



ECO

A Covenant Order
of Evangelical
Presbyterians

ECO Confessional Standards

2020

ECO Confessional Standards

Revision: August 10, 2020

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Table of Contents

<u>THE NICENE CREED INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>THE NICENE CREED</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>THE APOSTLES' CREED INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>THE APOSTLES' CREED</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>39</u>
<u>THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH</u>	<u>43</u>
<u>THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM</u>	<u>71</u>
<u>THE WESTMINSTER LARGER CATECHISM</u>	<u>83</u>
<u>THE THEOLOGICAL DECLARATION OF BARMEN INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>116</u>
<u>THE THEOLOGICAL DECLARATION OF BARMEN</u>	<u>119</u>

The Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed Introduction

The fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith came to form in the period running from the close of the New Testament writings to the Council of Chalcedon in 451—a time known as the Patristic Period. The first half of this period was occupied with what it meant to be the church, staying faithful to its mission and doctrine, the Apostolic deposit, in the midst of an often-hostile culture. With the conversion of the Emperor Constantine and the end of large-scale persecution, the church began to turn its attention to theological issues that had been percolating through the years primarily surrounding Christology and the Trinity.

Through deliberation and debate, councils and creeds, heretics and heroes, the church came to define what it believed to be essential for all Christians to believe. It was during the Patristic period that the church clearly and authoritatively expressed the triune nature of God, the two natures of Jesus Christ, the doctrine of salvation by grace, and the nature of the church, not only as essential doctrines, but also as foundational standards of faith and practice.

Authorship

It is a public document scripted collectively in councils of wise leaders.

Date

The text of the Nicene Creed is the product of the Council of Nicaea in 325 along with the revisions of the Council of Constantinople in 381. Several centuries later the Western Church made a small but momentous change, adding the three final words to the phrase "...the Holy Spirit...who proceeds from the Father *and the Son*."

Genre

This brief declaration made at Nicaea and expanded in Constantinople is a creed. The English word "creed" comes from the Latin *credo* meaning "I believe," although the original Greek would give us "We believe." A creed is seen as particularly unique, succinct, and authoritative statement of the foundational elements of Christian belief. It is also known as an ecumenical creed as it expresses core doctrines constitutive to Christian faith and is the product of a recognized Ecumenical Council. It states what must be held by all, at all times, in every place in order to be considered Christian.

Historical Context

Sometimes called the “Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed,” this expression of the Christian faith is the product of a century of heated debate around the person and nature of Christ and consequently, the nature of God. At the end of three hundred years of oppression and widespread persecution, a great turn came when the Roman Emperor Constantine declared the Christian faith legal for the first time by the Edict of Milan in 313 AD. As Roman Emperors had done in the past with conquered peoples, he convened a council of representatives from every major city in the empire to settle internecine disputes. In 325 AD, the council was convened in Nicaea, just outside of Constantinople. The Emperor himself presided, deferring to bishops and theologians from across the known world to deliberate the questions at hand.

At issue was the teaching of Arius, a presbyter from Alexandria. In an effort to defend Christianity as a monotheistic religion, Arius presented the Trinity as a chain of divine beings with the Father alone at the very top, and the Son and Spirit following along behind—lesser divinities, but still divine. His bishop, Alexander, a deacon named Athanasius, and many others immediately perceived the diminished place of the Son and Spirit. In an effort to be defensibly rational, Arius had abandoned the confession that Jesus is the eternal God, no less than the Father. The council declared there was no time or ontological category in which the Father’s existence preceded the Son’s, they are of one substance.

The close of the Council of Nicaea opened a generation of heated debate. By the time a second council was gathered in Constantinople in 381, the church was ready not only to defend the equality of divine Being in the Son, but in the Spirit as well. The creed we now share is the product of these two councils, and represents the core Christian belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, revealed and beyond human rationality.

Summary and Highlights

The second paragraph powerfully and unequivocally declares that Jesus the Son is of the same being and divine substance as the Father. Jesus is not “god-like” but is, with the Father (and the Spirit) one God with one divine essence (*homoousios*).

The third paragraph, added at Constantinople in 381, makes clear that the Holy Spirit is also to be understood as bearing the same essence and nature and is worthy of praise as God. The Nicene Creed sets forth in radiant clarity the church’s belief that God is one being of three persons, each equal in nature and essence, each to be equally worshiped and obeyed. This is the Christian enunciation of the Holy Trinity.

One very influential feature of the Nicene Creed is the list of adjectives describing the Church: one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. These have come to be known as the

Nicene Marks of the Church. These marks are not aspirations, but declarations that describe the real and present nature of the Church. The claim that the Church is one may seem self-evidently untrue, given the many ways that the Church is divided; however, in confessing that the Church is one, we are claiming that despite appearances we who are members of the Church are in fact all united with one another because we share "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (Eph 4:5-6a). The claim of catholicity complements the claim that the Church is one, since catholicity is seen by the Church's embrace of the "rich variety" necessary for God's wisdom to be expressed (Eph 3:10). The Roman Catholic Church does not have an exclusive claim to the word "catholic" any more than ECO has an exclusive claim to the word "evangelical." In fact, it could be argued that Protestantism, with its constant multiplication of ways to express the Church, has a much better claim to the word. The marks of holiness and apostolicity also express a pair of complementary truths, since holiness requires clear boundaries to maintain purity whereas apostolicity requires a strong evangelistic focus on spreading the gospel to those outside those boundaries.

Significance

This creed represents the core doctrine of God for all Christians. God is revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God in three Persons, equally divine and of the same substance. They are equally revered, worshipped and adored. The century of heated debate created a united statement on the nature of God and the meaning of the incarnation, uniting the church in faith and understanding. The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed provided the church with a clear and succinct understanding of the person of Christ and the nature of God, uniting the universal church in its most essential doctrines.

In this, the Nicene Creed accomplished far more than Constantine hoped or imagined. Moving well beyond uniting the empire it has united the church around core elements of faith as Christianity has spread across the globe and through the centuries.

Potential Uses

The Nicene Creed is fundamental and beautiful enough to be used regularly in liturgy for worship. It is significant as the primary basis for discerning true Christian faith. It is a simple and clear expression of the core Christian doctrine of the Trinity and belongs to the church to be used for instruction and correction. More specifically the Nicene Creed is a priceless resource for new members classes, confirmation classes, and introductions to Christian theology.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father,
the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through
him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy
Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father
and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has
spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection
of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

The Apostles' Creed Introduction

An appealing story is told of the twelve apostles, who at Pentecost desired to present a creed that could express the essentials of the Christian faith. Each apostle, inspired by the Holy Spirit, declared a specific element: Peter declared, "I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth." Andrew continued saying, "And in Jesus Christ, his only son our Lord." This continued until each of the twelve, under the anointing of the Spirit, had spontaneously added together became the *Apostles' Creed*. More a product of pious imagination than historical reality it nevertheless conveys a vitally important fact: the Christian faith is founded upon historical truths faithfully described and rightly interpreted by eyewitnesses. Thus, from the earliest days the church has held to the importance of maintaining continuity with the witness and teaching of the apostles.

The Apostles' Creed is one of the earliest full expressions of the Christian faith, and most likely emerged as a baptismal liturgy. In one of the earliest descriptions of a Christian baptism written around 150 AD, Justin Martyr wrote, "they are brought by us where there is water, and are born again in the same manner of rebirth by which we ourselves were born again, for they then receive washing in water in the name of God the Father and Master of all, and of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit...And we have learned from the Apostles this reason for this rite" (*First Apology*). The initiate would be asked: "Do you believe in the Father? Do you believe in the Son? Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?" and would respond with answers to each. These answers were eventually codified into the Old Roman Creed by the end of the second century. The Old Roman Creed saw elaboration over the years, eventually becoming the Apostles' Creed.

This creed represents the most fundamental expression of the Christian faith and teaching. There is no doubt that The *Apostles' Creed* is a proper summary of the apostolic deposit of faith and it remains one of the most basic and complete expressions of Christianity, recognized in almost every church that calls itself Christian.

Authorship

Authorship of the Apostles' Creed is unknown having been formed by the church over many centuries.

Dates

The Apostles' Creed likely had its beginning as an early baptismal confession. This grew into the Old Roman Creed in the second century and slowly took the form we know

today through the next several centuries. It has been in the distinct form in which it sits since the seventh century.

Genre

The English word “creed” comes from the Latin *credo* meaning “I believe.” Both the Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds are seen as particularly unique and authoritative statements of the chief elements of Christian belief. These two creeds express the most essential and necessary elements of what the church believes.

Historical Contexts

While both The Nicene and The Apostles’ Creeds are succinct documents they are the result of protracted struggles and profound discernment, and thus provide the church with ingenious expressions of deep theological mysteries. Indeed, these two have proven so essential and foundational to the faith of the church that only these two, of all the creeds and confession produced by the church, have been given the title, “The Creed.”

Tradition ascribing the words and phrases of this creed to each of the twelve apostles directly has been discounted, but the creed as it stands is a clear articulation of the Christian faith sourced in the earliest liturgies and confessional experiences of the Christian church. No distinct date can be offered for its composition. This creed is not the product of an ecumenical council or specific event. It emerged out of the faith and practice of the early church, and was codified into doctrine through liturgical use. Its authority grew steadily from inception into the early medieval period when it was enshrined as a guide of faith. Still there is no doubt that The Apostles’ Creed is a proper summary of the apostolic deposit of faith and it remains one of the most basic and complete expressions of Christianity, recognized in almost every church that calls itself Christian.

Trinitarian in outline, the creed asserts the divinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in whom the Christian places his or her trust and belief. Some traditions break the creed down into twelve articles of faith, but the Trinitarian form should be upheld in outline however the remainder of the creed is taught. Our ultimate faith and trust is “in” God—so we “believe in” the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The remaining material describes the life and activity of God. Nonetheless, failure to believe in the life and activity of God in any of the subsidiary claims is failure to fully profess the Christian faith. This creed asserts, for example, that failure to believe in the virgin birth is falling short of full trust and faith placed in “Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord.”

The “catholic church” is not the name of a particular denomination or branch of Christianity, but denotes the church universal gathered in all places and all times by the power of the Holy Spirit. The descent of Jesus Christ “into hell” refers to the death of

Christ, and not necessarily to traditions concerning the mission of Jesus to the damned (the so-called “harrowing of hell” traditions).

Summary and Highlights

Trinitarian in outline, the creed asserts the divinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in whom the Christian places trust and belief. Some traditions break the creed down into twelve articles of faith, but it is more helpful to attend to the Trinitarian form. Belief is expressed in God the Father, in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit. Our ultimate faith and trust is “in” God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The remaining material describes the life and activity of God in the particularity between the three Persons. The Father is associated with creation, the Son with incarnation and salvation, and the Holy Spirit with the formation of the church, forgiveness and redemption. These particularities between the Persons are meant only to show distinction in relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and not to distinguish each as individual actors. All that God does, God does as one God—the works of God are undivided.

With faith placed squarely and solely in God alone, it is nevertheless the intrinsic claim of the Apostles’ Creed that failure to believe in the life and activity of God in each of the Trinitarian categories is failure to fully profess the Christian faith. Failure to profess confidence in the activities of God is failure to place one’s faith in God. This creed asserts, for example, that to disbelieve in the virgin birth or the bodily resurrection of Jesus is falling short of full trust and faith placed in “Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord.” To disregard a doctrine of creation is to disbelieve in God the Father. Disclaiming the resurrection of the body for believers or the forgiveness of sins is to insult the Holy Spirit, and so on.

The “catholic church” is not the name of a particular denomination or branch of Christianity, but denotes the church universal gathered in all places and all times by the power of the Holy Spirit. The descent of Jesus Christ “into hell” refers to the death of Christ, and not necessarily to traditions concerning the mission of Jesus to the damned (the so-called “harrowing of hell” traditions).

Significance

The Apostles’ Creed is undoubtedly the most used and most familiar and most authoritative creed of Christianity. This short symbol of faith has defined what it means to be a Christian for centuries and across languages and cultures. This is the single most fundamental expression of the Christian faith.

Potential Uses

Regularly used in the profession of faith during worship, the Apostles' Creed still serves its original intent to educate new believers in the primary profession of faith necessary to become a Christian. Many traditions require this creed be read publicly when the sacrament of baptism is performed. It is a simple and clear text used to define and delimit Christian doctrine. Variance in profession or teaching from a single article of the Apostles' Creed is a decision to walk away from the apostolic deposit of faith and begin to construct something new and different from Christianity.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit;
the holy catholic church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting.

The Heidelberg Catechism

The Heidelberg Catechism Introduction

Authorship

Although tradition states that noted Reformed theologians Ursinus and Olevianus co-authored the *Heidelberg Catechism*, in reality a team of academic theologians under the supervision of Frederick III, Elector Palatine (1515–1576) authored the document. It was originally written in German and translated into Latin.

Date

The Heidelberg Catechism was approved by a synod in its eponymous city in 1563. It went through three revisions in the same year. It was later approved at the Synod of Dort in 1619, a major gathering of representatives of Reformed churches from the Netherlands, the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, as well as from other European churches.

Genre

A catechism is characterized by its numbered question and answer format. The word "catechism" itself comes from a Greek word meaning "oral instruction." Each question is designed to build on top of previous ones to create a theological system. Many catechisms are written in tandem with confessions, using the structure and content of a confession to guide the format of the questions. Catechisms are generally written for those who are new to the faith and younger believers. The *Heidelberg Catechism* is divided into 52 sections for use over the course of one year of Sundays.

Historical Context

In the Holy Roman Empire of the 1500's, Heidelberg, the home of Heidelberg University, was the most influential city in what is now modern Germany. In the 1520's some of the university's reform-minded faculty began calling for church reform. Frederick II, Elector Palatine, embraced and endorsed this new movement, against the desires of Emperor Charles V, who in 1548 enacted the Augsburg Interim, which tried to force all territories to adhere to the practices of the Holy Roman Church. The Protestant churches so strongly resisted this interdict that in 1555 the Peace of Augsburg was decreed, allowing each local prince to decide the religious direction of his own region.

In 1556, Otto Henry, Elector Palatine, realized that the Protestant pastors were inadequately trained and depended more on superstitions and traditions rather than the truths of Scripture, resulting in congregations who were spiritually deficient. He undertook means to remedy this situation. At his death in 1559, his nephew, Frederick III, the new Elector, continued his work.

In 1563, Frederick III and a team of 15 theologians, church superintendents, and lay leaders published the Heidelberg Catechism as a teaching tool and a form of confessional unity among the churches. Frederick III prefaced this publication, stating his particular concern for the younger generation's spiritual development:

Therefore, we also have ascertained, that, by no means the least defect of our system, is found in the fact that our blooming youth is disposed to be careless in respect to Christian doctrine... The consequence has ensued that they have, in too many instances, grown up without the fear of God and the knowledge of his Word.

Summary and Highlights

The *Heidelberg Catechism* was designed to be a document for laying a biblical foundation in the life of God's people through individual study, preaching the foundations of the faith, and to be a tool for devotional reading as well. From the very first question it points us to Jesus Christ as our only hope in life and in death. Its teachings help to keep our hearts and minds focused on the importance of being faithful to many essential tenets of God's Word.

It is comprised of 129 questions, arranged in 52 groups – one for each Sunday of the year; discussing our hope in Christ alone (through grace alone, by faith alone), the Apostles' Creed, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the nature of spiritual conversion, and giving us a basic understanding of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* is especially helpful to us in making sure that the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ are fully understood through its exposition of the Apostles' Creed. The concise explanations of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper commend themselves as a basic reference to what the sacraments are all about.

The section on the Ten Commandments shows us the usefulness of the law and how it helps us to live our lives in obedience to God, while not being a slave to the letter of the law. And the section on the Lord's Prayer reminds us of the importance of prayer in our daily lives, as well as expanding on the model Christ gave us for effective personal and corporate prayer.

Significance

The *Heidelberg Catechism* is one of the most widely used theological statements in the Reformed Tradition, of which Presbyterianism is but one part.

Potential Uses

As with any catechism, the *Heidelberg* is useful exactly as it was intended, to educate people in the faith in a simple question and answer format. As with other systematic theologies, it is intended to be used in order, as it generally builds upon previous questions to create a coherent system of belief.

The Heidelberg Catechism

Lord's Day 1

Q. 1. What is your only comfort, in life and in death?

A. That I belong—body and soul, in life and in death—not to myself but to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. At the cost of his own blood he has fully paid for all my sins and has completely freed me from the dominion of the devil. He protects me so well that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head. Indeed, everything must fit his purpose for my salvation. Therefore, by his Holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

Q. 2. How many things must you know that you may live and die in the blessedness of this comfort?

A. Three. First, the greatness of my sin and wretchedness. Second, how I am freed from all my sins and their wretched consequences. Third, what gratitude I owe to God for such redemption.

Part I: Of Human Misery

Lord's Day 2

Q. 3. Where do you learn of your sin and its wretched consequences?

A. From the law of God.

Q. 4. What does the law of God require of us?

A. Jesus Christ teaches this in a summary in Matthew 22:37–40: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.” (Luke 10:27)

Q. 5. Can you keep all this perfectly?

A. No, for by nature I am prone to hate God and my neighbor.

Lord's Day 3

Q. 6. Did God create humanity evil and perverse like this?

A. No. God created humanity good and in his image, that is, in true righteousness and holiness, so that they might rightly know God their creator, love him with their whole heart, and live with him in eternal blessedness, praising and glorifying him.

Q. 7. Where, then, does this corruption of human nature come from?

A. From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in the garden of Eden. From this our human life is so poisoned that we are all conceived and born in the state of sin.

Q. 8. But are we so corrupt that we are totally unable to do good and prone to do evil?

A. Yes, unless we are born again through the Spirit of God.

Lord's Day 4

Q. 9. Is God unjust when he requires people to do things in his law that they are unable to do?

A. No, for God so created humanity that they could do it. But humanity, by the instigation of the devil, by deliberate disobedience, has cheated all humanity out of these gifts.

Q. 10. Will God let humanity get by with such disobedience and rebellion?

A. Certainly not, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, both against our inborn sinfulness and our actual sins. He will punish them according to his righteous judgment in time and in eternity, as he has declared: "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them." (Galatians 3:10)

Q. 11. But is not God also merciful?

A. God is indeed merciful and gracious, but he is also righteous. It is his righteousness which requires that sin committed against the supreme majesty of God be punished with extreme, that is, with eternal punishment of body and soul.

Part II: Deliverance

Lord's Day 5

Q. 12. Because we have deserved temporal and eternal punishment by the righteous judgment of God, how may we escape this punishment, come again to grace, and be reconciled to God?

A. God wills that his righteousness be satisfied; therefore, payment in full must be made to his righteousness, either by ourselves or by another.

Q. 13. Can we make this payment ourselves?

A. By no means. On the contrary, we increase our debt each day.

Q. 14. Can any creature make the payment for us?

A. No one. First of all, God does not want to punish any other creature for humanity's debt. Moreover, no creature can bear the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin and redeem others from it.

Q. 15. Then what kind of mediator and redeemer must we seek?

A. One who is a true and righteous human and yet more powerful than all creatures, that is, one who is at the same time true God.

Lord's Day 6

- Q. 16. Why must he be a true and righteous human?**
A. Because God's righteousness requires that a person who has sinned should make reparation for sin, but the sinner cannot pay for others.
- Q. 17. Why must he at the same time be true God?**
A. So that by the power of his divinity he might bear as a human the burden of God's wrath, and recover for us and restore to us righteousness and life.
- Q. 18. Who is this mediator who is at the same time true God and a true and perfectly righteous human?**
A. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is freely given to us for complete redemption and righteousness.
- Q. 19. From where do you know this?**
A. From the holy gospel, which God himself revealed in the beginning in the garden of Eden, afterward proclaimed through the holy patriarchs and prophets and foreshadowed through the sacrifices and other rites of the Old Covenant, and finally fulfilled through his own well-beloved Son.

Lord's Day 7

- Q. 20. Will all people be saved through Christ as they became lost through Adam?**
A. No. Only those who, by true faith, are incorporated into him and accept all his benefits.
- Q. 21. What is true faith?**
A. Faith is a certain knowledge by which I accept as true all that God has revealed to us in his word. Faith is also a wholehearted trust which the Holy Spirit creates in me through the gospel. I trust that God has given the forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation, to me and to others. This comes out of grace alone solely for the sake of Christ's saving work.
- Q. 22. What, then, must a Christian believe?**
A. All that is promised us in the gospel, a summary of which is taught us in the articles of the Apostles' Creed, our universally acknowledged confession of faith.
- Q. 23. What are these articles?**
A. I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.

Lord's Day 8

Q. 24. How are these articles divided?

A. Into three parts: The first concerns God the Father and our creation; the second, God the Son and our redemption; and the third, God the Holy Spirit and our sanctification.

Q. 25. Since there is only one divine being, why do you speak of three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

A. Because that is how God has revealed himself in his word. These three distinct persons are the one, true, eternal God.

God the Father

Lord's Day 9

Q. 26. What do you believe when you say: "I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth"?

A. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ created heaven and earth with all that is in them out of nothing. He also upholds and governs his creation by his eternal counsel and providence. He is my God and my Father for the sake of Christ his Son. I trust in him so completely that I have no doubt that he will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul. Moreover, whatever evil he sends upon me in this troubled life he will turn to my good. He is able to do this, because he is almighty God. He is determined to do this, because he is a faithful Father.

Lord's Day 10

Q. 27. What is the providence of God?

A. God's providence is the almighty and ever-present power of God by which he upholds heaven and earth together with all creatures by his own hand. He rules in such a way that leaves and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and unfruitful years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, and everything else, come to us not by chance but by his fatherly hand.

Q. 28. What good comes from acknowledging God's creation and providence?

A. We learn that we are to be patient in adversity, grateful in the midst of blessing, and to trust our faithful God and Father for the future. We are assured that no creature shall separate us from his love, since all creatures are so completely in his hand that without his will they cannot even move.

God the Son

Lord's Day 11

Q. 29. Why is the Son of God called "Jesus," which means "savior"?

A. Because he saves us from our sins, and because salvation is to be sought or found in no other.

Q. 30. Do those who seek their salvation and well-being from saints, by their own efforts, or by other means really believe in the only Savior Jesus?

A. No. Rather, by such actions they deny Jesus, the only savior and redeemer, even though they boast of belonging to him. It therefore follows that either Jesus is not a perfect savior, or those who receive this savior with true faith must possess in him all that is necessary for their salvation.

Lord's Day 12

Q. 31. Why is he called "Christ," that is, the "anointed one"?

A. Because Jesus is ordained by God the Father and anointed with the Holy Spirit to be our chief prophet and teacher. He fully reveals to us the secret purpose and will of God concerning our redemption. He is our only high priest, having redeemed us by the one sacrifice of his body. He continually intercedes for us with the Father. He is our eternal king, governing us by his word and Spirit, and defending and sustaining us in the redemption he has won for us.

Q. 32. But why are you called a Christian?

A. Because through faith I share in Christ and thus in his anointing, so that I may confess his name, offer myself a living sacrifice of gratitude to him, and fight against sin and the devil with a free and good conscience throughout this life and hereafter rule with him in eternity over all creatures.

Lord's Day 13

Q. 33. Why is he called "God's only-begotten Son," since we also are God's children?

A. Because Christ alone is God's own eternal Son, whereas we are accepted for his sake as children of God by grace.

Q. 34. Why do you call him "our Lord"?

A. Because, not with gold or silver but at the cost of his blood, he has redeemed us—body and soul—from sin and all the dominion of the devil, and has bought us for his very own.

Lord's Day 14

Q. 35. What is the meaning of: "Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary"?

A. That the eternal Son of God, who is and remains true and eternal God, took upon himself our true humanity from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary through the action of the Holy Spirit, so that he is also the true seed of David, like his fellow humans in all things, except for sin.

Q. 36. What benefit do you receive from the holy conception and birth of Christ?

A. That he is our mediator, and that, in God's sight, he covers over with his innocence and perfect holiness the sinfulness in which I have been conceived.

Lord's Day 15

Q. 37. What do you understand by the word "suffered"?

A. That throughout his life on earth, but especially at the end of it, he bore in body and soul the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race. So, by his suffering as the only expiatory sacrifice, he redeems our body and soul from everlasting damnation. He obtained for us God's grace, righteousness, and eternal life.

Q. 38. Why did he suffer "under Pontius Pilate" as his judge?

A. So that Jesus would be condemned by an earthly judge even though he was innocent. He thereby set us free from the judgment of God which, in all its severity, ought to fall upon us.

Q. 39. What is unique about Jesus' death by crucifixion?

A. By this I am assured that he took upon himself the curse which lay upon me, because the death of the cross was cursed by God.

Lord's Day 16

Q. 40. Why did Christ have to suffer "death"?

A. Because the righteousness and truth of God are such that nothing else could make reparation for our sins except the death of the Son of God.

Q. 41. Why was he "buried"?

A. To confirm the fact that he was really dead.

Q. 42. Since Christ died for us why must we also die?

A. Our death is not a reparation for our sins, but only a dying to sin and an entering into eternal life.

Q. 43. What further benefit do we receive from the sacrifice and death of Christ on the cross?

A. That by his power our old self is crucified, put to death, and buried with him, so that the evil passions of our physical bodies may reign in us no more, but that we may offer ourselves to him as a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

Q. 44. Why is there added: "He descended into hell"?

A. In my severest tribulations I may be assured that Christ my Lord has redeemed me from hellish anxieties and torment by the unspeakable anguish, pains, and terrors which he suffered in his soul both on the cross and before.

Lord's Day 17

Q. 45. What benefit do we receive from "the resurrection" of Christ?

A. First, by his resurrection he has overcome death that he might make us share in the righteousness which he has obtained for us through his death. Second, we too are now raised by his power to a new life. Third, the resurrection of Christ is a sure pledge to us of our blessed resurrection.

Lord's Day 18

- Q. 46. How do you understand the words: "He ascended into heaven"?**
A. Christ was taken up from the earth into heaven before the eyes of his disciples and remains there for us until he comes again to judge the living and the dead.
- Q. 47. Is Christ not with us unto the end of the world, as he has promised us?**
A. Christ is true man and true God. As a human he is no longer on earth, but in his divinity, majesty, grace, and Spirit, he is never absent from us.
- Q. 48. If the humanity is not wherever the divinity is, are the two natures in Christ separated from each other?**
A. Not at all. Divinity is unable to be contained and everywhere present. Therefore, Jesus' divinity goes beyond the boundaries of the humanity which it took on. But his divinity is always in that humanity as well, and remains personally united to it.
- Q. 49. What benefit do we receive from Christ's ascension into heaven?**
A. First, he is our advocate in the presence of his Father in heaven. Second, we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that he, as the head, will also take us, his members, up to himself. Third, he sends us his Spirit as a counter-pledge by whose power we seek what is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God, and not things that are on earth.

Lord's Day 19

- Q. 50. Why is there added: "And sits at the right hand of God"?**
A. Because Christ ascended into heaven so that he might reveal himself there as the head of his church, through whom the Father governs all things.
- Q. 51. What benefit do we receive from this glory of Christ, our head?**
A. First, through his Holy Spirit he pours out heavenly gifts upon us, his members. Second, he defends and supports us against all our enemies by his power.
- Q. 52. What comfort does the return of Christ "to judge the living and the dead" give you?**
A. In all affliction and persecution I may await with head held high the judge from heaven who has already submitted himself to the judgment of God for me and has removed all the curse from me. He will cast all his enemies and mine into everlasting condemnation. But he shall take me, together with all his elect, to himself into heavenly joy and glory.

God the Holy Spirit

Lord's Day 20

- Q. 53. What do you believe concerning "the Holy Spirit"?**

- A. First, that, with the Father and the Son, he is equally eternal God. Second, that God's Spirit is also given to me, preparing me through a true faith to share in Christ and all his benefits, that he comforts me and will abide with me forever.

Lord's Day 21

- Q. 54. What do you believe concerning "the holy catholic church"?**
A. I believe that the Son of God gathers, protects, and preserves for himself, in the unity of the true faith, a congregation chosen for eternal life from the beginning to the end of the world, and from among the whole human race, by his Spirit and his word. Moreover, I believe that I am and forever will remain a living member of it.
- Q. 55. What do you understand by "the communion of saints"?**
A. First, all believers shall share in one fellowship as partakers of the Lord Christ and all his treasures and gifts. Second, each one ought to know that he or she is obliged to use his or her gifts freely and with joy for the benefit and welfare of other members.
- Q. 56. What do you believe concerning "the forgiveness of sins"?**
A. For the sake of Christ's reconciling work God will remember my sins no more, nor the sinfulness with which I have to struggle all my life long. But he graciously imparts to me the righteousness of Christ so that I may never be condemned.

Lord's Day 22

- Q. 57. What comfort does "the resurrection of the body" give you?**
A. After this life my soul shall be immediately taken up to Christ, its head. This flesh of mine, raised by the power of Christ, shall be reunited with my soul, and be conformed to the glorious body of Christ.
- Q. 58. What comfort does the article concerning "the life everlasting" give you?**
A. Since I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy, I shall possess, after this life, perfect blessedness, which no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of humanity conceived, and thereby praise God forever.

Lord's Day 23

- Q. 59. But how does it help you now that you believe all this?**
A. I am righteous in Christ before God, and an heir of eternal life.
- Q. 60. How are you righteous before God?**
A. Only by true faith in Jesus Christ. God grants me the benefits of the perfect expiation of Christ, imputing to me his righteousness and holiness as though I had never committed a single sin or had ever been sinful. I have fulfilled all the obedience which Christ has carried out for me, if I only accept such grace with a trusting heart. This is in spite of the fact that my conscience accuses me that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God, and have not kept any one of them, and that I am still ever prone to all that is evil.

Q. 61. Why do you say that you are righteous by faith alone?

A. Not because I please God by virtue of the worthiness of my faith, but because the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ alone are my righteousness before God, and because I can accept it and make it mine in no other way than by faith alone.

Lord's Day 24

Q. 62. But why can our good works not be our righteousness before God, or at least a part of it?

A. Because the righteousness which can stand before the judgment of God must be absolutely perfect and wholly in conformity with the divine law. But even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin.

Q. 63. Will our good works merit nothing, even when it is God's purpose to reward them in this life, and in the future life as well?

A. This reward is not given because of merit, but out of grace.

Q. 64. But does not this teaching make people careless and sinful?

A. No, for it is impossible for those who are ingrafted into Christ by true faith not to bring forth the fruit of gratitude.

The Holy Sacraments

Lord's Day 25

Q. 65. Since, then, faith alone makes us share in Christ and all his benefits, where does such faith originate?

A. The Holy Spirit creates it in our hearts by the preaching of the holy gospel, and confirms it by the use of the holy sacraments.

Q. 66. What are the sacraments?

A. They are visible, holy signs and seals instituted by God in order that by their use he may the more fully disclose and seal to us the promise of the gospel. That is, because of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross he graciously grants us the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Q. 67. Are both the word and the sacraments designed to direct our faith to the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation?

A. Yes, indeed, for the Holy Spirit teaches in the gospel and confirms by the holy sacraments that our whole salvation is rooted in the one sacrifice of Christ offered for us on the cross.

Q. 68. How many sacraments has Christ instituted in the New Testament?

A. Two: holy baptism and the holy supper.

Holy Baptism

Lord's Day 26

- Q. 69.** How does holy baptism remind and assure you that the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross is effective for you?
- A. In this way: Christ has instituted this external washing with water and by it has promised that I am as certainly washed with his blood and Spirit from the uncleanness of my soul and from all my sins, as I am washed externally with water which is used to remove the dirt from my body.
- Q. 70.** What does it mean to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?
- A. It means to have the forgiveness of sins from God, through grace. This is for the sake of Christ's blood which he shed for us in his sacrifice on the cross. It also means to be renewed by the Holy Spirit and sanctified as members of Christ, so that we may more and more die unto sin and live in a holy and blameless way.
- Q. 71.** Where has Christ promised that we are as certainly washed with his blood and Spirit as with the water of baptism?
- A. In the institution of baptism: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). "He who believes and is baptized will be saved: but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). This promise is also repeated where the Scriptures call baptism "the water of rebirth" and the washing away of sins.

Lord's Day 27

- Q. 72.** Does merely the outward washing with water itself wash away sins?
- A. No; for only the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sins.
- Q. 73.** Then why does the Holy Spirit call baptism the water of rebirth and the washing away of sins?
- A. God speaks in this way for an important reason. He teaches us by baptism that our sins are removed by the blood and Spirit of Christ, just as the dirt of the body is taken away by water. More importantly, he assures us that we are truly washed from our sins spiritually, just as our bodies are washed with water by this divine pledge and sign.
- Q. 74.** Should infants also be baptized?
- A. Yes, because they, as well as their parents, are included in the covenant and belong to the people of God. Since both redemption from sin through the blood of Christ and the gift of faith from the Holy Spirit are promised to these children no less than to their parents, infants are also by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, to be incorporated into the Christian church and distinguished from the children of unbelievers. This was done in the old covenant by circumcision. In the new covenant baptism has been instituted to take its place.

The Holy Supper of Jesus Christ

Lord's Day 28

Q. 75. How are you reminded and assured in the holy supper that you participate in the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross and in all his benefits?

A. Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread, and to drink of this cup in remembrance of him. In this way he promised that his body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and his blood was shed for me, as surely as I see with my eyes that the bread of the Lord is broken for me, and that the cup is shared with me. Also, he has promised that he himself as certainly feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life with his crucified body and shed blood as I receive from the hand of the minister and actually taste the bread and the cup of the Lord which are given to me as sure signs of the body and blood of Christ.

Q. 76. What does it mean to eat the crucified body of Christ and to drink his shed blood?

A. It is to embrace with a trusting heart the whole passion and death of Christ, and by it to receive the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. In addition, it is to be united more and more to his blessed body by the Holy Spirit dwelling both in Christ and in us. So, although he is in heaven and we are on earth, we are nevertheless flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, always living and being governed by one Spirit, as the members of our bodies are governed by one soul.

Q. 77. Where has Christ promised that he will feed and nourish believers with his body and blood just as surely as they eat of this broken bread and drink of this cup?

A. In the institution of the holy supper which reads: "The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'this is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Corinthians 11:24–26). This promise is also repeated by the apostle Paul, "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:16–17).

Lord's Day 29

Q. 78. Do the bread and wine become the very body and blood of Christ?

A. No, for as the water in baptism is not changed into the blood of Christ, nor becomes the washing away of sins by itself, but is only a divine sign and confirmation of it, so also in the Lord's supper the sacred bread does not become the body of Christ itself, although, in accordance with the nature and usage of sacraments, it is called the body of Christ.

Q. 79. Then why does Christ call the bread his body, and the cup his blood, or the New Covenant in his blood, and why does the apostle Paul call the supper “a means of sharing” in the body and blood of Christ?

A. Christ speaks in this way for an important reason. He wishes to teach us by it that, as bread and wine sustain this temporal life, so his crucified body and shed blood are the true food and drink of our souls for eternal life. Even more, he wishes to assure us by this visible sign and pledge that we come to share in his true body and blood through the working of the Holy Spirit as surely as we receive with our mouth these holy symbols in remembrance of him. He teaches that all his sufferings and his death are our own as certainly as if we had ourselves suffered and rendered satisfaction in our own persons.

Lord’s Day 30

Q. 80. What difference is there between the Lord’s supper and the Roman Catholic mass?

A. The Lord’s Supper testifies to us that we have complete forgiveness of all our sins through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ which he himself has accomplished on the cross once for all. The Lord’s Supper also teaches that through the Holy Spirit we are incorporated into Christ, who is now in heaven with his true body at the right hand of the Father and is there to be worshiped. But the mass teaches that the living and the dead do not have forgiveness of sins through the sufferings of Christ unless Christ is again offered for them daily by the priest. The mass also teaches that Christ is bodily under the form of bread and wine and is therefore to be worshiped in them. Therefore the mass is fundamentally a complete denial of the once for all sacrifice and passion of Jesus Christ.

Q. 81. Who should come to the table of the Lord?

A. Those who are displeased with themselves for their sins, and who nevertheless trust that these sins have been forgiven them and that their remaining weakness is covered by the passion and death of Christ, and who also desire more and more to strengthen their faith and improve their life. The unrepentant and hypocrites, however, eat and drink judgment upon themselves.

Q. 82. Should those who show themselves to be unbelievers and enemies of God by their confession and life be admitted to this Supper?

A. No, for then the covenant of God would be profaned and his wrath provoked against the whole congregation. According to the ordinance of Christ and his apostles, therefore, the Christian church is under obligation, by the office of the keys, to exclude such persons until they amend their lives.

Lord’s Day 31

Q. 83. What is the office of the keys?

A. The preaching of the holy gospel and Christian discipline. By these two means the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and shut against unbelievers.

Q. 84. How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the holy gospel?

A. The kingdom of heaven is opened when it is proclaimed and openly demonstrated to believers, one and all, according to the command of Christ. As often as they accept the promise of the gospel with true faith all their sins are truly forgiven by God for the sake of Christ's gracious work. On the contrary, the wrath of God and eternal condemnation fall upon all unbelievers and hypocrites as long as they do not repent. It is according to this witness of the gospel that God will judge the one and the other in this life and in the life to come.

Q. 85. How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by Christian discipline?

A. Christ commanded that those who bear the Christian name in an unchristian way either in doctrine or in life should be given brotherly admonition. If they do not give up their errors or evil ways, notification is given to the church or to those ordained for this by the church. Then, if they do not change after this warning, they are forbidden to partake of the holy Sacraments and are thus excluded from the communion of the church and by God himself from the kingdom of Christ. However, if they promise and show real amendment, they are received again as members of Christ and of the church.

Part III: Gratitude

Lord's Day 32

Q. 86. Since we are redeemed from our sin and its wretched consequences by grace through Christ without any merit of our own, why must we do good works?

A. Because just as Christ has redeemed us with his blood he also renews us through his Holy Spirit according to his own image, so that with our whole life we may show ourselves grateful to God for his goodness and that he may be glorified through us. Furthermore, we must do good works so that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by its fruits and by our good works may win our neighbors to Christ.

Q. 87. Can those who do not turn to God from their ungrateful, impenitent life be saved?

A. Certainly not! Scripture says, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9–10).

Lord's Day 33

Q. 88. How many parts are there to true repentance or conversion?

A. Two: the dying of the old self and the birth of the new.

Q. 89. What is the dying of the old self?

A. Sincere sorrow over our sins and more and more to hate and flee from them.

Q. 90. What is the birth of the new self?

- A. Complete joy in God through Christ and a strong desire to live according to the will of God in all good works.
- Q. 91. But what are good works?**
- A. Only those which are done out of true faith, in accordance with the law of God, and for his glory, and not those based on our own opinion or on the traditions of men.

The Ten Commandments

Lord's Day 34

Q. 92. What is the law of God?

- A. God spoke all these words saying:

FIRST COMMANDMENT "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me."

SECOND COMMANDMENT "You shall not make 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 fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."

THIRD COMMANDMENT "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."

FOURTH COMMANDMENT "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 cattle, 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 the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

FIFTH COMMANDMENT "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you."

SIXTH COMMANDMENT "You shall not murder."

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT "You shall not commit adultery."

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT "You shall not steal."

NINTH COMMANDMENT "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

TENTH COMMANDMENT "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" (Exodus 20:1–17).

- Q. 93. How are these commandments divided?**
 A. Into two tables. The first table teaches us in four commandments how we ought to live in relation to God. The other table teaches us in six commandments what we owe to our neighbor.
- Q. 94. What does the Lord require in the first commandment?**
 A. That I must avoid and flee all idolatry, magic, enchantments, invocation of saints or other creatures because of the risk of losing my salvation. I ought to properly acknowledge the only true God, trust in him alone, in humility and patience expect all good from him only, and love, fear and honor him with my whole heart. In short, I should rather turn my back on all creatures than do the least thing against his will.
- Q. 95. What is idolatry?**
 A. Idolatry is to put my trust in something I imagine or possess, instead of or alongside of the one true God who has revealed himself in his word.

Lord's Day 35

- Q. 96. What does God require in the second commandment?**
 A. That we should not represent him or worship him in any other manner than he has commanded in his word.
- Q. 97. Should we, then, not make any images at all?**
 A. God cannot and should not be pictured in any way. As for creatures, although they may indeed be portrayed, God forbids making or having any likeness of them in order to worship them, or to use them to serve him.
- Q. 98. But may not pictures be tolerated in churches in place of books for unlearned people?**
 A. No, for we must not try to be wiser than God who does not want his people to be taught by means of lifeless idols, but through the living preaching of his word.

Lord's Day 36

- Q. 99. What is required in the third commandment?**
 A. We must not abuse the name of God or make it common by cursing, by swearing falsely, or by unnecessary oaths. Nor should we to participate in such horrible sins by keeping quiet and thus giving silent consent. We must not use the holy name of God except with fear and reverence so that he may be rightly confessed and addressed by us, and be glorified in all our words and works.
- Q. 100. Is it, therefore, so great a sin to blaspheme God's name by cursing and swearing that God is also angry with those who do not try to prevent and forbid it as much as they can?**
 A. Yes, indeed. For no sin is greater or provokes his wrath more than the using his name without respect. That is why he commanded it to be punished with death.

Lord's Day 37

Q. 101. But may we not swear oaths by the name of God in a devout manner?

A. Yes, when the civil authorities require it of their subjects, or when it is otherwise needed to maintain and promote fidelity and truth, to the glory of God and the welfare of our neighbor. Such oath-taking is grounded in God's word and has therefore been rightly used by God's people under the old and new covenants.

Q. 102. May we also swear by the saints or other creatures?

A. No. For a lawful oath is a calling upon God, as the only searcher of hearts, to bear witness to the truth, and to punish me if I swear falsely. No creature deserves such honor.

Lord's Day 38

Q. 103. What does God require in the fourth commandment?

A. First, that the ministry of the gospel and Christian education be maintained, and that I diligently attend church, especially on the Lord's day, to hear the word of God, to participate in the holy sacraments, to call publicly upon the Lord, and to give Christian service to those in need. Second, that I cease from my evil works all the days of my life, allow the Lord to work in me through his Spirit, and thus begin in this life the eternal Sabbath.

Lord's Day 39

Q. 104. What does God require in the fifth commandment?

A. I must show honor, love, and faithfulness to my father and mother and to all who are set in authority over me. I must submit myself with respectful obedience to all their careful instruction and discipline and that I also bear patiently their failures, since it is God's will to govern us by their hand.

Lord's Day 40

Q. 105. What does God require in the sixth commandment?

A. That I am not to abuse, hate, injure, or kill my neighbor, with thought, word, gesture, or deed, whether by myself or through another. But I must lay aside all desire for revenge. I must not harm myself or willfully expose myself to danger. This is why the authorities are armed with the means to prevent murder.

Q. 106. But does this commandment speak only of killing?

A. In forbidding murder God means to teach us that he abhors the root of murder, which is envy, hatred, anger, and desire for revenge, and that he regards all these as hidden murder.

Q. 107. Is it enough, then, if we do not kill our neighbor in any of these ways?

A. No. For when God condemns envy, hatred, and anger, he requires us to love our neighbors as ourselves, to show patience, peace, gentleness, mercy, and friendliness

toward them, to prevent injury to them as much as we can, also to do good to our enemies.

Lord's Day 41

Q. 108. What does the seventh commandment teach us?

A. That all sexual immorality is condemned by God, and that we should therefore detest it from the heart, and live chaste and disciplined lives, whether in holy wedlock or in single life.

Q. 109. Does God forbid nothing more than adultery and such gross sins in this commandment?

A. Since both our body and soul are a temple of the Holy Spirit, it is his will that we keep both pure and holy. Therefore he forbids all sexually immoral actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires and whatever may excite another person to them.

Lord's Day 42

Q. 110. What does God forbid in the eighth commandment?

A. God forbids the theft and robbery which civil authorities punish. But God also labels as theft all wicked tricks and schemes by which we seek to get for ourselves our neighbor's goods, whether by force or under the pretext of right, such as false weights and measures, deceptive advertising or merchandising, counterfeit money, exorbitant interest, or any other means forbidden by God. He also forbids all greed and misuse and waste of his gifts.

Q. 111. But what does God require of you in this commandment?

A. That I work for the good of my neighbor wherever I can and may, deal with him as I would have others deal with me, and do my work well so that I may be able to help the poor in their need.

Lord's Day 43

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

A. That I do not bear false witness against anyone, twist anyone's words, be a gossip or a slanderer, or condemn anyone lightly without a hearing. Rather I am required to avoid, under penalty of God's wrath, all lying and deceit as the works of the devil himself. In judicial and all other matters I am to love the truth, and to speak and confess it honestly. Indeed, insofar as I am able, I am to defend and promote my neighbor's good name.

Lord's Day 44

Q. 113. What is required in the tenth commandment?

A. That there should never enter our heart even the least inclination or thought contrary to any commandment of God, but that we should always hate sin with our whole heart and find satisfaction and joy in all righteousness.

Q. 114. But can those who are converted to God keep these commandments perfectly?

A. No, for even the holiest of them make only a small beginning in obedience in this life. Nevertheless, they begin to seriously conform not only to some, but to all the commandments of God.

Q. 115. Why, then, does God have the Ten Commandments preached so strictly since no one can keep them in this life?

A. First, that for all of our life we may become increasingly aware of our sinfulness, and therefore more eagerly seek forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ. Second, that we may constantly and diligently pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that more and more we may be renewed in the image of God, until we attain the goal of full perfection after this life.

The Lord's Prayer

Lord's Day 45

Q. 116. Why is prayer necessary for Christians?

A. Because it is the chief part of the gratitude which God requires of us, and because God will only give his grace and Holy Spirit to those who sincerely seek him in prayer without ceasing, and who thank him for these gifts.

Q. 117. What is contained in a prayer which pleases God and is heard by him?

A. First, that we sincerely call upon the one true God, who has revealed himself to us in his word, for all that he has commanded us to ask of him. Then, we thoroughly acknowledge our need and evil condition so that we may humble ourselves in the presence of his majesty. Third, we rest assured that, in spite of our unworthiness, he will certainly hear our prayer for the sake of Christ our Lord, as he has promised us in his word.

Q. 118. What has God commanded us to ask of him?

A. All things necessary for soul and body which Christ the Lord has included in the prayer which he himself taught us.

Q. 119. What is the Lord's Prayer?

A. "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen" (Matthew 5:9–13, with traditional ending).

Lord's Day 46

Q. 120. Why has Christ commanded us to address God: "Our Father"?

A. At the very beginning of our prayer he may awaken in us the childlike reverence and trust in God which should be the motivation of our prayer. God has become our

Father through Christ and will much less deny us what we ask him in faith than our human fathers will refuse us earthly things.

Q. 121. Why is there added: "in heaven"?

A. That we may have no earthly conception of the heavenly majesty of God, but that we may expect from his almighty power all things that are needed for body and soul.

Lord's Day 47

Q. 122. What is the first petition?

A. "Hallowed be your name." That is: help us first of all to know you rightly, and to respect, glorify, and praise you in all your works through which there shine your almighty power, wisdom, goodness, righteousness, mercy, and truth. And so order our whole life in thought, word, and deed that your name may never be blasphemed on our account, but may always be honored and praised.

Lord's Day 48

Q. 123. What is the second petition?

A. "Your kingdom come." That is, govern us by your word and Spirit that we may more and more submit ourselves unto you. Sustain and grow your church. Destroy the works of the devil, every power that raises itself against your, and all wicked schemes thought up against your holy word, until the full coming of your kingdom in which you will be all in all.

Lord's Day 49

Q. 124. What is the third petition?

A. "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." That is, grant that all people may renounce their own wills and obey your will, which alone is good, without grumbling, so that everyone may carry out his or her office and calling as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven.

Lord's Day 50

Q. 125. What is the fourth petition?

A. "Give us this day our daily bread." That is, please provide for all our bodily needs so that we may recognize that you are the only source of all that is good, and that without your blessing neither our care and labor nor your gifts can do us any good. So, we should stop trusting in all other creatures and trust in you alone.

Lord's Day 51

Q. 126. What is the fifth petition?

A. "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." That is, for the sake of Christ's blood, please do not charge to us our many transgressions as miserable sinners, nor the evil which still clings to us. We also find this witness of your grace in us, that we want to forgive our neighbor with all our hearts.

Lord's Day 52

Q. 127. What is the sixth petition?

A. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." That is, please preserve and strengthen us through the power of thy Holy Spirit since we are so weak that we cannot stand by ourselves for one moment, since our sworn enemies, the devil, the world, and our own sin, ceaselessly assail us. Preserve us so that we may stand firm against them, and not be defeated in this spiritual warfare, until at last we obtain complete victory.

Q. 128. How do you close this prayer?

A. "For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever." That is, we ask all this of you because, as our King, you are willing and able to give us all that is good since you have power over all things. By this your holy name should be glorified forever, not ours.

Q. 129. What is the meaning of the little word "Amen"?

A. Amen means, "this shall truly and certainly be." For my prayer is much more certainly heard by God than I am persuaded in my heart that I desire such things from him.

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The Westminster Standards

The Westminster Standards Introduction

Comprising:

The Westminster Confession

The Westminster Shorter Catechism

The Westminster Larger Catechism

The Westminster Standards have been the most influential theological documents in the history of American Presbyterianism. The most lasting of these documents has been the Confession, the Shorter, and Larger Catechisms.

Authorship

The Westminster Assembly of Divines, a group of 121 ministers of the Church of England, 30 lay observers, and six commissioners from the Church of Scotland. Appointed by the "Long Parliament" of England (1640-1660) as a standing theological body.

Date

The Assembly sat from 1642 until around 1653 when it was dissolved with Parliament by Oliver Cromwell. The *Westminster Confession* was first published in 1647.

Genres

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* is a work of scholastic (academic) systematic theology. It deals with matters of the faith by working from a logical starting point, and it builds a coherent system of theology with carefully crafted rational statements on specific topics. This type of confession was very common in the Reformation and comes from theological scholasticism, which developed in the high Middle Ages from the 12th century. Confessions are still a popular genre because they can be used as reference and legally binding material. Because they try to encapsulate a lot of detail into as short a space as possible, confessions tend to require higher reading levels and theological education to understand.

The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* and the *Westminster Larger Catechism* are both catechisms in genre. This genre is characterized by its numbered question and answer format. Each question is designed to build on top of previous ones to create a theological system. Many catechisms are written in tandem with confessions, using the

structure and content of a confession to guide the format of the questions. Catechisms are generally written for those who are new to the faith and younger believers.

Historical Context

The Westminster Assembly was established primarily to reform the Church of England. Its formation and dissolution coincides nearly with the start and end of the English Civil War. It was commissioned by the "Long Parliament" in defiance of King Charles I. Part of the reforms it suggested were the adoption of a presbyterian model of church government, and the replacement of the Church of England's *Thirty-Nine Articles* (1571), which were and remain today, the Church of England's guiding theological document. The *Westminster Confession of Faith* was signed into English and Scottish law in 1648 and 1647 respectively.

The Westminster Assembly also produced the *Directory of Public Worship* and the *Form of Church Government*, performed an advisory role to Parliament, and examined ministers.

With the Restoration of King Charles II (1660), all of the Westminster Assembly's productions were legally overturned.

In 1729 the *Confession and Catechisms* became the formal confession of faith of American Presbyterians when they were adopted by the Synod of Philadelphia. Despite the complex history of Presbyterian splits and reunions, they remained the doctrinal standard of the major Presbyterian denominations in America until the UPCUSA (or "northern Presbyterian Church") embraced a new understanding of the role of confessions with the adoption of a Book of Confessions in 1967. The PC(US) (or "southern Presbyterian Church") continued to hold the *Westminster Confession and Catechisms* as its confessional standard until it merged with the UPCUSA to form the PC(USA) in 1983.

Throughout its history, the *Westminster Confession* has undergone many significant changes. There are, therefore, many versions that exist in modern church traditions. Because it has been the constitutional theological document for many denominations, it has been updated to fit political necessities, changing relationships between Protestants and Roman Catholics, and sections have been added to make up for significant gaps in mission and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Summary and Highlights

The theology of the *Westminster Confession and Catechisms* reflects the characteristic emphases of the Reformed Tradition, including the authority of Scripture as the Word of God, and the glory and sovereignty of God in creation and redemption. The primary distinctive teaching of the Westminster Standards, relative to other Reformed confessions, can be found in its covenant theology, which features a two-covenant schema for understanding God's relationship to humanity: a "covenant of works" (prior to humanity's fall into sin) and a "covenant of grace" through Christ, which spans the history of salvation in both the Old and New Testaments.

Significance

The Westminster Confession and Catechisms provide the organizing theme or central thread of the Essential Tenets of ECO, as reflected in the opening statement of the Essential Tenets (following the preamble), which quotes the Westminster Shorter Catechism: "The great purpose toward which each human life is drawn is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." (The first question of the catechism, "What is the chief end of man?" is answered: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.")

Potential Uses

The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* remains useful for the instruction of children and new believers. Many resources exist to accomplish this, notably the *New City Catechism*, whose first question comes directly from the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, and includes much material from WSC and the *Heidelberg Catechism*.

The *Larger Catechism* was written for a more advanced audience and it can be useful in adult Sunday School classes.

The *Westminster Confession* is a useful resource to help elaborate the compact wording of many of ECO's *Essential Tenets*. It can be used as a reference for those who want to study more about a specific doctrine. And it is a useful tool in understanding the common beliefs of the Presbyterian tradition.

A Note on the Text

The text of the Confession and Catechisms as found in the *ECO Confessional Standards (2020)* reflects various amendments made in the course of American Presbyterian history. The three most significant amendments to the Confession are the

revisions of 1788 concerning the civil government's relationship to the church, the amendments of 1903, which included the addition of new chapters on the Holy Spirit and Missions, and the 1958 replacement of chapter 24 with a new statement on marriage and divorce. The version presented here represents an update that ECO's theology teams made to the 1958 edition of the UPCUSA. Note especially that the additional chapters on the Holy Spirit and Missions are inserted as chapters IX and X, thus changing subsequent chapter numbers. So, although the starting text represents the UPCUSA version, the numbering reflects the PCUS version.

The Westminster Confession of Faith

Chapter I Of the Holy Scripture

1. Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave humans inexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary for salvation; therefore it pleased the Lord, at various times, and in different ways, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will to his church; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly to writing; which makes the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will to his people being now ceased.

2. Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these:

Of the Old Testament

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

Of the New Testament

Matthew	II Corinthians	I Timothy	II Peter
Mark	Galatians	II Timothy	I John
Luke	Ephesians	Titus	II John
John	Philippians	Philemon	III John
Acts	Colossians	Hebrews	Jude
Romans	I Thessalonians	James	Revelation
I Corinthians	II Thessalonians	I Peter	

All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.

3. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are not part of the canon of the Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.

4. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, depends not upon the testimony of any human or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the word of God.

5. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church to a high and reverent esteem for the Holy Scripture; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consistency of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of human salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments by which it abundantly evidences itself to be the word of God; nevertheless, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.

6. The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, human salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: to which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or human traditions. Nevertheless we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word; and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed.

7. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear to all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them.

8. The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of religion the church is finally to appeal to them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God who have right to, and interest in, the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the language of every people to which they

come, that the word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.

9. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture, is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it may be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.

10. The Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, human doctrines, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.

Chapter II Of God, and the Holy Trinity

1. There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty; most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of those who diligently seek him; and after all most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

2. God has all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and to himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he has made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, to, and upon them: he is alone the fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; and has most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever he pleases. In his sight all things are open and manifest; his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and not dependent upon the creature; so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and people, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them.

3. In the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

Chapter III Of God's Eternal Decrees

1. God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet in such a way that God is neither the author of sin nor doing violence to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

2. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions; yet he has not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass, upon such conditions.

3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some humans and angels are predestined to everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

4. These angels and humans, thus predestined and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

5. Those people who are predestined to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, has chosen in Christ, to everlasting glory, out of his free grace and love alone, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

6. As God has appointed the elect to glory, so has he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means to make it so. Those then who are elected being fallen in Adam are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called to faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith to salvation. Neither are any others redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

7. The rest of humanity, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, by which he extends or withholds mercy as he pleases, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.

8. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that people attending the will of God revealed in his word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God; and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

Chapter IV Of Creation

1. It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create or make of nothing the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.

2. After God had made all other creatures, he created humans, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness after his own image, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject to change. Besides this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.

Chapter V Of Providence

1. God, the great Creator of all things, upholds, directs, disposes, and governs all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

2. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet, by the same providence, he orders them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

3. God, in his ordinary providence, makes use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure.

4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it extends itself even to the first Fall, and all other sins of angels and humans, and that not by a bare permission, but such as has joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness there present proceeds only from the creature, and not from God; who being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God, often-times leaves for a season his own children to manifold temptations and the corruption of their own hearts, to

chastise them for their former sins, or to reveal to them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for various other just and holy ends.

6. As for those wicked and ungodly people whom God, as a righteous judge, for former sins, blinds and hardens; from them he not only withholds his grace, by which they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts, but sometimes also withdraws the gifts which they had; and exposes them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and therefore, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan; by which it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God uses for the softening of others.

7. As the providence of God does, in general, reach to all creatures; so, after a most special manner, it takes care of his church, and disposes all things for its good.

Chapter VI

Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment Thereof

1. Our first parents, being seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.

2. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

3. They being the root of all humanity, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation.

4. From this original corruption, by which we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

5. This corruption of nature, during this life, remains in those that are regenerated: and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all its accompanying impulses, are truly and properly sin.

6. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary to it, does, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, by which the sinner is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

Chapter VII

Of God's Covenant with Man

1. The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience to him as their Creator, yet they could never have any part of him, as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he has been pleased to express by way of covenant.

2. The first covenant made with humanity was a covenant of works, in which life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

3. Humanity, by its Fall, having made itself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace: in which he freely offered to sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved, and promising to give to all those that are ordained to life, his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.

4. This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in the Scripture by the name of a testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ, the testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it bestowed within.

5. This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foreshadowing Christ to come, which were for that time sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the Old Testament.

6. Under the gospel, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed, are the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper; which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity and less outward glory, yet in them it is held forth in more fullness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not, therefore, two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations.

Chapter VIII

Of Christ the Mediator

1. It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the mediator between God and humanity, the prophet, priest, and king; the head and savior of his church, the heir of all things, and judge of the

world; for whom he did, from all eternity, give a people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

2. The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him human nature, with all its essential properties and common infirmities; yet without sin: being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the divinity and the humanity, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and humanity.

3. The Lord Jesus in his human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure; having in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell: to the end that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, he might be thoroughly equipped to execute the office of a mediator and surety. Which office he took not to himself, but was called into by his Father; who put all power and judgment into his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same.

4. This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake, which, that he might discharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfill it; endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified and died, was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption. On the third day he arose from the dead, with the same body in which he suffered; with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sits at the right hand of his Father, making intercession and shall return to judge humans and angels, at the end of the world.

5. The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up to God, has fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father has given to him.

6. Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ until after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits of it were communicated to the elect, in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices wherein he was revealed, and signified to be the seed of the woman, which should bruise the serpent's head, and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, being yesterday and today the same and forever.

7. Christ, in the work of mediation, acts according to both natures; by each nature doing that which is proper to itself; yet by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes, in Scripture, attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.

8. To all those for whom Christ has purchased redemption, he certainly and effectually applies and communicates the same; making intercession for them, and revealing to them, in and by the word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey; and governing their hearts by his word and Spirit; overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation.

Chapter IX¹ Of the Holy Spirit

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

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

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

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

Chapter X

¹ Chapters IX and X on the Holy Spirit and Missions are additions to the Westminster Confession of Faith from 1903.

Of the Gospel of the Love of God and Missions

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

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

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

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

Chapter XI Of Free Will

1. God has endued the will of humanity with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined for good or evil.

2. Humans, in their state of innocence, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that they might fall from it.

3. Humanity, by its fall into a state of sin, has wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural human, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by human strength, to convert oneself, or to prepare oneself for conversion.

4. When God converts sinners and translates them into the state of grace, he frees them from their natural bondage under sin, and, by his grace alone, enables them freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that, by reason of their remaining corruption, they not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but also will that which is evil.

5. The will of a human is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone in the state of glory only.

Chapter XII Of Effectual Calling

1. All those whom God has predestined to life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ: enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving to them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

2. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in a person, who is altogether passive in it, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

3. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who works when, and where, and how he pleases. So also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word.

4. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can humans, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may be saved is without warrant of the word of God.

Chapter XIII Of Justification

1. Those whom God effectually calls, he also freely justifies: not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ to them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.

2. Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is alone the instrument of justification; yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but works by love.

3. Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf. Yet inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for anything in them, their justification is only of free grace; that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

4. God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect; and Christ did, in the fullness of time, die for their sins and rise again for their justification: nevertheless they are not justified until the Holy Spirit, in due time, actually applies Christ to them.

5. God continues to forgive the sins of those that are justified; and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may by their sins fall under God's Fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of his countenance restored to them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

6. The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament.

Chapter XIV Of Adoption

1. All those that are justified, God keeps, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption: by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God; have his name put upon them; receive the Spirit of adoption; have access to the throne of grace with boldness; are enabled to cry, "Abba, Father;" are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a father; yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.

Chapter XV Of Sanctification

1. They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by his word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts within it are more and more

weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened, in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord.

2. This sanctification is throughout in the whole person, yet imperfect in this life: there abides still some remnants of corruption in every part, from which arises a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

3. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part overcomes: and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Chapter XVI Of Saving Faith

1. The grace of faith, by which the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts; and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word: by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.

2. By this faith, a Christian believes to be true whatsoever is revealed in the word, for the authority of God himself speaking within it; and acts differently, upon that which each particular passage contains; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threats and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

3. This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; may be often and many ways assailed and weakened, but gets the victory; growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith.

Chapter XVII Of Repentance Unto Life

1. Repentance unto life is an evangelical grace, the doctrine which is to be preached by every minister of the gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ.

2. By it a sinner, out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of one's sins, as contrary to the holy nature and righteous law of God, and upon the apprehension of his mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, so grieves for, and hates these sins, as to turn from them all to God, purposing and endeavoring to walk with him in all the ways of his commandments.

3. Although repentance is not to be rested in as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon of it, which is the act of God's free grace in Christ; yet is it of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it.

4. As there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation; so there is no sin so great that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent.

5. People ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is everyone's duty to endeavor to repent of particular sins, particularly.

6. As everyone is bound to make private confession of their sins to God, praying for their pardon, upon which, and the forsaking of them, they shall find mercy: so those who scandalize their brother, or the church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or public confession and sorrow for their sin, to declare their repentance to those that are offended; who are on that grounds to be reconciled to them, and in love to receive them.

Chapter XVIII Of Good Works

1. Good works are only such as God has commanded in his holy word, and not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by people out of blind zeal, or upon any pretense of good intention.

2. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith: and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their fellow believers, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus to perform, that, having their fruit lead to holiness, they may have the end, eternal life.

3. Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ. And that they may be enabled to do them, besides the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure; yet are they not then to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless upon a special motion of the Spirit; but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.

4. They, who in their obedience, attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate and to do more than God requires, that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do.

5. We cannot, by our best works, merit pardon of sin, or eternal life, at the hand of God, because of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come, and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom by them we can neither profit, nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins; but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants: and because, as they are good,

they proceed from his Spirit; and as they are wrought by us, they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection that they cannot endure the severity of God's judgment.

6. Yet notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him, not as though they were in this life wholly blameless and without reproof in God's sight; but that he, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.

7. Works done by unregenerate people, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and in themselves praiseworthy and useful, and although the neglect of such things is sinful and displeasing to God; yet, because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to his word; nor to a right end, the glory of God; they come short of what God requires, and do not make anyone fit to receive the grace of God.

Chapter XIX Of the Perseverance of the Saints

1. They whom God has accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace: but shall certainly persevere in it to the end, and be eternally saved.

2. This perseverance of the saints depends, not upon their own free-will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit and of the seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which comes also the certainty and infallibility of it.

3. Nevertheless they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalence of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and for a time continue in them: by which they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit; come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

Chapter XX Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation

1. Although hypocrites, and other unregenerate people, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions: of being in the favor of God and estate of salvation; which hope of theirs shall perish: yet such as truly believe in the Lord

Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavoring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in a state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God: which hope shall never make them ashamed.

2. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces to which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God; which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, by which we are sealed to the day of redemption.

3. This infallible assurance does not so belong to the essence of faith but that a true believer may wait long and conflict with many difficulties before becoming a partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given by God, the true believer may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain it. And therefore it is the duty of everyone to give all diligence to make one's calling and election sure; that thereby one's heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance: so far is it from inclining people to looseness.

4. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation diverse ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preserving of it; by falling into some special sin, which wounds the conscience, and grieves the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation; by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance and suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness and to have no light: yet are they never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the family of God, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may in due time be revived, and by the which, in the meantime, they are supported from utter despair.

Chapter XXI Of the Law of God

1. God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it; and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

2. This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai in Ten Commandments, and written in two tables; the first four commandments containing our duty toward God, and the other six our duty to other people.

3. Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly holding forth diverse instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the New Testament.

4. To them also, as a body politic, he gave various judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any other, now, further than the general equity of them may require.

5. The moral law forever binds all, as well justified persons as others, to obedience to it; and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator who gave it. Neither does Christ in the gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen, this obligation.

6. Although true believers are not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned; yet it is of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as, examining themselves, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience. It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin, and the threats of it serve to show what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from their curse threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance of it; although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works: so as a person's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourages to the one, and deters from the other, is no evidence of one's being under the law, and not under grace.

7. Neither are the aforementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it: the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of a person to do that freely and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requires to be done.

Chapter XXII

Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience

1. The liberty which Christ has purchased for believers under the gospel consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law; and in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin, from the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the

grave, and everlasting damnation; as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience to him, not out of slavish fear, but a childlike love, and a willing mind. All which were common also to believers under the law; but under the New Testament, the liberty of Christians is further enlarged in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish church was subjected; and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.

2. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of humans which are in anything contrary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

3. They who, upon pretense of Christian liberty, do practice any sin, or cherish any lust, do thereby destroy the end of Christian liberty; which is, that, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

4. And because the power which God has ordained, and the liberty which Christ has purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretense of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices as, either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ has established in the church; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church.

Chapter XXIII Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

1. The light of nature shows that there is a God, who has lordship and sovereignty over all; is good, and does good to all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of humans, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture.

2. Religious worship is to be given to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and to him alone: not to angels, saints, or any other creature: and since the Fall, not without a mediator; nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone.

3. Prayer with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship, is by God required of all people; and that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of his Spirit, according to his will, with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and, if vocal, in a known tongue.

4. Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of living people, or that shall live hereafter, but not for the dead.

5. The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear; the sound preaching, and conscionable hearing of the word, in obedience to God with understanding, faith, and reverence; singing of psalms with grace in the heart; as, also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God: besides religious oaths, and vows, solemn fasts, and thanksgivings upon special occasion; which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in a holy and religious manner.

6. Neither prayer, nor any other part of religious worship, is now, under the gospel, either tied to, or made more acceptable by, any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed: but God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth; as in private families daily, and in secret each one alone, so more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or willfully to be neglected or forsaken, when God, by his word or providence, calls us to them.

7. As it is of the law of nature that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in his word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all people in all ages, he has particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath, to be kept holy to him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath.

8. This Sabbath is then kept holy to the Lord when people, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe a holy rest all the day from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations; but also are taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.

Chapter XXIV Of Lawful Oaths and Vows

1. A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein upon just occasion, the person swearing solemnly calls God to witness what one asserts or promises; and to be judged according to the truth or falsehood of what is sworn.

2. The name of God only is that by which people ought to swear, and it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence, therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred. Yet, as, in matters of weight and moment, an oath is warranted by the word of God, under the New Testament, as well as under the Old, so a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters ought to be taken.

3. Whomever takes an oath ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and to assert nothing in it but what one is fully persuaded is the truth. Neither may anyone bind oneself by oath to anything but what is good and just, and what one believes so to be, and what one is able and resolved to perform.

4. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation. It cannot oblige to sin; but in anything not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, although to a person's own hurt: nor is it to be violated, although made to heretics or unbelievers.

5. A vow is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to be performed with the like faithfulness.

6. It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone: and that it may be accepted, it is to be made voluntarily, out of faith and conscience of duty, in way of thankfulness for mercy received, or for obtaining of what we want; by which we more strictly bind ourselves to necessary duties, or to other things, so far and so long as they may fitly produce these ends.

7. No one may vow to do anything forbidden in the word of God, or what would hinder any duty commanded in it, or which is not in one's own power, and for the performance of which one has no promise or ability from God. In which respects, monastic vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.

Chapter XXV Of the Civil Magistrate

1. God, the Supreme Lord and King of all the world, has ordained civil magistrates to be under him over the people, for his own glory and the public good; and to this end,

has armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evildoers.

2. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called to it; in the managing of which, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth, so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions.

3. Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the word and sacraments; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; or, in the least, interfere in matters of faith. Yet, as nursing fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger. And, as Jesus Christ has appointed a regular government and discipline in his church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise of it, among the voluntary members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief. It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered, either upon pretense of religion or infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury to any other person whatsoever: and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance.

4. It is the duty of the people to pray for magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience' sake. Infidelity, or difference in religion, does not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience: from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted; much less has the Pope any power or jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; and least of all to deprive them of their dominions or lives, if he shall judge them to be heretics, or upon any other pretense whatsoever.

Chapter XXVI Of Marriage and Divorce

1. Christian marriage is an institution ordained of God, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, established and sanctified for the happiness and welfare of humanity, into which spiritual and physical union one man and one woman enter, cherishing a mutual esteem and love, bearing with each other's infirmities and weaknesses, comforting each other in

trouble, providing in honesty and industry for each other and for their household, praying for each other, and living together the length of their days as heirs of the grace of life.

2. Because the corruption of humanity is apt unduly to put asunder those whom God has joined together in marriage, and because the church is concerned with the establishment of marriage in the Lord as Scripture sets it forth, and with the present penitence as well as with the past innocence or guilt of those whose marriage has been broken; therefore as a breach of that holy relation may occasion divorce, so remarriage after a divorce granted on grounds explicitly stated in Scripture or implicit in the gospel of Christ may be sanctioned in keeping with his redemptive gospel, when sufficient penitence for sin and failure is evident, and a firm purpose of and endeavor after Christian marriage is manifest.

Chapter XXVII Of the Church

1. The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ its head, and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.

2. The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ; the house and family of God, through which people are ordinarily saved and union with which is essential to their best growth and service.

3. Unto this catholic visible church, Christ has given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, makes them effectual.

4. This catholic church has been sometimes more, sometimes less, visible. And particular churches, which are members of it, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them.

5. The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error: and some have so degenerated as to become apparently no churches of Christ. Nevertheless, there shall be always a church on earth, to worship God according to his will.

6. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only head of the church, and the claim of anyone to be the vicar of Christ and the head of the church is unscriptural, without warrant in fact, and is a usurpation dishonoring to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter XXVIII Of the Communion of Saints

1. All saints being united to Jesus Christ their head, by his Spirit and by faith, have fellowship with him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory: and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as to conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward person.

2. Saints by their profession are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offers opportunity, is to be extended to all those who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

3. This communion which the saints have with Christ, does not make them in any wise partakers of the substance of his Godhead, or to be equal with Christ in any respect: either of which to affirm, is impious and blasphemous. Nor does their communion one with another as saints, take away or infringe the title or property which each person has in goods and possessions.

Chapter XXIX Of the Sacraments

1. Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and his benefits, and to confirm our interest in him: as also to put a visible difference between those that belong to the church, and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his word.

2. There is in every sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.

3. The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments, rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither does the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of the one who administers it, but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing its use, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.

4. There are only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospel, that is to say, baptism and the supper of the Lord: neither of which may be dispensed by any but by a minister of the word, lawfully ordained.

5. The sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the New.

Chapter XXX Of Baptism

1. Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of being ingrafted into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of giving up to God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life: which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in his church until the end of the world.

2. The outward element to be used in this sacrament is water, with which the party is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, by a minister of the gospel, lawfully called.

3. Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary, but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.

4. Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience to Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.

5. Although it is a great sin to scorn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed to it as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.

6. The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time when it is administered; nonetheless, by the right use of this ordinance the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Spirit, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongs unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in his appointed time.

7. The sacrament of baptism is but once to be administered to any person.

Chapter XXXI Of the Lord's Supper

1. Our Lord Jesus, on the night in which he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of his body and blood, called the Lord's supper, to be observed in his church to the end of the world; for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing all benefits found there to true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe to him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other, as members of his mystical body.

2. In this sacrament Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sins of the living or dead, but a commemoration of that one offering up of himself, by himself, upon the cross, once for all, and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise to God for the same; so that the so-called sacrifice of the mass is most contradictory to Christ's one sacrifice, the only propitiation for all the sins of the elect.

3. The Lord has, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to declare his word of institution to the people, to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and so doing to set them apart from a common to a holy use; and to take and break the bread, to take cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants; but to none who are not then present in the congregation.

4. Private masses, or receiving this sacrament by a priest, or any other, alone; as likewise the denial of the cup to the people; worshipping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ.

5. The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, that is, the body and blood of Christ; albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly, and only, bread and wine, as they were before.

6. That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ's body and blood (commonly called transubstantiation) by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant, not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason; overthrows the nature of the sacrament; and has been, and is, the cause of manifold superstitions, even of gross idolatries.

7. Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death: the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.

8. Although ignorant and wicked people receive the outward elements in this sacrament, yet they receive not the thing signified by them; but by their unworthy participation are guilty of body and blood of the Lord and bring judgement on themselves. Wherefore all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's Table, and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted so to do.

Chapter XXXII Of Church Censures

1. The Lord Jesus, as king and head of his church, has appointed a government within it in the hand of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate.

2. To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue of which they have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the word and censures; and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require.

3. Church censures are necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending believers; for deterring others from like offenses; for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the church, if they should suffer his covenant, and its accompanying seals, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.

4. For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the church are to proceed by admonition, suspension from the sacrament of the Lord's supper for a season, by excommunication from the church, according to the nature of the crime, and demerit of the person.

Chapter XXXIII Of Synods and Councils

1. For the better government and further edification of the church, there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called synods or councils: and it belongs to the overseers and other rulers of the particular churches, by virtue of their office, and the power which Christ has given them for edification, and not for destruction, to appoint such assemblies; and to convene together in them, as often as they shall judge it expedient for the good of the church.

2. It belongs to synods and councils, as ministers, to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of his church; to receive complaints in cases of maladministration, and authoritatively to determine the same: which decrees and determinations, if consonant to the word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission, not only for their agreement with the word, but also for the power by which they are made, as being an ordinance of God, appointed in his word.

3. All synods or councils since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as a help in both.

4. Synods and councils are to handle or conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical; and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary; or by way of advice for satisfaction of conscience, if they be required to do so by the civil magistrate.

Chapter XXXIV

Of the State of Man After Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead

1. Human bodies, after death, return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep), having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledges none.

2. At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed: and all the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever.

3. The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonor; the bodies of the just, by his Spirit, to honor, and be made conformable to his own glorious body.

Chapter XXXV

Of the Last Judgement

1. God has appointed a day, on which he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged; but likewise all persons, that have lived upon earth, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

2. The end of God's appointing this day, is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into

everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and refreshing which shall come from the presence of the Lord: but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

3. As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all people from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity; so will he have that day unknown to humans, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism

- Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?**
A. The chief end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.
- Q. 2. What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?**
A. The word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.
- Q. 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?**
A. The Scriptures principally teach what one is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of humanity.
- Q. 4. What is God?**
A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.
- Q. 5. Are there more Gods than one?**
A. There is but one only, the living and true God.
- Q. 6. How many persons are there in the Godhead?**
A. There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.
- Q. 7. What are the decrees of God?**
A. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, by which, for his own glory, he has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.
- Q. 8. How does God execute his decrees?**
A. God executes his decrees in the works of creation and providence.
- Q. 9. What is the work of creation?**
A. The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.
- Q. 10. How did God create humanity?**
A. God created humanity male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.
- Q. 11. What are God's works of providence?**
A. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.
- Q. 12. What special act of providence did God exercise towards man, in the estate in which he was created?**
A. When God created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.
- Q. 13. Did our first parents continue in the estate in which they were created?**

- A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate in which they were created, by sinning against God.
- Q. 14. What is sin?**
- A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.
- Q. 15. What was the sin by which our first parents fell from the estate in which they were created?**
- A. The sin by which our first parents fell from the estate in which they were created was their eating the forbidden fruit.
- Q. 16. Did all humanity fall in Adam's first transgression?**
- A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all humanity, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.
- Q. 17. Into what estate did the Fall bring humanity?**
- A. The Fall brought humanity into an estate of sin and misery.
- Q. 18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate into which humanity fell?**
- A. The sinfulness of that estate into which humanity fell consists in: the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.
- Q. 19. What is the misery of that estate into which humanity fell?**
- A. All humanity, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.
- Q. 20. Did God leave all humanity to perish in the estate of sin and misery?**
- A. God, having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a redeemer.
- Q. 21. Who is the redeemer of God's elect?**
- A. The only redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became human, and so was, and continues to be, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person forever.
- Q. 22. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become human?**
- A. Christ, the Son of God, became human, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.
- Q. 23. What offices does Christ execute as our redeemer?**
- A. Christ, as our redeemer, executes the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

- Q. 24. How does Christ execute the office of a prophet?**
A. Christ executes the office of a prophet in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.
- Q. 25. How does Christ execute the office of a priest?**
A. Christ executes the office of a priest in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.
- Q. 26. How does Christ execute the office of a king?**
A. Christ executes the office of a king in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.
- Q. 27. In what does Christ's humiliation consist?**
A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.
- Q. 28. In what consists Christ's exaltation?**
A. Christ's exaltation consists in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.
- Q. 29. How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?**
A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.
- Q. 30. How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?**
A. The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.
- Q. 31. What is effectual calling?**
A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, by which, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he persuades and enables us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.
- Q. 32. What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?**
A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, sanctification, and the several benefits which, in this life, do either accompany or flow from them.
- Q. 33. What is justification?**
A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, by which he pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.
- Q. 34. What is adoption?**

- A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, by which we are received into the number, and have a right to all privileges, of the children of God.
- Q. 35. What is sanctification?**
- A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, by which we are renewed in the whole person after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness.
- Q. 36. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?**
- A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification are: assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, increase of grace, and perseverance to the end.
- Q. 37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?**
- A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves until the resurrection.
- Q. 38. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?**
- A. At the resurrection, believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.
- Q. 39. What is the duty which God requires of humanity?**
- A. The duty which God requires of humanity is obedience to his revealed will.
- Q. 40. What did God at first reveal to humanity for the rule of his obedience?**
- A. The rule which God at first revealed to humanity for his obedience was the moral law.
- Q. 41. Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?**
- A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments.
- Q. 42. What is the sum of the Ten Commandments?**
- A. The sum of the Ten Commandments is: to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves.
- Q. 43. What is the preface to the Ten Commandments?**
- A. The preface to the Ten Commandments is in these words: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."
- Q. 44. What does the preface to the Ten Commandments teach us?**
- A. The preface to the Ten Commandments teaches us that because God is the Lord, and our God and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.
- Q. 45. What is the First Commandment?**
- A. The First Commandment is, "You shall have no other gods before me."
- Q. 46. What is required in the First Commandment?**

- A. The First Commandment requires us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.
- Q. 47. What is forbidden in the First Commandment?**
- A. The First Commandment forbids the denying, or not worshiping and glorifying, the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other which is due to him alone.
- Q. 48. What are we specially taught by these words, "before me," in the First Commandment?**
- A. These words, "before me," in the First Commandment teach us that God, who sees all things, takes notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other god.
- Q. 49. What is the Second Commandment?**
- A. The Second Commandment is, "You shall not make for yourselves any graven 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, nor serve them: for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of those who love me, and keep my commandments."
- Q. 50. What is required in the Second Commandment?**
- A. The Second Commandment requires the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word.
- Q. 51. What is forbidden in the Second Commandment?**
- A. The Second Commandment forbids the worshiping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.
- Q. 52. What are the reasons annexed to the Second Commandment?**
- A. The reasons annexed to the Second Commandment are: God's sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he has toward his own worship.
- Q. 53. 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 anyone guiltless who takes his name in vain."
- Q. 54. What is required in the Third Commandment?**
- A. The Third Commandment requires the holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works.
- Q. 55. What is forbidden in the Third Commandment?**
- A. The Third Commandment forbids all profaning or abusing of anything by which God makes himself known.
- Q. 56. What is the reason annexed to the Third Commandment?**

A. The reason annexed to the Third Commandment is that, however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from humans, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.

Q. 57. What is the Fourth Commandment?

A. The Fourth Commandment is, "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days shall you labor, and do all your work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God: in it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor the foreigner that is within your gates: for six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and made it holy."

Q. 58. What is required in the Fourth Commandment?

A. The Fourth Commandment requires the keeping holy to God such set times as he has appointed in his word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself.

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

A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath.

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

A. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.

Q. 61. What is forbidden in the Fourth Commandment?

A. The Fourth Commandment forbids the omission, or careless performance, of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.

Q. 62. What are the reasons annexed to the Fourth Commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the Fourth Commandment are: God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the Sabbath Day.

Q. 63. 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 which the Lord your God is giving to you."

Q. 64. What is required in the Fifth Commandment?

- A. The Fifth Commandment requires the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to everyone in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.
- Q. 65. What is forbidden in the Fifth Commandment?**
- A. The Fifth Commandment forbids the neglecting of, or doing anything against, the honor and duty which belongs to everyone in their several places and relations.
- Q. 66. What is the reason annexed to the Fifth Commandment?**
- A. The reason annexed to the Fifth Commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory, and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.
- Q. 67. What is the Sixth Commandment?**
- A. The Sixth Commandment is, "You shall not kill."
- Q. 68. What is required in the Sixth Commandment?**
- A. The Sixth Commandment requires all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others.
- Q. 69. What is forbidden in the Sixth Commandment?**
- A. The Sixth Commandment forbids the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor unjustly, or anything that tends to such ends.
- Q. 70. What is the Seventh Commandment?**
- A. The Seventh Commandment is, "You shall not commit adultery."
- Q. 71. What is required in the Seventh Commandment?**
- A. The Seventh Commandment requires the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech, and behavior.
- Q. 72. What is forbidden in the Seventh Commandment?**
- A. The Seventh Commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.
- Q. 73. What is the Eighth Commandment?**
- A. The Eighth Commandment is, "You shall not steal."
- Q. 74. What is required in the Eighth Commandment?**
- A. The Eighth Commandment requires the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.
- Q. 75. What is forbidden in the Eighth Commandment?**
- A. The Eighth Commandment forbids whatsoever does, or may, unjustly hinder our own, or our neighbor's, wealth or outward estate.
- Q. 76. What is the Ninth Commandment?**
- A. The Ninth Commandment is, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."
- Q. 77. What is required in the Ninth Commandment?**

- A. The Ninth Commandment requires the maintaining and promoting of truth between one another, and of our own and our neighbor's good name, especially in witness-bearing.
- Q. 78. What is forbidden in the Ninth Commandment?**
- A. The Ninth Commandment forbids whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbor's good name.
- Q. 79. Which is the Tenth Commandment?**
- A. The Tenth Commandment is, "You shall not covet thy neighbor's house, you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is your neighbor's."
- Q. 80. What is required in the Tenth Commandment?**
- A. The Tenth Commandment requires full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor and all that is his.
- Q. 81. What is forbidden in the Tenth Commandment?**
- A. The Tenth Commandment forbids all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is our neighbor's.
- Q. 82. Is anyone able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?**
- A. No mere human, since the Fall, is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but daily breaks them, in thought, word, and deed.
- Q. 83. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?**
- A. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.
- Q. 84. What does every sin deserve?**
- A. Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come.
- Q. 85. What does God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse, due to us for sin?**
- A. To escape the wrath and curse of God, due to us for sin, God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means by which Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption.
- Q. 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ?**
- A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, by which we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.
- Q. 87. What is repentance unto life?**
- A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, by which a sinner, out of a true recognition of sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, does, with grief and hatred of this sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.

- Q. 88. What are the outward means by which Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption?**
- A. The outward and ordinary means by which Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer, all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.
- Q. 89. How is the word made effectual to salvation?**
- A. The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching, of the word an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation.
- Q. 90. How is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?**
- A. That the word may become effectual to salvation we must attend to it with diligence, preparation, and prayer; receive it with faith and love; lay it up in our hearts; and practice it in our lives.
- Q. 91. How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?**
- A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in the one who administers them, but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.
- Q. 92. What is a sacrament?**
- A. A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ in which, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.
- Q. 93. Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?**
- A. The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord's supper.
- Q. 94. What is baptism?**
- A. Baptism is a sacrament in which the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, signifies and seals our ingrafting into Christ, our partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.
- Q. 95. To whom is baptism to be administered?**
- A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, until they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.
- Q. 96. What is the Lord's supper?**
- A. The Lord's supper is a sacrament in which, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.
- Q. 97. What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's supper?**

A. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's supper that they examine themselves, of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

Q. 98. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

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

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

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

A. The preface of the Lord's Prayer, which is, "Our Father in heaven," teaches us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.

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

A. In the first petition, which is, "Hallowed be your name," we pray that God would enable us, and others, to glorify him in all the ways he makes himself known, and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

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

A. In the second petition, which is, "Your kingdom come," we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

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

A. In the third petition, which is, "Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," we pray that God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

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

A. In the fourth petition, which is, "Give us this day our daily bread," we pray that, of God's free gift, we may receive a sufficient portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.

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

A. In the fifth petition, which is, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," we pray that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are then rather encouraged to ask because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

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

A. In the sixth petition, which is, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

Q. 107. 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 take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him; and in testimony of our desire and assurance to be heard, we say, "Amen."

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS EXODUS, CH. 20

And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

I. You shall have no other gods before me.

II. 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.

III. 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.

IV. 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.

V. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

VI. You shall not murder.

VII. You shall not commit adultery.

VIII. You shall not steal.

IX. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

X. 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.

THE LORD'S PRAYER MATTHEW, CH. 6

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.

The Westminster Larger Catechism

- Q. 1. What is the chief and highest end of man?**
A. The chief and highest end of man is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever.
- Q. 2. How does it appear that there is a God?**
A. The very light of nature in humanity, and the works of God, declare plainly that there is a God; but his word and Spirit only, do sufficiently and effectually reveal him unto humanity for their salvation.
- Q. 3. What is the word of God?**
A. The holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience.
- Q. 4. How does it appear that the Scriptures are the word of God?**
A. The Scriptures manifest themselves to be the word of God, by their majesty and purity; by the consistency of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God; by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation. But the Spirit of God, bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in the human heart, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very word of God.
- Q. 5. What do the Scriptures principally teach?**
A. The Scriptures principally teach, what people are to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of people.
- Q. 6. What do the Scriptures make known of God?**
A. The Scriptures make known what God is, the persons in the Godhead, his decrees, and the execution of his decrees.

What People Ought to Believe Concerning 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, everywhere present, 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 but one only, 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; and these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties.
- Q. 10. What are the personal properties of the three persons in the Godhead?**

- A. It is proper to the Father to beget his Son, and 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 does it appear that the Son and the Holy Spirit are equal with the Father?**
- A. The Scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Spirit are God equal with the Father, ascribing unto them such names, attributes, works, and worship, as are proper to God only.
- 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, whereby, from all eternity, he has, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and humanity.
- Q. 13. What has God especially decreed concerning angels and humans?**
- A. God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, has elected some angels to glory; and, in Christ, has chosen some people to eternal life, and the means thereof; and also, according to his sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will (whereby he extends or withholds favor as he pleases) has passed by, and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice.
- Q. 14. How does God execute his decrees?**
- A. God executes 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 that God did in the beginning, by the word of his power, make of nothing, the world and all things in it for himself, within the space of six days, and all very good.
- Q. 16. How did God create angels?**
- A. God created all the angels, spirits, immortal, holy, excelling in knowledge, mighty in power, to execute his commandments, and to praise his name, yet subject to change.
- Q. 17. How did God create humanity?**
- A. After God had made all other creatures, he created humanity, male and female; formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground, and the woman of the side of man; endued them with living, rational, and immortal souls; made them after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, having the law of God written in their hearts, and 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 preserving, and governing all his creatures; ordering them, and all their actions, to his own glory.

- Q. 19. What is God's providence toward the angels?**
A. God by his providence permitted some of the angels, willfully and irrecoverably, to fall into sin and damnation, limiting and ordering their fall, and all their sins, to his own glory; and established the rest 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 humanity in the estate in which it was created?**
A. The providence of God toward humanity in the estate in which it was created was, the placing them in paradise, appointing them to dress it, giving them liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth, putting the creatures under their dominion, ordaining marriage for their help, affording their communion with himself, and instituting the Sabbath; entering into a covenant of life with them, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience, of which the tree of life was a pledge; and forbidding to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.
- Q. 21. Did humanity continue in estate in which God at first created them?**
A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, through the temptation of Satan, transgressed the commandment of God, in eating the forbidden fruit, and so fell from the estate of innocence in which they were created.
- Q. 22. Did all humanity fall in that first transgression?**
A. The covenant being made with Adam, as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all humanity, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression.
- Q. 23. Into what estate did the Fall bring humanity?**
A. The Fall brought humanity into an estate of sin and misery.
- Q. 24. What is sin?**
A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.
- Q. 25. What comprises the sinfulness of that estate into which humanity fell?**
A. The sinfulness of that estate into which humanity fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness in which humanity was created, and the corruption of human nature, whereby humanity is utterly and continually indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil; which is commonly called original sin, and from which proceeds all actual transgressions.
- Q. 26. How is original sin conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity?**
A. Original sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so as all that proceed from them in that way, are conceived and born in sin.

- Q. 27. What misery did the Fall bring upon humanity?**
A. The Fall brought upon humanity the loss of communion with God, his displeasure and curse; so as we are by nature children of wrath, bond-slaves to Satan, and justly liable to all punishments in 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 blindness of mind, a reprobate sense, strong delusions, hardness of heart, horror of conscience, and vile affections; or outward, as the curse of God upon the creatures for our sake, and all other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments; 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 comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell fire forever.
- Q. 30. Does God leave all humanity to perish in the estate of sin and misery?**
A. God does not leave all people to perish in the estate of sin and misery, into which they fell by the breach of the first covenant, commonly called the covenant of works; but of his mere love and mercy delivers his elect out of it, and brings them into an estate of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called 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 in him with all the elect 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 him; and requiring faith as the condition to interest them in him, promises and gives his Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith, with all other saving graces; and to enable them for all holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their faith and of their thankfulness to God, and as the way which he has appointed them to 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, but the administrations of it under the Old Testament were different from those under the New.
- Q. 34. How was the covenant of grace administered under the Old Testament?**
A. The covenant of grace was administered under the Old Testament, by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the Passover, and other types and ordinances; which did all symbolically point toward Christ then to come, and were for that time sufficient to build up the elect 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 Testament?**
A. Under the New Testament, when Christ the substance was exhibited, 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 efficacy 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, in the fullness of time became human, and so was, and continues to be, God and human, in two entire distinct natures, and one person, forever.
- Q. 37. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become human?**
A. Christ, the Son of God, became human by taking to himself a true body, and a rational 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; that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death; give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience, and intercession; and to satisfy God's justice, procure his favor, purchase a peculiar 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 human?**
A. It was necessary that the mediator should be human; that he might advance our nature, perform obedience to the law, suffer and make intercession for us in our nature, have a fellow feeling of our infirmities; that we might receive the adoption of children, and have comfort and access with boldness unto the throne of grace.
- Q. 40. Why was it necessary that the mediator should be God and human in one person?**
A. It was necessary that the mediator who was to reconcile God and humanity, should himself be both God and human, and this in one person; that the proper works of each nature might be accepted of God for us, and relied on by us, as the works of the whole person.
- Q. 41. Why was our mediator called Jesus?**
A. Our mediator was called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins.
- Q. 42. Why was our mediator called Christ?**
A. Our mediator was called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure; and so set apart, and fully furnished with all authority and ability, to execute the office of prophet, priest, and king of his church, in the estate both of his humiliation and exaltation.
- Q. 43. How does Christ execute the office of a prophet?**

A. Christ executes the office of a prophet, in his revealing to the church in all ages, by his Spirit and word, in divers ways of administration, the whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation.

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

A. Christ executes the office of a priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice without spot to God, to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people; and in making continual intercession for them.

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

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

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

A. The estate of Christ's humiliation was that low condition, in which he, for our sakes, emptying himself of his glory, took upon him the form of a servant, in his conception and 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 of low estate, and to be born to her, with diverse 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 conflicting with the indignities of the world, temptations of Satan, and infirmities in his flesh; whether common to human nature, 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; having also conflicted with the terrors of death and the powers of darkness, felt and borne the weight of God's wrath, he laid down his life an offering for sin, enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross.

Q. 50. What was Christ's humiliation after his death?

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 been otherwise expressed in these words: "He descended into hell."

- Q. 51. What was the estate of Christ's exaltation?**
A. The estate of Christ's exaltation includes his resurrection, ascension, 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 (of which it was not possible for him to be held), and having the very same body in which he suffered, with the essential properties thereof (but without mortality and other common infirmities belonging to this life), really united to his soul, he rose again from the dead the third day by his own power; whereby 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 living and dead. All which he did as a public person, the head of his church, for their justification, quickening in grace, support against 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, after his resurrection, often appeared unto, and conversed with his apostles, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and giving them commission to preach the gospel to all nations; forty days after his resurrection, he, in our nature, and as our head, triumphing over enemies, visibly went up into the highest heavens, there to receive gifts for humans, to elevate our affections that direction, and to prepare a place for us, where himself is, and shall 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 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; and does gather and defend his church, and subdue their enemies; furnishes his ministers and people with gifts and graces, and makes intercession for them.
- Q. 55. How does Christ make intercession?**
A. Christ makes intercession, by his appearing in our nature continually before the Father in heaven, in the merit of his obedience and 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, notwithstanding daily failings, access with boldness to the throne of grace, and acceptance of their persons and services.
- 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 people, shall come again at the last day in great power, and in the full manifestation of his own glory, and of his Father's, 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.
- Q. 58. How do we come to be made partakers of the benefits which Christ has procured?**
 A. We are made partakers of the benefits which Christ has procured, by the application of them unto 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 in time by the Holy Spirit enabled to believe in Christ, according to the gospel.
- Q. 60. Can they who have never heard the gospel, and so know not Jesus Christ nor believe in him, be saved by their living according to the light of nature?**
 A. They who having never heard the gospel, know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in him, cannot be saved, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the laws of that religion which they profess; neither is there salvation in any other, but in Christ alone, who is the Savior only of his body the church.
- Q. 61. Are all they saved who hear the gospel, and live in the church?**
 A. All that hear the gospel, and live in the visible church, are not saved; but only they who are true members of the church invisible.
- Q. 62. What is the visible church?**
 A. The visible church is a society made up of all such as in all ages and places of the world do profess the true religion, and of their children.
- Q. 63. What are the special privileges of the visible church?**
 A. The visible church has the privilege of being under God's special care and government; of being protected and preserved in all ages, notwithstanding the opposition of all enemies; and of enjoying the communion of saints, the ordinary means of salvation, and offers of grace by Christ, to all members of it, in the ministry of the gospel, testifying that whosoever believes in him shall be saved, and excluding none that will come unto him.
- Q. 64. What is the invisible church?**
 A. The invisible church is the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ the head.
- Q. 65. What special benefits do the members of the invisible church enjoy by Christ?**
 A. The members of the invisible church, by Christ, enjoy union and communion with him in grace and glory.
- Q. 66. What is that union which the elect have with Christ?**
 A. The union which the elect have with Christ is the work of God's grace, whereby they are spiritually and mystically, yet really and inseparably, joined to Christ as their head and husband; which 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, whereby (out of his free and especial love to his elect, and from nothing in them moving him thereunto) he does in his accepted time invite and draw them to Jesus Christ, by his word and Spirit; savingly enlightening their minds, renewing and powerfully determining their wills, so as they (although in themselves dead in sin) are hereby made willing and able, freely to answer his call, and to accept and embrace the grace offered and conveyed within.
- Q. 68. Are the elect only effectually called?**
A. All the elect, and they only, are effectually called; although others may be, and often are, outwardly called by the ministry of the word, and have some common operations of the Spirit, who, for their willful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them, being justly left in their unbelief, do never 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 unto sinners, in which he pardons all their sin, accepts and accounts their persons righteous in his sight; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them and received by faith alone.
- Q. 71. How is justification an act of God's free grace?**
A. Although Christ by his obedience and death, did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in the behalf of them that are justified: yet inasmuch as God accepts the satisfaction from a surety, which he might have demanded of them; and did provide this surety, his only Son, imputing his righteousness to them, and requiring nothing of them for their justification, but faith, which also is his gift, their justification is to them of free grace.
- Q. 72. What is justifying faith?**
A. Justifying faith is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner, by the Spirit and the word of God; whereby sinners, being convinced of sin and misery, and of the disability in themselves and all other creatures to recover them out of their lost condition, not only assents to the truth of the promise of the gospel, but receives and rests upon Christ and his righteousness there held forth, for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting of one's own person righteous in the sight of God for 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 do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it; nor as if the grace of faith, or any other act, were imputed to the sinner for justification; but only as it is an instrument, by which the sinner 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, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the Spirit of his Son given to them, are under his Fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the children of God, 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, whereby they, whom God has, before the foundation of the world, chosen to be holy, are, in time, through the powerful operation of his Spirit, applying the death and resurrection of Christ unto them, renewed in their whole person after the image of God; having the seeds of repentance unto life, and all other saving graces, put into their hearts, and those graces so stirred up, increased and strengthened, as that they more and more die unto sin, and rise into newness of life.

Q. 76. What is repentance unto life?

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and word of God, whereby out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of one's sins, and upon the apprehension of God's mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, the sinner so grieves for, and hates one's sins, that the sinner turns from them all to God, purposing and endeavoring constantly to walk with him in all the ways of new obedience.

Q. 77. Wherein do justification and sanctification differ?

A. Although sanctification is inseparably joined with justification, yet they differ in that God, in justification, imputes the righteousness of Christ; in sanctification, his Spirit infuses grace, and enables its exercise; in the former, sin is pardoned; in the other, it is subdued; the one does equally free all believers from the revenging wrath of God, and that perfectly in this life, that they never fall into condemnation; the other is neither equal in all, nor in this life perfect in any, but growing up to perfection.

Q. 78. Whence arises the imperfection of sanctification in believers?

A. The imperfection of sanctification in believers arises from the remnants of sin abiding in every part of them, and the perpetual lusting of the flesh against the Spirit; whereby they are often foiled with temptations, and fall into many sins, are hindered in all their spiritual service, and their best works are imperfect and defiled in the sight of God.

Q. 79. May not true believers, by reason of their imperfections, and the many temptations and sins they are overtaken with, fall away from the state of grace?

- A. True believers, by reason of the unchangeable love of God, and 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, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.
- Q. 80. Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and that they shall persevere in it unto salvation?**
- A. Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavor to walk in all good conscience before him, may, without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded upon 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, and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and shall persevere in it unto salvation.
- Q. 81. Are all true believers at all times assured of their present being in the estate of grace, and that they shall be saved?**
- A. Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith, true believers may wait long before they obtain it; and, after the enjoyment of it, may have it weakened and intermitted, through manifold distempers, sins, temptations, and desertions; yet are they never left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God, as keeps them from sinking into utter despair.
- Q. 82. What is the communion in glory which the members of the invisible church have with Christ?**
- A. The communion in glory which the members of the invisible church have with Christ, is in this life, immediately after death, and at last perfected at the resurrection and day of judgment.
- Q. 83. What is the communion in glory with Christ, which 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, as they are members of him their head, and so in him are interested in that glory which he is fully possessed of; and as an earnest, enjoy the sense of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, and hope of glory. As, on the contrary, the sense of God's revenging wrath, horror of conscience, and a fearful expectation of judgment, are to the wicked the beginning of the torment which they shall endure after death.
- Q. 84. Shall all people die?**
- A. Death being threatened as the wages of sin, it is appointed unto all people once to die; for all have sinned.
- Q. 85. Death being the wages of sin, why are not the righteous delivered from death, seeing all their sins are forgiven in Christ?**

- A. The righteous shall be delivered from death itself at the last day, and even in death are delivered from the sting and curse of it; so that although they die, yet it is out of God's love, to free them perfectly from sin and misery, and to make them capable of further communion with Christ in glory, which they then enter upon.
- Q. 86. What is the communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death?**
- A. The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death, is in that their souls are then 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 at the last day they be again united to their souls. Whereas the souls of the wicked are at their death cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness; and their bodies kept in their graves, as in their 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 shall be a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; when they that are then found alive shall in a moment be changed; and the selfsame bodies of the dead which are laid in the grave, being then again united to their souls forever, shall be 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, shall be raised in power, spiritual, and incorruptible, and made like to his glorious body: and the bodies of the wicked shall be raised up in dishonor by him as an offended judge.
- Q. 88. What shall immediately follow after the resurrection?**
- A. Immediately after the resurrection shall follow the general and final judgment of angels and humans, the day and hour of which no one knows, that all may watch and pray, and be ever ready for the coming of the Lord.
- Q. 89. What shall be done to the wicked at the day of judgment?**
- A. At the day of judgment, the wicked shall be set on Christ's left hand, and upon clear evidence, and full conviction of their own consciences, shall have the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them; and thereupon shall be cast out from the favorable presence of God, and the glorious fellowship with Christ, his saints, and all his holy angels, into hell, to be punished with unspeakable torments both of body and soul, with the devil and his angels forever.
- Q. 90. What shall 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, shall be set on his right hand, and, there openly acknowledged and acquitted, shall join with him in the judging of reprobate angels and humans; and shall be received into heaven, where they shall be fully and forever freed from all sin and misery; filled with inconceivable joy; made perfectly holy and happy both in body and soul, in the company of innumerable saints and angels, but especially in the immediate vision

and fruition of God the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, to all eternity. And this is the perfect and full communion, which the members of the invisible church shall enjoy with Christ in glory, at the resurrection and day of judgment.

Having Seen What the Scriptures Principally Teach Us to Believe Concerning God, It Follows to Consider What They Require as the Duty of Humanity

Q. 91. What is the duty which God requires of humanity?

A. The duty which God requires of humanity is obedience to his revealed will.

Q. 92. What did God at first reveal unto humanity as the rule of his obedience?

A. The rule of obedience revealed to Adam in the estate of innocence, and to all humanity in him, besides a special command, not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, was the moral law.

Q. 93. What is the moral law?

A. The moral law is the declaration of the will of God to humanity, directing and binding everyone to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience, in the frame and disposition of the whole person, soul and body, and in performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which one owes to God and fellow humanity: promising life upon the fulfilling, and threatening death upon the breach of it.

Q. 94. Is there any use of the moral law to people since the Fall?

A. Although no one since the Fall can attain to righteousness and life by the moral law, yet it has great use, as well common to all people, as particularly either to the unregenerate, or the regenerate.

Q. 95. Of what use is the moral law to all people?

A. The moral law is of use to all people, to inform them of the holy nature and will of God, and of their duty binding them to walk accordingly; to convince them of their disability to keep it, and of the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts, and lives, to humble them in the sense of their sin and misery, and so 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 the wrath to come, and to drive them to Christ; or, upon their continuance in the estate and way of sin, to leave them inexcusable, and under the curse thereof.

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

A. Although they that are regenerate and believe in Christ are delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so as thereby they are neither justified nor condemned: yet, besides the general uses of it 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 enduring its curse, in their stead and for their good; and thereby to provoke them to more

thankfulness, and to express the same in their greater care to conform themselves thereunto as the rule of their obedience.

Q. 98. Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments, which were delivered by the voice of God upon Mount Sinai, and written by him on two tables of stone; and are recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus; the first four commandments containing our duty to God, and the other six our duty to other people.

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 binds everyone to full conformity in the whole person unto its righteousness, and unto 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 so reaches the understanding, will, affections, and all other powers of the soul; as well as words, works, and gestures.

3. That one and the same thing, in diverse respects, is required or forbidden in several commandments.

4. That as, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden; and where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded; so, where a promise is attached, the contrary threatening is included; and where a threatening is attached, the contrary promise is included.

5. That what God forbids, is at no time to be done; what he commands is always our duty; and yet every particular duty is not 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, and provocations associated with it.

7. That what is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, according to our places, to endeavor that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to the duty of their places.

8. That in what is commanded to others, we are bound, according to our places and callings, to be helpful to them: and to take heed of partaking with others in what is forbidden them.

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

A. We are to consider in the Ten Commandments: the preface, the substances of the commandments themselves, and the several reasons attached to some of them the more to enforce them.

- Q. 101. What is the preface to the Ten Commandments?**
- A. The preface to the Ten Commandments is contained in these words: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." (Exodus 20:2) Here God manifests his sovereignty, as being Yahweh, the eternal, immutable, and almighty God; having his being in and of himself, and giving being to all his words and works; and that he is a God in covenant, as with Israel of old, so with all his people; who as he brought them out of their bondage in Egypt, so he delivered us from our spiritual slavery; and that therefore we are bound to take him for our God alone, and to keep all his commandments.
- Q. 102. What is the sum of the four Commandments which contain our duty to God?**
- A. The sum 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. Which is the First Commandment?**
- A. The First Commandment is, "You shall have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:3)
- Q. 104. What are the duties required in the First Commandment?**
- A. The duties required in the First Commandment are: the knowing and acknowledging of God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly; by thinking, meditating, remembering, highly esteeming, honoring, adoring, choosing, loving, desiring, fearing of him; believing him; trusting, hoping, delighting, rejoicing in him; being zealous for him; calling upon him, giving all praise and thanks, and yielding all obedience and submission to him with the whole person; being careful in all things to please him, and sorrowful when in anything he is offended; 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: atheism, in denying or not having a God; idolatry, in having or worshiping more gods than one, or any with, or instead of the true God; the not having and vouching him for God, and our God; the omission or neglect of anything due to him, required in this commandment; ignorance, forgetfulness, misapprehensions, false opinions, unworthy and wicked thoughts of him; bold and curious inquiries into his secrets; all profaneness, hatred of God, self-love, self-seeking, and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of our mind, will, or affections upon other things, and taking them off from him in whole or in part; vain credulity, unbelief, heresy, misbelief, distrust, despair, incorrigibleness, and insensibleness under judgments, hardness of heart, pride, presumption, carnal security, tempting of God; using unlawful means, and trusting in lawful means; carnal 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 humans the lords of our faith and conscience; slighting and despising God, and his commands; resisting

and grieving of 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, we either are, have, or can do, to fortune, idols, ourselves, or any other creature.

Q. 106. What are we especially taught by these words “before me,” in the First Commandment?

A. These 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 much displeased with, the sin of having any other God; that so it may be an argument to dissuade from it, and to aggravate it as a most impudent provocation; as also to persuade us to do as in his sight, whatever we do in his service.

Q. 107. Which 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 upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing mercy to thousands of those who love me, and keep my commandments.” (Exodus 20:5)

Q. 108. What are the duties required in the Second Commandment?

A. The duties required in the Second Commandment are: the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God has instituted in his word; particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ; the reading, preaching, and hearing of the word; the administration and receiving of the sacraments; church government and discipline; the ministry and maintenance of them; religious fasting; swearing by the name of God; and vowing unto him: as also the disapproving, detesting, opposing all false worship; and, according to each one’s place and calling, removing it, 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: all devising, counseling, commanding, using, and any way approving any religious worship not instituted by God himself; the 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 whatsoever; all worshiping of it, or God in it or by it; the making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them; all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretense whatsoever; simony, sacrilege; all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God has appointed.

Q. 110. What are the reasons attached to the Second Commandment, the more to enforce it?

A. The reasons attached to the Second Commandment, the more to enforce it, contained in these words, “for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing mercy to thousands of those who love me, and keep my commandments” (Exodus 20:5) are, besides God’s sovereignty over us, and propriety in us, his revengeful indignation against all false worship, as being a spiritual whoredom; accounting the breakers of this Commandment such as hate him, and threatening to punish them unto divers generations, and esteeming the observers of it such as love him and keep his commandments, and promising mercy to them unto 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.” (Exodus 20:7)

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 whatsoever else there is whereby he makes himself known, be holily and reverently used in thought, meditation, word, and writing; by an holy profession, and answerable conversation, 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 not using of God’s name as is required; and the abuse of it in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious, or wicked mentioning or otherwise using the titles, attributes, ordinances, or works; by blasphemy; perjury; all sinful cursing, oaths, vows, and lots; violating our oaths and vows, if lawful; and fulfilling them, if of things unlawful; murmuring and quarreling at, curious prying into, and misapplying of God’s decrees and providence; misinterpreting, misapplying, or any way perverting the word, or any part of it, to profane jests, curious and unprofitable questions, vain grumbings, or the maintaining of false doctrines; abusing it, the creatures, or anything contained under the name of God, to charms, or sinful lusts and practices; the maligning, scorning, reviling, or any way opposing of God’s truth, grace, and ways; making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends; being ashamed of it, or a shame to it, by uncomfortable, unwise, unfruitful, and offensive walking or backsliding from it.

Q. 114. What reasons are attached to the Third Commandment?

A. The reasons attached to the Third Commandment, is these words, “the LORD your God,” and, “for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain,” (Exodus 20:7) are because he is the Lord and our God, therefore his name is not to be profaned, or any way abused by us; especially because he will be so far from acquitting and sparing the transgressors of this Commandment, as that he will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment, albeit many do escape the censures and punishments of humans.

Q. 115. Which 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 the Sabbath of 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 in them is, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and made it holy." (Exodus 20:8–11)

Q. 116. What is required in the Fourth Commandment?

A. The Fourth Commandment requires of all people the sanctifying or keeping 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, and so to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian Sabbath, and in the New Testament 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 a holy resting all that day, not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful; and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy) in the public and private exercise of God's worship. And, to that end, we are to prepare our hearts, and with such foresight, diligence, and moderation, to dispose, and seasonably to dispatch our worldly business, that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of the day.

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

A. The charge of keeping the Sabbath is more specially directed to governors of families and other superiors, because they are bound not only to keep it themselves, but to see that it be observed by all those that are under their charge; and because they are prone often to hinder them by employments of their own.

Q. 119. What are the sins forbidden in the Fourth Commandment?

A. The sins in the Fourth Commandment are: all omissions of the duties required, all careless, negligent, and unprofitable performing of them, and being weary of them; all profaning the day by idleness, and 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 attached to the Fourth Commandment, the more to enforce it?

A. The reasons attached to the Fourth Commandment, the more to enforce it, are taken from the equity of it, God allowing us six days of seven for our own affairs, and reserving but one for himself, in these words, "Six days you shall labor, and do all your work;" from God's challenging a special propriety in that day. "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God;" from the example of God who "in six days ...

made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day"; and from that blessing which God put upon that day, not only in sanctifying it to be a holy day for his service, but in 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 in the beginning of the Fourth Commandment?

A. The word "remember" is set in the beginning of the Fourth Commandment, partly because of the great benefit of remembering it, we being thereby helped in our preparation to keep it; and, in keeping it, better to keep all the rest of the Commandments and to continue a thankful remembrance of the two great benefits of creation and redemption, which contain a short abridgment of religion: and partly because we are ready to forget it, for that there is less light of nature for it, and yet it restrains our natural liberty in things at other times lawful; that it comes but once in seven days, and many worldly businesses come between, and too often take off our minds from thinking of it, either to prepare for it, or to sanctify it; and that Satan with his instruments much labor to blot out the glory, and even the memory of it, and to bring in all irreligion and impiety.

Q. 122. What is the sum of the six Commandments which contain our duty to other people?

A. The sum of the six Commandments which contain our duty to other people is, to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to do to others what we would have them to do to us.

Q. 123. Which 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" (Exodus 20:12).

Q. 124. Who are meant by "father" and "mother," in the Fifth Commandment?

A. By "father" and "mother" in the Fifth Commandment, are meant not only natural parents, but all superiors in age and gifts; and especially such as by God's ordinance are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth.

Q. 125. Why are superiors styled "father" and "mother"?

A. Superiors are styled "father" and "mother" both to teach them in all duties towards their inferiors, like natural parents, to express love and tenderness to them, according to their several relations, and to work inferiors to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to their superiors, 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 which we mutually owe in our several relations, as inferiors, superiors, or equals.

Q. 127. What is the honor which inferiors owe to superiors?

A. The honor which inferiors owe to their superiors is: 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 and maintenance of their persons and authority, according to their several ranks, and the nature of their places; bearing with their

infirmities, and covering them in love, that they may be an honor to them and to their government.

Q. 128. What are the sins of inferiors against their superiors?

A. The sins of inferiors against their superiors are: all neglect of the duties required toward them; envying at, contempt of, and rebellion against their persons and places, in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections; cursing, mocking, and all such refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame and dishonor to them and their government.

Q. 129. What is required of superiors towards their inferiors?

A. It is required of superiors, according to that power they receive from God, and that relation wherein they stand, to love, pray for, and bless their inferiors; to instruct, counsel, and admonish them; countenancing, commending, and rewarding such as do well; and discountenancing, reproving, and chastising such as do ill; protecting, and providing for them all things necessary for soul and body; and, by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary carriage, to procure glory to God, honor to themselves, and so to preserve that authority which God has put upon them.

Q. 130. What are the sins of superiors?

A. The sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them an inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit or pleasure; commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform; counseling, encouraging, or favoring them in that which is evil; dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; correcting them unduly; careless exposing or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger; provoking them to wrath; or any way dishonoring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behavior.

Q. 131. What are the duties of equals?

A. The duties of equals are: to regard the dignity and worth of each other, in giving honor to go one before another, and to rejoice in each other's gifts and advancement as their own.

Q. 132. What are the sins of equals?

A. The sins of equals are, besides the neglect of the duties required, the undervaluing of the worth, envying the gifts, grieving at the advancement or prosperity one of another, and usurping preeminence one over another.

Q. 133. What is the reason attached to the Fifth Commandment the more to enforce it?

A. The reason attached to the Fifth Commandment in these words, "that your days may be long in the land which the LORD your God is giving you," is an express promise of long life and prosperity, as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good, to all such as keep this Commandment.

Q. 134. Which is the Sixth Commandment?

A. The Sixth Commandment is, "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13).

Q. 135. What are the duties required in the Sixth Commandment?

A. The duties required in the Sixth Commandment are: all careful studies 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 life of any; by just defense against violence; patient bearing of the hand of God, quietness of mind, cheerfulness of spirit, a sober use of meat, drink, medicine, sleep, labor, and recreation; by charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable, mild, and courteous speeches and behavior, forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and returning good for evil; comforting and succoring 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: all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defense; the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful or necessary means of preservation of life; sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge; all excessive passions; distracting cares; immoderate use of meat, drink, labor, and recreation; provoking words; oppression, quarreling, striking, wounding, and whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.

Q. 137. Which is the Seventh Commandment?

A. The Seventh Commandment is, "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:13).

Q. 138. What are the duties required in the Seventh Commandment?

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

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: adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections; all corrupt or filthy communications, or exposure to them; wanton looks, impudent or light behavior, immodest apparel, prohibiting of lawful, and dispensing with unlawful marriages; allowing, tolerating, keeping of brothels, and resorting to them; entangling vows of single life, undue delay of marriage; having more wives or husbands than one at the same time; unjust divorce or desertion; idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company; lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancing, theater plays, and all other provocations to, or acts of, uncleanness either in ourselves or others.

Q. 140. Which is the Eighth Commandment?

A. The Eighth Commandment is, "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15).

Q. 141. What are the duties required in the Eighth Commandment?

A. The duties required in the Eighth Commandment are: truth, faithfulness, and justice in contracts and commerce between people; rendering to everyone their due; restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners of them; giving and lending freely, according to our abilities, and the necessities of others; moderation of our judgments, wills, and affections, concerning worldly goods; a provident care and study to get, keep, use, and dispose of those things which are necessary and convenient for the sustenance of our nature, and suitable to our condition; a lawful calling, and a diligence in it; frugality; avoiding unnecessary lawsuits, and unjust obligations, or other like engagements; and an endeavor by all just and lawful means to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward estate of others, as well 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 duties required, are: theft, robbery, human trafficking, and receiving anything that is stolen; fraudulent dealing, false weights and measures, removing landmarks, injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts between people, or in matters of trust; oppression, extortion, usury, bribery, vexatious lawsuits, unjust enclosures and depopulations; engrossing commodities to enhance the price, unlawful callings, and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbors what belongs to them, or of enriching ourselves; covetousness, inordinate prizing and desiring worldly goods; distrustful and distracting cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using them; envying at the prosperity of others; as likewise idleness, prodigality, wasteful gaming, and all other ways whereby we do unduly prejudice our own outward estate; and defrauding ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate which God has given us.

Q. 143. Which is the Ninth Commandment?

A. The Ninth Commandment is, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" (Exodus 20:16).

Q. 144. What are the duties required in the Ninth Commandment?

A. The duties required in the Ninth Commandment are: the preserving and promoting of truth between people, and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own; appearing and standing for the truth; and 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 whatsoever; a charitable esteem of our neighbors, loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities; freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocence; a ready receiving of good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report concerning them; discouraging gossips, flatterers, and slanderers; love and care of our own good name, and defending it when need requires; keeping of lawful promises; studying and practicing of whatsoever 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: all prejudicing of the truth, and the good name of our neighbors as well as our own, especially in public adjudication; giving false evidence, suborning false witnesses, wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause, outfacing and overbearing the truth; passing unjust sentence, calling evil good, and good evil; rewarding the wicked according to the work of the righteous, and the righteous according to the work of the wicked; forgery, concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause, and holding our peace when iniquity calls for either a reproof from ourselves, or complaint to others; speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong meaning, or in doubtful and equivocal expression, to the prejudice of truth or justice; speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, gossiping, whispering, scoffing, reviling; rash, harsh, and partial censuring; misconstruing intentions, words, and actions; flattering, vainglorious boasting, thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others; denying the gifts and graces of God; aggravating smaller faults; hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession; unnecessarily discovering of infirmities; raising false rumors; receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defense; evil suspicion; envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any; endeavoring or desiring to impair it, rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy; scornful contempt, fond admiration, breach of lawful promises; neglecting such things as are of good report; and practicing or not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering what we can in others, such things as procure an ill name.

Q. 146. Which 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" (Exodus 20:17).

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 frame of the whole soul towards our neighbors, as that all our inward motions and affections touching them, tend toward and further all that good which is theirs.

Q. 148. What are the sins forbidden in the Tenth Commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the Tenth Commandment are: discontentment with our own estate; envying, and grieving at the good of our neighbors, together with all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is theirs.

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

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

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

A. All transgressions of the law of God are not equally heinous; but some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

Q. 151. What are those aggravations that make some sins more heinous than others?

A. Sins receive their aggravations,

1. From the persons offending: if they be of riper age, greater experience, or grace; eminent for profession, gifts, place, office, guides to others, and whose example is likely to be followed by others.

2. From the parties offended: if immediately against God, his attributes, and worship; against Christ, and his grace: the Holy Spirit, his witness, and workings; against superiors, eminent persons, and such as we stand especially related and engaged unto; against any of the saints, particularly weak brethren, the souls of them or any other; and the common good of all or many.

3. From the nature and quality of the offense: if it be against the express letter of the law, break many commandments, contain in it many sins: if not only conceived in the heart, but break forth in words and actions, scandalize others, and admit no reparation: if against means, mercies, judgments, light of nature, conviction of conscience, public or private admonition, censures of the church, civil punishments; and our prayers, purposes, promises, vows, covenants, and engagements to God or people: if done deliberately, willfully, presumptuously, impudently, boastingly, maliciously, frequently, obstinately, with light, continuance, or relapsing after repentance.

4. From 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 to prevent or remedy such miscarriages; if in public, or in the presence of others, who are thereby likely to be provoked or defiled.

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 that which is to come; and cannot be expiated but by the blood of Christ.

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

A. That we may escape the wrath and curse of God due to us by reason of the transgression of the law, he requires of us repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and the diligent use of the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of his mediation.

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

A. The outward and ordinary means, whereby Christ communicates to his church the benefits of his mediation, are all his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer, all which are made effectual to the elect for their salvation.

- Q. 155. How is the word made effectual to salvation?**
A. The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners, of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto 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 establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.
- Q. 156. Is the word of God to be read by all?**
A. Although all are not permitted to read the word publicly to the congregation, yet all sorts of people are bound to read it apart by themselves, and with their families; to which end, the Holy Scriptures are to be translated out of the original into the language of every people unto whom they come.
- 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 of them; with a firm persuasion that they are the very word of God, and that he only can enable us to understand them; with desire to know, believe, and obey, the will of God revealed in them; with diligence, and attention to the matter and scope of them; 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 to be preached only by such as 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 that are called to preach it?**
A. They that 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 word of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; faithfully, making known the whole counsel of God; wisely, applying themselves to the necessities and capacities of the hearers; zealously, with fervent love to God, and the souls of his people; sincerely, aiming at his glory, and their conversion, edification, and salvation.
- Q. 160. What is required of those that hear the word preached?**
A. It is required of those that hear the word preached, that they attend upon it with diligence, preparation, and prayer; examine what they hear by the Scriptures; receive the truth with faith, love, meekness, and readiness of mind, as the word of God; meditate, and confer with others about it; hide it in their hearts, and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives.
- 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 the one 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 unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of his mediation; to strengthen and increase their faith and all other graces; to oblige them to obedience; to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another, and to distinguish them from those that are without.

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

A. The parts of a sacrament are two: the one, an outward and sensible sign used according to Christ's own appointment; the other, an inward and spiritual grace thereby signified.

Q. 164. How many sacraments has Christ instituted under the New Testament?

A. Under the New Testament Christ has instituted in his church only two sacraments, baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

Q. 165. What is baptism?

A. Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, 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 ingrafting into himself, of remission of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit; of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life: and whereby the parties 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. Unto whom is baptism to be administered?

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers from the covenant of promise, until they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but infants descending from parents, either both or only one of them, professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are, in that respect, within the covenant, and are to be baptized.

Q. 167. How is our baptism to be improved by us?

A. The needful but much neglected duty of improving our baptism, is to be performed by us all our life long, especially in the time of temptation, and when we are present at the administration of it to others, by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed by it, and our solemn vow made in it; by being humbled for our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to, the grace of baptism and our engagements; by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament; by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin, and quickening of grace; and by endeavoring to live by faith, to have our conversation in holiness and righteousness, as those that have given up their names to Christ, and to walk in familial love, as being 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 Testament, in which by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the appointment of Jesus Christ, his death is showed forth; and they that worthily communicate, feed upon his body and blood to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace; have their union and communion with him confirmed; testify and renew their thankfulness and engagement to God, and their mutual love and fellowship each with other, as members of the same mystical body.

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

A. Christ has appointed the ministers of his word in the administration of this sacrament of the Lord's supper, to set apart the bread and wine from common use by the word of institution, thanksgiving, and prayer; to take and break the bread, and to give both the bread and the wine to the communicants; who are by the same appointment to take and eat the bread, and to drink the wine; in thankful remembrance that the body of Christ was broken and given, and his blood shed for them.

Q. 170. How do they that worthily communicate in the Lord's supper feed upon the body and blood of Christ?

A. As the body and the blood of Christ are not corporally or carnally 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; so they that worthily communicate in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, do feed upon the body and blood of Christ, not after a corporal or carnal, but in a spiritual manner; yet truly and really, while by faith they receive and apply unto themselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death.

Q. 171. How are they that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper to prepare themselves before they come unto it?

A. They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves for it; by examining themselves, their being in Christ, their sins and wants; the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance, love to God and the body of Christ, charity to all people, forgiving those that have done them wrong; their desires after Christ, and their 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 due preparation, come to the Lord's supper?

A. One who doubts of being in Christ, or of due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, may have true interest in Christ, though not yet be assured of that interest; and in God's account has it, if such a person is duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desirous to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity; in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians) this person is to bewail their unbelief, and labor to have their doubts resolved; and so doing, such a

person may and ought to come to the Lord's supper, that they may be further strengthened.

Q. 173. May any who profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's supper, be kept from it?

A. Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding 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 which Christ has left in his church, until they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation.

Q. 174. What is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper in the time of the administration of it?

A. It is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention, they wait upon God in that ordinance; diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions; heedfully discern the Lord's body, and affectionately meditate upon his death and sufferings, and so stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces; in judging themselves, and sorrowing for sin; in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ, feeding on him by faith, receiving of his fullness, trusting in his merits, rejoicing in his love, giving thanks for his grace; in renewing of their covenant with God, and love to all the saints.

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

A. The duty of Christians after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's supper, is seriously to consider how they have behaved in receiving it, and with what success; if they find quickening and comfort, to bless God for it, beg the continuance of it, watch against relapse, fulfill their vows, and encourage themselves to a frequent attendance on that ordinance: but if they find no present benefit, more exactly to review their preparation to, and carriage at, the sacrament; in both which 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 upon it afterward with more care and diligence.

Q. 176. Wherein do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper agree?

A. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper agree, 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, are to be dispensed by ministers of the gospel and by none other, and to be continued in the church of Christ until his second coming.

Q. 177. Wherein do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper differ?

A. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper differ, in that baptism is to be administered but once, with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that even to infants; whereas 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 that only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves.

Q. 178. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto 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 unto God only?

A. God only being able to search the heart, hear the requests, pardon the sins, and fulfill the desires of all, and only to be believed in, and worshiped with religious worship; prayer, which is a special part of worship, is to be made by all to him alone, and to none other.

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

A. To pray in the name of Christ is, in obedience to his command, and in confidence on his promises, to ask mercy for his sake; not by bare mentioning of his name; but by drawing our encouragement to pray, and our boldness, strength, and hope of acceptance in prayer, from Christ and his mediation.

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

A. The sinfulness of humanity, and its distance from God by reason of it, being so great, as that we can have no access into his presence without a mediator, and there being none in heaven or earth appointed to, or fit for, that glorious work but Christ alone, we are to pray in no other name but his only.

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

A. We not knowing what to pray for as we ought, the Spirit helps our infirmities, by enabling us to understand both for whom, and what, and how prayer is to be made; and by working and quickening in our hearts (although not in all persons, nor at all times in the same measure) those apprehensions, affections, and graces, which are necessary for the right performance of that duty.

Q. 183. For whom are we to pray?

A. We are to pray for the whole church of Christ upon earth, for magistrates, and ministers, for ourselves, our brethren, even our enemies, and for all sorts of people living, or that shall live hereafter; but not for the dead.

Q. 184. For what things are we to pray?

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

Q. 185. How are we to pray?

A. We are to pray with an awful apprehension of the majesty of God, and deep sense of our own unworthiness, necessities, and sins; with penitent, thankful, and enlarged hearts; with understanding, faith, sincerity, fervency, love, and perseverance, waiting upon 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 praying; 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; but may be also used as a prayer so that it be done with understanding, faith, reverence, and other graces necessary to the right performance of the duty of prayer.

Q. 188. Of how many parts does the Lord's Prayer consist?

A. The Lord's Prayer consists of three parts; a preface, petitions, 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 in heaven") teaches us, when we pray, to draw near to God with confidence of his fatherly goodness, and our interest therein; with reverence, and all other childlike dispositions, heavenly affections, and due apprehensions of his sovereign power, majesty, and gracious condescension: as also to pray with and for others.

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

A. In the first petition (which is, "Hallowed be your name"), acknowledging the utter inability and indisposition that is in ourselves and all people to honor God properly, we pray; that God would by his grace enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and highly esteem him, his titles, attributes, ordinances, word, works, and whatsoever he is pleased to make himself known by; and to glorify him in thought, word, and deed; that he would prevent and remove atheism, ignorance, idolatry, profaneness, and whatsoever is dishonorable to him; and by his overruling providence, direct and dispose of all things to his own glory.

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

A. In the second petition (which is, "Your kingdom come"), acknowledging ourselves and all humanity to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray: that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fullness of the Gentiles brought in; that the church may be furnished with all gospel-officers and ordinances, purged from corruption, regarded and maintained by the civil magistrate; that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual to the converting of those that are yet in their sins, and the confirming, comforting, and building up of those that are already converted; that Christ would rule in our hearts here, and hasten the time of his second coming, and our reigning with him forever; and that he would be pleased so to exercise the kingdom of his power in all the world, as may best conduce to these ends.

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

A. In the third petition (which is, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”), acknowledging that by nature we and all people are not only utterly unable and unwilling to know and do the will of God, but prone to rebel against his word, to repine and murmur against his providence, and wholly inclined to do the will of the flesh, and of the devil: we pray that God would by his Spirit take away from ourselves and others all blindness, weakness, indisposedness, and perverseness of heart, and by his grace make us able and willing to know, do, and submit to his will in all things, with the like humility, cheerfulness, faithfulness, diligence, zeal, sincerity, and constancy, as the angels do in heaven.

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

A. In the fourth petition (which is, “Give us this day our daily bread”), acknowledging that in Adam, and by our own sin, we have forfeited our right to all the outward blessings of this life, and deserve to be wholly deprived of them by God, and to have them cursed to us in the use of them; and that neither they of themselves are able to sustain us, nor we to merit, or by our own industry to procure them, but prone to desire, get, and use them unlawfully: we pray for ourselves and others, that both they and we, waiting upon the providence of God from day to day in the use of lawful means may, of his free gift, and as to his fatherly wisdom shall seem best, enjoy a sufficient portion of them, and have the same continued and blessed to us in our holy and comfortable use of them, and contentment in them; and be kept from all things that are contrary to our temporal support and comfort.

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

A. In the fifth petition (which is, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors”), acknowledging that we and all others are guilty both of original and actual sin, and thereby become debtors to the justice of God, and neither we nor any other creature can make the least satisfaction for that debt: we pray for ourselves and others, that God of his free grace would, through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ apprehended and applied by faith, acquit us both from the guilt and punishment of sin, accept us in his beloved, continue his favor and grace to us, pardon our daily failings, and fill us with peace and joy, in giving us daily more and more assurance of forgiveness; which we are the rather emboldened to ask, and encouraged to expect, when we have this testimony in ourselves, that we from the heart forgive others their offenses.

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

A. In the sixth petition (which is, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”), acknowledging that the most wise, righteous, and gracious God, for diverse holy and just ends, may so order things that we may be assaulted, foiled, and for a time led captive by temptations; that Satan, the world, and the flesh, are ready powerfully to draw us aside and ensnare us; and that we, even after the pardon of our sins, by reason of our corruption, weakness, and want of watchfulness, are not only subject to be tempted, and forward to expose ourselves unto temptations, but also

of ourselves unable and unwilling to resist them, to recover out of them, and to improve them; and worthy to be left under the power of them; we pray: that God would so overrule the world and all in it, subdue the flesh, and restrain Satan, order all things, bestow and bless all means of grace, and quicken us to watchfulness in the use of them, 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, raised again and recovered out of it, and have a sanctified use and improvement from it; that our sanctification and salvation may be perfected, Satan trodden under our feet, and we fully freed from sin, temptation, and all evil forever.

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 enforce our petitions with arguments, which are to be taken, not from any worthiness in ourselves, or in any other creature, but from God; and with our prayers to join praises, ascribing to God alone eternal sovereignty, omnipotence, and glorious excellency; in regard of these, as he is able and willing to help us, so we by faith are emboldened to plead with him that he would, and quietly to rely upon him that he will, fulfill our requests. And to testify our desires and assurance, we say, "Amen."

The Theological Declaration of Barmen

The Theological Declaration of Barmen Introduction

The Theological Declaration of Barmen is unique in ECO's *Confessional Standards* as a declaration about a specific issue that stands to unite the church against a mortal heresy. It purposefully avoided being a confession in order to unite disparate confessional traditions. As such, Barmen adds no new doctrine to the Reformed tradition, but declares a perspective of supreme importance on the relationship of the church to the Word of God, and to the state in a time of crisis.

Authorship

Karl Barth (Swiss Theologian 1886-1968), Hans Asmussen (Lutheran Pastor, 1898-1968), Thomas Breit (Lutheran Pastor 1880-1966)

Date

May 29-31, 1934

Genre

Barmen is a "theological declaration." It does not make an attempt to carefully craft new doctrines, or even clarify areas of potential confusion. Barmen simply and clearly states what its authors and the Confessing Church believed to be the truth of Scripture in opposition to the cultural trends of its context. Its intended purpose was to call the church and Christians in Germany to account and to submission to Jesus at the cost of allegiance to the dominant political trends of Nazism.

Historical Context

Germany, 1933: a growing nationalism based in ideology of Volk, and blood and soil, had worked its way into the life of the churches of Germany. A new movement, the "German Christians," arose, filled with religious zeal, to unite and revitalize the churches of Germany with this newfound spirit. "German Christians" succumbed to the temptation that faces all Christians in all times, of seeking to use Jesus Christ to justify the world as the world. When Hitler was made chancellor of Germany and his power sealed, a series of bold maneuvers led to the unification of German churches under the power of the "German Christians," who had earlier called for the purity of their race as part of God's established natural order. When the Nazi party produced the Aryan Paragraph, forcibly retiring all Jews from civil service and precluding their future involvement, "German Christians" were happy to apply this to church membership. The growing clarity of the unbiblical beliefs and bullying tactics of this group produced a crisis in German churches

which culminated in April 22, 1934, where a meeting of pastors in Ulm created the “Confessing Church,” which claimed to alone be the true Protestant Church of Germany, against those controlled by the “German Christians.” This meeting commissioned a confessional synod, which met in Barmen May 29-31, 1934. Karl Barth and two other delegates wrote the Theological Declaration of Barmen, unanimously accepted by 138 delegates of Lutheran, Reformed, and United churches. Notable among the signatories were Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Niemoller. Barmen was not a direct attack on Nazism or Hitler, but sought to address the heart of the matter—false teaching in the church.

Summary and Highlights

Barmen contains two main sections: 1) The purpose of the Declaration in uniting the church in obedience to the Word of God by the power of the Holy Spirit rather than in submission to “false doctrine, force, and insincere practices”; 2) Six theses that use Scripture to establish a positive doctrine and the basis by which false doctrines of the “German Christians” are rejected.

Barmen’s six theses in sum are:

1. Sola Scriptura: “Jesus Christ, the Word of God, as attested in Holy Scripture” is the sole basis of our trustworthy revelation of God.
2. Solus Christus: Christ is lord of all areas of life, and no other lord can offer justification or sanctification.
3. Christ is our only source of unity and the church is solely his property. The church must never change the form of its message or polity to fit an ideology.
4. Positions of authority in the church are not positions of lordship, but of ministry.
5. Although the state is established by God, this is only for the provision of justice and peace, and the state should not expand its dominion to encompass the function of the church. Nor should the church become an organ of the state.
6. The message of free grace in Christ must be extended to all people. It cannot be, as the “German Christians” desired, withheld from Jews, or from anyone else. The grace of God is both a consolation to a church under affliction (Matthew 28:20) and the guarantor of the church’s freedom (2 Timothy 2:9).

Significance

Barmen declared that the church stood unified against false teachings that were destroying the peace, unity, and purity of the church in Germany. It exemplified the prophetic role of the church. Rather than aggressive, political wrangling, the church trusted in its Lord, Jesus Christ, alone. As we enter a significantly different period of

Western history in which Christianity is not privileged or equated with a specific culture, Post-Christendom, our churches will increasingly face situations similar to that of the Confessing Church. Will we be prepared to boldly declare the total lordship of Christ, rooted only in his revelation in Scripture, though it may cost us everything? Barmen asks us today, "In what ways is the church tempted to justify the world?"

Potential Uses

The six theses of Barmen provide an appropriate outline for a special preaching series, especially around times when congregations are particularly tempted to find identity in national and political identities.

Many resources exist surrounding Barmen and the larger history of the Confessing Church that are suitable for Sunday School or small groups. The history of the Confessing Church is a worthwhile study because it connects modern political, racial, and other aspects of identity formation with the demand of Jesus for complete and total lordship in the life of all Christians.

The Theological Declaration of Barmen

I. An Appeal to the Evangelical Congregations and Christians in Germany

The Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church met in Barmen, May 29–31, 1934. Here representatives from all the German Confessional churches met with one accord in a confession of the one Lord of the one, holy, apostolic church. In fidelity to their confession of faith, members of Lutheran, Reformed, and United Churches sought a common message for the need and temptation of the church in our day. With gratitude to God they are convinced that they have been given a common word to utter. It was not their intention to found a new church or to form a union. For nothing was farther from their minds than the abolition of the confessional status of our churches. Their intention was, rather, to withstand in faith and unanimity the destruction of the confession of faith, and thus of the Evangelical Church in Germany. In opposition to attempts to establish the unity of the German Evangelical Church by means of false doctrine, by the use of force and insincere practices, the Confessional Synod insists that the unity of the Evangelical Churches in Germany can come only from the word of God in faith through the Holy Spirit. Thus alone is the church renewed.

Therefore the Confessional Synod calls upon the congregations to range themselves behind it in prayer, and steadfastly to gather around those pastors and teachers who are loyal to the confessions.

Be not deceived by loose talk, as if we meant to oppose the unity of the German nation! Do not listen to the seducers who pervert our intentions, as if we wanted to break up the unity of the German Evangelical Church or to forsake the confessions of the fathers!

Try the spirits whether they are of God! Prove also the words of the Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church to see whether they agree with Holy Scripture and with the confessions of the fathers. If you find that we are speaking contrary to Scripture, then do not listen to us! But if you find that we are taking our stand upon Scripture, then let no fear or temptation keep you from treading with us the path of faith and obedience to the Word of God, in order that God's people be of one mind upon earth and that we in faith experience what he himself has said: "I will never leave you, nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). Therefore, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

II. Theological Declaration Concerning the Present Situation of the German Evangelical Church

According to the opening words of its constitution of July 11, 1933, the German Evangelical Church is a federation of confessional churches that grew out of the

Reformation and that enjoy equal rights. The theological basis for the unification of these churches is laid down in Article 1 and Article 2(1) of the constitution of the German Evangelical Church that was recognized by the Reich Government on July 14, 1933:

1. Article 1. The inviolable foundation of the German Evangelical Church is the gospel of Jesus Christ as it is attested for us in Holy Scripture and brought to light again in the confessions of the Reformation. The full powers that the church needs for its mission are hereby determined and limited.
2. Article 2(1). The German Evangelical Church is divided into member churches" (*Landeskirchen*).

We, the representatives of Lutheran, Reformed, and United Churches, of free synods, church assemblies, and parish organizations united in the Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church, declare that we stand together on the ground of the German Evangelical Church as a federation of German Confessional churches. We are bound together by the confession of the one Lord of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.

We publicly declare before all evangelical churches in Germany that what they hold in common in this confession is grievously imperiled, and with it the unity of the German Evangelical Church. It is threatened by the teaching methods and actions of the ruling church party of the "German Christians" and of the church administration carried on by them. These have become more and more apparent during the first year of the existence of the German Evangelical Church. This threat consists in the fact that the theological basis, in which the German Evangelical Church is united, has been continually and systematically thwarted and rendered ineffective by alien principles, on the part of the leaders and spokesmen of the "German Christians" as well as on the part of the church administration. When these principles are held to be valid, then, according to all the confessions in force among us, the church ceases to be the church and the German Evangelical Church, as a federation of confessional churches, becomes intrinsically impossible.

As members of Lutheran, Reformed, and United churches, we may and must speak with one voice in this matter today. Precisely because we want to be and to remain faithful to our various confessions, we may not keep silent, since we believe that we have been given a common message to utter in a time of common need and temptation. We commend to God what this may mean for the interrelations of the confessional churches.

In view of the errors of the "German Christians" of the present Reich church government which are devastating the church and are also thereby breaking up the unity of the German Evangelical Church, we confess the following evangelical truths:

1. *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"* (John 14:6). *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but*

climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ... I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved" (John 10:1, 9).

Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and in death.

We reject the false doctrine, as though the church could and would have to acknowledge as a source of its proclamation, apart from and besides this one Word of God, still other events and powers, figures and truths, as God's revelation.

2. *"Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (I Corinthians 1:30).*

As Jesus Christ is God's assurance of the forgiveness of all our sins, so in the same way and with the same seriousness is he also God's mighty claim upon our whole life. Through him befalls us a joyful deliverance from the godless fetters of this world for a free, grateful service to his creatures.

We reject the false doctrine, as though there were areas of our life in which we would not belong to Jesus Christ, but to other lords—areas in which we would not need justification and sanctification through him.

3. *"Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body [is] joined and knit together" (Ephesians 4:15, 16).*

The Christian church is the congregation of the brethren in which Jesus Christ acts presently as the Lord in word and sacrament through the Holy Spirit. As the church of pardoned sinners, it has to testify in the midst of a sinful world, with its faith as with its obedience, with its message as with its order, that it is solely his property, and that it lives and wants to live solely from his comfort and from his direction in the expectation of his appearance.

We reject the false doctrine, as though the church were permitted to abandon the form of its message and order to its own pleasure or to changes in prevailing ideological and political convictions.

4. *"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (Matthew 20:25, 26).*

The various offices in the church do not establish a dominion of some over the others; on the contrary, they are for the exercise of the ministry entrusted to and enjoined upon the whole congregation.

We reject the false doctrine, as though the church, apart from this ministry, could and were permitted to give to itself, or allow to be given to it, special leaders vested with ruling powers.

5. *"Fear God. Honor the emperor" (I Peter 2:17).*

Scripture tells us that, in the as yet unredeemed world in which the church also exists, the state has by divine appointment the task of providing for justice and peace. [It fulfills this task] by means of the threat and exercise of force, according to the measure of human judgment and human ability. The church acknowledges the benefit of this divine appointment in gratitude and reverence before him. It calls to mind the kingdom of God, God's commandment and righteousness, and thereby the responsibility both of rulers and of the ruled. It trusts and obeys the power of the Word by which God upholds all things.

We reject the false doctrine, as though the state, over and beyond its special commission, should and could become the single and totalitarian order of human life, thus fulfilling the church's vocation as well.

We reject the false doctrine, as though the church, over and beyond its special commission, should and could appropriate the characteristics, the tasks, and the dignity of the state, thus itself becoming an organ of the state.

6. *"Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). "The word of God is not bound" (II Timothy 2:9).*

The church's commission, upon which its freedom is founded, consists in delivering the message of the free grace of God to all people in Christ's stead, and therefore in the ministry of his own Word and work through sermon and sacrament.

We reject the false doctrine, as though the church in human arrogance could place the Word and work of the Lord in the service of any arbitrarily chosen desires, purposes, and plans.

The Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church declares that it sees in the acknowledgment of these truths and in the rejection of these errors the indispensable theological basis of the German Evangelical Church as a federation of confessional churches. It invites all who are able to accept its declaration to be mindful of these theological principles in their decisions in church politics. It entreats all whom it concerns to return to the unity of faith, hope, and love.



**The Mission of ECO:
A Covenant Order
of Evangelical Presbyterians is**

**the building of flourishing churches
that make disciples
of Jesus Christ**