 18.9.
25. Prv 21.17, 23.20-21, 28.19.
26. Eccl 4.8, 6.2, 1 Tm 5.8, Dt 12.7, 16.14.

Q. 143. What is the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment is: You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.¹

1. Ex 20.16.

Q. 144. What does the ninth commandment require?

A. The ninth commandment requires that we maintain and promote truthfulness in our dealings with each other¹ and the good reputation of others as well as ourselves.² We must come forward and stand up for the truth,³ speaking the truth and nothing but the truth from our hearts,⁴ sincerely,⁵ freely,⁶ clearly,⁷ and without equivocation,⁸ not only in all matters relating to the law and justice⁹ but in any and every circumstance whatsoever.¹⁰ We must have a charitable regard for others,¹¹ loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good reputation¹² as well as regretting¹³ and putting the best light on their failings.¹⁴ We must freely acknowledge their talents and gifts,¹⁵ defending their innocence,¹⁶ readily receiving a good report about them¹⁷ and reluctantly admitting a bad one.¹⁸ We should discourage gossips,¹⁹ flatterers,²⁰ and slanderers;²¹ we should love and protect our own good reputation and defend it when necessary;²² we should keep every lawful promise we make no matter what;²³ and finally we should do the best we can to focus our lives and thoughts on things that are true, noble, lovely, and admirable.²⁴

1. Zec 8.16, Eph 4.25.
2. 3 Jn 12.
3. Prv 31.8-9.
4. Ps 15.2.
5. 2 Chr 19.9.
6. 1 Sm 19.4-5, Jer 9.3.

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7. Jos 7.19, Jer 42.4, Acts 20.20.
8. 2 Sm 14.18-20, Acts 20.27.
9. Lv 19.15, Prv 14.5,25.
10. 2 Cor 1.17-18, Eph 4.25, Is 63.8, Col 3.9.
11. Heb 6.9, 1 Cor 13.4-5,7.
12. Rom 1.8, 2 Jn 4, 3 Jn 3-4.
13. 2 Cor 2.4, 12.21, Ps 119.158.
14. Prv 17.9, 1 Pt 4.8.
15. 1 Cor 1.4-5,7, 2 Tm 1.4-5.
16. 1 Sm 22.14, Ps 82.3.
17. 1 Cor 13.4,6-7.
18. Ps 15.3.
19. Prv 25.23.
20. Prv 26.24-25.
21. Ps 101.5.
22. Prv 22.1, Jn 8.49, 2 Cor 11.18,23.
23. Ps 15.4.
24. Phil 4.8.

Q. 145. What particular sins does the ninth commandment forbid?

- A. The ninth commandment forbids everything detrimental to the truth and the good reputation of others as well as our own,¹ with special reference to legal matters in the courts.² We must not give untrue evidence,³ suborn perjury,⁴ knowingly appear and plead on behalf of an evil cause, or engage in overbearing and boastful exaggeration.⁵ We should never participate in passing an unjust sentence,⁶ call evil good or good evil, or reward the wicked in a way appropriate to the righteous or the righteous in a way appropriate to the wicked.⁷ Forgery is forbidden,⁸ as is concealing the truth, remaining silent in a just cause,⁹ and not taking it on ourselves to reprove¹⁰ or complain to others about some wrong.¹¹ We must not speak the truth at an inappropriate time,¹² or maliciously to promote a wrong purpose,¹³ nor pervert it into a wrong meaning,¹⁴ into ambiguous equivocations, or in such ways as to undermine truth and justice.¹⁵ Also forbidden are: saying anything untrue,¹⁶ as well as lying,¹⁷ slandering,¹⁸ backbiting,¹⁹ belittling,²⁰ gossiping,²¹ whispering,²² ridiculing,²³ reviling,²⁴ and expressing any kind of judgmental opinion that is rash,²⁵ harsh,²⁶ or prejudiced;²⁷ misconstruing intentions, words, and actions;²⁸ flattery²⁹ and ostentatious boasting;³⁰ thinking or speaking too highly or too poorly of ourselves or others;³¹ denying the gifts of God or the effects of his grace on us;³² exaggerating the significance of trivial faults;³³ concealing, excusing, or rationalizing our sinful behavior when we are called to confess it voluntarily;³⁴ gratuitously revealing the problems and failings of others;³⁵ spreading false rumors,³⁶ receiving and approving evil reports,³⁷ and refusing to listen to a just defense;³⁸ harboring evil suspicions;³⁹ being envious of or grieved by the deserved honors others receive,⁴⁰ trying to discredit those honors,⁴¹ and rejoicing at someone else's disgrace or evil reputation;⁴² scornful contempt⁴³ and foolish admiration;⁴⁴ breaking our lawful promises;⁴⁵ and, finally, failing to promote everyone's good name,⁴⁶ and doing, not avoiding, or not hindering in others, as we can, those things that give people a bad name.⁴⁷

1. 1 Sm 17.28, 2 Sm 16.3, 1.9,10,15-16, Lk 3.14.
2. Lv 19.15, Hb 1.4.
3. Prv 19.5, 6.16,19.
4. Acts 6.13.
5. Jer 9.3,5, Acts 24.2,5, Ps 12.3-4, 52.1-4.
6. Prv 17.15, 1 Kgs 21.9-14.
7. Is 5.23.
8. Ps 119.69, Lk 19.8, 16.5-7, 1 Kgs 21.8.
9. Lv 5.1, Dt 13.8, Acts 5.3,8-9, 2 Tm 4.6.
10. 1 Kgs 1.6, Lv 19.17, Is 58.1.
11. Is 59.4.
12. Prv 29.11.

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13. 1 Sm 22.9-10, Ps 52.1-5.
14. Ps 56.5, Jn 2.19, Mt 26.60-61.
15. Gn 3.5, 26.7,9.
16. Is 59.13.
17. Lv 19.11, Col 3.9.
18. Ps 50.20.
19. Ps 15.3, Rom 1.30.
20. Jas 4.11, Jer 38.4, Ti 3.2.
21. Lv 19.16.
22. Rom 1.29-30, Prv 16.28.
23. Gn 21.9, Gal 4.29, Is 28.22.
24. 1 Cor 6.10.
25. Mt 7.1.
26. Acts 28.4, Jas 2.13.
27. Gn 38.24, Rom 2.1, Jn 7.24.
28. Neh 6.6-8, Rom 3.8, Ps 69.10, 1 Sm 1.13-15, 2 Sm 10.3.
29. Ps 12.2-3.
30. 2 Tm 3.2.
31. Lk 18.9,11, Rom 12.16, 1 Cor 4.6, Acts 12.22, Ex 4.10-14.
32. Jb 27.5-6, 4.6, Gal 5.26.
33. Mt 7.3-5, Is 29.20-21.
34. Prv 28.13, 30.20, Gn 3.12-13, 4.9, Jer 2.35, 2 Kgs 5.25.
35. Gn 9.22, Prv 25.9-10.
36. Ex 23.1.
37. Prv 29.12, Jer 20.10.
38. Acts 7.56-57, Jb 31.13-14.
39. 1 Cor 13.4-5, 1 Tm 6.4.
40. Nm 11.29, Mt 21.15.
41. Ezr 4.12-13, Dn 6.3-4.
42. Jer 48.27.
43. Ps 35.15-16,21, Mt 27.28-29.
44. Jude 16, Acts 12.22, 1 Cor 3.21.
45. Rom 1.31, 2 Tm 3.3.
46. 1 Sm 2.24, 2 Sm 12.14.
47. 2 Sm 12.13-14, Prv 5.8-9, Phil 3.18-19, 2 Pt 2.2.

Q. 146. What is the tenth commandment?

- A. The tenth commandment is: *You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.*¹

1. Ex 20.17.

Q. 147. What does the tenth commandment require?

- A. The tenth commandment requires that we be so completely satisfied with our own status in life¹ and have such a proper, loving attitude toward others that we are naturally inclined to wish the best for them and all their possessions.²

1. Heb 13.5, 1 Tm 6.6.
2. Jb 31.29, Rom 12.15, Ps 122.7-9, 1 Tm 1.5, Est 10.3, 1 Cor 13.4-7, Phil 2.4.

Q. 148. What particular sins does the tenth commandment forbid?

- A. The tenth commandment forbids any dissatisfaction with what belongs to us,¹ envy² and grief at the success of others,³ and all improper desire for anything that belongs to someone else.⁴

1. Kgs 21.4, Est 5.13, 1 Cor 10.10.
2. Gal 5.26, Jas 3.14,16.
3. Ps 112.9-10, Neh 2.10.
4. Rom 7.7-8, 13.9, Col 3.5, Dt 5.21.

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Q. 149. Can anyone perfectly keep the commandments of God?

A. No one can perfectly keep the commandments of God, either on his own¹ or from any divine gift received in this life,² but breaks them every day in thought,³ word, and action.⁴

1. Jas 3.2, Jn 15.5, Rom 8.3.
2. Eccl 7.20, 1 Jn 1.8-2.6, Gal 5.17, Rom 7.18-19, Ps 17.15, 1 Kgs 8.46.
3. Gn 6.5, 8.21, Jas 1.14, and citations under figure 2 above.
4. Rom 3.9-19, Jas 3.2-13, Ps 19.12.

Q. 150. Are all sins equally evil in themselves and in the eyes of God?

A. All sins are not equally evil; in the eyes of God, some of them are more evil in themselves and others because of the harm that results from them.¹

1. Jn 19.11, Ez 8.6, 13, 15, 1 Jn 5.16, Ps 78.17, 32, 56, Ezr 9.14, Heb 2.2-3.

Q. 151. What sins are more evil because of the harm that results from them?

A. Sins become more harmful:

1. From those who commit the sins:¹ if they are older,² have a longer experience of God's grace,³ are well-known for their faith,⁴ clearly know better,⁵ hold a prominent position⁶ or office,⁷ are teachers,⁸ and whose example will influence others.⁹

1. Jer 2.8.
2. Jb 32.7, 9, Eccl 4.13.
3. 1 Kgs 11.4, 9.
4. 2 Sm 12.14, 1 Cor 5.1.
5. Jas 4.17, Lk 12.47-48.
6. Jer 5.4-5, Jn 3.10.
7. 2 Sm 12.7-9, Ez 8.11-12.
8. Rom 2.17-24.
9. Gal 2.11-14, 2 Pt 2.2.

2. From those sinned against:¹⁰ if directly against God,¹¹ his attributes,¹² and worship;¹³ against Christ and his grace;¹⁴ against the Holy Spirit,¹⁵ his witness¹⁶ and work;¹⁷ against those above us, prominent men¹⁸ and especially those to whom we are related or owe allegiance;¹⁹ and against any fellow believer,²⁰ particularly those who are weaker in the faith,²¹ their souls or anyone else's,²² and the general good of everyone.²³

10. Mt 21.38-39, 1 Jn 5.10.
11. 1 Sm 2.25, Acts 5.4, Ps 51.4.
12. Rom 2.4.
13. Mal 1.8, 14, 1 Cor 10.21-22.
14. Heb 2.2-3, 12.25, Jn 3.18, 36.
15. Heb 10.29, Mt 12.31-32.
16. Eph 4.30.
17. Heb 6.4-6.
18. Jude 8, Num 12.8-9, Is 3.5.
19. Prv 30.17, 2 Cor 12.15, Ps 41.9, 55.12-15.
20. Zep 2.8, 10-11, Mt 18.6, 1 Cor 6.8, Rv 17.6.
21. 1 Cor 8.11-12, Rom 14.13, 15, 21.
22. Ez 13.19, 1 Cor 8.12, Rev 18.12-13, Mt 23.15.
23. 1 Thes 2.15-16, Jos 22.20, Mt 23.34-38.

3. From the nature and quality of the sin:²⁴ if it is against the exact letter of the law,²⁵ breaks more than one commandment or includes many separate sins;²⁶ if it is not only planned in the heart, but is expressed in words and actions,²⁷ scandalizes others,²⁸ and cannot be made right;²⁹ if it is against the means of God's grace,³⁰ his mercy,³¹ or his judgments,³² against our natural

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understanding,³³ convictions of our conscience,³⁴ public or private warnings,³⁵ condemnation by the church,³⁶ and civil punishment;³⁷ and if it is against our own prayers, purposes, promises,³⁸ vows,³⁹ covenants,⁴⁰ and commitments to God or men⁴¹—if made deliberately,⁴² willfully,⁴³ presumptuously,⁴⁴ immodestly,⁴⁵ boastfully,⁴⁶ maliciously,⁴⁷ repeatedly,⁴⁸ obstinately,⁴⁹ with delight,⁵⁰ continually,⁵¹ or as a result of falling back into it after repenting from it.⁵²

- 24. Prv 6.30-35, Is 3.9.
- 25. Ezr 9.10-12, 1 Kgs 11.9-10, Ez 20.12-13.
- 26. Col 3.5, 1 Tm 6.10, Prv 5.8-12, 6.32-33, Jos 7.21.
- 27. Jas 1.14-15, Mt 5.22, Mi 2.1-2.
- 28. Mt 18.7, Rom 2.23-24.
- 29. Dt. 22.22,28-29, Prv 6.32-35, Mt 16.26.
- 30. Mt 11.21-24, Jn 15.22.
- 31. Is 1.2-3, Dt 32.6, Ezr 9.13-14.
- 32. Am 4.8-11, Jer 5.3.
- 33. Rom 1.20.
- 34. Rom 1.32, Dn 5.22, Ti 3.10-11.
- 35. Prv 29.1.
- 36. Ti 3.10, Mt 18.17.
- 37. Prv 27.22, 23.35, Rom 13.1-5.
- 38. Ps 78.34-37, Jer 2.20, 42.5-6, 20-22.
- 39. Eccl 5.4-6, Prv 20.25.
- 40. Lv 26.25, Jer 31.32.
- 41. Prv 2.17, Ez 17.18-19.
- 42. Ps 36.4.
- 43. Jer 6.16.
- 44. Nm 15.30, Ex 21.14, Jer 6.15.
- 45. Jer 3.3, Prv 7.13.
- 46. Ps 52.1.
- 47. 3 Jn 10, Ez 35.5-6.
- 48. Nm 14.22.
- 49. Zec 7.11-12.
- 50. Prv 2.14.
- 51. Is 57.17, Jer 9.3,5.
- 52. Jer 34.8-11, 2 Pt 2.20-22, Heb 6.4,6.

4. From circumstances of time⁵³ and place;⁵⁴ if on the Lord's day⁵⁵ or other times of divine worship,⁵⁶ or immediately before⁵⁷ or after these⁵⁸ or other religious activities that help to prevent or be a remedy for such failures;⁵⁹ and if publicly or in the presence of others, who consequently may very well be aroused to or defiled by the sin.⁶⁰

- 53. 2 Kgs 5.26, Is 22.12-14.
- 54. Jer 7.10-11, Is 26.10.
- 55. Ez 23.37-39.
- 56. Is 58.3-5, Nm 25.6-7.
- 57. 1 Cor 11.20-21.
- 58. Jer 7.8-10, Prv 7.14-15, Jn 13.27,30.
- 59. Ezr 9.13-14, Neh 9.13-16, 2 Chr 36.15-16.
- 60. 2 Sm 16.22, 1 Sm 2.22-24, Is 3.9.

Q. 152. What does every sin deserve from God?

- A. Since even the least sin goes against the sovereignty,¹ goodness,² and holiness of God,³ and against his righteous law,⁴ every sin deserves God's wrath and curse,⁵ both in this life⁶ and the life to come,⁷ and cannot be expiated except by the blood of Christ.⁸

- 1. Jas 2.10-11, Mal 1.14.
- 2. Ex 20.1-2, Dt 32.6.
- 3. Hb 1.13, Lv 10.3, 11.44-45, 1 Pt 1.15-16.
- 4. 1 Jn 3.4, Rom 7.12.
- 5. Eph 5.6, Gal 3.10.

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6. Lam 3.39, Dt 28.15-29, Prv 13.21.
7. Mt 25.41, Rom 6.21,23.
8. Heb 9.22, 1 Pt 1.18-19, 1 Jn 1.7.

Q. 153. What does God require from us to escape his wrath and curse, which we deserve for our sin?

- A. To escape God's wrath and curse, which we deserve for our sin, God requires from us repentance in relationship to God and faith in our relationship to our Lord Jesus Christ,¹ along with diligent involvement in all the external ways Christ uses to bring us the benefits of his mediation.²

1. Acts 20.21, 16.30-31, Mt 3.7-8, Lk 13.3,5, Jn 3.16,18, Mk 1.15.
2. Prv 2.1-5, 8.33-36, Mt 28.19-20, Acts 2.42,46, 1 Tm 4.16, 1 Cor 1.21, Eph 5.19-20, 6.17-18.

Q. 154. What are the external ways Christ uses to bring us the benefits of his mediation?

- A. The ordinary external ways Christ uses to bring the benefits of his mediation to his church are his regulations, particularly the word, sacraments, and prayer, all of which are made effective for the salvation of his chosen ones.¹

1. Mt 28.19-20, Acts 2.42,46-47, 1 Tm 4.16, 1 Cor 1.21, Eph 5.19-20, 6.17-18.

Q. 155. What makes the word effective for salvation?

- A. The Spirit of God causes the reading and especially the preaching of the word to enlighten,¹ convince, and humble sinners.² The Spirit drives sinners out of themselves and draws them to Christ;³ he conforms them to his image⁴ and subdues them to his will;⁵ he strengthens them against temptations and corrupting influences;⁶ and he builds them up in God's grace⁷ and establishes their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith to salvation.⁸

1. Neh 8.8, Acts 26.18, 17.11-12, Ps 19.8.
2. 1 Cor 14.24-25, 2 Chr 34.18-19, 26-28, Jer 23.28-29, Heb 4.12.
3. Acts 2.37,41, 8.27-39.
4. 2 Cor 3.18, Col 1.27.
5. 2 Cor 10.4-6, Rom 6.17.
6. Mt 4.4,7,10, Eph 6.16-17, Ps 19.11, 1 Cor 10.11, Col 1.28.
7. Acts 20.32, 2 Tm 3.15-17, Eph 4.11-12, 1 Cor 3.9-11.
8. Rom 16.25, 1 Thes 3.2, 10-11, 13, Rom 15.4, 10.13-17, 1.16.

Q. 156. Should everyone read the word of God?

- A. Although everyone is not allowed to read the word publicly in church,¹ all people must read it privately on their own² and with their families.³ In order for this to happen, the Bible has to be translated out of the original Hebrew and Greek into contemporary languages.⁴

1. Dt 31.9, 11-13, Neh 8.2-3, 9.3-5.
2. Dt 17.18-19, Rv 1.3, Jn 5.39, Is 34.16.
3. Dt 6.6-9, Gn 18.17,19, Ps 78.5-7.
4. 1 Cor 14.6, 9, 11-12,15-16,18-19,24,27-28.

Q. 157. How should the word of God be read?

- A. We must read the Bible with high and reverent esteem,¹ being absolutely convinced that it is truly God's word² and that only he can enable us to understand it.³ We should read with a desire to know, believe, and obey his will as revealed in the Bible.⁴ We should pay careful attention⁵ to its content and the extent of its meaning,⁶ meditate on it,⁷ apply it to our lives,⁸ deny ourselves under its direction,⁹ and use it as a basis for our prayers.¹⁰

1. Ps 19.10, 119.97, Neh 8.3-6, 10, Ex 24.7, 2 Chr 34.27, Is 66.2.
2. 2 Pt 1.16-21, 1 Thes 2.13.

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3. Lk 24.44-48 2 Cor 3.13-16, Ps 119.18.
4. Dt 17.10,20, Jas 1.21-22, 1 Pt 2.2, Mk 4.20.
5. Acts 17.11, Dt 11.13.
6. Acts 8.30,34, Lk 10.26-28, Mt 13.23.
7. Ps 1.2, 119.97.
8. 2 Chr 34.21, Acts 2.38-39, 2 Sm 12.7.
9. Prv 3.5, Dt 33.3, Gal 1.15.
10. Prv 2.1-6, Ps 119.18, Neh 7.6,8, Lk 24.45.

Q. 158. Who should preach the word of God?

- A. The word of God should be preached only by those who are sufficiently gifted¹ and who are properly approved and called to do it.²

1. 1 Tm 3.2,6, 2 Tm 2.2, Eph 4.8-11, Hos 4.6, Mal 2.7, 2 Cor 3.6.
2. Jer 14.15, Rom 10.15, Heb 5.4, 1 Cor 12.28-29, 1 Tm 3.10, 4.14, 5.22.

Q. 159. How should those who are called preach the word of God?

- A. Those who are called to labor in the ministry of the word should preach sound doctrine,¹ accurately,² in season and out of season,³ clearly,⁴ and not with seductive words of human wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power.⁵ They should faithfully⁶ and fully express the whole counsel of God;⁷ this should be done wisely,⁸ taking into account the needs and capabilities of the audience.⁹ Their preaching should be motivated by a zealous¹⁰ and fervent love for God¹¹ and the souls of his people.¹² Finally, it should be done sincerely,¹³ aiming to glorify God¹⁴ and to convert,¹⁵ edify,¹⁶ and save¹⁷ his people.

1. Ti 2.1,8.
2. Acts 18.25.
3. 2 Tm 4.2.
4. 1 Cor 14.9, 19.
5. 1 Cor 2.4.
6. Jer 23.28, 1 Cor 4.1-2, Mt 24.45-47.
7. Acts 20.27.
8. Col 1.28, 2 Tm 2.15.
9. 1 Cor 3.2, Heb 5.12-14, Lk 12.42, 1 Thes 2.7.
10. Acts 18.25, 2 Tm 4.5.
11. 2 Cor 5.13-14, Phil 1.15-17.
12. Col 4.12, 2 Cor 12.15, 5.13, Phil 1.15-17, 1 Thes 3.12.
13. 2 Cor 2.17, 4.2.
14. 1 Thes 2.4-6, Jn 7.18.
15. 1 Cor 9.19-22.
16. 2 Cor 12.19, Eph 4.12.
17. 1 Tm 4.16, 2 Tm 2.10, Acts 26.16-18.

Q. 160. What is required of those who hear the word preached?

- A. Those who hear the word preached must pay careful attention to it,¹ prepare themselves² and pray for understanding.³ They should review carefully what they hear through the Bible⁴ and accept the truths in it faithfully,⁵ lovingly,⁶ humbly,⁷ and with a ready mind,⁸ treating it as it is, the word of God.⁹ They should meditate on it,¹⁰ talk about it,¹¹ hide it in their hearts,¹² and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives.¹³

1. Prv 8.34, Ps 84.1-2,4, 27.4.
2. 1 Pt 2.1-2, Lk 8.18, Jas 1.21.
3. Ps 119.18, Eph 6.18-19.
4. Acts 17.11.
5. Heb 4.2.
6. 2 Thes 2.10.
7. Jas 1.21, Ps 25.9.

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8. Acts 17.11, 2.41.
9. 1 Thes 2.13.
10. Lk 9.44, Heb 2.1.
11. Lk 24.14, Dt 6.6-7.
12. Prv 2.1-5, Ps 119.11.
13. Lk 8.15, Jas 1.25.

Q. 161. How do the sacraments become effective means of salvation?

- A. The sacraments become effective means of salvation, not by any power in them or by any inherent potency coming from the devoutness or the intention of whoever administers them, but rather by the working of the Holy Spirit and the blessing of Christ, who established them.¹

1. 1 Pt 3.21, Acts 8.13,23, 1 Cor 3.6-7, 6.11, 12.13.

Q. 162. What is a sacrament?

- A. A sacrament is a holy regulation established by Christ in his church¹ as a sign, seal, and outward display² to those within the covenant of grace³ of the benefits they have from Christ's mediation.⁴ It serves to strengthen and increase their faith and all other graces in them;⁵ it obliges them to obey God⁶ and to witness to and cherish their love and fellowship with each other;⁷ and it distinguishes them from those outside the covenant.⁸

1. Gn 17.7,10, Ex 12, Mt 28.19, 26.26-28.
2. Rom 4.11, 1 Cor 11.24-25.
3. Rom 9.8, 15.8, Ex 12.48, Gal 3.27,29, 5.6, 6.15.
4. Acts 2.38, 22.16, 1 Cor 10.16.
5. Rom 4.11, Gal 3.27, 1 Cor 11.24-26.
6. Rom 6.3-4, 1 Cor 10.21.
7. Eph 4.2-5, 1 Cor 10.17, 12.13.
8. Eph 2.11-12, Gn 34.14, 1 Cor 10.21.

Q. 163. What are the parts of the sacrament?

- A. There are two parts of the sacrament. One is the external, physical sign used according to Christ's own directions. The other is the internal, spiritual grace signified by the external use.¹

1. Gn 17.10, Mt 3.11, 26.27-28, 1 Pt 3.21, Rom 2.28-29, Ti 3.5.

Q. 164. How many sacraments has Christ established in his church under the New Testament?

- A. Under the New Testament, Christ has established in the church only two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper.¹

1. Mt 28.19, 1 Cor 11.20, 23-26, Mt 26.26-28.

Q. 165. What is baptism?

- A. Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament in which Christ has ordained washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit¹ as a sign and seal of our being joined to Christ,² of the remission of our sins through his blood,³ of rebirth by his Spirit,⁴ of adoption,⁵ and resurrection unto everlasting life;⁶ and it is the means of solemnly admitting those baptized into the visible church⁷ and of their making a public commitment that they belong completely and only to the Lord.⁸

1. Mt 28.19.
2. Gal 3.27, Rom 6.3.
3. Mk 1.4, Rv 1.5, Acts 22.16.
4. Ti 3.5, Eph 5.26, Jn 3.5.
5. Gal 3.26-27.

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6. 1 Cor 15.29, Rom 6.5.
7. 1 Cor 12.13, Acts 2.41.
8. Rom 6.4.

Q. 166. Who should be baptized?

- A. Those who are not members of the visible church and so are not included in the covenant of promise should not be baptized until they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him.¹ However, the infants of one or both parents who do profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him are by that relationship included in the covenant and should be baptized.²

1. Acts 8.36-37, 2.38,41.
2. Gn 17.7-9, Gal 3.9,14,17-18,29, Col 2.11-12, Acts 2.38-39, 1 Cor 2.11-12, 7.14, Mt 28.19, Lk 18.15-16, Rom 4.11-12, 11.16.

Q. 167. How do we continue to use our baptism?

- A. We have a necessary but frequently neglected obligation to use our baptism our whole lives, particularly in times of temptation and when we are present at the baptism of others.¹ We should seriously and thankfully reflect on what is involved in baptism, why Christ established it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed by it, and the significance of our own solemn vows when we were baptized.² This reflection humbles us when we recognize how defiled we are by sin and how far short we fall of living up to, and indeed walk so contrary to the standards set by the grace of baptism and by our other spiritual commitments.³ We are also assured of pardon from sin and of all the other blessings sealed in that sacrament.⁴ We draw strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we were baptized, in order to keep killing our sins and becoming alive by his grace.⁵ We are also spurred on to try to live by faith,⁶ to have our human relationships defined by holiness and righteousness,⁷ as is proper for those who have given up their names to Christ,⁸ and to walk with each other in brotherly love, as is proper for those baptized by the same Spirit into one body.⁹

1. Col 2.11-12, Rom 6.4, 6, 11, Ps 22.10-11.
2. Rom 6.3-5.
3. 1 Cor 1.11-13, Rom 6.2-3.
4. Rom 4.11-12, 1 Pt 3.21.
5. Rom 6.2-5.
6. Gal 3.26-27.
7. Rom 6.22.
8. Acts 2.38.
9. 1 Cor 12.13,25-27.

Q. 168. What is the Lord's supper?

- A. The Lord's supper is a sacrament of the New Testament¹ in which bread and wine are given and received as Christ directed to proclaim his death. Those who receive the Lord's supper in the right way feed on his body and blood and thereby are spiritually nourished and grow in grace.² They have their union and communion with Christ confirmed,³ and they publicly witness to and repeat anew their thankfulness⁴ and commitment to God⁵ and their mutual love and fellowship with each other, as members of the same mystical body.⁶

1. Lk 22.20.
2. Mt 26.26-28, 1 Cor 11.23-27.
3. 1 Cor 10.16.
4. 1 Cor 11.24.
5. 1 Cor 10.14-16, 21.
6. 1 Cor 10.17.

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Q. 169. What are Christ's directions for giving and receiving the bread and wine in the sacrament of the Lord's supper?

- A. Christ has directed ministers of his word to administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper. First, they should set apart the bread and wine from their ordinary use by the biblical declaration, thanksgiving, and prayer. Then they take the bread, break it, and give both it and the wine to the communicants, who, according to the same directions, are to eat the bread and drink the wine, thankfully remembering that the body of Christ was broken and given, and his blood shed, for them.¹

1. See General Note; 1 Cor 11.23-24, Mt 26.26-28, Mk 14.22-24, Lk 22.19-20.

Q. 170. How do those who receive the Lord's supper in the right way feed on the body and blood of Christ?

- A. The body and blood of Christ are not present in bodily or physical form, either in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's supper.¹ They are, however, spiritually present to the faith of the recipient just as truly as the external elements are obvious to the senses.² And so those who receive the Lord's supper in the right way do truly and actually feed on the body and blood of Christ, not in a bodily or physical way, but spiritually,³ while by faith they receive and apply to themselves Christ crucified, along with all the benefits of his death.⁴

1. Acts 3.21.

2. Mt 26.26,28, Gal 3.1, Heb 11.1.

3. 1 Cor 11.24-29, Jn 6.51,53.

4. 1 Cor 10.16.

Q. 171. How do we prepare to receive the Lord's supper?

- A. Preparation for the Lord's supper involves careful examination:¹ of the condition of our life in Christ;² of our sins and failings;³ of whether we truly and to what degree know God,⁴ believe in him,⁵ and have repented,⁶ and of whether we love God and our fellow believers.⁷ We should have a charitable attitude toward everyone,⁸ including forgiveness of those who have wronged us.⁹ We must also assess how much we desire Christ¹⁰ and whether we are living in newness of obedience.¹¹ Finally we must renew the practice of these graces in us¹² by serious meditation¹³ and fervent prayer.¹⁴

1. 1 Cor 11.28.

2. 2 Cor 13.5.

3. 1 Cor 5.7, Ex 12.15.

4. 1 Cor 11.29.

5. 2 Cor 13.5, Mt 26.28.

6. Zec 12.10, 1 Cor 11.31.

7. 1 Cor 10.16-17, Acts 2.46-47.

8. 1 Cor 5.8, 11.18,20.

9. Mt 5.23-24.

10. Is 55.1, Jn 7.37, Lk 1.53.

11. 1 Cor 5.7-8.

12. 1 Cor 11.25-26, 28, Heb 10.21-22,24, Ps 26.6.

13. 1 Cor 11.24-25.

14. 2 Chr 30.18-19, Mt 26.26.

Q. 172. Should those who have doubts about their being in Christ or about whether they are ready to take communion come to the Lord's supper anyway?

- A. Those who have doubts about their position in Christ or about their readiness to take communion may nonetheless have a valid interest in Christ, even though they are not yet assured of being in

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him.¹ In God's view, if such people are aware of and grieved by their lack of assurance,² sincerely want to be found in Christ,³ and want to get away from sinning,⁴ and (since promises are involved in the sacrament, and it has been established to aid even weak and doubting Christians⁵) if people in that condition are truly sorry for their lack of faith⁶ and work hard to resolve their doubts,⁷ they may and ought to come to the Lord's supper, so that their faith may be further strengthened.⁸

1. Is 50.10, 1 Jn 5.13, Ps 88, 77.1-12, Jon 2.4,7.
2. Is 54.7-10, Mt 5.3-4, Ps 31.22, 73.13, 22-23.
3. Phil 3.8-9, Ps 10.17, 42.1-2, 5, 11.
4. 2 Tm 2.19, Is 50.10, Ps 66.18-20, Rom 7.24-25.
5. Is 40.11,29,31, Mt 11.28, 12.20, 26.28.
6. Mk 9.24.
7. Acts 2.37, 9.6, 16.30.
8. Rom 4.11, 1 Cor 11.28, Mt 11.28.

Q. 173. Should the Lord's supper be withheld from anyone who professes the faith and wants to come to it?

- A. The sacrament should and must be withheld by the authority Christ has left in his church from those whose profession of faith is based on spiritual ignorance or whose lives have scandalized the church,¹ until they are properly instructed and demonstrate by their behavior that they have reformed their lives.²

1. 1 Cor 11.27-31 compared with Mt 7.6, 1 Cor 5, Jude 23, and 1 Tm 5.22.
2. 2 Cor 2.5-8, 1 Cor 5.4-5.

Q. 174. How must we receive the Lord's supper when it is offered?

- A. In receiving the Lord's supper when it is offered, we should reverently and attentively wait on God,¹ as we carefully observe the sacramental elements and their administration.² We should take specific notice of the Lord's body³ and meditate feelingly on his death and suffering⁴ and so stir up in us a lively effect of God's spiritual gifts.⁵ We should critically examine ourselves⁶ and be sorry for our sins.⁷ We should earnestly hunger and thirst after Christ,⁸ feeding on him by faith,⁹ drawing from his fullness,¹⁰ trusting in his merit,¹¹ rejoicing in his love,¹² and giving thanks for his grace.¹³ We thereby renew our covenant with God¹⁴ and our love for fellow believers.¹⁵

1. Lv 10.3, Heb 12.28, Ps 5.7, 1 Cor 11.17, 26-27.
2. Ex 24.8, Mt 26.28, Gal 3.1.
3. 1 Cor 11.29.
4. Lk 22.19.
5. 1 Cor 11.26, 10.3-5, 11, 14.
6. 1 Cor 11.31.
7. Zec 12.10.
8. Rv 22.17, Ps 63.1-2.
9. Jn 6.35, Gal 2.20.
10. Jn 1.16, Col 1.19.
11. Phil 1.16, 3.9.
12. Ps 63.4-5, 2 Chr 30.21, 1 Pt 1.8.
13. Ps 22.26.
14. Jer 50.5, Ps 50.5.
15. Acts 2.42, 1 Cor 10.17.

Q. 175. What should we do after we have received the Lord's supper?

- A. After receiving the Lord's supper, we should think about our participation in the sacrament and whether we got anything out of it.¹ If we have been spiritually renewed and comforted in that participation, we should bless God for it,² pray for the effect to continue,³ watch out for relapses,⁴ fulfill our vows,⁵ and be encouraged to take communion frequently.⁶ If, on the other hand, we

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have not received any immediate benefit from our participation, we should more carefully go over how we prepared for and participated in the sacrament.⁷ If this review reveals no fault in us before God and our own conscience, then we should wait for the spiritual fruit of participation to come to us in due time.⁸ However, if such a review finds us at fault in either preparing for or participating in the sacrament, we must humbly⁹ resolve to be more careful and diligent in the future.¹⁰

1. Ps 28.7, 85.8, 1 Cor 11.17, 30-31.
2. 2 Chr 30.21-23, 25-26, Acts 2.42, 46-47, 2 Cor 2.14.
3. Ps 36.10, Sg 3.4, 1 Chr 29.18.
4. 1 Cor 10.3-5, 12, Rom 11.20.
5. Ps 50.14.
6. 1 Cor 11.25-26, Acts 2.42,46, Ps 27.4.
7. Sg 5.1-6, Eccl 5.1-6, Ps 77.6, 139.23-24.
8. Ps 123.1-2, 42.5,8, 43.3-5, Is 8.17.
9. 2 Chr 30.18-19, Hos 14.2, 6.1-2.
10. 2 Cor 7.11, 1 Chr 15.12-14.

Q. 176. In what ways do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper coincide?

- A. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper coincide in that God is the author of both,¹ and the spiritual part of both is Christ and his benefits.² Both are also seals of the same covenant,³ are ordinarily to be administered by ministers of the gospel,⁴ and are to continue in Christ's church until the second coming.⁵

1. Mt 28.19, 1 Cor 11.23.
2. Rom 6.3-4, 1 Cor 10.16.
3. Rom 4.11, Col 2.11-12, Mt 26.27-28.
4. See General Note; Jn 1.33, Mt 28.19, 1 Cor 11.23, 4.1, Heb 5.4.
5. Mt 28.19-20, 1 Cor 11.26.

Q. 177. In what ways do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper differ?

- A. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper differ in that baptism is administered just once, with water, as a sign and seal of our rebirth and engrafting into Christ,¹ even for infants.² The Lord's supper, on the other hand, is to be administered repeatedly with the elements of bread and wine, to represent and display Christ as spiritual food for the soul³ and to confirm our continuing growth in him,⁴ and it is only for those who are old enough and capable of self-examination.⁵

1. Mt 3.11, Ti 3.5, Gal 3.27.
2. Gn 17.7-9, Acts 2.38-39, 1 Cor 7.14, Lk 18.16, Rom 11.16, Col 2.11-12, Gal 3.17-18, 29.
3. 1 Cor 11.23-26, Col 2.19.
4. 1 Cor 10.16, Jn 6.51-53.
5. 1 Cor 11.28-29.

Q. 178. What is prayer?

- A. Prayer is offering our desires to God¹ in the name of Christ² with the help of his Spirit,³ confessing our sins⁴ and thankfully recognizing his mercies.⁵

1. Ps 62.8.
2. Jn 16.23-24.
3. Rom 8.26.
4. Ps 32.5-6, Dn 9.4.
5. Phil 4.6.

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Q. 179. Should we pray only to God?

- A. God is the only one capable of searching human hearts,¹ the only one who hears requests,² pardons sins,³ and fulfills the desires of everyone,⁴ and he is the only one to be believed in⁵ and truly worshiped.⁶ Since prayer is an integral part of religious worship,⁷ it is to be made by everyone only to him⁸ and to no one else.⁹

1. 1 Kgs 8.39, Acts 1.24, Rom 8.27.
2. Ps 65.2.
3. Mi 7.18.
4. Ps 145.16, 18-19.
5. Rom 10.14, 2 Sm 22.32, Jn 14.1.
6. Mt 4.10.
7. 1 Cor 1.2.
8. Ps 50.15, Lk 4.8.
9. Rom 10.14, Is 42.8, Jer 3.23.

Q. 180. What is the significance of praying in Christ's name?

- A. When we pray in Christ's name, we obey his command and confidently rely on his promises as a basis for requesting mercy for his sake.¹ This involves not just mentioning his name² but drawing our encouragement to pray and our boldness, strength, and hope that our prayers will be answered from Christ himself and his mediation.³

1. Jn 14.13-14, 16.24, Dn 9.17.
2. Mt 7.21, Lk 6.46.
3. Heb 4.14-16, 1 Jn 5.13-15.

Q. 181. Why must we pray in Christ's name?

- A. Human sinfulness has so far separated us from God that we cannot gain access to his presence without a mediator to bridge that separation,¹ and since no one in heaven or earth has been appointed to or is fit for that glorious job except Christ alone,² we must pray in his name only and in no other.³

1. Jn 14.6, Is 59.2, Eph 3.12.
2. Jn 6.27, Heb 7.25-27, 1 Tm 2.5.
3. Col 3.17, Heb 13.15.

Q. 182. How does the Spirit help us to pray?

- A. Since we do not know what we ought to pray for, the Spirit helps our weakness by enabling us to understand for whom, for what, and how to pray. He works in and makes our hearts alive (although not in everyone, nor all the time, nor to the same degree) to grasp, feel, and experience the gifts that are needed to pray properly.¹

1. Rom 8.26-27, Ps 10.17, 80.18, Zec 12.10.

Q. 183. For whom should we pray?

- A. We should pray for the entire church of Christ on earth,¹ for civil authorities² and ministers,³ for ourselves⁴ and fellow believers,⁵ and, yes, for our enemies.⁶ We should pray for all humans who are alive,⁷ and those who are going to live in the future.⁸ But we should not pray for the dead⁹ or for those who are known to have sinned the sin that leads to death.¹⁰

1. Eph 6.18, Ps 28.9.
2. 1 Tm 2.1-2.
3. Col 4.3, 2 Thes 3.1.
4. Gn 32.11.

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5. Jas 5.16.
6. Mt 5.44.
7. 1 Tm 2.1-2.
8. Jn 17.20, 2 Sm 7.29.
9. 2 Sm 12.21-23. This statement is [also] based on the absence of any command to pray for the dead, and of any example in the Scriptures of such prayer.
10. 1 Jn 5.16.

Q. 184. For what should we pray?

- A. We should pray for things that promote the glory of God,¹ the welfare of the church,² and our own³ or others' good,⁴ but not for anything that is unlawful.⁵

1. Mt 6.9.
2. Ps 51.18, 122.6.
3. Mt 7.11.
4. Ps 125.4, 1 Thes 5.23, 2 Thes 3.16.
5. 1 Jn 5.14, Jas 4.3.

Q. 185. How should we pray?

- A. In prayer, we should approach God with a reverent awareness of his majesty¹ and a deep sense of our own unworthiness,² inadequacies,³ and sins.⁴ Our hearts should be filled with repentance,⁵ thanks,⁶ and confidence,⁷ and our prayers should be marked by understanding,⁸ faith,⁹ sincerity,¹⁰ fervor,¹¹ love,¹² and perseverance,¹³ while we wait on him¹⁴ and humbly submit to his will.¹⁵

1. Eccl 5.1, Ps 33.8, 95.6.
2. Gn 18.27, 32.10, Ps 144.3.
3. Lk 15.17-19, Ps 86.1.
4. Lk 18.13-14, Ps 130.3.
5. Ps 51.17, Zec 12.10-14.
6. Phil 4.6, 1 Thes 5.18.
7. 1 Sm 1.15, 2.1, Ps 81.10, Eph 3.20-21.
8. 1 Cor 14.15.
9. Mk 11.24, Jas 1.6, Heb 10.22.
10. Ps 145.18, 17.1, Heb 10.22, Jn 4.24.
11. Jas 5.16.
12. 1 Tm 2.8, Mt 5.23-24.
13. Eph 6.18.
14. Mi 7.7.
15. Mt 26.39.

Q. 186. How does God direct us to pray?

- A. The whole word of God,¹ but especially the Lord's prayer, which our Savior Christ taught his disciples,² directs our prayers.

1. 1 Jn 5.14, 2 Tm 3.16-17.
2. Mt 6.9-13, Lk 11.2-4.

Q. 187. How should we use the Lord's prayer?

- A. The Lord's prayer not only directs us as a model for our other prayers but may also be used as a prayer itself that will promote our understanding, faith, reverence, and the other gifts of God in us that are necessary for us to pray properly.¹

1. Mt 6.9 compared with Lk 11.2.

Q. 188. How many parts does the Lord's prayer have?

- A. The Lord's prayer has three parts: an opening, individual requests, and a conclusion.

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Q. 189. What does the opening of the Lord's prayer teach us?

- A. The opening of the Lord's prayer (*Our father in heaven*¹) teaches us that when we pray we should draw near to God, confident of his fatherly goodness and the benefits to us from that goodness,² reverently and in every way like a child,³ and with heavenly feelings⁴ and a proper awareness of his sovereign power, his majesty, and his graciousness in allowing us to approach him.⁵ The opening also teaches us to pray with and for others.⁶

1. Mt 6.9.
2. Lk 11.13, Rom 8.15.
3. Is 64.9, Ps 95.6-7.
4. Ps 123.1, Lam 3.41.
5. Is 63.15-16, Neh 1.4-6, Ps 104.1, 113.4-6.
6. Acts 12.5, Zec 8.21.

Q. 190. For what do we pray in the first request?

- A. In the first request (*hallowed be your name*¹), we acknowledge that we and all human beings are completely incapable of honoring God properly and are even disinclined to do so.² We pray then that he would by his grace enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and to esteem him highly,³ his titles,⁴ attributes,⁵ regulations, word,⁶ works, and everything else by which he is pleased to reveal himself,⁷ and to glorify him in thought, word,⁸ and deed,⁹ to the effect that he would thwart and do away with atheism,¹⁰ spiritual ignorance,¹¹ idolatry¹² or any kind of desecration,¹³ and whatever else dishonors him,¹⁴ and that by his invincible providence, he would direct and regulate everything to his own glory.¹⁵

1. Mt 6.9.
2. 2 Cor 3.5, Ps 51.15.
3. Ps 67.2-3, 72.19, Eph 3.20-21.
4. Ps 83.18.
5. Ps 86.10-15, 145.6-8.
6. 2 Thes 3.1, Ps 107.32, 147.19-20, 138.1-3, 2 Cor 2.14-15.
7. Ps 145 and Ps 8.
8. Ps 103.1, 19.14.
9. Phil 1.9,11.
10. Ps 67.1-4, 79.10.
11. Eph 1.17-18.
12. Ps 97.7.
13. Ps 74.18, 22-23.
14. 2 Kgs 19.15-16, Jer 14.21.
15. 2 Chr 20.6, 10-12, Ps 83, 140.4,8, Is 64.1-2.

Q. 191. For what do we pray in the second request?

- A. In the second request (*your kingdom come*¹), we acknowledge that we and all humans are by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan.² We pray then that the kingdom of sin and Satan be destroyed,³ that the gospel be preached throughout the whole world,⁴ that the Jews be converted,⁵ and that the full number of the Gentiles come in.⁶ We pray that the church would be supplied with evangelical officers and regulations,⁷ purged from corruption,⁸ and recognized and supported by the civil authorities.⁹ We pray for the regulations of Christ to be administered fully and that these regulations may effectively convert sinners, while confirming, comforting, and building up those who are already converted.¹⁰ And we pray that Christ would rule over our hearts in the here and now,¹¹ that he would hurry up and come again, when we shall reign with him forever,¹² and that he would be pleased so to rule over everything that goes on in the world as may best bring about all these results.¹³

1. Mt 6.10.

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2. Eph 2.2-3.
3. Ps 68.1,18, Rv 12.9-11.
4. 2 Thes 3.1.
5. Rom 10.1, Ps 67.2.
6. Jn 17.9,20, Rom 11.25-26, Ps 67.
7. Mt 9.38, 2 Thes 3.1.
8. Mal 1.11, Zep 3.9, Eph 5.26-27.
9. 1 Tm 2.1-2.
10. Acts 4.29-30, 26.18, Eph 6.18-20, Rom 15.29-30,32,2 Thes 1.11, 2.16-17, 2 Cor 4.2.
11. Eph 3.14-20.
12. Rv 22.20.
13. Is 64.1-2, Rv 4.8-11, 2 Chr 20.6, 10-12.

Q. 192. For what do we pray in the third request?

A. In the third request (*your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*¹), we acknowledge that we and all humans are by nature not only completely incapable of and unwilling to know and to do the will of God² but are actively prone to rebel against his word,³ to be unhappy with and complain about his providence,⁴ and are naturally inclined to follow our own selfish desires and the directions of Satan.⁵ We pray then that God would by his Spirit remove from us and others all spiritual blindness,⁶ weakness,⁷ indisposition to spiritual activities,⁸ and perverseness of heart,⁹ and that he would by his grace make us willing to know, do, and submit to his will in every circumstance,¹⁰ with the same kind of humility,¹¹ cheerfulness,¹² faithfulness,¹³ steadfastness,¹⁴ zeal,¹⁵ sincerity,¹⁶ and constancy¹⁷ that the angels have in heaven.¹⁸

1. Mt 6.10.
2. Rom 7.18, 8.5,8, Jb 21.14, 1 Cor 2.14.
3. Rom 8.7.
4. Ex 17.7, Nm 14.2, Mt 20.11-12, Ps 73.3.
5. Eph 2.2-3, Ti 3.3.
6. Eph 1.17-18.
7. Eph 3.16.
8. Mt 26.40-41, Rom 7.24-25.
9. Jer 31.18-19, Ez 11.19.
10. Ps 119.1, 8, 35-36, Acts 21.14, 1 Sm 3.18.
11. Mi 6.8, Ps 123.2, 131.2.
12. Ps 100.2, Jb 1.21, 2 Sm 15.25-26.
13. Is 38.3, Eph 6.6.
14. Ps 119.4-5.
15. Rom 12.11.
16. Ps 119.80, 2 Cor 1.12.
17. Ps 119.112, Rom 2.7.
18. Is 6.2-3, Ps 103.20-22, Mt 18.10, Dan 7.10.

Q. 193. For what do we pray in the fourth request?

A. In the fourth request (*Give us today our daily bread*¹), we acknowledge that in Adam and by our own sin we have forfeited any right to all of the outward blessings of this life, that we deserve to be completely deprived of them by God and to have their use by us cursed,² and that the outward blessings of this life are not in and of themselves capable of sustaining us,³ nor do we deserve⁴ or actually obtain them by our own efforts,⁵ but lust after,⁶ acquire,⁷ and use them in unlawful ways.⁸ We pray then for ourselves and others that both they and we may wait daily on God's providential allowance of the outward blessings of this life and that, according to what his fatherly wisdom decides is best, we may lawfully enjoy his free gift of what is sufficient for us.⁹ We also pray that God would continue to bless us with sufficient worldly goods, that they would sustain our needs and be sanctified by us,¹⁰ that we would be satisfied with them,¹¹ and that God would protect us from anything that undermines our support and sustenance in this world.¹²

1. Mt 6.11.

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2. Gn 2.17, 3.17, Rom 8.20-22, Jer 5.25, Dt 28.15-68, Lam 3.22.
3. Dt 8.3.
4. Gn 32.10.
5. Dt 8.17-18, Prv 10.22.
6. Jer 6.13, Mk 7.21-22, Lk 12.15.
7. Hos 12.7.
8. Jas 4.3.
9. Gn 43.12-14, 28.20-21, Eph 4.28, 2 Thes 3.11-12, Phil 4.6, Jas 4.13,15, Ps 90.17, 144.12-15.
10. 1 Tm 4.3-5, Prv 10.22.
11. 1 Tm 6.6-8.
12. Prv 30.8-9.

Q. 194. For what do we pray in the fifth request?

- A. In the fifth request (*Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors*¹), we acknowledge that we and everyone else are guilty both of original sin and actual sins and are therefore debtors to God's justice, and that neither we nor any other created being can make the least satisfaction for that debt.² We pray then for ourselves and others that of his free grace and through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, which is grasped and applied by faith, God would acquit us from the guilt and punishment of sin,³ accept us in the One he loves,⁴ continue his favor and grace to us,⁵ forgive our daily sins,⁶ and fill us with the peace and joy that come from the daily gift of growing assurance of being forgiven.⁷ We may more boldly make this request and be encouraged to expect to be forgiven, when and if we are assured in ourselves that we have genuinely, from the heart, forgiven others who have wronged us.⁸

1. Mt 6.12.
2. Rom 3.9-22, 5.19, Mt 18.24-25, Ps 130.3-4, Mi 6.6-7.
3. Rom 3.24-26, 5.19, Heb 9.22, Acts 13.39.
4. Eph 1.6-7.
5. 2 Pt 1.2.
6. Hos 14.2, Jer 14.7, Ps 143.2, 130.3.
7. Rom 15.13, 5.1-2, Ps 51.7-12.
8. Lk 11.4, Mt 6.14-15, 18.35.

Q. 195. For what do we pray in the sixth request?

- A. In the sixth request (*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*¹), we acknowledge that God, who is completely wise, righteous, and gracious, may, for various holy and just purposes, ordain circumstances by which we become the target of temptations, are defeated, and temporarily taken captive by them;² that Satan,³ the world,⁴ and our own sinful natures have a powerful potential to turn us aside from righteousness and trap us;⁵ and that even after our sins have been forgiven, we are naturally so depraved,⁶ spiritually weak, and inattentive to our spiritual condition⁷ that we are not only prey to temptations and willingly expose ourselves to them⁸ but are completely incapable of and unwilling to resist, get away from, or use them as opportunities for our spiritual growth⁹—and consequently we deserve to be left under their power.¹⁰ We pray then that God would so rule over the world and everyone in it,¹¹ so curb our sinful natures¹² and restrain Satan,¹³ so ordain all things,¹⁴ so endow and bless all the means of grace¹⁵ and sharpen our awareness in the use of them, that we and all his people may be providentially spared from being tempted to sin;¹⁶ or, if tempted, that his Spirit would powerfully support and enable us to resist during the time of our temptation;¹⁷ or, should we fall, that we would be raised again and restored,¹⁸ with the experience being thereby sanctified and used for our spiritual growth;¹⁹ and that our sanctification and salvation may be made complete,²⁰ Satan trampled under our feet,²¹ and we become completely delivered from sin, temptation, and all evil, forever.²²

1. Mt 6.13.
2. 2 Chr 32.31, Job 2.6.

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3. 1 Chr 21.1, 1 Pt 5.8, Job 2.2.
4. Lk 21.34, Mk 4.19.
5. Jas 1.14.
6. Gal 5.17, Rom 7.18.
7. Mt 26.41.
8. Mt 26.69-72, Gal 2.11-14, 2 Chr 18.3, 19.2, 1 Tm 6.9, Prv 7.22.
9. Rom 7.18-19, 23-24, 1 Chr 21.1-4, 2 Chr 16.7-10.
10. Ps 81.11-12.
11. Jn 17.15, Rom 8.28.
12. Ps 51.10, 119.133.
13. 2 Cor 12.7-8, Heb 2.18, 1 Cor 10.13.
14. 1 Cor 10.12-13, Rom 8.28.
15. Heb 13.20-21, Eph 4.11-12.
16. Mt 26.41, Ps 19.13.
17. Eph 3.14-17, 1 Thes 3.13, Jude 24, 1 Cor 10.13.
18. Ps 51.12.
19. 1 Pt 5.8-10, 1.6-7.
20. 2 Cor 13.7,9, 1 Thes 3.13.
21. Rom 16.20, Zec 3.2, Lk 22.31-32.
22. Jn 17.15, 1 Thes 5.23.

Q. 196. What does the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us?

- A. The conclusion of the Lord's prayer (*for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever*¹) teaches us that there must be substance to our requests,² that they are based not on any intrinsic worth in ourselves or any created being but on God himself,³ and that to our prayers should be added praise,⁴ which recognizes God alone as eternally sovereign, omnipotent, and gloriously excellent.⁵ In that respect, insofar as he is able and willing to help us,⁶ our faith makes us bold to plead with him that he will help us⁷ and calmly to count on him to answer our prayers.⁸ To show that we want to be heard and have confidence that we are heard, we say Amen.⁹

1. Mt 6.13.
2. Rom 15.30, Job 23.3-4, Jer 14.20-21.
3. Dn 9.4,7-9,16-19.
4. Phil 4.6.
5. 1 Chr 29.10-13.
6. Eph 3.20-21, Lk 11.13, Ps 84.11.
7. 2 Chr 20.6,11, Eph 3.12, Heb 10.19-22.
8. 2 Chr 14.11, 1 Jn 5.14, Rom 8.32.
9. 1 Cor 14.16, Rv 22.20-21.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism

The Shorter Catechism

Q. 1. What is man's primary purpose?

A. Man's primary purpose is to glorify God¹ and to enjoy him forever.²

1. 1 Cor 10.31, Rom 11.36.
2. Ps 73.24-28, Jn 17.22,24.

Q. 2. What authority from God directs us how to glorify and enjoy him?

A. The only authority for glorifying and enjoying him is the Bible, which is the word of God and is made up of the Old and New Testaments.¹

1. Gal 1.8-9, Is 8.20, Lk 16.29,31, 2 Tm 3.15-17, Eph 2.20, 1 Jn 1.3-4.

Q. 3. What does the Bible primarily teach?

A. The Bible primarily teaches what man must believe about God and what God requires of man.¹

1. Mi 6.8, Jn 20.31, 3.16, 2 Tm 1.13, 3.16.

Q. 4. What is God?

A. God is a spirit,¹ whose being,² wisdom,³ power,⁴ holiness,⁵ justice,⁶ goodness,⁷ and truth⁸ are infinite,⁹ eternal, and unchangeable.¹⁰

1. Jn 4.24.
2. Ex 3.14, Ps 90.2, Mal 3.6, Jas 1.17, 1 Kgs 8.27, Jer 23.24, Is 40.22.
3. Ps 147.5, Rom 16.27.
4. Gn 17.1, Rv 19.16.
5. Is 57.15, Jn 17.11, Rv 4.8, 15.4.
6. Dt 32.4.
7. Ps 100.5, Rom 2.4.
8. Ex 34.6-7, Ps 117.2.
9. Jb 11.7-9.
10. 1 Jas 1.17.

Q. 5. Is there more than one God?

A. There is only one, the living and true God.¹

1. Dt 6.4, Jer 10.10.

Q. 6. How many persons are in the one God?

A. Three persons are in the one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one God, the same in substance and equal in power and glory.¹

1. 1 Jn 5.7, 2 Cor 13.14, Mt 28.19, 3.16-17.

Q. 7. What are the decrees of God?

A. The decrees of God are his eternal plan based on the purpose of his will, by which, for his own glory, he has foreordained everything that happens.¹

1. Eph 1.4, 11, Acts 4.27-28, Ps 33.11, Eph 2.10, Rom 9.22-23, 11.33.

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

A. God carries out his decrees in creation and providence.¹

1. Rv 4.11, Eph 1.11.

Q. 9. What is creation?

A. Creation is God's making everything out of nothing by his powerful word in six days— and all very good.¹

1. Heb 11.3, Rv 4.11, Gn 1.1-31.

Q. 10. How did God create man?

A. God created man, male and female, in his own image¹ and in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness,² to rule over the other creatures.³

1. Gn 1.26-28.

2. Col 3.10, Eph 4.24.

3. Gn 1.28.

Q. 11. What is God's providence?

A. God's providence is his completely holy,¹ wise,² and powerful preserving³ and governing every creature and every action.

1. Ps 145.17.

2. Ps 104.24, Is 28.29.

3. Heb 1.3.

4. Ps 103.19, Mt 10.29-30, Job 38-41.

Q. 12. What did God's providence specifically do for man whom he created?

A. After the creation God made a covenant with man to give him life, if he perfectly obeyed;¹ God told him not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil or he would die.²

1. Gal 3.12 and compare Gn 2.16-17 with Rom 5.12-14, 10.5, Lk 10.25-28, and with the covenants made with Noah and Abraham.

2. Gn 2.17.

Q. 13. Did our first parents remain as they were created?

A. Left to the freedom of their own wills, our first parents sinned against God and fell from their original condition.¹

1. Gn 3.6-8, 13, Eccl 7.29, 2 Cor 11.3.

Q. 14. What is sin?

A. Sin is disobeying or not conforming to God's law in any way.¹

1. 1 Jn 3.4, Jas 4.17, Rom 3.23.

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Q. 15. By what sin did our first parents fall from their original condition?

A. Our first parents' sin was eating the forbidden fruit¹

1. Gn 3.6-8, 13, 2 Cor 11.3, Gn 3.6.

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

A. Since the covenant was made not only for Adam but also for his natural descendants,¹ all mankind sinned in him and fell with him in his first disobedience.²

1. Acts 17.26, see under Q. 12.

2. Gn 2.16-17, compare Rom 5.12-20, 1 Cor 15.21-22.

Q. 17. What happened to man in the fall?

A. Man fell into a condition of sin and misery.¹

1. Rom 5.12, Gal 3.10.

Q. 18. What is sinful about man's fallen condition?

A. The sinfulness of that fallen condition is twofold. First, in what is commonly called original sin,¹ there is the guilt of Adam's first sin² with its lack of original righteousness and the corruption of his whole nature. Second are all the specific acts of disobedience that come from original sin.³

1. Rom 5.6, 12, 19, Eph 2.1-3, Rom 8.7-8, Gn 6.5, Rom 3.10-20, Ps 51.5, 58.3.

2. Rom 5.12, 19, 1 Cor 15.22.

3. Jas 1.14-15, Mt 15.19.

Q. 19. What is the misery of man's fallen condition?

A. By their fall all mankind lost fellowship with God¹ and brought his anger and curse on themselves.² They are therefore subject to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.³

1. Gn 3.8, 10, 24.

2. Eph 2.3, Gal 3.10.

3. Lam 3.39, Rom 5.14, 6.23, Mt 25.41, 46.

Q. 20. Did God leave all mankind to die in sin and misery?

A. From all eternity and merely because it pleased him, God chose some to have everlasting life.¹ These he freed from sin and misery by a covenant of grace and brought them to salvation by a redeemer.²

1. Eph 1.4-7.

2. Ti 3.4-7, 1.2, Gal 3.21-22, Rom 3.20-22.

Q. 21. Who is the redeemer of God's chosen ones?

A. The only redeemer of God's chosen is the Lord Jesus Christ,¹ the eternal Son of God, who became man.² He was and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever.³

1. 1 Tm 2.5-6.

2. Jn 1.1, 14, 10.30, Phil 2.6, Gal 4.4.

3. Rom 9.5, Lk 1.35, and see texts just cited and also Phil 2.5-11.

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

A. Christ, the son of God, became man by assuming a real body and a reasoning soul.¹ He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, who gave birth to him;² yet he was sinless.³

1. Jn 1.14, Heb 2.14,16, 10.5, Mt 26.38.
2. Lk 1.27,31,35,41-42, Gal 4.4.
3. Heb 4.15, 7.26.

Q. 23. How is Christ our redeemer?

A. As our redeemer, Christ is a prophet,¹ priest,² and king in both his humiliation and his exaltation.³

1. Acts 3.21-22, Lk 4.18,21, Heb 12.25 compared with 2 Cor 13.3.
2. Heb 5.5-7, 4.14-15, 7.25.
3. Rv 19.16, Is 9.6-7, My 21.5, Ps 2.6,8-11.

Q. 24. How is Christ a prophet?

A. As a prophet, Christ reveals the will of God to us¹ for our salvation by his word and Spirit.²

1. Jn 1.1,4,18.
2. Jn 15.15, 20.31, 2 Pt 1.10-12,21, Jn 14.26, 15.15, 20.31.

Q. 25. How is Christ a priest?

A. As a priest, Christ offered himself up once as a sacrifice for us to satisfy divine justice¹ and to reconcile us to God,² and he continually intercedes for us.³

1. Heb 9.14,28, Rom 3.26, 10.4.
2. Heb 2.17.
3. Heb 7.24-25.

Q. 26. How is Christ a king?

A. As a king, Christ brings us under his power,¹ rules and defends us,² and restrains and conquers all his and all our enemies.³

1. Acts 15.14-16, Ps 110.3.
2. Is 32.1-2, 33.22.
3. 1 Cor 15.25, Ps 110, Acts 12.17, 18.9-10.

Q. 27. How was Christ humiliated?

A. Christ was humiliated: by being born as a man and born into a poor family;¹ by being made subject to the law² and suffering the miseries of this life,³ the anger of God,⁴ and the curse of death on the cross;⁵ and by being buried and remaining under the power of death for a time.

1. Lk 2.7, Phil 2.6-8, 2 Cor 8.9.
2. Gal 4.4.
3. Heb 12.2-3, Is 53.2-3.
4. Mt 27.46, Lk 22.41-44.
5. Gal 3.13, Phil 2.8.
6. 1 Cor 15.3-4, Acts 2.24-27, 31.

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Q. 28. How is Christ exalted?

A. Christ is exalted by his rising from the dead on the third day,¹ his going up into heaven, his sitting at the right hand of God the Father,² and his coming to judge the world at the last day.³

1. 1 Cor 15.3-4.
2. Mk 16.19, Acts 1.9, Eph 1.19-20.
3. Acts 1.11, 17.31.

Q. 29. How are we made to take part in the redemption Christ bought?

A. We take part in the redemption Christ bought when the Holy Spirit effectively applies it to us.¹

1. Jn 1.11-13, 3.5-6, Ti 3.5-6.

Q. 30. How does the Holy Spirit apply to us the redemption Christ bought?

A. The Spirit applies to us the redemption Christ bought by producing faith in us¹ and so uniting us to Christ in our effective calling.²

1. Eph 1.13-14, 2.8, Jn 6.37-39.
2. Jn 15.5, Eph 3.17, 1 Cor 6.17, 1.9, 1 Pt 5.10.

Q. 31. What is effective calling?

A. Effective calling is the work of God's Spirit,¹ who convinces us that we are sinful and miserable,² who enlightens our minds in the knowledge of Christ,³ and who renews our wills.⁴ This is how he persuades and makes us able to receive Jesus Christ, who is freely offered to us in the gospel.

1. 2 Tm 1.8-9, 2 Thes 2.13-14, Eph 1.18-20.
2. Acts 2.37.
3. Acts 26.18.
4. Ez 11.19, 36.26-27.
5. Jn 6.44-45, Phil 2.13, Dt 30.6, Eph 2.5.

Q. 32. What benefits do those who are effectively called share in this life?

A. In this life those who are effectively called share justification,¹ adoption,² sanctification, and the other benefits that either go with or come from them.³

1. Rom 8.30.
2. Eph 1.5.
3. 1 Cor 1.26,30.

Q. 33. What is justification?

A. Justification is the act of God's free grace by which he pardons all our sins¹ and accepts us as righteous in his sight.² He does so only because he counts the righteousness of Christ as ours.³ Justification is received by faith alone.⁴

1. Rom 3.24-25, 4.6-8, Eph 1.7.
2. 2 Cor 5.19,21, Rom 4.5, 3.22, 24-25.
3. Rom 5.17-19, 4.6-8.
4. Rom 5.1, Acts 10.43, Gal 2.16, Phil 3.9.

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Q. 34. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is the act of God's free grace¹ by which we become his sons with all the rights and privileges of being his.²

1. 1 Jn 3.1.
2. Jn 1.12, Rom 8.17.

Q. 35. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace¹ by which our whole person is made new in the image of God,² and we are made more and more able to become dead to sin and alive to righteousness.³

1. 2 Thes 2.13.
2. Eph 4.23-24.
3. Rom 6.4,6,14, 8.1,4.

Q. 36. What benefits in this life go with or come from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

A. The benefits that in this life go with or come from justification, adoption, and sanctification are: the assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit,¹ and growing and persevering in grace² to the end of our lives.³

1. Rom 5.1-2,5, 14.17.
2. Col 1.10-11, Prv 4.18, Eph 3.16-18, 2 Pt 3.18.
3. Jer 32.40, 1 Jn 2.19,27, Rv 14.21, 1 Pt 1.5, 1 Jn 5.13.

Q. 37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ when they die?

A. When believers die, their souls are made perfectly holy and immediately pass into glory.¹ Their bodies, which are still united to Christ,² rest in the grave until the resurrection.³

1. Heb 12.23, Lk 23.43, 16.23, Phil 1.23, 2 Cor 5.1,6-8.
2. 1 Thes 4.14.
3. Is 57.2, Jb 19.26-27, Rom 8.23, 1 Thes 4.14.

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

A. At the resurrection, believers, raised in glory,¹ will be publicly recognized and declared not guilty on the day of judgment² and will be made completely happy in the full enjoyment of God³ forever.⁴

1. 1 Cor 15.42-43.
2. Mt 25.23,33-34, 10.32.
3. 1 Jn 3.2, Ps 16.11, 1 Cor 2.9, 13.12.
4. 1 Thes 4.17-18; see preceding context.

Q. 39. What does God require of man?

A. God requires man to obey his revealed will.¹

1. Dt 29.29. Mi 6.8, 1 Sm 15.22.

Q. 40. What rules did God first reveal for man to obey?

A. The rules he first revealed were the moral law.¹

1. Rom 2.14-15, 10.5.

Shorter Catechism

Q. 41. Where is the moral law summarized?

A. The moral law is summarized in the ten commandments.¹

1. Dt 10.4, Mt 19.17-19.

Q. 42. What is the essence of the ten commandments?

A. The essence of the ten commandments is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and to love everyone else as we love ourselves.¹

1. Mt 22.37-40.

Q. 43. What introduces the ten commandments?

A. These words introduce the ten commandments: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.¹

1. Ex 20.2.

Q. 44. What does the introduction to the ten commandments teach us?

A. The introduction to the ten commandments teaches us that, because God is Lord and is our God and redeemer, we must keep all his commandments.¹

1. Lk 1.74-75, 1 Pt 1.15-18.

Q. 45. What is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is: You shall have no other gods before me.¹

1. Ex 20.3.

Q. 46. What does the first commandment require?

A. The first commandment requires us¹ to know and recognize God as the only true God and our God,² and to worship and glorify him accordingly.³

1. The exposition of the Ten Commandments found in the answers to questions 46-81 are deductions from the commandments themselves and the guidelines set forth in the Larger Catechism, Q. 99. The texts cited under the specific commandments are given to show that they conform to the general teaching of the Bible.

2. 1 Chr 28.9, Dt 26.17.

3. Mt 4.10, Ps 95.6-7, 29.2.

Q. 47. What does the first commandment forbid?

A. The first commandment forbids denying God¹ or not worshipping and glorifying him as the true God² and our God.³ It also forbids giving worship and glory, which he alone deserves, to anyone or anything else.⁴

1. Ps 14.1.

2. Rom 1.20-21.

3. Ps 81.10-11.

4. Rom 1.25-26.

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Q. 48. What are we specifically taught in the first commandment by the words before me?

A. The words before me in the first commandment teach us that God, who sees everything, notices and is very offended by the sin of having any other god.¹

1. Ez. 8.5-6, 1 Chr 28.9, Ps 44.20-21.

Q. 49. What is the second commandment?

A. 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 a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.*¹

1. Ex 20.4-6.

Q. 50. What does the second commandment require?

A. The second commandment requires us to receive, respectfully perform, and preserve completely and purely all the regulations for religion and worship that God has established in his word.¹

1. Dt 12.32, 32.46, Mt 28.20, Acts 2.42.

Q. 51. What does the second commandment forbid?

A. The second commandment forbids our worshipping God with images¹ or in any other way not established in his word.²

1. Dt 4.15-19, Ex 32.5,8, Acts 17.29.

2. Dt 12.30-32.

Q. 52. What are the reasons for the second commandment?

A. The reasons for the second commandment are that God totally rules over us,¹ that we belong to him,² and that he is eager to be worshipped correctly.³

1. Ps 95.2-3.

2. Ps 45.11.

3. Ex 34.13-14.

Q. 53. What is the third commandment?

A. 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 his¹ name.*

1. Ex 20.7.

Q. 54. What does the third commandment require?

A. The third commandment requires the holy and reverent use of God's names,¹ titles, qualities,² regulations,³ word,⁴ and works.⁵

1. Ps 29.2, Mt 6.9, Dt 28.58.

2. Ps 68.4, Rv 15.3-4.

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- 3. Mal 1.11,14.
- 4. Ps 138.1-2.
- 5. Jb 26.24, Ps 107.21-22.

Q. 55. What does the third commandment forbid?

A. The third commandment forbids our treating as unholy or abusing anything God uses to make himself known.¹

- 1. Mal 1.6-7,12 2.2, 3.14, Is 5.12.

Q. 56. What is the reason for the third commandment?

A. The reason for the third commandment is that the Lord our God will not allow those who break this commandment to escape his righteous judgment, although they may escape punishment from men.¹

- 1. 1 Sm 2.12,17,22,29, 3.13, Dt 28.58-59.

Q. 57. What is the fourth commandment?

A. *The fourth commandment is: Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor 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 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 on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*¹

- 1. Ex 20.8-11.

Q. 58. What does the fourth commandment require?

A. The fourth commandment requires us to set apart to God the times he has established in his word - specifically one whole day out of every seven as a holy Sabbath to him.¹

- 1. Lv 19.30, Dt 5.12-14, Is 56.2-7.

Q. 59. Which day of the week has God designated as the Sabbath?

A. From the beginning of the world until the resurrection of Christ, God established the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath.¹ From that time until the end of the world, the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath.²

- 1. Gn 2.2-3, Lk 23.56.
- 2. Acts 20.7, 1 Cor 16.1-2, Jn 20.19-26.

Q. 60. How do we keep the Sabbath holy?

A. We keep the Sabbath holy by resting the whole day from worldly affairs or recreations, even ones that are lawful on other days.¹ Except for necessary works or acts of mercy,² we should spend all our time publicly and privately worshipping God.³

- 1. Lv 23.3, Ex 16.25-29, 20.8,10, Neh 13.15-19, Jer 17.21-22.
- 2. Mt 12.11-12, and see context.
- 3. Ps 92.1-2 (a psalm or song for the Sabbath day), Is 66.23, Luke 4.16, Is 58.13, Acts 20.7.

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Q. 61. What does the fourth commandment forbid?

A. The fourth commandment forbids failing to do or carelessly doing what we are supposed to do.¹ It also forbids treating the day as unholy by loafing, by doing anything in itself sinful,² or by unnecessary thinking, talking about, or working on our worldly affairs or recreations.³

1. Ez 22.26, Mal 1.13, Am 8.5.
2. Acts 20.7,9, Ez 23.38.
3. Is 58.13, Jer 17.24-27.

Q. 62. What are the reasons for the fourth commandment?

A. The reasons for the fourth commandment are these: God allows us six days of the week to take care of our own affairs;¹ he claims the seventh day as his own;² he set the example,³ and he blesses the Sabbath.⁴

1. Ex 20.9, 31.15-16.
2. Lv 23.3.
3. Ex 31.17.
4. Ex 20.11, Gn 2.3.

Q. 63. What is the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment is: Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.¹

1. Ex 20.12.

Q. 64. What does the fifth commandment require?

A. The fifth commandment requires us to respect and treat others, whether above, below, or equal to us, as their position or our relationship to them demands.¹

1. Eph 5.21-22, 6.1,5,9, 1 Pt 2.17, Rom 13.1, 12.10.

Q. 65. What does the fifth commandment forbid?

A. The fifth commandment forbids being disrespectful to or not treating others as their position or relationship to us demands.¹

1. Mt 15.4-6, Ez 34.2-4, Rom 13.7-8.

Q. 66. What is the reason for the fifth commandment?

A. The reason for the fifth commandment is the promise of long life and prosperity, if these glorify God and are for the good of those who obey this commandment.¹

1. Dt 5.16, Eph 6.2-3.

Q. 67. What is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is: You shall not murder.¹

1. Ex 20.13.

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Q. 68. What does the sixth commandment require?

A. The sixth commandment requires making every lawful effort to preserve one's own life¹ and the lives of others.²

1. Eph 5.28-29, Mt 10.23.
2. Ps 82.3-4, Jb 29.13, 1 Kgs 18.4.

Q. 69. What does the sixth commandment forbid?

A. The sixth commandment forbids taking one's own life¹ or the lives of others unjustly² or doing anything that leads to suicide or murder.³

1. Acts 16.28.
2. Gn 9.6.
3. Mt 5.22, 1 Jn 3.15, Gal 5.15, Prv 24.11-12, Ex 21.18-32.

Q. 70. What is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is: You shall not commit adultery.¹

1. Ex 20.14.

Q. 71. What does the seventh commandment require?

A. The seventh commandment requires us¹ and everyone else to keep sexually pure² in heart,³ speech,⁴ and action.⁵

1. 1 Thes 4.4-5.
2. 1 Cor 7.2-3, 5, 34, 36, Eph 5.11-12.
3. Mt 5.28.
4. Eph 4.29, Col 4.6.
5. 1 Pt 3.2.

Q. 72. What does the seventh commandment forbid?

A. The seventh commandment forbids thinking,¹ saying,² or doing³ anything sexually impure.

1. Mt 5.28.
2. Eph 5.4, Mt 15.19.
3. Eph 5.3.

Q. 73. What is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is: You shall not steal.¹

1. Ex 20.15.

Q. 74. What does the eighth commandment require?

A. The eighth commandment requires that we lawfully acquire and increase our own¹ and others' money and possessions.

1. 2 Thes 3.10-12, Rom 12.17, Prv 27.23.
2. Lv 25.35, Phil 2.4, Prv 13.4, 20.4, 24.30-34.

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Q. 75. What does the eighth commandment forbid?

A. The eighth commandment forbids anything that either does or may unjustly take away money or possessions from us¹ or anyone else.²

1. Gn 30.30, 1 Tm 5.8.

2. Lv 25.35, Dt 21.1-5, Ex 23.4-5, Gn 47.14,20, Eph 4.28, Prv 21.16, 2 Thes 3.7-10.

Q. 76. What is the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment is: You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.¹

1. Ex 20.16.

Q. 77. What does the ninth commandment require?

A. The ninth commandment requires us to tell the truth and to maintain and promote it¹ and our own² and others' reputations,³ especially when testifying.⁴

1. Zec 8.16.

2. 1 Pt 3.16, Acts 25.10.

3. 3 Jn 12.

4. Prv 14.5,25.

Q. 78. What does the ninth commandment forbid?

A. The ninth commandment forbids anything that gets in the way of the truth¹ or injures anyone's reputation.²

1. Prv 19.5, 6.16-19.

2. 1 Sm 17.28, Lv 19.16, Lk 3.14, Ps 15.3.

Q. 79. What is the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment is: You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.¹

1. Ex 20.17.

Q. 80. What does the tenth commandment require?

A. The tenth commandment requires us to be completely satisfied with our own status in life¹ and to have a proper, loving attitude toward others and their possessions.²

1. Heb 13.5, 1 Tm 6.6.

2. Jb 21.29, Rom 12.15, Phil 2.4, 1 Cor 13.4-7, 1 Tm 1.5.

Q. 81. What does the tenth commandment forbid?

A. The tenth commandment forbids any dissatisfaction with what belongs to us,¹ envy or grief at the success of others,² and all improper desire for anything that belongs to someone else.³

1. 1 Kgs 21.4, Est 5.13, 1 Cor 10.10.

2. Gal 5.26, Jas 3.14,16.

3. Col 3.5.

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Q. 82. Can anyone perfectly keep the commandments of God?

A. Since the fall no ordinary man can perfectly keep the commandments of God in this life¹ but breaks them every day in thought,² word,³ and action.⁴

1. Eccl 7.20, 1 Jn 1.8,10, Gal 5.17, 1 Kgs 8.46, 1 Jn 1.8-2.6.
2. Gn 6.5, 8.21.
3. Rom 3.9-19, Jas 3.8.
4. Jas 3.2.

Q. 83. Are all sins equally evil?

A. In the eyes of God some sins in themselves are more evil than others, and some are more evil because of the harm that results from them.¹

1. Ez 8.6.13.15, 1 Jn 5.16, Ps 19.13, 78.17,32,56, Jn 19.11.

Q. 84. What does every sin deserve?

A. Every sin deserves God's anger and curse, both in this life and in the life to come.¹

1. Eph 5.6, Gal 3.10, Lam 3.39 Mt 25.41.

Q. 85. What does God require from us to escape his anger and curse, which we deserve for our sin?

A. To escape God's anger and curse, which we deserve for our sin, God requires from us faith in Jesus Christ and repentance unto life¹ along with diligent involvement in all the external ways Christ uses to bring us the benefits of redemption.²

1. Acts 20.21, Mk 1.15, Jn 3.18.
2. Pr 2.1-5, 8.33-36, Is 55.3, Mt 28.19-20, Act 2.41-42.

Q. 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ?

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace,¹ by which we receive² and rest on him alone for salvation,³ as he is offered to us in the gospel.⁴

1. Heb 10.39.
2. Jn 1.12, Is 26.3-4.
3. Phil 3.9, Gal 2.16.
4. Jn 6.40.

Q. 87. What is repentance unto life?

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace,¹ by which a sinner, being truly aware of his sinfulness,² understands the mercy of God in Christ,³ grieves for and hates his sins, and turns from them to God,⁴ fully intending and striving for a new obedience.⁵

1. Acts 11.18.
2. Acts 2.37-38.
3. Jl 2.12-13, Jer 3.22.
4. 2 Cor 7.11, Jer 31.18-19, Ez 36.31, Acts 26.18.
5. 2 Cor 7.11, Is 1.16-17, Ps 119.59.

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Q. 88. What are the ordinary, external ways Christ uses to bring us the benefits of redemption?

A. The ordinary, external ways Christ uses to bring us the benefits of redemption are his regulations, particularly the word, sacraments, and prayer,¹ all of which are made effective for the salvation of his chosen ones.

1. Mt 28.19-20, Acts 2.41-42, 46-47.

Q. 89. What makes the word effective for salvation?

A. The Spirit of God causes the reading and especially the preaching of the word to convince and convert sinners¹ and to build them up in holiness and comfort through faith to salvation.²

1. Neh 8.8, 1 Cor 14.24-25, Ps 19.7-8, 119.130, Heb 4.12.

2. Acts 26.18, 1 Thes 1.6, Rom 1.16, 10.13-17, 15.4, 16.25, 2 Tm 3.15-17, Acts 20.32.

Q. 90. How is the word to be read and heard in order to become effective for salvation?

A. For the word to become effective for salvation, we must pay careful attention to it,¹ prepare ourselves,² and pray for understanding.³ We must also receive it with faith⁴ and love,⁵ treasure it in our hearts,⁶ and practice it in our lives.⁷

1. Prv 8.34.

2. Lk 8.18, 1 Pt 2.1-2.

3. Ps 119.18.

4. Heb 4.2.

5. 2 Thes 2.10.

6. Ps 119.11.

7. Lk 8.15, Jas 1.25.

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

A. The sacraments become effective means of salvation, not because of any special power in them or in the people who administer them, but rather by the blessing of Christ and the working of his Spirit in those who receive them by faith.¹

1. 1 Pt 3.21, Mt 3.11, Acts 8.13,23 and the intervening context, 1 Cor 3.6-7, 6.11, 12.13.

Q. 92. What is a sacrament?

A. A sacrament is a holy regulation established by Christ, in which Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented,¹ sealed, and applied to believers by physical signs.²

1. Gn 17.7,10, Ex 12, Mt 28.19, 26.26-28.

2. 1 Cor 11.23,26, Rom 4.11.

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

A. The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism¹ and the Lord's supper.²

1. Mt 28.19.

2. Mt 26.26-28, 1 Cor 11.23.

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Q. 94. What is baptism?

A. The sacrament of baptism is a washing with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,¹ which is a sign and seal that we are joined to Christ, that we receive the benefits of the covenant of grace,² and that we are engaged to be the Lord's.³

1. Mt 28.19.
2. Gal 3.27, Rom 6.3.
3. Rom 6.4.

Q. 95. Who should be baptized?

A. Those who are not members of churches should not be baptized until they have publicly stated that they believe in Christ and will obey him,¹ but the infant children of church members should be baptized.²

1. Acts 2.38,41, 8.36-38.
2. Gn 17.7.10. Col 2.11-12, 1 Cor 7.14, Gal 3.17-18, 29, Acts 2.38-39.

Q. 96. What is the Lord's supper?

A. The Lord's supper is a sacrament in which bread and wine are given and received as Christ directed to proclaim his death.¹ Those who receive the Lord's supper in the right way share in his body and blood with all his benefits, not physically but by faith, and become spiritually stronger and grow in grace.²

1. Mt 26.26-27, 1 Cor 11.23-26.
2. 1 Cor 10.16, Eph 3.17.

Q. 97. What is the right way to receive the Lord's supper?

A. The right way to receive the Lord's supper is to examine whether we discern the Lord's body,¹ whether our faith feeds on him.² and whether we have repentance,³ love,⁴ and a new obediences⁵—so that we may not come in the wrong way and eat and drink judgment on ourselves.⁶

1. 1 Cor 11.28-29.
2. 2 Cor 13.5, Jn 6.53-56.
3. 1 Cor 11.31, Zec 12.10.
4. 1 Cor 10.16-17, 1 Jn 4.19, Gal 5.6.
5. 1 Cor 5.7-8, Rom 6.4,17-22.
6. 1 Cor 11.27-29.

Q. 98. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is offering our desires to God¹ in the name of Christ² for things that agree with his will,³ confessing our sins,⁴ and thankfully recognizing his mercies.⁵

1. Ps 62.8, 10.17.
2. Jn 16.23.
3. 1 Jn 5.14, Mt 26.39, Jn 6.38.
4. Ps 32.5-6, Dn 9.4.
5. Phil 4.6.

Q. 99. How does God direct us to pray?

A. The whole word of God,¹ but especially the Lord's prayer,² which Christ taught his disciples, directs our prayers.

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1. 2 Tm 3.16-17, 1 Jn 5.14.
2. Mt 6.9-13 compared with Lk 11.2-4.

Q. 100. What does the beginning of the Lord's prayer teach us?

A. The beginning of the Lord's prayer (*Our Father in heaven*) teaches us to draw near to God with completely holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father who is able and ready to help us.¹ It also teaches that we should pray with and for others.²

1. Is 64.9, Lk 11.13, Rom 8.15.
2. Acts 12.5, 1 Tm 2.1-2, Eph 6.18, Acts 12.5, Zec 8.21.

Q. 101. For what do we pray in the first request?

A. In the first request (*hallowed be your name*) we pray that God will enable us and others to glorify him in everything he uses to make himself known¹ and that he will work out everything to his own glory²

1. Ps 67.1-3, 2 Thes 3.1, Ps 145.
2. Ps 83, Is 64.1-2, Rom 11.36.

Q. 102. For what do we pray in the second request?

A. In the second request (*vour kingdom come*) we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed,¹ that the kingdom of grace may be advanced,² with ourselves and others brought into and kept in it,³ and that the kingdom of glory may come quickly.⁴

1. Ps 68.1,18.
2. Rv 12.10-11.
3. 2 Thes 3.1, Ps 51.18, 67.1-3, Rom 10.1, Jn 17.9,20.
4. Rv 22.20, 2 Pt 3.11-13.

Q. 103. For what do we pray in the third request?

A. In the third request (*vour will be done on earth as it is in heaven*) we pray that by his grace God would make us have the capability and the will to know, obey, and submit to his will in everything,¹ as the angels do in heaven.²

1. Ps 67, 119.35-36, Mt 26.39, 2 Sm 15.25, Jb 1.21, Acts 21.14.
2. Ps 103.20-22.

Q. 104. For what do we pray in the fourth request?

A. In the fourth request (*Give us today our daily bread*) we pray that we may receive an adequate amount of the good things in this life as a free gift of God¹ and that with them we may enjoy his blessing.²

1. Prv 30.8-9, Gn 28.23.
2. 1 Tm 4.4-5, Prv 10.22.

Q. 105. For what do we pray in the fifth request?

A. In the fifth request (*Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors*), encouraged by God's grace, which makes it possible for us sincerely to forgive others,¹ we pray that for Christ's sake God would freely pardon all our sins.²

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1. Lk 11.4, Mt 18.35, 6.14-15
2. Ps 51.1-2, 7, 9, Dn 9.17-19, Rom 3.24-25.

Q. 106. For what do we pray in the sixth request?

A. In the sixth request (*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 sin¹ or support and deliver us when we are tempted.²

1. Mt 26.41, Ps 19.13.
2. 2 Cor 12.7-8, 1 Cor 10.13, Ps 51.10,12.

Q. 107. What does the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us?

A. The conclusion of the Lord's prayer (*for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever*) teaches us to be encouraged only by God in our prayers¹ and to praise him by acknowledging that kingdom, power, and glory are his.² To show that we want to be heard and have confidence that we are, we say Amen.³

1. Dn 9.4, 7-9,16-19.
2. 1 Chr 29.10-13.
3. Rv 22.20-21, 1 Cor 14.16.

Afterword on the Texts

The major changes made by American Presbyterians to the Westminster Confession in 1788 concerned statements about the relationship between the church and the civil government in Chapters 23 and 31. The original Confession of 1647 allows some secular authority over and interference in church affairs, which the American Presbyterians were unwilling to grant.

After the great division of the church into the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) and the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) at the conclusion of the Civil War, both PCUSA and PCUS wrote new chapters on marriage. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church has adopted what was the PCUS version of Chapter 24.

The EPC has also adopted the new, American Chapters 34 and 35. These were added by PCUSA in 1903, and subsequently by PCUS and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. The original wording of these two chapters included deliberately archaic expressions (“doth,” “hath,” etc.), which have been modernized here.

The EPC has amended the Confession at three points. The word “ordinarily” has been added to Chapter 27, Section 4, and to Chapter 28, Section 2. The phrase, “so that the marriage dies at the heart and the union becomes,” has been deleted from the second sentence of Section 5 of Chapter 24. For the Larger Catechism, “only” has been replaced with “ordinarily” in A 176.

The editors are: Dr. Philip Rollinson, Emeritus Professor of English at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, and Dr. Douglas F. Kelly, Jordon Professor of Systematic Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, NC. They have been joined by Dr. Hugh W. McClure, III, a retired Presbyterian minister, for the Confession, and by Dr. S. Donald Fortson, III, Assistant Professor of Church History and Practical Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, NC, for the Larger Catechism.

For the Shorter Catechism, Drs. Kelly and Rollinson were joined by a translation team from the Westshor Group of Jackson, Mississippi: Rev. Frederick T. Marsh, Thomas I. Rice, III, A. Jerry Sheldon, Dr. Luder G. Whitlock, Jr., and Rev. William K. Wymond. The Westshor Group was comprised of a group of lay members of First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, Mississippi, who conceived of modernizing the Shorter Catechism in the 1980s after the example of the modern language Confession of Faith and who subsidized the project.