

The Westminster Larger Catechism in Modern English

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SECTION I. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Q. 1. What is the main and highest purpose of mankind?

A. Mankind's main and highest purpose is to glorify God, and to fully enjoy him forever.

Q. 2. How do we know that there is a God?

A. The true light of nature in all people and the works of God declare plainly that there is a God, but only his Word and Spirit reveal him to people sufficiently and effectually for their salvation.

Q. 3. What is the Word of God?

A. The holy Scriptures of the Old and New Covenant are the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience.

Q. 4. How do we know that the Scriptures are of the Word of God?

A. The Scriptures manifest themselves to be the Word of God by their majesty and purity, by the coherence of all their parts and the consistent message of the whole, which is to give all glory to God, and by their light and power to convince and convert sinners and to comfort and build up believers to salvation. But only the Spirit of God, bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in the heart of a person, is able to fully persuade a heart that the Scriptures are the true Word of God.

Q. 5. What do the Scriptures primarily teach?

A. The Scriptures primarily teach what we are to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of us.

SECTION II. WHAT MANKIND OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

Q. 6. What do the Scriptures make known about God?

A. The Scriptures make known what God is, the persons in the Godhead, his decrees, and how his decrees are carried out.

Section IIA. The Nature of God

Q. 7. What is God?

A. God is a Spirit, in and of himself infinite in being, glory, blessedness, and perfection, all-sufficient, eternal, unchangeable, incomprehensible, present everywhere, almighty, knowing all things, most wise, most holy, most just, most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

Q. 8. Are there more Gods than one?

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

Q. 9. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory, although distinguished by what is personally proper to them.

Q. 10. What is proper to the three persons in the Godhead?

A. It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Spirit to proceed from the Father and the Son from all eternity.

Q. 11. How do we know that the Son and the Holy Spirit are God, equal with the Father?

A. The Scriptures show that the Son and the Holy Spirit are God, equal with the Father, by ascribing to them such names, attributes, works, and worship as are proper to God only.

Section IIB. The Decrees of God

Q. 12. What are the decrees of God?

A. God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will, by which from all eternity he has unchangeably foreordained everything that ever happens, for his own glory, especially concerning angels and mankind.

Q. 13. What has God especially decreed concerning angels and mankind?

A. By an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, and for the praise of his glorious grace which will be manifested in due time, God has chosen some angels to glory

and in Christ has chosen some people to eternal life, and also the means of this. Also, according to his sovereign power and the unsearchable counsel of his own will (by which he extends or withholds favor as he pleases) he has passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be afflicted for their sin, to the praise of the glory of his justice.

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

A. God carries out his decrees in the works of *creation* and *providence*, according to his infallible foreknowledge and the free and immutable counsel of his own will.

Q. 15. What is the work of creation?

A. The work of creation is when God, in the beginning, by the word of his power, made for himself the world and all the things in it out of nothing, within the space of six days, and all truly good.

Q. 16. How did God create angels?

A. God created all the angels as spirits, immortal, holy, excelling in knowledge, and mighty in power, to carry out his commandments and to praise his name, yet subject to change.

Q. 17. How did God create mankind?

A. After God had made all the other creatures, he created mankind, male and female; he formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground and the woman of the rib of the man. He endowed them with living, reasoning, and immortal souls, and he made them in his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, having the law of God written in their hearts and the power to fulfill it, with dominion over the creatures, yet subject to fall.

Q. 18. What are God's works of providence?

A. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful acts of preserving and governing all his creatures, ordering them and all their actions to his own glory.

Q. 19. What was God's providence towards the angels?

A. God in his providence permitted some of the angels to willfully and irrecoverably fall into sin and damnation, limiting and ordering their fall and all their sins to his own glory. He established the rest of the angels in holiness and happiness, employing them all, at his pleasure, in the administrations of his power, mercy, and justice.

Q. 20. What was the providence of God toward mankind in the state in which the first man was created?

A. The providence of God toward mankind in the state in which the first man was created was the following:

- placing him in paradise, appointing him to tend it and giving him the liberty to eat the fruit of the earth;
- putting the creatures under his dominion and ordaining marriage for his help;
- allowing him communion with God himself;
- instituting the Sabbath;
- entering into a covenant of life with him on the condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience, of which the tree of life was a pledge;
- and forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, on pain of death.

Q. 21. Did mankind continue in the state in which God first created them?

A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, transgressed the commandment of God by eating the forbidden fruit through the temptation of Satan, and by that they experienced the *fall* from the state of innocence in which they were created.

Q. 22. Did all mankind fall in that first transgression?

A. Because the covenant was made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only but also for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him and fell with him in that first transgression.

Q. 23. Into what state did Adam's fall bring mankind?

A. The fall brought mankind into a state of *sin* and *misery*.

Q. 24. What is sin?

A. Sin is any lack of conformity to, or transgression of, any law of God given as a rule to a reasoning creature.

Q. 25. What does the sinfulness of the state into which mankind fell consist of?

A. The sinfulness of the state into which mankind fell consists of

- the guilt of Adam's first sin;
- the lack of the righteousness in which he was created;
- and the corruption of our nature, by which every person is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all that is spiritually good, and wholly and continually inclined to all evil.

This is commonly called *original sin*, and from this proceed all actual transgressions.

Q. 26. How is original sin conveyed from our first parents to their posterity?

A. Original sin is conveyed from our first parents to their posterity by natural generation, so that all who proceed from them in that way are conceived and born in sin.

Q. 27. What misery did the fall bring on mankind?

A. The fall brought on mankind the loss of communion with God and his displeasure and curse, so that we are by nature children of wrath, slaves to Satan, and justly liable to all the punishments of this world and that which is to come.

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

A. The punishments of sin in this world are either *inward*, as a blindness of mind, a reprobate sense, strong delusions, hardness of heart, horror of conscience, and vile affections; or *outward*, as the curse of God on the creatures for our sakes, and all the other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, states, relations, and employment, together with death itself.

Q. 29. What are the punishments of sin in the world to come?

A. The punishments of sin in the world to come are everlasting separation from the comforting presence of God, and very grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in the fire of hell forever.

Q. 30. Does God leave all mankind to perish in their state of sin and misery?

A. God does not leave all people to perish in the state of sin and misery into which they fell by the breach of the first covenant, commonly called the *covenant of works*. Instead, out of his mere love and mercy, he delivers his chosen ones from sin and misery and brings them into a state of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called the *covenant of grace*.

Section IIB.1. The Covenant of Grace

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

A. The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and with all the chosen ones in him as his seed.

Q. 32. How is the grace of God manifested in the second covenant?

A. The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant in that he freely provides and offers to sinners a mediator, and life and salvation by that mediator. Requiring faith as the

condition to give them a legal union with him, he promises and gives his Holy Spirit to all his chosen ones to work that faith into them, along with all the other saving graces, and to enable them to all types of holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their faith and their thankfulness to God, and as the path that he has appointed to them for salvation.

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

A. The covenant of grace was not always administered in the same manner; the administrations of it under the Old Covenant were different from those under the New.

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

A. The covenant of grace was administered under the Old Covenant by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the Passover, and other symbols and ordinances, all of which foreshadowed the Christ to come and were sufficient for that time to build up the chosen ones in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they then had full remission of sin and eternal salvation.

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

A. Under the New Covenant, when Christ was exhibited as the true substance of what had been previously foreshadowed, the same covenant of grace was and still is to be administered in the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, in which grace and salvation are held forth in more fullness, evidence, and effectiveness to all nations.

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, who, being the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father, became man in the fullness of time, and so was and continues to be God and man, in two wholly distinct natures and one person, forever.

Section IIB.2. The Nature of Christ, the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace

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

A. Christ, the Son of God, became man by taking to himself a true body and a reasoning soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance and born of her, yet without sin.

Q. 38. Why was it necessary that the mediator should be God?

- A. It was necessary that the mediator should be God
- so that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God and the power of death;
 - so that he might give worth and effectiveness to his sufferings, obedience, and intercession;
 - and so that he might satisfy God's justice, procure his favor, purchase a special people, give his Spirit to them, conquer all their enemies, and bring them to everlasting salvation.

Q. 39. Why was it necessary that the mediator should be a man?

- A. It was necessary that the mediator should be man
- so that he might represent our nature, performing obedience to the law and suffering and making intercession for us in our nature;
 - so that he might have a fellow-feeling of our infirmities;
 - and so that we might receive the adoption of sons and have comfort and access with boldness to the throne of grace.

Q. 40. Why was it necessary that the mediator should be God and man in one person?

- A. It was necessary that the mediator who was to reconcile God and mankind should himself be both God and man, and this in one person, so that the proper works of each nature might be accepted by God for us, and also relied on by us as the works of the whole person.

Q. 41. Why was our mediator called Jesus (meaning "God saves")?

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

Q. 42. Why was our mediator called Christ (meaning "the Anointed One")?

- A. Our mediator was called Christ because he was anointed with the Holy Spirit beyond measure, and thus he was set apart and fully equipped with all authority and ability to carry out the offices of prophet, priest, and king of his church, both in his state of *humiliation* and in his state of *exaltation*.

Q. 43. How does Christ carry out the office of a prophet?

- A. Christ carries out the office of a prophet in revealing to the church in all ages, by his Spirit and his Word and in diverse ways of administration, the whole will of God in all

things concerning their edification and salvation.

Q. 44. How does Christ carry out the office of a priest?

- A. Christ carries out the office of a priest
- in offering himself as a sacrifice to God one time, without spot, to be the reconciliation for the sins of his people;
 - and in making continual intercession for them.

Q. 45. How does Christ carry out the office of a king?

- A. Christ carries out the office of a king
- in calling a people out of the world to himself and giving them officers, laws, and censures by which he visibly governs them;
 - in bestowing saving grace on these chosen ones, rewarding their obedience and correcting them for their sins, preserving and supporting them during all their temptations and sufferings, restraining and overcoming all their enemies, and powerfully ordering all things for his own glory and for their good;
 - and also in taking vengeance on the rest, who do not know God and do not obey the Gospel.

Q. 46. What was the state of Christ's humiliation?

- A. The state of Christ's humiliation was the low condition in which, for our sakes, emptying himself of his glory, he took upon himself the form of a servant in his conception, birth, life, death, and after his death, until his resurrection.

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, he was pleased in the fullness of time to become the son of man, made of a woman in a state of poverty, and to be born of her, with various circumstances of more than ordinary abasement.

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

- A. Christ humbled himself in his life by subjecting himself to the Law, which he perfectly fulfilled, and by struggling with the indignities of the world, the temptations of Satan, and the infirmities in his flesh, whether common to the nature of mankind or particularly accompanying his low condition.

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

- A. Christ humbled himself in his death in that having been betrayed by Judas, forsaken

by his disciples, scorned and rejected by the world, condemned by Pilate, and tormented by his persecutors, and having also struggled with the terrors of death and the powers of darkness, he felt and bore the weight of God's wrath and laid down his life as an offering for sin, enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the Cross.

Q. 50. What did Christ's humiliation after his death consist of?

A. Christ's humiliation after his death consisted in his being buried and continuing in the state of the dead and under the power of death until the third day, which has also been expressed in these words: "*He descended into hell.*"

Q. 51. What is the state of Christ's exaltation?

A. The state of Christ's exaltation includes his resurrection, his ascension, his sitting at the right hand of the Father, and his coming again to judge the world.

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

A. Christ was exalted in his resurrection in that, not having seen corruption in death (in which it was not possible for him to be held), and having truly the same body in which he suffered (with the essential properties of it, but without mortality and the other common infirmities belonging to this life) really united to his soul, he rose again from the dead on the third day by his own power. By this he declared himself to be the Son of God, to have satisfied divine justice, to have vanquished death and him that had the power of it, and to be lord of the living and the dead. All of this he did as a public person as the head of his church, for their justification, to enliven them in grace, to support them against their enemies, and to assure them of their resurrection from the dead at the last day.

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

A. Christ was exalted in his ascension in that, having often appeared to and conversed with his apostles after his resurrection, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God and giving them commission to preach the gospel to all nations, he visibly went up into the highest heavens forty days after his resurrection, in our nature and as our head, triumphing over his enemies. He went there to receive gifts for men, to raise up our affections to heaven, and to prepare a place for us, where he himself is and will continue until his second coming at the end of the world.

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

A. Christ is exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God in that, as the God-man, he is advanced to the highest favor with God the Father, with all fullness of joy, glory, and power over all things in heaven and earth. He gathers and defends his church and subdues their enemies, furnishes his servants and people with gifts and graces, and makes intercession for them.

Q. 55. How does Christ make intercession?

A. Christ makes intercession by appearing in our nature continually before the Father in heaven in the merit of his obedience and his sacrifice on earth, declaring his will to have it applied to all believers, answering all accusations against them, and procuring for them quiet of conscience (despite their daily failings), access with boldness to the throne of grace, and acceptance of their selves and their acts of service.

Q. 56. How is Christ to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world?

A. Christ is to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world in that he, who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men, will come again at the last day in great power and in the full manifestation of his own glory and his Father's glory, with all his holy angels, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, to judge the world in righteousness.

Q. 57. What benefits has Christ procured by his mediation?

A. Christ, by his mediation, has procured redemption, with all other benefits of the covenant of grace.

Section IIB.3. The Process of Redemption in the Covenant of Grace

Q. 58. How are we made partakers of the benefits that Christ has procured?

A. We are made partakers of the benefits that Christ has procured by the application of them to us, which is the work especially of God the Holy Spirit.

Q. 59. Who are made partakers of redemption through Christ?

A. Redemption is certainly applied and effectually communicated to all those for whom Christ has purchased it, who are enabled by the Holy Spirit in time to believe in Christ according to the Gospel.

Q. 60. Can people who have never heard the Gospel, and do not know Jesus Christ or believe in him, be saved by living according to the light of nature?

A. Those who have never heard the Gospel, and do not know Jesus Christ or believe in him, cannot be saved by any degree of being diligent to orient their lives according to the light of nature or the laws of that religion which they profess. Nor is there salvation in any other, but in Christ alone, who is the only Savior of his body the church.

Q. 61. Is everyone who hears the Gospel and lives in the church saved?

A. Not everyone who hears the Gospel and lives in the visible church is saved, but only those who are true members of the invisible church.

Q. 62. What is the visible church?

A. The visible church is a society made up of all people in all ages and places of the world who profess the true religion, and their children.

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

A. The visible church has the privileges

- of being under God's special care and government;
- of being protected and preserved in all ages, despite the opposition of all enemies;
- and of enjoying the communion of saints, the ordinary means of salvation, and the offers of grace by Christ to all the members of the visible church in the ministry of the Gospel, testifying that whoever believes in him will be saved, and excluding none who are willing come to him.

Q. 64. What is the invisible church?

A. The invisible church is the whole number of the chosen ones who have been, are, or will be gathered into one body under Christ the head.

Q. 65. What special benefits do the members of the invisible church enjoy by Christ?

A. By Christ, the members of the invisible church enjoy *union* and *communion* with him in *grace* and *glory*.

Q. 66. What is the union that God's chosen ones have with Christ?

A. The union that God's chosen ones have with Christ is the work of God's grace by which they are spiritually and mystically, yet really and inseparably, joined to Christ as their head and husband; this is done in their *effectual calling*.

Q. 67. What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's almighty power and grace, by which he invites his chosen ones and draws them to Jesus Christ by his Word and Spirit in his accepted time (out of his free and special love to them, and from nothing in them moving him to it), enlightening their minds so that they are saved, and renewing and powerfully determining their wills, so that they (although dead in sin in themselves) are thus made

willing and freely able to answer his call and to accept and embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

Q. 68. Are only God's chosen ones effectually called?

A. All of God's chosen ones, and only they, are effectually called, although others may be (and often are) outwardly called by the ministry of the Word and have some operations of the Spirit in common with God's chosen ones. For their willful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them, these others are justly left in their unbelief, and never do truly come to Jesus Christ.

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

A. The communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ is their partaking of the virtue of his mediation, in their *justification, adoption, sanctification*, and whatever else in this life manifests their union with him.

Q. 70. What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace to sinners, in which he pardons all their sins and accepts and accounts their whole persons as righteous in his sight, not for anything worked into them or done by them, but only because of the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ imputed to them by God, received by faith alone.

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

A. Although Christ, by his obedience and death, made a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice on behalf of those who are justified, yet because God

- accepts this satisfaction for a payment which he might have demanded of them;
- provided this payment himself, through his own only Son imputing his righteousness to them;
- and requires nothing from them for their justification except faith, which is also his gift;

therefore their justification is of free grace.

Q. 72. What is justifying faith?

A. Justifying faith is a saving grace, worked in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and Word of God, by which the sinner, being convinced of his sin and misery and of the inability of himself and all other creatures to save him out of his lost condition, not only assents to the truth of the promise of the Gospel, but also receives and rests on Christ and his righteousness, held forth in the Gospel, for the pardon of his sin and for the acceptance and accounting of his self as righteous in the sight of God, for his salvation.

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

A. Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which always accompany it, nor because of the good works that are the fruits of it, nor as if the grace of faith, or any act flowing from it, were imputed to him for his justification, but only because it is an instrument by which he receives and applies Christ and his righteousness.

Q. 74. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of the free grace of God, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, by which all those who are justified

- are received into the number of his children;
- have his name put on them;
- have the Spirit of his Son given to them;
- are under his fatherly care and dispensations;
- are admitted 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.

Q. 75. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is a work of God's grace by which those whom God has chosen to be holy before the foundation of the world are in time, through the powerful operation of his Spirit applying the death and resurrection of Christ to them, are renewed in their whole person after the image of God. The seeds of repentance that leads to life and all the other saving graces are put into their hearts, and those graces are stirred up, increased, and strengthened, so that they more and more die to sin, and rise to newness of life.

Q. 76. What is repentance that leads to life?

A. Repentance that leads to life is a saving grace, worked in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and the Word of God, by which, out of the sight and sense not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, and awareness of God's mercy in Christ to those who are penitent, the sinner so grieves for and hates his sins that he turns away from them all to God, purposing and working constantly to walk with God in all the ways of new obedience.

Q. 77. How do justification and sanctification differ?

A. Although sanctification is inseparably joined with justification, yet they differ in the following ways: in justification God *imputes* the righteousness of Christ; in the sanctification of his Spirit, God *infuses* grace and enables it to be put into action. In the former, sin is pardoned; in the latter, it is subdued. The first frees all believers equally from the revenging wrath of God perfectly in this life, so that they never fall into condemnation; the second is not equal in all people, nor is it ever perfect in anyone in this

life, but grows toward perfection.

Q. 78. What is the cause of the imperfection of sanctification in believers?

A. The imperfection of sanctification in believers comes from the remnants of sin remaining in every part of them and the perpetual lusts of the flesh against the spirit. By these, believers are often foiled with temptations, fall into many sins, and are hindered in all their spiritual services, and their best works are imperfect and defiled in the sight of God.

Q. 79. Can true believers fall away from the state of grace because of their imperfections and the many temptations and sins they are overtaken with?

A. Because of

- the unchangeable love of God;
- his decree and covenant to give them perseverance;
- their inseparable union with Christ;
- his continual intercession for them;
- and the Spirit and seed of God abiding in them;

true believers can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but are kept by the power of God through faith to salvation.

Q. 80. Can true believers be rightly confident that they are in the state of grace and that they will persevere in it until their salvation?

A. Those who truly believe in Christ, and who endeavor to walk in all good conscience before him, may be rightly confident that they are in the state of grace and that they will persevere in that state until their salvation. They can know this without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded on the truth of God's promises and by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made, bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God.

Q. 81. Are all true believers at all times confident of their being in the state of grace and that they will be saved?

A. Because confidence of grace and salvation are not the essence of faith, true believers may wait a long time before they obtain it, and after the enjoyment of it they may have it weakened and discontinued through many types of disorders, sins, temptations, and times of feeling deserted by God. Yet they are never left without such presence and support of the Spirit of God as keeps them from sinking into utter despair.

Q. 82. When do the members of the invisible church have communion in glory with Christ?

A. The communion in glory that the members of the invisible church have with Christ occurs in this life, immediately after death, and when at last perfected at the resurrection and day of judgment.

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

A. The members of the invisible church have communicated to them in this life the first fruits of glory with Christ, because they are members of him their head, and therefore in him they have a legitimate claim to that glory which he is fully possessed of. As a down payment of this, they enjoy the sense of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, and the hope of glory. On the contrary, a sense of God's revenging wrath, a horror of conscience, and a fearful expectation of judgment are just the beginning of the torments that the wicked will endure after death.

Q. 84. Will all people die?

A. Because death is threatened as the wages of sin, it is appointed to all people to die once, because all have sinned.

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

A. The righteous will be delivered from death itself at the last day, and even in death they are delivered from the sting and curse of it, so that, although they die, yet in God's love he frees them perfectly from sin and misery and makes them capable of further communion with Christ in glory, which they then enter.

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

A. The communion in glory with Christ that the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death is that their souls are made perfect in holiness and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, which even in death continue united to Christ and rest in their graves as in their beds, until they are again united to their souls at the last day. On the other hand, the souls of the wicked are cast into hell at their death, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, and their bodies are kept in their graves, as in prisons, until the resurrection and judgment of the great day.

Q. 87. What are we to believe concerning the resurrection?

A. We are to believe that at the last day there will be a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. At that time those who are found alive will be changed in a moment, and the same bodies of the dead that were laid in the grave will then be united to their souls again forever, raised up by the power of Christ. The bodies of the just, by the Spirit of Christ and by virtue of his resurrection as their head, will be raised in power, and will be spiritual, incorruptible, and made like his glorious body. The bodies of the wicked will be raised up in dishonor by him, as an offended judge.

Q. 88. What will immediately follow after the resurrection?

A. The general and final judgment of angels and men will follow immediately after the resurrection, the day and hour of which no one knows, so that all may watch and pray, and always be ready for the coming of the Lord.

Q. 89. What will be done to the wicked at the day of judgment?

A. At the day of judgment, the wicked will be set on Christ's left hand, and, upon clear evidence and the full conviction of their own consciences, they will have the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them. Then they will be cast out from the favoring presence of God and the glorious fellowship with Christ, his saints, and all his holy angels, and they will go into hell, to be punished with unspeakable torments both of body and soul, with the devil and his angels, forever.

Q. 90. What will be done to the righteous at the day of judgment?

A. At the day of judgment, the righteous, being caught up to Christ in the clouds, will be set on his right hand, and having been openly acknowledged and acquitted, they will join with him in judging reprobate angels and people. They will be received into heaven, where they will be fully and forever freed from all sin and misery, filled with inconceivable joys, made perfectly holy and happy both in body and soul, in the company of innumerable saints and holy angels, but especially in the immediate vision and presence of God the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, to all eternity. This is the perfect and full communion that the members of the invisible church will enjoy with Christ in glory at the resurrection and day of judgment.

SECTION III. WHAT DUTY GOD REQUIRES OF MANKIND

Q. 91. What is the duty that God requires of mankind?

A. The duty that God requires of mankind is obedience to his revealed will.

Q. 92. What did God reveal to the first man as the rule of his obedience?

A. The rule of obedience revealed to Adam in his state of innocence, and to all mankind in him, was the *moral law*, in addition to the special command not to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Q. 93. What is the moral law?

A. The moral law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding every person to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience to it, in the orientation and disposition of the whole person, soul and body, along with the performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness that each person owes to God and other people. It is accompanied by the promise of life if they fulfill it and the threat of death if they break it.

Q. 94. Is there any use of the moral law to mankind since the fall?

A. Although no person, since the fall, can attain to righteousness and life by the moral law, yet there is great use of it, in a way common to all people, and also as it particularly applies either to the unregenerate or the regenerate.

Q. 95. What is the use of the moral law to all people?

A. The moral law is of use to all people

- to inform them of the holy nature and the will of God and of their duty, binding them to walk accordingly;
- and to convince them of their inability to keep it and of the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts, and lives.

This can humble them in the sense of their sin and misery and thus help them to a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ and of the perfection of his obedience.

Q. 96. What particular use is there of the moral law to unregenerate people?

A. The moral law is of use to unregenerate people to awaken their consciences to flee from wrath to come and to drive them to Christ. Alternatively, if they continue in their state and way of sin, it leaves them inexcusable and under the curse of the law.

Q. 97. What particular use is there of the moral law to regenerate people?

A. Although those who are regenerate and believe in Christ are delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so that they are neither justified nor condemned by it, yet besides the general uses of the law common to them with all people, it is of special use to show them how much they are bound to Christ for his fulfilling it and his enduring the curse of it in their place and for their good. By this they are provoked to more thankfulness and to express it in their greater care to conform themselves to the moral law as the rule of their obedience.

Section IIIA. The Ten Commandments

Q. 98. Where is the moral law given in summary form?

A. The moral law is given in summary form in the *Ten Commandments*, which were delivered by the voice of God on Mount Sinai and written by him in two tables of stone. They and are recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. The four first commandments contain our duty to God, and the other six our duty to mankind.

Q. 99. What rules are to be observed for the right understanding of the Ten Commandments?

A. For the right understanding of the Ten Commandments, these rules are to be observed:

1. That the law is perfect, and it binds everyone to full conformity in the whole person to the righteousness of it and to entire obedience forever, so as to require the utmost perfection of every duty, and to forbid the least degree of every sin.
2. That it is spiritual, and therefore reaches the understanding, will, affections, and all other powers of the soul, in addition to words, works, and gestures.
3. That the same thing, in various aspects, can be required or forbidden in several commandments.
4. That when a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden, and when a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded. In the same way, when a promise is added, the contrary threat is implied, and when a threat is added, the contrary promise is implied.
5. That what God forbids is never to be done; what he commands is always our duty, but not every particular duty is to be done at all times.
6. That under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded, together with all the causes, means, occasions, appearances of it, and provocations to it.
7. That if something is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, in accord

with our roles in life, to work so that it may be avoided or performed by others, in accord with the duties of their roles in life.

8. That in what is commanded to others, we are bound, in accord with our roles and callings, to help them to do; we are also to beware of partaking with others in what is forbidden them.

Q. 100. What specific things are we to consider in the Ten Commandments?

A. We are to consider in the Ten Commandments the preface, the substance of the commandments themselves, and the various reasons added to some of them to reinforce them.

Q. 101. What is the preface to the Ten Commandments?

A. The preface to the Ten Commandments is, *“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”* In this, God manifests his sovereignty as being *I AM*, the eternal, immutable, and almighty God, having his being in and of himself and giving being to all his words and works, and manifests that he is a God in covenant, as with Israel of old, and so with all his people. As he brought them out of their slavery in Egypt, so he delivers us from our spiritual slavery, and therefore we are bound to take him as our God alone and to keep all his commandments.

Section IIIA.1. Our Duty to God

Q. 102. What is the summary of the four commandments that contain our duty to God?

A. The summary of the four commandments containing our duty to God 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.

Q. 103. What is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is, *“You shall have no other gods before me.”*

Q. 104. What are the duties required in the first commandment?

A. The duties required in the first commandment are the following:

- knowing and acknowledging God to be the only true God, and our God;
- worshipping and glorifying him accordingly, by thinking, meditating, remembering, highly esteeming, honoring, adoring, choosing, loving, desiring, and fearing him;
- believing him;
- trusting, hoping, delighting, and rejoicing in him;

- being zealous for him;
- calling on him;
- giving all praise and thanks and yielding all obedience and submission to him with our whole person;
- being careful to please him in all things and being sorrowful when he is offended in anything;
- and walking humbly with him.

Q. 105. What are the sins forbidden in the first commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the first commandment are the following:

- atheism, in denying or not having a God;
- idolatry, in having or worshipping more gods than one, or any god along with or instead of the true God;
- not having and recognizing him as God, and as our God;
- the omission or neglect of anything due to him required in this commandment;
- ignorance, forgetfulness, misapprehensions, false opinions, or unworthy and wicked thoughts of him;
- bold and curious searching into his secrets;
- all profaneness and hatred of God;
- self-love, self-seeking, and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of our mind, will, or desires on other things and off of him, in whole or in part;
- vain credulity, unbelief, heresy, misbelief, distrust, despair, incorrigibleness, insensibleness under judgments, hardness of heart, pride, presumption, fleshly security, and tempting of God;
- using unlawful means and trusting in lawful means;
- fleshly delights and joys;
- corrupt, blind, and indiscreet zeal;
- lukewarmness and deadness in the things of God;
- estranging ourselves and apostatizing from God;
- praying or giving any religious worship to saints, angels, or any other creatures;
- all compacts and consulting with the devil and hearkening to his suggestions;
- making people the lords of our faith and conscience;
- making light of and despising God and his commands;
- resisting and grieving his Spirit;
- discontent and impatience at his dispensations, charging him foolishly for the evils he inflicts on us;
- and ascribing the praise of any good in us, any good that we have, or any good that we can do, to fortune, to idols, to ourselves, or to any other creature.

Q. 106. What are we specially taught by the words “*before me*” in the first commandment?

A. The words, “*before me,*” (or, before my face) in the first commandment teach us that God, who sees all things, takes special notice of and is very displeased with the sin of having any other God. This is an argument to dissuade us from it and to increase its

weight as a most impudent provocation, and also to persuade us to do whatever we do in his service as though we are in his sight.

Q. 107. What is the second commandment?

A. The second commandment is, *“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”*

Q. 108. What are the duties required in the second commandment?

- A. The duties required in the second commandment are the following:
- receiving, observing, and keeping pure and whole all such religious worship and ordinances as God has instituted in his Word, particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ;
 - reading, preaching, and hearing the Word;
 - the administration and receiving of the sacraments;
 - church government and discipline, Christian ministry, and the support of it;
 - religious fasting;
 - swearing by the name of God and vowing to him;
 - disapproving, detesting, and opposing of all false worship and, in accord with one’s role in this life and calling, removing false worship and all monuments of idolatry.

Q. 109. What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment?

- A. The sins forbidden in the second commandment are the following:
- all devising, counseling, commanding, using, and otherwise approving any religious worship not instituted by God himself;
 - tolerating a false religion;
 - making any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind or outwardly, in any kind of image or likeness of any creature at all;
 - all worshipping of any kind of image, or God in it or through it;
 - making any representation of pretended deities and all worship of them or service belonging to them;
 - all superstitious activities;
 - corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up on our own or received by tradition from others, whether under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretense;
 - buying or selling religious privileges;
 - sacrilege;
 - and all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances that God has appointed.

Q. 110. What are the reasons added to the second commandment to reinforce it?

A. The reasons added to the second commandment to reinforce it are the following: *“for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”* Besides God’s sovereignty over us and rightful claims in us, these words teach his fervent zeal for his own worship and his vengeful indignation against all false worship as spiritual prostitution, accounting those break this commandment as those who hate him, threatening to punish them to several generations, and esteeming those who observe this commandment as those who love him and keep his commandments, promising mercy to them to many generations.

Q. 111. What is the third commandment?

A. The third commandment is, *“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.”*

Q. 112. What is required in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment requires that the name of God, his titles, attributes, ordinances, the Word, sacraments, prayer, oaths, vows, lots, his works, and whatever else there is by which he makes himself known, be treated as holy and reverently used in thought, meditation, word, and writing, by a profession of faith accompanied by holiness and a consistent lifestyle, to the glory of God and the good of ourselves and others.

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

A. The sins forbidden in the third commandment are the following:

- not using God’s name as is required and the abuse of it in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious or wicked mention;
- using his titles, attributes, ordinances, or works in other ways by blasphemy, perjury;
- all sinful curses, oaths, vows, and lots;
- violating our oaths and vows, if those vows are lawful, and fulfilling them, if those vows are of unlawful things;
- murmuring and quarrelling at, curious prying into, or misapplying God’s decrees and providences;
- misinterpreting, misapplying, or perverting the Word in any way or in any part of it;
- profane jests, curious or unprofitable questions, vain disputes, or maintaining false doctrines;
- using the name of God, his creatures, or anything contained under the name of God, for charms or sinful lusts and practices;
- maligning, scorning, reviling, or in any way opposing God’s truth, grace, and ways;

- making profession of religion in hypocrisy or for sinister ends;
- being ashamed of God's name, or becoming a shame to it by inappropriate, unwise, unfruitful, or offensive ways of life, or by turning from God's name.

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

A. The reasons added to the third commandment, in these words, "*the LORD your God,*" and, "*for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain,*" are the following: because he is the Lord and our God, therefore his name is not to be profaned, or any way abused by us; and especially because he will be so far from acquitting and sparing the transgressors of this commandment that he will not allow them to escape his righteous judgment, although many of them escape the censures and punishments of mankind.

Q. 115. What is the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment is, "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep 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, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*"

Q. 116. What is required in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment requires that all people sanctify and keep holy to God such set times as he has appointed in his Word, expressly one whole day in seven, which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since, so to continue to the end of the world. The first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath; in the New Covenant it is called the *Lord's Day*.

Q. 117. How is the Sabbath, or Lord's Day, to be sanctified?

A. The Sabbath or Lord's Day is to be sanctified by holy resting all day, not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but also from worldly employments and recreations that are lawful on other days, making it our delight to spend the whole time (except as much of it as is taken up in works of necessity and mercy) in public and private exercises of God's worship. To that end, we are to prepare our hearts, and with foresight, diligence, and moderation, we are to dispose and resolve our worldly business in a timely way, so that we may be more free and fit for the duties of the Lord's Day.

Q. 118. Why is the charge of keeping the Sabbath more specially directed to heads of families and other authorities?

A. The charge of keeping the Sabbath is more specially directed to heads of families and

other authorities because they are bound not only to keep it themselves, but to see that it is observed by all those under their charge, and because they are often prone to hinder those under them by assigning tasks of their own.

Q. 119. What are the sins forbidden in the fourth commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the fourth commandment are the following:

- all omissions of the duties required;
- all careless, negligent, unprofitable performing of them and being weary of them;
- and all ways of profaning the day by idleness, by doing that which is in itself sinful, and by all needless works, words, and thoughts about our worldly employments and recreations.

Q. 120. What are the reasons added to the fourth commandment, to reinforce it?

A. The reasons added to the fourth commandment to reinforce it are taken

- from the equity of it, namely that God allows us six days of seven for our own affairs, and reserves only one for himself, in these words: “*Six days you shall labor, and do all your work;*”
- from God’s claiming a special ownership of that day: “*the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God;*” from God’s example: “*in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day;*”
- and from the blessing that God put on that day, not only sanctifying it to be a day for his service, but also ordaining it to be a means of blessing to us in our sanctifying it: “*Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*”

Q. 121. Why is the word “remember” set at the beginning of the fourth commandment?

A. The word “*remember*” is set at the beginning of the fourth commandment partly because of the great benefit of remembering it: we are helped by this in our preparation to keep the Sabbath, and, in keeping it, helped to keep all the rest of the commandments and to continue a thankful remembrance of the two great benefits of creation and redemption (which are a short summary of religion).

Also, the word “remember” is used partly because

- we are very ready to forget it, because there is less light of nature for it;
- because it restrains our natural liberty in things that are lawful at other times;
- because it comes only once in seven days, and many worldly activities come in between and too often distract our minds from thinking about it, either to prepare for it, or to sanctify it;
- and because Satan with his devices works hard to blot out the glory and even the memory of it, to bring in all kinds of indifference to religion and impiety.

Section IIIA.2. Our Duty to Mankind

Q. 122. What is the summary of the six commandments which contain our duty to mankind?

A. The summary of the six commandments which contain our duty to mankind is “*to love our neighbor as ourselves*” and to “*do to others what we would have them to do to us.*”

Q. 123. What is the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment is, “*Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.*”

Q. 124. Who are meant by *father* and *mother* in the fifth commandment?

A. *Father* and *mother* in the fifth commandment mean not only natural parents, but all those set over us in age and gifts, and especially those who, by God’s arrangement, are over us in a place of authority, whether in a family, church, or nation.

Q. 125. Why are those in authority portrayed as father and mother?

A. Those in authority are portrayed as father and mother to teach them that in all duties toward those under them they should, like natural parents, express love and tenderness to them, according to their various relationships; also this should lead those under authority to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to those over them, as to their parents.

Q. 126. What is the general scope of the fifth commandment?

A. The general scope of the fifth commandment is the performance of those duties that we mutually owe in our various relationships, whether to those set over us, to those set under us, or to equals.

Q. 127. What is the honor that we owe to those in authority over us?

A. The honor that we owe to those in authority over us is the following:

- all due reverence in heart, word, and behavior;
- prayer and thanksgiving for them;
- imitation of their virtues and graces;
- willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels;
- due submission to their corrections;
- fidelity to, defense of, and support of them as individuals and in their roles of authority, according to their various ranks and the nature of their roles;

- and bearing with their infirmities and covering them in love, so that we may be an honor to them and to their oversight.

Q. 128. What are the sins against those in authority?

- A. The sins of subordinates against those in authority over them are the following:
- all neglect of the duties required toward them;
 - envy of, contempt for, and rebellion against those over them as individuals or in their roles of authority in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections;
 - and cursing, mocking, and all such obstinate and scandalous behavior as proves to be a shame and dishonor to them and to their oversight.

Q. 129. What is required of those in authority towards those under them?

- A. Those in authority, according to that power they receive from God and the role they have been given, are required to do the following:
- to love, pray for, and bless those under them;
 - to instruct, counsel, and admonish them;
 - approving, commending, and rewarding those who do well and disapproving, reproving, and chastising those who do bad;
 - protecting and providing for them all things necessary for soul and body;
 - and by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary behavior, to bring glory to God, honor to themselves, and so preserve the authority that God has given to them.

Q. 130. What are the sins of those in authority?

- A. The sins of those in authority are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them, the following:
- inordinate seeking of their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure;
 - commanding things that are unlawful or not in the power of their subordinates to perform;
 - approving, encouraging, or favoring subordinates in doing what is evil;
 - dissuading, discouraging, or disapproving subordinates in what is good;
 - correcting them to excess;
 - careless neglect or leaving them to being wronged, to temptation, or to danger;
 - provoking them to wrath;
 - and in any way dishonoring themselves or lessening their authority by unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behavior.

Q. 131. What are the duties of equals?

- A. The duties of equals are the following:
- to pay attention to the dignity and worth of each other;
 - to give honor to others, letting them go before one's self;
 - and to rejoice in others' gifts and advancements as though they were one's own.

Q. 132. What are the sins of equals?

- A. The sins of equals, besides the neglect of the duties required, are the following:
- undervaluing the worth of others;
 - envying their gifts;
 - grieving at the advancement or prosperity of others;
 - and usurping one another in preeminence.

Q. 133. What is the reason added to the fifth commandment, to reinforce it?

A. The reason added to the fifth commandment, in these words, “*that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you,*” is an express promise of long life and prosperity, as far as it will serve for God’s glory and the good of all who keep this commandment.

Q. 134. What is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is, “*You shall not murder.*”

Q. 135. What are the duties required in the sixth commandment?

A. The duties required in the sixth commandment are all manner of careful efforts and lawful endeavors to preserve the life of ourselves and others by resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and practices which tend to the unjust taking away the anyone’s life. This includes the following:

- the just defense of lives against violence;
- patiently bearing the hand of God, with quietness of mind and cheerfulness of spirit;
- sober use of food, drink, medicine, sleep, labor, and recreations;
- charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, and kindness;
- peaceable, mild and courteous speeches and behavior;
- forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and returning good for evil;
- and comforting and supporting the distressed and protecting and defending the innocent.

Q. 136. What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are the following:

- all taking away of the life of ourselves or of others except in cases of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defense;
- neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of the preservation of life;
- sinful anger, hatred, envy, and desire for revenge;
- all excessive passions and distracting cares;

- immoderate use of food, drink, labor, and recreations;
- provoking words, oppression, quarreling, striking, wounding, and whatever else tends to the destruction of the life of anyone.

Q. 137. What is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is, “*You shall not commit adultery.*”

Q. 138. What are the duties required in the seventh commandment?

- A. The duties required in the seventh commandment are the following:
- chastity in body, mind, affections, words, and behavior;
 - the preservation of chastity in ourselves and others;
 - watchfulness over our eyes and all the senses;
 - temperance and keeping of chaste company;
 - modesty in apparel;
 - marriage by those who do not have the gift of abstinence, with conjugal love and cohabitation;
 - diligent labor in our callings;
 - and shunning all occasions of uncleanness and resisting temptations to it.

Q. 139. What are the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment?

- A. The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are the following:
- adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts;
 - all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and desires;
 - all corrupt or filthy communications or listening to them;
 - wanton looks, impudent or seductive behavior;
 - immodest apparel;
 - prohibiting lawful marriages and allowing unlawful marriages;
 - allowing, tolerating, or running places of prostitution or resorting to them;
 - entangling vows of singleness;
 - undue delay of marriage;
 - having more wives or husbands than one at the same time;
 - unjust divorce or desertion;
 - idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, and unchaste company;
 - lewd songs, books, pictures, dances, or stage plays;
 - and all other provocations to uncleanness or acts of uncleanness either in ourselves or others.

Q. 140. What is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is, “*You shall not steal.*”

Q. 141. What are the duties required in the eighth commandment?

- A. The duties required in the eighth commandment are the following:
- truth, faithfulness, and justice in contracts and commerce between people;
 - paying everyone what they are due;
 - restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners of it;
 - giving and lending freely, according to our abilities and the necessities of others;
 - moderation in our judgments, wills, and affections concerning worldly goods;
 - a prudent care and effort to get, keep, use, and dispose those things which are necessary and convenient for our physical needs and suitable to our condition;
 - a lawful calling and diligence in it;
 - frugality;
 - avoiding unnecessary lawsuits, pledges of security, or other similar legal entanglements;
 - and an effort, by all just and lawful means, to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward state of others as much as our own.

Q. 142. What are the sins forbidden in the eighth commandment?

- A. The sins forbidden in the eighth commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are the following:
- theft, robbery, kidnapping and slave-catching, and receiving anything that is stolen;
 - fraudulent dealing, false weights and measures, and moving the marks of property boundaries;
 - injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts or in matters of trust;
 - oppression, extortion, taking advantage of the poor by charging them interest on loans, bribery, harassing lawsuits, unjust detainments, and unjust removal of people from their land;
 - hoarding commodities to enhance the price;
 - unlawful callings;
 - and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor what belongs to him or enriching ourselves.

In addition:

- covetousness;
- inordinate prizing and desiring of worldly goods and untrustworthy and distracting cares and efforts in getting, keeping, and using them;
- envying the prosperity of others;
- idleness, prodigality, wasteful gaming, and all other ways by which we excessively put at risk our physical well-being and defraud ourselves of the proper use and comfort of the state that God has given us.

Q. 143. What is the ninth commandment?

- A. The ninth commandment is, “*You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*”

Q. 144. What are the duties required in the ninth commandment?

- A. The duties required in the ninth commandment are the following:
- preserving and promoting truth between one person and another;
 - upholding the good name of our neighbor as much as our own;
 - appearing and standing for the truth, from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully;
 - speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice and in all other things;
 - a charitable esteem of our neighbors, loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name and sorrowing for and covering their infirmities, freely acknowledging their gifts and graces, defending their innocence, readily receiving a good report, and unwillingly admitting an evil report concerning them;
 - discouraging tale-bearers, flatterers, and slanderers;
 - love and care of our own good name and defending it when need requires;
 - keeping lawful promises;
 - pursuing and practicing of whatever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report.

Q. 145. What are the sins forbidden in the ninth commandment?

- A. The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are the following:
- anything that puts at risk the truth, or the good name of our neighbors as much as our own, especially in a public trial;
 - giving false evidence, encouraging false witnesses, or knowingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause;
 - defying or facing down the truth;
 - passing unjust sentences, calling evil good or calling good evil, or rewarding the wicked according to the work of the righteous or the righteous according to the work of the wicked;
 - forgery;
 - concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause, or holding our peace when sin calls for either a reproof from ourselves or a complaint to others;
 - speaking the truth at inappropriate times or maliciously for an evil purpose;
 - perverting the truth to a wrong meaning or in vague and equivocal expressions, to the risk of truth or justice;
 - speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, tale bearing, whispering, scoffing, and reviling;
 - rash, harsh, or partial censuring;
 - misconstruing intentions, words, and actions;
 - flattering or egotistical boasting;
 - thinking or speaking too highly or too little of ourselves or others;
 - denying the gifts and graces of God;
 - treating small faults as large;

- hiding, excusing, or downplaying sins when called to a free confession;
- unnecessary uncovering of the infirmities of others;
- raising false rumors;
- receiving and giving credit to evil reports, and refusing to listen to a legitimate defense;
- evil suspicions;
- envying or grieving at the deserved credit of anyone, endeavoring or desiring to impair their deserved credit or rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy;
- scornful contempt or fawning admiration of others;
- breaking lawful promises;
- neglecting such things as are of good report of others;
- and practicing, not avoiding in ourselves, or not hindering in others when we can, things that lead to a bad name.

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 male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”*

Q. 147. What are the duties required in the tenth commandment?

A. The duties required in the tenth commandment are such a full contentment with our own condition and such a charitable orientation of our whole soul toward our neighbors, so that all of our inward motions and desires relating to them tend to, and work for, the support of everything of theirs which is good.

Q. 148. What are the sins forbidden in the tenth commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the tenth commandment are discontent with our own state and envy and grief at the good state of our neighbors, together with all excessive feelings and desires for anything that is theirs.

Section IIIB. The Nature of Sin

Q. 149. Is anyone able to keep the commandments of God perfectly?

A. No one is able to keep the commandments of God perfectly, either of himself or by any grace received in this life; everyone breaks them daily in thought, word, and deed.

Q. 150. Are all transgressions of the law of God equally evil in themselves and in the sight of God?

A. No, all transgressions of the law of God are not equally evil; some sins are more evil in the sight of God than others, either in themselves, or because of various factors that increase their evil.

Q. 151. What factors make some sins more evil than others?

A. Sins are increased in their evil

1. By the *offending persons*, if they

- are of riper age or greater experience of grace;
- are eminent in their profession, gifts, place, or office;
- are guides to others;
- or are those whose example is likely to be followed by others.

2. By the *parties offended*, if the sin is

- immediately against God, his attributes, and worship;
- against Christ and his grace;
- against the Holy Spirit, his witness, and workings;
- against authorities over us or people of eminence;
- against people that we are especially related and connected to;
- against any of God's people, particularly against weaker brothers or against their souls or against the souls of any others;
- or against the common good of all or many.

3. By the *nature and character of the offense*:

- if the sin is against the express letter of the law;
- if it breaks many commandments or contains in it many sins;
- if it is not only conceived in the heart, but breaks forth in words and actions;
- if it scandalizes others;
- if it allows no reparation;
- if it is against the means of God's calling us to repentance, mercies, judgments, the light of nature, the conviction of conscience, public or private admonition, the censures of the church, or civil punishments;
- if it is against our prayers, purposes, promises, vows, covenants, and engagements to God or men;
- or if it is done deliberately, willfully, presumptuously, impudently, boastingly, maliciously, frequently, obstinately, with delight, in continuation, or relapsing after repentance.

4. By circumstances of *time and place*:

- if on the Lord's Day or other times of divine worship, or immediately before or after these or other helps meant to prevent or remedy such misdeeds;
- if in public;
- or if in the presence of others who are likely to be provoked or defiled by it.

Q. 152. What does every sin deserve at the hands of God?

A. Every sin, even the least, being against the sovereignty, goodness, and holiness of God and against his righteous law, deserves his wrath and curse both in this life and in that which is to come, and cannot be expiated except by the blood of Christ.

Q. 153. What does God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us because of our transgression of the law?

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us because of our transgression of the law, God requires of us repentance toward him, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and the diligent use of the outward *means* by which Christ communicates to us the benefits of his mediation.

Section III.C. The Means of Grace

Q. 154. What are the outward means by which Christ communicates to us the benefits of his mediation?

A. The outward and ordinary means by which Christ communicates to his church the benefits of his mediation are all his ordinances, especially the *Word*, the *sacraments*, and *prayer*; all of which are made effectual to the his chosen ones for their salvation.

Section III.C.1. The Word

Q. 155. How is the Word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God makes the reading of the Word, but especially the preaching of it, an effectual means

- of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners;
- of driving them out of themselves and drawing them to Christ;
- of conforming them to his image and subduing them to his will;
- of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions;
- of building them up in grace;
- and of establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith to salvation.

Q. 156. Is the Word of God to be read by all people?

A. Although not all people are permitted to read the Word publicly to the congregation, all types of people are bound to read it alone by themselves and with their families. For this purpose, the holy Scriptures are to be translated out of the original languages into common languages.

Q. 157. How is the Word of God to be read?

A. The holy Scriptures are to be read

- with a high and reverent esteem for them;
- with a firm persuasion that they are the true Word of God and that only he can make us able to understand them;
- with desire to know, believe, and obey the will of God revealed in them;
- with diligence and attention to the subject matter and the scope of them;
- and with meditation, application, self-denial, and prayer.

Q. 158. By whom is the Word of God to be preached?

A. The Word of God is only to be preached by those who are sufficiently gifted and also duly approved and called to that office.

Q. 159. How is the Word of God to be preached by those who are called to the ministry of the Word?

A. Those who are called to labor in the ministry of the Word are to preach sound doctrine, diligently, in season and out of season,

- plainly, not in the enticing words of man's wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power;
- faithfully, making known the whole counsel of God;
- wisely, with effort to take into account the necessities and capacities of the hearers;
- zealously, with fervent love to God and the souls of his people;
- and sincerely, aiming at his glory and their conversion, edification, and salvation.

Q. 160. What is required of those who hear the Word preached?

A. It is required of those who hear the Word preached

- that they listen to it with diligence, preparation, and prayer;
- that they examine what they hear by comparing it to the Scriptures;
- that they receive the truth with faith, love, meekness, and readiness of mind, as the Word of God;
- that they meditate and think on it;
- and that they hide it in their hearts and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives.

Section IIIC.2. The Sacraments

Q. 161. How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?

A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not by any power in themselves,

or any virtue derived from the piety or intention of him by whom they are administered, but only by the working of the Holy Spirit and the blessing of Christ, by whom they are instituted.

Q. 162. What is a sacrament?

- A. A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his church
- to signify, seal, and exhibit the benefits of his mediation to those who are within the covenant of grace;
 - to strengthen and increase their faith and all other graces;
 - to increase their sense of duty to obedience;
 - to testify to and give sweetness to their love and communion one with another;
 - and to distinguish them from those that are outside the covenant of grace.

Q. 163. What are the parts of a sacrament?

A. There are two parts of a sacrament: one is the outward and perceivable sign, used according to Christ's own instruction, and the other is the inward and spiritual grace signified by it.

Q. 164. How many sacraments has Christ instituted in his church in the New Covenant?

A. In the New Covenant, Christ has instituted only two sacraments in his church, namely baptism and the Lord's supper.

Q. 165. What is baptism?

A. Baptism is a sacrament of the New Covenant, in which Christ has ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, to be a sign and seal

- of being grafted into himself;
- of remission of sins by his blood and regeneration by his Spirit;
- and of adoption into his family and resurrection to everlasting life.

By this the people baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's.

Q. 166. To whom is baptism to be administered?

A. Baptism is not to be administered to people outside of the visible church, and therefore strangers from the covenant of promise, until they profess their faith in Christ and their obedience to him. But infants descending from parents who profess faith in Christ and obedience to him, either both or only one of them, are in that respect within the covenant, and are to be baptized.

Q. 167. How are we to build upon our baptism?

A. The needful but much neglected duty of building upon our baptism is to be performed by us all our life long, especially in times of temptation and when we are present at the administration of it to others, by the following:

- by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, the purposes for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed by it, and our solemn vows made in it;
- by being humbled for our sinful defilement and for the ways in which we fall short of it and walk contrary to the grace of baptism and our commitments in it;
- by growing up to an assurance of pardon for our sin and all of the other blessings sealed to us in this sacrament;
- by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin and enlivening of grace;
- by endeavoring to live by faith and to have a way of life of holiness and righteousness, as those who have given up their names to Christ in their baptism;
- and by walking in brotherly love, since we are baptized by the same Spirit into one body.

Q. 168. What is the Lord's Supper?

A. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament of the New Covenant in which, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the pattern set up by Jesus Christ, his death is shown forth. Those who worthily take part

- feed on his body and blood to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace;
- have their union and communion with him confirmed;
- and testify and renew their thankfulness and commitment to God and their mutual love and fellowship with each other, as members of the same mystical body.

Q. 169. How did Christ establish bread and wine to be given and received in the sacrament of the Lord's supper?

A. Christ established that the ministers of his Word, in the administration of this sacrament of the Lord's supper, are to set apart the bread and wine from common use by the words of institution, thanksgiving, and prayer, and are to take and break the bread and give both the bread and the wine to the participants. The participants are, by the same pattern set up by Christ, to take and eat the bread and drink the wine, in thankful remembrance that the body of Christ was broken and given for them and his blood shed for them.

Q. 170. How do those who worthily participate in the Lord's Supper feed on the body and blood of Christ in it?

A. The body and blood of Christ are not bodily or physically present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's supper, and yet are spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are to their outward senses. Therefore those who worthily participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper feed on the body and blood of Christ in it, not in a bodily or physical manner but in a spiritual manner, but nevertheless truly and really, while by faith they receive and apply to themselves Christ crucified and all the benefits of his death.

Q. 171. How are those who receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to prepare themselves before they come to it?

A. Those who receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are to prepare themselves for it before they come by examining themselves in the following ways:

- of their being in Christ;
- of their sins and needs;
- of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance, and love to God and the brethren;
- of their charity to all people, forgiving those who have done them wrong;
- of their desires for Christ and of new obedience;
- and by renewing the exercise of these graces by serious meditation and fervent prayer.

Q. 172. May one who doubts of being in Christ, or of being properly prepared, come to the Lord's Supper?

A. One who doubts of being in Christ, or of being properly prepared for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, may still have a true union with Christ, although he may not yet be assured of it. In God's accounting, such a person has this connection if he is properly moved by the perception of lacking it and unreservedly desires to be found in Christ and to depart from iniquity. In this case (because the promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians) such a person is to bewail his unbelief and work to have his doubts resolved, and in so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper, so that he may be further strengthened.

Q. 173. May anyone who professes the faith and desires to come to the Lord's Supper be kept from it?

A. Those who are found to be ignorant or scandalous, despite their profession of the faith and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power that Christ has left with his church, until they receive instruction and show that they have reformed.

Q. 174. What is required of those who receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper during the administration of it?

A. Those who receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper are required, during the administration of it, to the following:

- that they wait upon God with all holy reverence and attention;
- that they diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions;
- that they heedfully discern the Lord's body;
- and that they deeply meditate on his death and sufferings.

By this they should stir themselves up to a vigorous exercise of their graces, judging themselves and sorrowing for sin, earnestly hungering and thirsting after Christ, feeding on him by faith, receiving his fullness, trusting in his merits, rejoicing in his love, giving thanks for his grace, and renewing their covenant with God and their love for all the saints.

Q. 175. What is the duty of Christians after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper?

A. The duties of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's supper, are the following:

- They are to seriously consider how they have behaved themselves during it, and with what result.
- If they find new life and comfort, they are to bless God for it, beg for the continuance of it, keep watch against relapses, fulfill their vows, and encourage themselves to a frequent attendance of that ordinance.
- If they find no present benefit, they are to carefully review their preparation to and behavior at the sacrament. In both their preparation and behavior, if they can approve themselves to God and their own consciences, they are to wait for the fruit of it in due time, but if they see that they have failed in either, they are to be humbled and to attend to it afterwards with more care and diligence.

Q. 176. How are the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper similar?

A. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper are similar in that

- the author of both is God;
- the spiritual part of both is Christ and his benefits;
- both are seals of the same covenant;
- both are to be dispensed by ministers of the Gospel and by no one else;
- and both are to be continued in the church of Christ until his second coming.

Q. 177. How do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper differ?

A. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper differ in the following:

- Baptism is to be administered only once, with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and grafting into Christ, and is administered even to infants;

- The Lord's Supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul, and to confirm our continuance and growth in him, and is to be administered only to people who are of the years and ability to examine themselves.

Section III.C.3. Prayer

Q. 178. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God, in the name of Christ, by the help of his Spirit, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

Q. 179. Are we to pray only to God?

A. Because only God is able to search the hearts, to hear the requests, to pardon the sins, and to fulfill the desires of all people, and because only he is to be believed in and worshipped with religious worship, all people are to make prayer, which is a special part of worship, to him alone and to no other.

Q. 180. What does it mean to pray in the name of Christ?

A. To pray in the name of Christ, in obedience to his command and in confidence in his promises, is to ask mercy for his sake, not by merely mentioning his name, but by drawing our encouragement to pray, along with boldness, strength, and the hope of our prayers being accepted, from Christ and his mediation.

Q. 181. Why are we to pray in the name of Christ?

A. Because of the sinfulness of man and his distance from God due to sin are so great, so that we cannot have access into his presence without a mediator, and because there is no mediator in heaven or earth appointed to or fit for that glorious work except Christ alone, we are to pray in no other name but his only.

Q. 182. How does the Spirit help us to pray?

A. Since we do not know what to pray for as we ought, the Spirit helps our infirmities by enabling us to understand for whom, for what, and how prayer is to be made, and by working and enlivening in our hearts (although not in all persons, nor at all times, in the same degree) all those appreciations, desires, and graces which are needed for the right performance of this duty.

Q. 183. For whom are we to pray?

A. We are to pray

- for the whole church of Christ on earth;
- for government officials and church leaders;
- for ourselves, our brethren, and yes, for our enemies;
- and for all sorts of people living or who shall live afterward, but not for the dead, nor for those who are known to have sinned the sin to death.

Q. 184. What things are we to pray for?

A. We are to pray for all things tending to the glory of God, the welfare of the church, and our own good or that of others, but not for anything that is unlawful.

Q. 185. How are we to pray?

A. We are to pray

- with an awed appreciation of the majesty of God and deep sense of our own unworthiness, needs, and sins;
- with penitent, thankful, and enlarged hearts;
- with understanding, faith, sincerity, fervency, love, and perseverance;
- and waiting on him, with humble submission to his will.

Q. 186. What rule has God given for our direction in the duty of prayer?

A. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in the duty of prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which our Savior Christ taught his disciples, commonly called the *Lord's Prayer*.

Q. 187. How is the Lord's Prayer to be used?

A. The Lord's Prayer is not only for direction as a pattern, according to which we are to make other prayers; it may also be used as a prayer, if it is done with understanding, faith, reverence, and the other graces necessary to the right performance of the duty of prayer.

Q. 188. How many parts does the Lord's Prayer consist of?

A. The Lord's Prayer consists of three parts: a preface, requests, and a conclusion.

Q. 189. What does the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. The preface of the Lord's Prayer (contained in these words, "*Our Father who is in heaven*") teaches us to draw near to God when we pray, with confidence in his fatherly goodness and our legitimate claim on that, and to pray with reverence, a childlike

disposition, desires for heaven, and due appreciation for his sovereign power, majesty, and gracious condescension. Also (in using the plural *our*), it teaches us to pray with and for others.

Q. 190. What do we pray for in the first request?

A. In the first request (which is, “*May your name be hallowed*”), acknowledging the utter inability and lack of motivation of ourselves and all people to honor God properly, we pray the following:

- that God would enable and incline us and others by his grace to know, to acknowledge, and to highly esteem him, his titles, his attributes, his ordinances, his Word, his works, and whatever he is pleased to make himself known by;
- that we would glorify him in thought, word, and deed;
- that he would prevent and remove atheism, ignorance, idolatry, profaneness, and whatever is dishonorable to him;
- and that, by his providence ruling over all things, he would direct and use all things to his own glory.

Q. 191. What do we pray for in the second request?

A. In the second request (which is, “*May your kingdom come*”), acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray the following:

- that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed;
- that the Gospel may be propagated throughout the world, with the Jews called and the fullness of the Gentiles brought in;
- that the church may be furnished with all of its needed Gospel officers and structures, purged from corruption, and accepted and supported by the civil government;
- that the ordinances of Christ may be enacted purely and may be effectual to convert those who are still in their sins and to confirm, comfort, and build up those who are already converted;
- that Christ would rule in our hearts here and hasten the time of his second coming and our reign with him forever;
- and that he would be pleased so to exercise the kingdom of his power in all the world as may be most conducive to these purposes.

Q. 192. What do we pray for in the third request?

A. In the third request (which is, “*May your will be done in earth as it is in heaven*”), acknowledging that we and all people are by nature not only utterly unable and unwilling to know and to do the will of God, but are instead prone to rebel against his Word, and to fret and murmur against his providence and to be wholly inclined to do the will of the flesh and of the devil, we pray the following:

- that God would take away from ourselves and others by his Spirit all blindness, weakness, lack of motivation, and perverseness of heart;

- and that by his grace he would make us able and willing to know, do, and submit to his will in all things, with the same humility, cheerfulness, faithfulness, diligence, zeal, sincerity, and constancy as the angels in heaven.

Q. 193. What do we pray for in the fourth request?

A. In the fourth request (which is, “*Give us this day our daily bread*”), we pray the following for ourselves and others the following:

- that both they and we, waiting on the providence of God from day to day in the use of lawful means, may enjoy a reasonable portion of all the outward blessings of this life, by his free gift and as seems best to his fatherly wisdom;
- that we will have the these things continued and blessed to us in our holy and pleasant use of them and contentment in them;
- and that we will be kept from all things that are contrary to our temporal support and comfort.

At the same time we acknowledge

- that in Adam and by our own sin we have forfeited our right to all the outward blessings of this life, and that we deserve to be wholly deprived of them by God and to have them cursed to us in our use of them;
- that these blessings by themselves are not able to sustain us, nor are we able to merit them or procure them by our own effort;
- and that we are prone to desire, get, and use them unlawfully.

Q. 194. What do we pray for in the fifth request?

A. In the fifth request (which is, “*Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*”), we pray the following for ourselves and others the following:

- that God, through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, which is obtained and applied by faith, would acquit us by his free grace both from the guilt and punishment of sin and that he would accept us in his Beloved;
- that he would continue his favor and grace to us;
- and that he would pardon our daily failings and fill us with peace and joy, giving us daily more and more assurance of forgiveness.

All of this we are more emboldened to ask, and encouraged to expect, when we have the testimony in ourselves that we forgive others from our hearts for their offenses. At the same time we acknowledge

- that we and all others are guilty both of original and actual sin, and by that have become debtors to the justice of God,
- and that neither we nor any other creature can make the smallest satisfactory payment for that debt.

Q. 195. What do we pray for in the sixth request?

A. In the sixth request (which is, “*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*”), we pray the following:

- that God would rule over the world and everything in it, would subdue the flesh, and

restrain Satan, order all things, bestow and bless all means of grace, and enliven us to watchfulness in the use of them, so that we and all his people may by his providence be kept from being tempted to sin;

- or, if tempted, that by his Spirit we may be powerfully supported and enabled to stand in the hour of temptation;
- or, when fallen, that we will be raised again and recovered out of it and have a sanctified use of it, so that our sanctification and salvation may be perfected, Satan trodden under our feet, and we may be fully freed from sin, temptation, and all evil, forever.

At the same time we acknowledge

- that for various holy and just purposes, the most wise, righteous, and gracious God may order things so that we are assaulted, foiled, and for a time led captive by temptations;
- that Satan, the world, and the flesh are ready to draw us aside powerfully and ensnare us;
- that because of our corruption, weakness, and lack of watchfulness we, even after the pardon of our sins, are not only subject to be tempted and likely to expose ourselves to temptations, but also are unable and unwilling to resist them by ourselves, to escape out of them, or to build on them;
- that we are worthy to be left under the power of them;

Q. 196. What does the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer (which is, "*For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*") teaches us

- to reinforce our petitions with arguments which are taken, not from any worthiness in ourselves or in any other creature, but from God;
- and to join praises with our prayers, ascribing to God alone eternal sovereignty, omnipotence, and glorious excellency.

In light of this, because he is able and willing to help us, we are emboldened by faith to plead with him that he would, and to quietly rely on him that he will fulfill our requests. And to testify that this is our desire and assurance, we say *Amen*.

Translator's notes.

This translation is aimed to be at the level of a 10th grade native English speaker. Thus, even though in some cases a word exists in modern English, if there is a more familiar word or phrase this has been used. The translation uses American variants and spelling.

The liberal use of commas and semicolons in the original has changed to modern usage. In long lists, a semicolon has been retained acting as a comma, which is acceptable modern usage, and bullet points have been added for clarity.

Scripture quotations for the Ten Commandments are from the English Standard Version. The Lord's prayer, however, follows the Westminster usage.

Specific translation issues:

Question 3, 33, 34, 35, 116, 164, 165, 168. The word Testament means Covenant, but is often taken to mean a section of the Bible. Here the original meaning is used as "Covenant".

Question 10. The word "properties" has been changed to "what is proper". In modern English, a "property" is taken to mean either something that is owned as a possession, or an intrinsic characteristic. The context of Question 11 makes it clear that this word is being used in the older sense of "that which is proper or appropriate; in propriety." The persons of the Godhead do not have different "characteristics" (as though one could lack something which the other had), or different things that they own. Rather, they act differently according to what is appropriate, or proper to their roles.

Questions 13, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 92, 114, 122. "Man" is used often in the Catechism to refer to all humanity, but this word in modern English refers to a male specifically. In keeping with the notion of male headship or representation of humanity, which underlies the Catechism, this word has been translated as "mankind" in most places; sometimes it is translated as "people" when it is clear from the context that its use is completely generic. Also, the generic "he"/"his" is retained here in many places to avoid the awkwardness of excessive use of "one"/"one's" or "he/she".

Questions 32, 83, 172, 189. The old term "have an interest in" does not mean to be fascinated by, but rather, to have a legal claim or right to a share of the ownership of something. (This is the root of the term "interest" in banking, namely a share, or a participation in.) It could also be translated into the modern "have a relationship with", but the transitory nature of modern relationships could undermine our thinking about this; therefore it is translated as either a "legal union", or a "legitimate claim."

Questions 41, 42. The Hebrew and Latin names "Jesus" and "Christ" are translated, as these meanings are crucial for understanding the answers to these questions.

Questions 55, 70. The original speaks of "their persons", which is an archaic construction. This has been changed to "their selves."

Question 60. This answer as translated reads that those who have not heard of Christ “cannot be saved by being diligent...” The answer in the original could be taken to mean that they cannot be saved at all under any circumstances: “they cannot be saved.” But the question indicates that the topic is whether they may be saved by their own efforts. The Westminster Confession of Faith, X.3, says “*Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated, and saved by Christ, through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth: so also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.*” Assuming consistency of the Catechism and the Confession, it seems clear that the teaching is that those who have not heard of Christ, like an elect infant, might be saved through an extraordinary work of the Spirit, but never through the result of their own efforts or through a false religion.

Questions 60, 93, 147. A “frame” in the original sense meant a basic blueprint or structure, and has been translated here as “to orient,” or “orientation.”

Question 80. The phrase “infallibly assured” has been translated as “rightly confident.” The term “infallible” in modern English carries the connotation of never erring, of perfection in knowledge. Yet Question 81 makes clear that Christians can err in this area of knowledge, and we also know that no person has “infallible” knowledge in this modern sense. The older sense of “infallible” is merely “correct,” i.e., not in error at all. Also, “assured” in modern English usually refers to a statement by someone else, not a person’s inner sense of sureness, and therefore this has been translated as “confident”.

Question 81. The term “desertions” has been translated as “feeling deserted by God.” “Desertions” in the old sense referred to what we sometimes now called “periods of spiritual dryness,” of feeling distant from God, not God actually deserting a believer.

Question 89. “Favorable” has been translated as “favoring;” “favorable” in modern English carries the connotation of an optimistic outlook for the future.

Question 99.4. “Included” has been translated as “implied,” because the modern sense of this word can mean to be explicitly added.

Questions 99.7, 99.8, 108, 127, 128. The notion of a person’s “place” in the original did not refer to a person’s physical location, as it primarily does in modern English, but rather referred to their role in society, i.e., what is appropriate to a person based on their relation to others, as in the sometimes-used phrase in modern English, “it is not my place to speak up here.” “Place” has therefore been translated as “role in life” or just “role.”

Question 101. “Jehovah” is the English transliteration of the Hebrew YHWH, which means “I am”.

Question 112. “Conversation” in the old sense meant a way of life, a lifestyle.

Questions 118-130. The terms “superior” and inferior are used to refer to a relationships of subordinates and leaders in a society, and do not refer to the intrinsic value of people, as might be inferred from these terms by a modern reader.

Question 139. “Light” behavior is seductive behavior, in old usage. A “stew” is a brothel (from the bad reputation of bath houses.)

Question 151.3. “Against means” is obscure but the Bible text cited refers to the means God uses to call people to repentance.

Question 167. “Our vow” may be taken by modern readers to mean “my personal vow”, missing the collective nature of the joint vow which the whole church makes at a baptism.

Question 167, 195: To “improve” in the old sense meant to build on, to make use of for greater things.

Question 174. “Affectionately” did not mean lovingly, as it does now, but with deep affection, being deeply moved.

Question 189. A parenthetical remark on the use of the plural has been added.

Question 193. “Comfortable” meant “pleasant” not easy-to-wear.