

The Westminster Larger Catechism of 1648

Translated into 21st-Century American English

Edition: March 13, 2018

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Copyright 2015: Tom Sullivan, Editor

[**info@BeForgiven.INFO**](mailto:info@BeForgiven.INFO)

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Helpful Notes to the Reader

Words or phrases in brackets [] are generally synonyms or short definitions of the word just preceding the brackets. Occasionally brackets contain explanatory material. Footnotes give longer definitions or explanations. Also, some footnotes point out variations between the source texts used in this translation;¹ such variations are typically very minor. Helpful Hint: When using Adobe Reader, you can click on a footnote to jump to it. Then use <alt><left-arrow> to return to the main text. Other PDF readers and non-Windows computers will have a similar keyboard shortcut; check the menus or toolbars in the browser or PDF reader.

Scripture Proof Texts - Important Information

Scripture proof texts are an important concern in this document; the WLC is, after all, only a summary of teachings from the Word of God. Portions of the WLC are typically *followed* by superscripted letters that correspond to the same superscripted letter *preceding* one or more Scripture references. These superscripted letters mirror the WLC/Scripture proof text linkage of the original WLC. These letters are omitted when all references pertain to the whole paragraph. Also, in certain cases, the letters may not exactly mirror the original linkage due to rearrangement of the text for readability.

All Scripture references are followed by four hyperlinks: ESV, KJ3, NASB, and WEB, standing for the English Standard Version, the King James 3 Bible, the New American Standard Bible, and the World English Bible respectively. Some comments on these four versions and their differences are in order. These four are the only faithful, reliable, and contemporary Bible versions for which the editor was able to obtain permission to quote extensively. At the time of the writing of the Westminster documents, both the Geneva Bible and the King James Version (KJV) (also known as the Authorized Version) were in common use, but quotations within the Westminster documents are from the KJV, and much of the wording of the Westminster standards comes straight out of the KJV. In light of this, the KJ3 and the WEB are quite helpful as they are direct descendants of the KJV and of the original language manuscript streams from which the KJV was translated. Of these two, the WEB is by far the more readable. The KJ3 is a “literal translation” of the original languages. It can be extremely helpful to the careful reader by showing idiomatic and other features of the original languages that are often lost by other translations; knowledge of such features adds color and depth to our understanding of God’s Word. On the other hand, the KJ3 can mislead the reader for this very same reason. By way of example, consider Daniel 10:4 in the KJ3: “And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the hand of the great river.” Other

¹ The two primary source texts were those found in the *Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America*, A-5, <http://reformedpresbyterian.org/downloads/constitution2010.pdf> (accessed September 30, 2014) and Bower, John, R., *The Larger Catechism, A Critical Text and Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010) See the Appendix for more information.

versions put “side” or “bank” instead of “hand,” which makes the meaning immediately clear. It is the editor’s considered opinion that most readers should not use the KJ3 without simultaneously consulting another translation. This caution applies to all other literal translations as well. The ESV and NASB draw upon other original language manuscript streams (at least to some extent) than did the KJV, and thus in some cases, the reasons that the Westminster Divines chose a particular passage may be harder to discern. The NASB has long had a reputation for precision, while the ESV is among the easiest of contemporary and faithful translations to read. The careful seeker of Divine Truth will routinely consult multiple translations (Proverbs 11:14) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.²

These hyperlinks will jump to the referenced text, which text is included in this document. Each proof text also has a nearby “Back” link. The reader should note the difference between these Back links and the browser or reader Back button: the included Back link returns the reader to the proof text hyperlink, while the browser or reader Back button returns the reader to the former page location. Also, on the web version *only*, pausing the mouse over a hyperlink will display the passage in a screen tip, up to the first 256 characters. (This is true whether the web version is accessed online or as files on your computer.) Most web browsers and PDF readers will allow the user to open a “New Window” displaying the same document in two windows. Some readers will find this feature helpful as they study the WLC text and proof Scriptures together, something the editor highly recommends. Also, some Scripture passages may seem incomplete to some readers. This is because the WLC was written for those with significant Bible knowledge; they would recognize the context. In such cases, the reader is strongly encouraged to study the broader context of the Scripture passage.

² The editor is well aware of the “KJV Only,” Westcott-Hort, Majority Text, and other schools of thought and the attending, often uncharitable, controversies concerning them. He does not apologize for the simplifications presented here, since these topics are outside of the scope of this document.

Introduction

The *Westminster Larger Catechism* (WLC) is a rich, but largely neglected classic treasure. The WLC was the last work produced by the Westminster Divines and, as such, represents their most mature thought. Holy men from diverse backgrounds, led by God, had discussed and struggled with eternal truths for years, sharpening one another as “iron sharpens iron,” yet coming to a consensus.

The WLC has about twice as many questions and answers as the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (WSC), and its answers are much more detailed. The WLC was written for those who already have a good grounding in the Christian faith. Consequently, readers who have not already read the editor’s translations of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* and the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (WCF) are strongly encouraged to do so prior to reading the WLC. In those two works, the editor has been at pains to define and explain many words and theological concepts. The editor has given few such helps in this WLC translation on the assumption that the reader has, indeed, read the WSC and WCF translations first.

These documents include hyperlinks to the actual Scripture proof texts embedded in the document. Please be sure to read the Helpful Notes to the Reader to best take advantage of this feature.

The original *Westminster Larger Catechism* (WLC) was finished by the Westminster Assembly with Scripture proof texts in 1648.³ Since that time, various denominations have incorporated the WLC into their denominational standards. However, most denominations have either produced revisions of the WLC or declared exceptions to parts of the original WLC prior to incorporating the WLC into their denominational standards. Although some of these later editions of the WLC have been translated into twentieth-century English, the editor is not aware of an edition of the original 1648 WLC in contemporary American English.

While the editor does not presume to replace any denomination’s standard text, the present translation is given in order to make the original richness of the 1648 WLC accessible and easily read by the contemporary reader, all to the glory, praise, and honor of God. The editor has endeavored to faithfully retain the meaning of the original text, translating word for word when possible. At the same time, the goal of readability is paramount with the intent that one may read with ease, focusing on the material without being distracted by antique spelling, vocabulary, grammar, or difficult sentence constructs. For this reason, there are times when the original text is quite considerably modified and rearranged. Details on the translation process and philosophy may be found in the Appendix.

³ Bower, 43–4.

Regrettably, no human work can be translated without some loss of finer shades of meaning. It is the editor's opinion, however, that this loss is small compared to the loss imposed on many readers by changes in word and phrase meanings over time. Readers interested in more detailed study are encouraged to consult the referenced Scriptures and commentaries on the WLC, as well as the original WLC itself.

The editor has endeavored to translate faithfully without interjecting his own opinions. Nonetheless, the WLC is a human work that is a product of its place in history and geography. God has continued to raise up able theologians in the intervening 370 years, and we now know that there do exist a very few theological errors in the WLC. The editor is conscience-bound to point out these errors for fear of propagating that which is not in accordance with Scripture. All such editorial opinions are clearly designated in the footnotes. Let the reader be as the Bereans, searching the Scriptures, guided by the Holy Spirit.

Change Log

Unlike traditional paper book publishing, electronic publishing allows fairly rapid increments to new additions. This log allows the reader to know what changes have been made from an earlier version.

August 5, 2015

(No changes since this is the first edition.)

Questions 1 – 10

QUESTION 1. What is the chief and highest purpose of man?

ANSWER. Man's chief and highest purpose is to glorify God^a and to fully enjoy Him forever.^b

^aRomans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 10:31; ^bPsalm 73:24–28; John 17:21–23

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

A. The very light of nature in man and the works of God declare plainly that there is a God.^a However, only His Word and Spirit sufficiently and effectually reveal Him to men for their salvation.^b

^aRomans 1:19–20; Psalm 19:1–3; Acts 17:28; ^b1 Corinthians 2:9–10; 2 Timothy 3:15–17; Isaiah 59:21

Q. 3. What is the Word of God?

A. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God,^a the only rule of faith and obedience.^b

^a2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19–21; ^bEphesians 2:20; Revelation 22:18–19; Isaiah 8:20; Luke 16:29, 31; Galatians 1:8–9; 2 Timothy 3:15–17

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

A. The Scriptures clearly show themselves to be the Word of God:

- By their majesty^a and purity^b
- By the consistency of all the parts^c and the intent of the whole, which is to give all glory to God^d
- By their light and power to:
 - Convince and convert sinners
 - Comfort and build up believers for salvation^e

However, only the Spirit of God is able to persuade men fully that the Scriptures are the very Word of God. The Spirit does this by bearing witness by, and with, the Scriptures in the heart of man.^f

^aHosea 8:12; 1 Corinthians 2:6–7, 13; Psalm 119:18, 129; ^bPsalm 12:6; Psalm 119:140; ^cActs 10:43; Acts 26:22; ^dRomans 3:19, 27; ^eActs 18:28; Hebrews 4:12; James 1:18; Psalm 19:7–9; Romans 15:4; Acts 20:32; ^fJohn 16:13–14; 1 John 2:20, 27; John 20:31

Q. 5. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man.

2 Timothy 1:13

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

A. The Scriptures make known what God is,^a the persons in the Godhead,^b His decrees,^c and the execution of His decrees.^d

^aHebrews 11:6; ^b1 John 5:7; ^cActs 15:14–15, 18; ^dActs 4:27–28

Q. 7. What is God?

A. God is a Spirit.^a In and by Himself, He is infinite in being,^b glory,^c blessedness,^d and perfection.^e He is all-sufficient,^f eternal,^g unchangeable,^h without limits,ⁱ everywhere present,^j almighty,^k all-knowing,^l most wise,^m most holy,ⁿ most just,^o most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.^p

^aJohn 4:24; ^bExodus 3:14; Job 11:7–9; ^cActs 7:2; ^d1 Timothy 6:15; ^eMatthew 5:48; ^fGenesis 17:1; ^gPsalm 90:2; ^hMalachi 3:6; James 1:17; ⁱ1 Kings 8:27; ^jPsalm 139:1–13; ^kRevelation 4:8; ^lHebrews 4:13; Psalm 147:5; ^mRomans 16:27; ⁿIsaiah 6:3; Revelation 15:4; ^oDeuteronomy 32:4; ^pExodus 34:6

Q. 8. Are there more Gods than one?

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

Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4, 6; Jeremiah 10:10

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

A. There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one, true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. At the same time, the three are distinguished by their personal distinctive attributes.

1 John 5:7; Matthew 3:16–17; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 10:30

Q. 10. What are the personal distinctive attributes of the three persons in the Godhead?

A. From all eternity, it is distinctive to the being of the Father to beget the Son,^a to the Son to be begotten from the Father,^b and to the Holy Spirit to proceed from the Father and the Son.^c

^aHebrews 1:5–6, 8; ^bJohn 1:14, 18; ^cJohn 15:26; Galatians 4:6

Questions 11 – 20**Q. 11. How do we know that the Son and the Holy Spirit are God, equal with the Father?**

A. The Scriptures clearly show that the Son and the Holy Spirit are God, equal with the Father, by ascribing to them names,^a attributes,^b works,^c and worship that are applicable and appropriate to God only.^d

^aIsaiah 6:3, 5, 8 *with* John 12:41 *and* Acts 28:25; 1 John 5:20; Acts 5:3–4; ^bJohn 1:1; Isaiah 9:6; John 2:24–25; 1 Corinthians 2:10–11; ^cColossians 1:16; Genesis 1:2; ^dMatthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14

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.^a By His decrees, He has unchangeably foreordained whatever happens in time, especially concerning angels and men. God’s decrees are from all eternity and for His own glory.^b

^aEphesians 1:11; Romans 11:33; Romans 9:14–15, 18; ^bEphesians 1:4, 11; Romans 9:22–23; Psalm 33:11

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

A. God:

- By an eternal and unchangeable decree
- Out of His mere love
- For the praise of His glorious grace to be clearly displayed in due time

has:

- Elected some angels to glory^a
- In Christ, chosen some men to eternal life, along with the means of accomplishing it in them

God extends or withholds favor as He pleases according to His sovereign power and the unsearchable counsel of His own will. As such, God has passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath. These are inflicted as punishment for their sin, and are to the praise of the glory of His justice.^c

^a1 Timothy 5:21; ^bEphesians 1:4–6; 2 Thessalonians 2:13–14; ^cRomans 9:17–18, 21–22; Matthew 11:25–26; 2 Timothy 2:20; Jude 4; 1 Peter 2:8

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 unchangeable counsel of His own will.

Ephesians 1:11

Q. 15. What is the work of creation?

A. In the work of creation, God made the world and all things in it:

- Out of nothing
- In the beginning
- By the word of His power
- For Himself
- In the time span of six days
- All very good

Genesis 1; Hebrews 11:3; Proverbs 16:4

Q. 16. How did God create the angels?

A. God created all the angels^a to execute His commandments and to praise His name.^g God created these spirits^b immortal,^c holy,^d excelling in knowledge,^e mighty in power,^f yet subject to change.^h

^aColossians 1:16; ^bPsalms 104:4; ^cMatthew 22:30; ^dMatthew 25:31; ^e2 Samuel 14:17; Matthew 24:36; ^f2 Thessalonians 1:7; ^gPsalms 103:20–21; ^h2 Peter 2:4

Q. 17. How did God create man?

A. After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female.^a He formed the body of the man from the dust of the ground,^b and the woman from a rib of the man.^c God endowed them with living, reasoning, and immortal souls.^d He made them after His own image:^e

- In knowledge,^f righteousness, and holiness^g
- With the law of God written in their hearts^h and power to fulfill itⁱ
- With dominion over the creatures^j
- Yet subject to fall^k

^aGenesis 1:27; ^bGenesis 2:7; ^cGenesis 2:22; ^dGenesis 2:7 with Job 35:11 and Ecclesiastes 12:7 and Matthew 10:28 and Luke 23:43; ^eGenesis 1:27; ^fColossians 3:10; ^gEphesians 4:24; ^hRomans 2:14–15; ⁱEcclesiastes 7:29; ^jGenesis 1:28; ^kGenesis 3:6; Ecclesiastes 7:29

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

A. God's works of providence are His most holy,^a wise,^b and powerful preserving^c and governing all His creatures^d and ordering them and all their actions^e to His own glory.^f

^aPsalms 145:17; ^bPsalms 104:24; Isaiah 28:29; ^cHebrews 1:3; ^dPsalms 103:19; ^eMatthew 10:29–31; Genesis 45:7; ^fRomans 11:36; Isaiah 63:14

Q. 19. What is God's providence toward the angels?

A. God, by His providence, permitted some of the angels to willfully and irrecoverably fall into sin and damnation.^a He limited and ordered that fall and all their sins to His own glory.^b God established the rest in holiness and happiness^c and employs them all,^d at His pleasure, in the administration of His power, mercy, and justice.^e

^aJude 6; 2 Peter 2:4; Hebrews 2:16; John 8:44; ^bJob 1:12; Matthew 8:31; ^c1 Timothy 5:21; Mark 8:38; Hebrews 12:22; ^dPsalms 104:4; ^e2 Kings 19:35; Hebrews 1:14

Q. 20. What was the providence of God toward man in the state [condition] in which he was created?

A. In the providence of God toward man, in the state [condition] in which he was created, God:

- Placed him in paradise
- Appointed him to care for it
- Gave him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth^a
- Put the creatures under his dominion^b
- Ordained marriage for his help^c
- Granted him communion with Himself^d
- Instituted the Sabbath^e
- Entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience^f
- Planted the tree of life as a pledge of the covenant of life^g

- Forbade him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death^h

^aGenesis 2:8, 15–16; ^bGenesis 1:28; ^cGenesis 2:18; ^dGenesis 1:26–29; Genesis 3:8; ^eGenesis 2:3; ^fGalatians 3:12; Romans 10:5; ^gGenesis 2:9; ^hGenesis 2:17

Questions 21 – 30

Q. 21. Did man continue in that state in which God at first created him?

A. Our first parents were left to the freedom of their own will. Through the temptation of Satan, they transgressed the commandment of God by eating the forbidden fruit. Thus they fell from the state of innocence in which they were created.

Genesis 3:6–8, 13; Ecclesiastes 7:29; 2 Corinthians 11:3

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

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

^aActs 17:26; ^bGenesis 2:16–17 *with* Romans 5:12–20 *and* 1 Corinthians 15:21–22

Q. 23. Into what state did the fall bring mankind?

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

Romans 5:12; Romans 3:23

Q. 24. What is sin?

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

1 John 3:4; Galatians 3:10, 12

Q. 25. What is sinful about the state into which man fell?

A. The sinfulness of the state into which man fell consists of Original Sin, from which proceeds all actual transgressions.^c Original Sin is:

- The guilt of Adam’s first sin^a
- The lack of that righteousness in which he was created
- The corruption of his nature, by which he is:
 - Utterly averse to, disabled from, and made opposite to all that is spiritually good
 - Entirely inclined to all evil, and that continually^b

^aRomans 5:12, 19; ^bRomans 3:10–20; Ephesians 2:1–3; Romans 5:6; Romans 8:7–8; Genesis 6:5; ^cJames 1:14–15; Matthew 15:19

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

A. Original sin is transmitted from our first parents to their posterity by natural generation.⁴ Thus, all that proceed from them by natural generation are conceived and born in sin.

Psalm 51:5; Job 14:4; Job 15:14; John 3:6

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

A. The fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God^a and His displeasure and curse. Therefore, we are, by nature, children of wrath,^b slaves to Satan,^c and justly liable to all punishments in this world and that which is to come.^d

^aGenesis 3:8, 10, 24; ^bEphesians 2:2–3; ^c2 Timothy 2:26; ^dGenesis 2:17; Lamentations 3:39; Romans 6:23; Matthew 25:41, 46; Jude 7

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

A. The punishments of sin in this world are either:

- Inward, including:
 - Blindness of mind^a
 - A debased mind^b
 - Strong delusions^c
 - Hardness of heart^d
 - Horror of conscience^e
 - Vile passions^{5, f}
- Outward, including:
 - The curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes^g
 - All other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relationships, and employments,^h together with death itselfⁱ

^aEphesians 4:18; ^bRomans 1:28; ^c2 Thessalonians 2:11; ^dRomans 2:5; ^eIsaiah 33:14; Genesis 4:13; Matthew 27:4; ^fRomans 1:26; ^gGenesis 3:17; ^hDeuteronomy 28:15–68; ⁱRomans 6:21, 23

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 and unrelenting torments of soul and body in hellfire forever.

2 Thessalonians 1:9; Mark 9:44, 46, 48; Luke 16:24

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

A. All mankind fell into the state of sin and misery by the breach of the first covenant, commonly called the Covenant of Works.^b But God does not leave all mankind to perish in this state.^a Rather, out of His mere love and mercy, God delivers His elect out of it and brings them into a state of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called the Covenant of Grace.^c

⁴ This is a spiritual transmission, not a biological or physical process.

⁵ Vile passions may be any sinful or depraved passions or emotions, but the term especially applies to sexual perversions including homosexual passions and fornication.

^a1 Thessalonians 5:9; ^bGalatians 3:10, 12; ^cTitus 3:4–7; Galatians 3:21; Romans 3:20–22

Questions 31 – 40

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 Christ, with all the elect as His seed.

Galatians 3:16; Romans 5:15–21; Isaiah 53:10–11

Q. 32. How is the grace of God clearly shown forth in the second covenant?

A. The grace of God is clearly shown forth in the second covenant in that He:

- Freely provides and offers to sinners a Mediator,^a and life and salvation by Him^b
- Promises and gives his Holy Spirit^d to all his elect to:
 - Work in them that faith^e that is required as the necessary condition for a claim and share in Christ^c
 - Work in them all other saving graces^f
 - Enable them to all holy obedience^g as:
 - The evidence of the truth of their faith^h and thankfulness to Godⁱ
 - The way that he has appointed to them for salvation^j

^aGenesis 3:15; Isaiah 42:6; John 6:27; ^b1 John 5:11–12; ^cJohn 3:16; John 1:12; ^dProverbs 1:23; ^e2 Corinthians 4:13; ^fGalatians 5:22–23; ^gEzekiel 36:27; ^hJames 2:18, 22; ⁱ2 Corinthians 5:14–15; ^jEphesians 2:10

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 administration of it under the Old Testament was different from that under the New.

2 Corinthians 3:6–9

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,^a prophecies,^b sacrifices,^c circumcision,^d the Passover,^e and other types⁶ and ordinances. All of these fore-signified Christ to come. They were, for that time, sufficient to build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah,^f by whom they then had full remission of sin and eternal salvation.^g

^aRomans 15:8; ^bActs 3:20, 24; ^cHebrews 10:1; ^dRomans 4:11; ^e1 Corinthians 5:7; ^fHebrews 8–10; Hebrews 11:13; ^gGalatians 3:7–9, 14

⁶ type: a person or thing that foreshadows a greater person or thing to come in fulfillment of a divine promise.

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

A. Under the New Testament, when Christ, the substance,⁷ was displayed openly, the same covenant of grace was, and still is, to be administered by the preaching of the Word^a and the administration of the sacraments of baptism^b and the Lord’s Supper.^c In these, grace and salvation are held out in more fullness, evidence, and efficacy to all nations.^d

^aMark 16:15; ^bMatthew 28:19–20; ^c1 Corinthians 11:23–25; ^d2 Corinthians 3:6–18; Hebrews 8:6, 10–11; Matthew 28:19

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

A. The only Mediator of the covenant of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ.^a Christ, the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father,^b in the fullness of time became man.^c Thus, He was, and continues to be, God and man, in two entire distinct natures, and one person, forever.^d

^a1 Timothy 2:5; ^bJohn 1:1, 14; John 10:30; Philippians 2:6; ^cGalatians 4:4; ^dLuke 1:35; Romans 9:5; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 7:24–25

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

A. Christ, the Son of God, became man by taking to Himself a true body and a true reasoning soul.^a He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance and born of her,^b yet without sin.^c

^aJohn 1:14; Matthew 26:38; ^bLuke 1:27, 31, 35, 42; Galatians 4:4; ^cHebrews 4:15; Hebrews 7:26

Q. 38. Why was it essential that the Mediator be God?

A. It was essential that the Mediator be God:

- That He might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God and the power of death^a
- To give worth and efficacy to His sufferings, obedience, and intercession^b

and therefore:⁸

- Satisfy God’s justice^c
- Procure His favor^d
- Purchase a special people^e
- Give His Spirit to His people^f
- Conquer all of the enemies of His people^g
- Bring His people to everlasting salvation^h

^aActs 2:24–25; Romans 1:4 *with* Romans 4:25; Hebrews 9:14; ^bActs 20:28; Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 7:25–28; ^cRomans 3:24–26; ^dEphesians 1:6; Matthew 3:17; ^eTitus 2:13–14; ^fGalatians 4:6; ^gLuke 1:68–69, 71, 74; ^hHebrews 5:8–9; Hebrews 9:11–16

⁷ substance: in this context, the reality, in fulfillment of divine promises, that was foreshadowed by earlier types.

⁸ In the original, the RPCNA *Constitution* has “to,” while Bower has “so.” The editor chooses “so” and translates it as “therefore” in recognition of its indicating cause and effect. Of the two choices, “to” places all the listed items on one level. But “so” (“therefore”) properly shows how and why being God qualified and enabled Christ so as to bring the benefits listed after the “therefore.”

Q. 39. Why was it essential that the Mediator be man?

A. It was essential that the Mediator be man so that He might:

- Advance our nature^a
- Perform obedience to the law^b
- Suffer and make intercession for us in our nature^c
- Sympathize with our weaknesses^d

The result is that we receive the adoption of sons^e and have comfort and access with boldness to the throne of grace.^f

^aHebrews 2:16; ^bGalatians 4:4; ^cHebrews 2:14; Hebrews 7:24–25; ^dHebrews 4:15; ^eGalatians 4:5; ^fHebrews 4:16

Q. 40. Why was it essential that the Mediator be God and man in one person?

A. It was essential that the Mediator, who was to reconcile God and man, be both God and man and those in one person. This was so that the distinctive works of each nature, deemed as the works of the whole person, might be accepted by God for us^a and relied on by us.^b

^aMatthew 1:21, 23; Matthew 3:17; Hebrews 9:14; ^b1 Peter 2:6

Questions 41 – 50

Q. 41. Why was our Mediator called Jesus?

A. Our Mediator was called Jesus⁹ because He saves His people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21

Q. 42. Why was our Mediator called Christ?

A. Our Mediator was called Christ¹⁰ because He was anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure.^a By this anointing, He was set apart and fully furnished with all authority and ability^b to execute the offices of prophet,^c priest,^d and king of His Church,^e both in His state of humiliation and in His state of exaltation.

^aJohn 3:34; Psalm 45:7; ^bJohn 6:27; Matthew 28:18–20; ^cActs 3:21–22; Luke 4:18, 21; ^dHebrews 5:5–7; Hebrews 4:14–15; ^ePsalm 2:6; Matthew 21:5; Isaiah 9:6–7; Philippians 2:8–11

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

A. Christ executes the office of a prophet by revealing to the Church^a the whole will of God^d in all things concerning their edification and salvation.^e In diverse ways of administration,^c He does this in all ages by His Spirit and Word.^b

^aJohn 1:18; ^b1 Peter 1:10–12; ^cHebrews 1:1–2; ^dJohn 15:15; ^eActs 20:32; Ephesians 4:11–13; John 20:31

⁹ Jesus: “Yahweh is salvation”

¹⁰ Christ: *Messiah* in Hebrew = *Anointed One*

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

A. Christ executes the office of a priest when He, just once, offered Himself a sacrifice without spot to God^a to be a reconciliation for the sins of His people.^b Further, He makes continual intercession for them.^c

^aHebrews 9:14, 28; ^bHebrews 2:17; ^cHebrews 7:25

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

A. Christ executes the office of a king by:

- Calling out of the world a people to Himself^a and giving them officers,^b laws,^c and censures, by which He visibly governs them^d
- For His elect:
 - Bestowing saving grace upon them^e
 - Rewarding their obedience^f
 - Correcting them for their sins^g
 - Preserving and supporting them under all their temptations and sufferings^h
 - Restraining and overcoming all their enemiesⁱ
 - Powerfully ordering all things for His own glory^j and their good^k
- Taking vengeance on the rest who do not know God and do not obey the gospel.^l

^aActs 15:14–16; Isaiah 55:4–5; Genesis 49:10; Psalm 110:3; ^bEphesians 4:11–12; 1 Corinthians 12:28; ^cIsaiah 33:22; ^dMatthew 18:17–18; 1 Corinthians 5:4–5; ^eActs 5:31; ^fRevelation 22:12; Revelation 2:10; ^gRevelation 3:19; ^hIsaiah 63:9; ⁱ1 Corinthians 15:25; Psalm 110; ^jRomans 14:10–11; ^kRomans 8:28; ^l2 Thessalonians 1:8–9; Psalm 2:8–9

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

A. The state of Christ’s humiliation was that low condition in which He, for our sakes, emptied Himself of His glory and took upon Himself the form of a servant in His:

- Conception and birth
- Life
- Death
- [Remaining in the tomb] after His death until His resurrection

Philippians 2:6–8; Luke 1:31; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Acts 2:24

Q. 47. How did Christ humble Himself in His conception and birth?

A. From all eternity, Christ was Son of God in the bosom of the Father. Yet, Christ humbled Himself in His conception and birth in that He was pleased in the fullness of time to become the son of man, made of a woman of low estate. And also, He was born of her in various circumstances of more than ordinary abasement.

John 1:14, 18; Galatians 4:4; Luke 2:7

Q. 48. How did Christ humble Himself in His life?

A. Christ humbled Himself in His life by:

- Subjecting Himself to the law,^a which He perfectly fulfilled^b

- Striving with the indignities of the world,^c temptations of Satan,^d and infirmities in His flesh, whether common to the nature of man, or particularly accompanying His low condition^e

^aGalatians 4:4; ^bMatthew 5:17; Romans 5:19; ^cPsalms 22:6; Hebrews 12:2–3; ^dMatthew 4:1–12; Luke 4:13; ^eHebrews 2:17–18; Hebrews 4:15; Isaiah 52:13–14

Q. 49. How did Christ humble Himself in His death?

A. Christ humbled Himself in His death in that He:

- Was betrayed by Judas^a
- Was forsaken by His disciples^b
- Was scorned and rejected by the world^c
- Was condemned by Pilate
- Was tormented by His persecutors^d
- Strove with the terrors of death and the powers of darkness
- Felt and bore the weight of God’s wrath^e
- Laid down His life as an offering for sin,^f enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross^g

^aMatthew 27:4; ^bMatthew 26:56; ^cIsaiah 53:2–3; ^dMatthew 27:26–50; John 19:34; ^eLuke 22:44; Matthew 27:46; ^fIsaiah 53:10; ^gPhilippians 2:8; Hebrews 12:2; Galatians 3:13

Q. 50. Wherein consisted Christ’s humiliation after His death?

A. Christ’s humiliation after His death consisted in His being buried,^a continuing in the state of the dead, and being under the power of death until the third day.^b This has been otherwise expressed in the words, “He descended into hell.”¹¹

^a1 Corinthians 15:3–4; ^bPsalms 16:10 *with* Acts 2:24–27, 31; Romans 6:9; Matthew 12:40

Questions 51 – 60

Q. 51. What was the state of Christ’s exaltation?

A. The state of Christ’s exaltation consists in His resurrection,^a ascension,^b sitting at the right hand of the Father,^c and His coming again to judge the world.^d

^a1 Corinthians 15:4; ^bMark 16:19; ^cEphesians 1:20; ^dActs 1:11; Acts 17:31

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

A. Christ was exalted in His resurrection in that:

- He did not see corruption in death, as it was not possible for death to hold Him^a
- He rose again from the dead the third day:^d
 - In the very same body in which He suffered, retaining the essential properties of that body.^b His body was really united to His soul, but without mortality and other common infirmities belonging to this life.^c

¹¹ This phrase is in the *Apostle’s Creed*.

- By His own power,^d by which He declared:
 - Himself to be the Son of God^e
 - That He satisfied divine justice^f
 - That He vanquished death and him that had the power of it^g
 - That He is Lord of the living and the dead^h
- As public person,ⁱ doing all of these as the head of His church^j
 - For their justification,^k enlivening in grace,^l and support against enemies^m
 - To assure them of their resurrection from the dead at the last dayⁿ

^aActs 2:24, 27; ^bLuke 24:39; ^cRomans 6:9; Revelation 1:18; ^dJohn 10:18; ^eRomans 1:4; ^fRomans 8:34; ^gHebrews 2:14; ^hRomans 14:9; ⁱ1 Corinthians 15:21–22; ^jEphesians 1:20, 22–23; Colossians 1:18; ^kRomans 4:25; ^lEphesians 2:1, 5–6; Colossians 2:12; ^m1 Corinthians 15:25–27; ⁿ1 Corinthians 15:20

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

A. Christ was exalted in His ascension in that:

- After His resurrection, He often appeared to, and conversed with, His apostles. He spoke to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God^a and gave them commission to preach the gospel to all nations.^b
- Forty days after His resurrection, in our nature and as our head,^c Christ:
 - Triumphed over enemies^d
 - Visibly went up into the highest heavens:
 - To receive gifts for men^e
 - To raise up our dispositions towards heaven^f
 - To prepare a place for us^g where [He] Himself is
 - He will continue in heaven until His second coming at the end of the world^h

^aActs 1:2–3; ^bMatthew 28:19–20; ^cHebrews 6:20; ^dEphesians 4:8; ^eActs 1:9–11; Ephesians 4:10; Psalm 68:18; ^fColossians 3:1–2; ^gJohn 14:3; ^hActs 3:21

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^a with all fullness of joy,^b glory,^c and power over all things in heaven and earth^d
- Gathers and defends His Church and subdues their enemies
- Furnishes His ministers and people with gifts and graces^e and makes intercession for them^f

^aPhilippians 2:9; ^bActs 2:28 *with* Psalm 16:11; ^cJohn 17:5; ^dEphesians 1:22; 1 Peter 3:22; ^eEphesians 4:10–12; Psalm 110; ^fRomans 8:34

Q. 55. How does Christ make intercession?

A. Christ makes intercession by:

- His appearing in our nature continually before the Father in heaven^a in the merit of His obedience and sacrifice on earth^b
- Declaring His will to have His obedience and sacrifice applied to all believers^c

- Answering all accusations against believers^d and procuring for them quiet of conscience notwithstanding daily failings^e
- Procuring for believers access with boldness to the throne of grace^f and acceptance of their persons^g and services^h

^aHebrews 9:12, 24; ^bHebrews 1:3; ^cJohn 3:16; John 17:9, 20, 24; ^dRomans 8:33–34; ^eRomans 5:1–2; 1 John 2:1–2; ^fHebrews 4:16; ^gEphesians 1:6; ^h1 Peter 2:5

Q. 56. How will Christ be exalted in His coming again to judge the world?

A. Christ will be exalted in His coming again to judge the world in that: He who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men^a will come again at the last day. He will come in great power^b and fully and clearly show forth both His own glory and His Father’s glory. With all His holy angels,^c with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God,^d Christ will come to judge the world in righteousness.^e

^aActs 3:14–15; ^bMatthew 24:30; ^cLuke 9:26; Matthew 25:31; ^d1 Thessalonians 4:16; ^eActs 17:31

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

A. Christ, by His mediation, has procured redemption^a with all other benefits of the covenant of grace.^b

^aHebrews 9:12; ^b2 Corinthians 1:20

Q. 58 How do we come to be made partakers of the benefits that Christ has procured?

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

^aJohn 1:11–12; ^bTitus 3:5–6

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

A. Redemption is certainly applied and effectually communicated to all those for whom Christ has purchased it.^a They are, in time,¹² enabled by the Holy Spirit to believe in Christ according to the gospel.^b

^aEphesians 1:13–14; John 6:37, 39; John 10:15–16; ^bEphesians 2:8; 2 Corinthians 4:13

Q. 60. Can those who have never heard of the gospel, and thus do not know Jesus Christ nor believe in Him, be saved by their living according to the light of nature?

A. Those who have never heard the gospel,^a do not know Jesus Christ,^b and do not believe in Him, cannot be saved.^c This is true no matter how diligent they are to frame their lives according to the light of nature^d or the law of that religion that they do profess.^e Neither is there salvation in any other but in Christ alone,^f who is the only Savior of His body the Church.^g

¹² “In time” validly refers to both created time as opposed to election from eternity, and the right moment in created time.

^aRomans 10:14; ^b2 Thessalonians 1:8–9; Ephesians 2:12; John 1:10–12; ^cJohn 8:24; Mark 16:16; ^d1 Corinthians 1:20–24; ^eJohn 4:22; Romans 9:31–32; Philippians 3:4–9; ^fActs 4:12; ^gEphesians 5:23

Questions 61 – 70

Q. 61. Are all people saved who hear the gospel and are in the Church while they live?

A. Not all who hear the gospel and are in the visible Church while they live are saved, but only those who are true members of the invisible Church.

John 12:38–40; Romans 9:6; Matthew 22:14; Matthew 7:21; Romans 11:7

Q. 62. What is the visible Church?

A. The visible Church is a society made up of all those who profess the true religion,^a including their children,^b in all ages and places of the world.

^a1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 15:9–12; Revelation 7:9; Psalm 2:8; Psalm 22:27–31; Psalm 45:17; Matthew 28:19–20; Isaiah 59:21; ^b1 Corinthians 7:14; Acts 2:39; Romans 11:16; Genesis 17:7

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^a
- Being protected and preserved in all ages, notwithstanding the opposition of all enemies^b
- Excluding none that will come to Christ^c
- Enjoying:
 - The communion of saints
 - The ordinary means of salvation^c
 - Offers of grace by Christ, by means of the ministry of the gospel, to all of the members of it
 - Testifying that whoever believes in Christ will be saved^d

^aIsaiah 4:5–6; 1 Timothy 4:10; ^bPsalm 125; Isaiah 31:4–5; Zechariah 12:2–4, 8–9; ^cActs 2:39, 42; ^dPsalm 147:19–20; Romans 9:4; Ephesians 4:11–12; Mark 16:15–16; ^eJohn 6:37

Q. 64. What is the invisible Church?

A. The invisible Church is the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or will be gathered into one, under Christ the head.

Ephesians 1:10, 22–23; John 10:16; John 11:52

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.

John 17:21; Ephesians 2:5–6; John 17:24

Q. 66. What is the union that the elect have with Christ?

A. The union that the elect have with Christ is the work of God's grace^a by which they are spiritually and mystically, yet really and inseparably, joined to Christ as their head and husband.^b This union is made in their effectual calling.^c

^aEphesians 1:22; Ephesians 2:6–8; ^b1 Corinthians 6:17; John 10:28; Ephesians 5:23, 30; ^c1 Peter 5:10; 1 Corinthians 1:9

Q. 67. What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's almighty power and grace^a by which He, in His accepted time, invites and draws the elect to Jesus Christ by His Word and Spirit.^c He does this out of His free and special love to His elect, and not from anything in them moving Him to it.^b He savingly enlightens their minds^d and renews and powerfully determines their wills.^e Thus they are made willing and able to freely answer His call and to accept and embrace the grace offered and conveyed in the call, even though, in themselves, they are dead in sin.^f

^aJohn 5:25; Ephesians 1:18–20; 2 Timothy 1:8–9; ^bTitus 3:4–5; Ephesians 2:4–5, 7–9; Romans 9:11; ^c2 Corinthians 5:20 *with* 2 Corinthians 6:1–2; John 6:44; 2 Thessalonians 2:13–14; ^dActs 26:18; 1 Corinthians 2:10, 12; ^eEzekiel 11:19; Ezekiel 36:26–27; John 6:45; ^fEphesians 2:5; Philippians 2:13; Deuteronomy 30:6

Q. 68. Are only the elect effectually called?

A. All of the elect, and only the elect, are effectually called.^a Others may be, and often are, outwardly called by the ministry of the Word^b and have some common operations of the Spirit.^c But, because of their willful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them, they are justly left in their unbelief and never truly come to Jesus Christ.^d

^aActs 13:48; ^bMatthew 22:14; ^cMatthew 7:22; Matthew 13:20–21; Hebrews 6:4–6; ^dJohn 12:38–40; Acts 28:25–27; John 6:64–65; Psalm 81:11–12

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

A. The communion in grace that the members of the invisible Church have with Christ is their partaking of the virtue of His mediation in their:

- Justification^a
- Adoption^b
- Sanctification
- Whatever else in this life displays forth their union with Him^c

^aRomans 8:30; ^bEphesians 1:5; ^c1 Corinthians 1:30

Q. 70. What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace to sinners^a in which He pardons all their sins, and accepts and accounts their persons as righteous in His sight.^b He does not do so for anything [that He has] worked in the sinner or for anything done by the sinner,^c but only

for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ. This obedience and satisfaction are imputed to them by God^d and received by faith alone.^e

^aRomans 3:23–25; Romans 4:5; ^b2 Corinthians 5:19, 21; Romans 3:22, 24–25, 27–28; ^cTitus 3:5, 7; Ephesians 1:7; ^dRomans 5:17–19; Romans 4:6–8; ^eActs 10:43; Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:9

Questions 71 – 80

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

A. Christ, by His obedience and death, made an exact, real, and full satisfaction of God’s justice in behalf of those who are justified.^a Now, God accepts satisfaction from a surety¹³, and He might have demanded that surety from believers. But God Himself provided this surety, His own only Son,^b imputing His righteousness to believers.^{14, c} For this surety, God requires nothing from believers for their justification but faith.^d But faith is also His gift.^e Therefore, believers’ justification is, to them, of free grace.^f

^aRomans 5:8–10, 19; ^b1 Timothy 2:5–6; Hebrews 10:10; Matthew 20:28; Daniel 9:24, 26; Isaiah 53:4–6, 10–12; Hebrews 7:22; Romans 8:32; 1 Peter 1:18–19; ^c2 Corinthians 5:21; ^dRomans 3:24–25; ^eEphesians 2:8; ^fEphesians 1:7

Q. 72. What is justifying faith?

A. Justifying faith is a saving grace^a and a work in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit^b and Word of God.^c By this faith, the sinner:

- Is convinced of his sin and misery
- Is convinced that neither he, nor any other creature, has the ability to recover him out of his lost condition^d
- Assents to the truth of the promise of the gospel^e
- Receives and rests upon Christ and His righteousness as held forth in the gospel:
 - For pardon of sin^f
 - So that God will accept and account his person as righteous in His sight for salvation^g

^aHebrews 10:39; ^b2 Corinthians 4:13; Ephesians 1:17–19; ^cRomans 10:14, 17; ^dActs 2:37; Acts 16:30; John 16:8–9; Romans 5:6; Ephesians 2:1; Acts 4:12; ^eEphesians 1:13; ^fJohn 1:12; Acts 16:31; Acts 10:43; ^gPhilippians 3:9; Acts 15:11

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

A. Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God only as an instrument¹⁵ by which the sinner receives and applies Christ and His righteousness.^c Faith does not justify because of those other graces that always accompany it or of good works, which are the fruits of it.^a Nor is the grace of faith or any act of faith imputed to him for his justification.^b

¹³ surety: in this context, guarantor, one who provides a guarantee to make good the default of another

¹⁴ “Believers” is not in the original, but is inserted to link the shorter sentences derived from a single long sentence.

¹⁵ instrument: an implement, tool or means

^aGalatians 3:11; Romans 3:28; ^bRomans 4:5 *with* Romans 10:10; ^cJohn 1:12; Philippians 3:9; Galatians 2:16

Q. 74. What is adoption?

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

- Are received into the number of His children^c
- Have His name put upon them^d
- Receive the Spirit of His Son^e
- Are under His fatherly care and dispensations^f
- Are admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God
- Are made heirs of all the promises and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory^g

^a1 John 3:1; ^bEphesians 1:5; Galatians 4:4–5; ^cJohn 1:12; ^d2 Corinthians 6:18; Revelation 3:12; ^eGalatians 4:6; ^fPsalms 103:13; Proverbs 14:26; Matthew 6:32; ^gHebrews 6:12; Romans 8:17

Q. 75. What is sanctification?

A. God has chosen believers¹⁶ to be holy before the foundation of the world. Sanctification is a work of God's grace by which believers are, in time, renewed in their whole man after the image of God.^c This renewal is through the powerful operation of His Spirit,^a who applies the death and resurrection of Christ to them.^b Believers have the seeds of repentance to life and of all other saving graces put into their hearts.^d These graces are so stirred up, increased, and strengthened,^e that they more and more die to sin and rise to newness of life.^f

^aEphesians 1:4; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; ^bRomans 6:4–6; ^cEphesians 4:23–24; ^dActs 11:18; 1 John 3:9; ^eJude 20; Hebrews 6:11–12; Ephesians 3:16–19; Colossians 1:10–11; ^fRomans 6:4, 6, 14; Galatians 5:24

Q. 76. What is repentance to life?

A. Repentance to life is a saving grace,^a a work in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit^b and Word of God^c by which:

- Out of the sight and sense not only of the danger,^d but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins^e
- Upon the perception and understanding of God's mercy in Christ to those who are penitent^f

he so grieves for^g and hates his sins,^h that he turns from them all to God,ⁱ purposing and endeavoring to walk constantly with Him in all the ways of new obedience.^j

^a2 Timothy 2:25; ^bZechariah 12:10; ^cActs 11:18, 20–21; ^dEzekiel 18:28, 30, 32; Luke 15:17–18; Hosea 2:6–7; ^eEzekiel 36:31; Isaiah 30:22; ^fJoel 2:12–13; ^gJeremiah 31:18–19; ^h2 Corinthians 7:11; ⁱActs 26:18; Ezekiel 14:6; 1 Kings 8:47–48; ^jPsalms 119:6, 59, 128; Luke 1:6; 2 Kings 23:25

Q. 77. How do justification and sanctification differ?

A. Although sanctification is inseparably joined with justification,^a they differ in that:

¹⁶ “Believers” does not appear in the original; it is included to connect shorter sentences which replace a single, quite complex sentence.

- In justification, God imputes the righteousness of Christ [to the believer].^b In sanctification, His Spirit infuses grace and enables [the believer] to exercise righteousness^c
- In justification sin is pardoned.^d In sanctification sin is subdued^e
- Justification equally frees all believers from the revenging wrath of God, and that perfectly in this life, so that they never fall into condemnation.^f Sanctification is neither equal in all,^g nor in this life perfect in any,^h but grows up toward perfectionⁱ

^a1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 Corinthians 1:30; ^bRomans 4:6, 8; ^cEzekiel 36:27; ^dRomans 3:24–25; ^eRomans 6:6, 14; ^fRomans 8:33–34; ^g1 John 2:12–14; Hebrews 5:12–14; ^h1 John 1:8, 10; ⁱ2 Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 3:12–14

Q. 78. From what comes the imperfection of sanctification in believers?

A. The imperfection of sanctification in believers comes from the remnants of sin abiding in every part of them and from the perpetual lusting of the flesh against the spirit. Thus, they are often foiled by temptations, fall into many sins,^a are hindered in all their spiritual services,^b and their best works are imperfect and defiled in the sight of God.^c

^aRomans 7:18, 23; Mark 14:66–72; Galatians 2:11–12; ^bHebrews 12:1; ^cIsaiah 64:6; Exodus 28:38

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

A. True believers can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace,^f but are kept by the power of God through faith to salvation.^g This is by reason of:

- The unchangeable love of God^a
- His decree and covenant to give them perseverance^b
- Their inseparable union with Christ^c
- Christ’s continual intercession for them^d
- The Spirit and seed of God abiding in them^e

^aJeremiah 31:3; ^b2 Timothy 2:19; Hebrews 13:20–21; 2 Samuel 23:5; ^c1 Corinthians 1:8–9; ^dHebrews 7:25; Luke 22:32; ^e1 John 3:9; 1 John 2:27; ^fJeremiah 32:40; John 10:28; ^g1 Peter 1:5

Q. 80. Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are in the state of grace and that they will persevere in it to salvation?

A. Those who truly believe in Christ and endeavor to walk in all good conscience before Him^a may be infallibly assured that they are in the state of grace and will persevere in it to salvation:^d

- Without extraordinary revelation
- By faith grounded upon the truth of God’s promises
- By the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made^b
- By the Spirit bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God^c

^a1 John 2:3; ^b1 Corinthians 2:12; 1 John 3:14, 18–19, 21, 24; 1 John 4:13, 16; Hebrews 6:11–12; ^cRomans 8:16; ^d1 John 5:13

Questions 81 – 90

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

A. Assurance of grace and salvation are not of the essence of faith.^a Thus, true believers may wait long before they obtain it.^b Also, after the enjoyment of it, they may have it weakened and interrupted through many kinds of disturbances, sins, temptations, and desertions.^c However, they are never left without sufficient presence and support of the Spirit of God to keep them from sinking into utter despair.^d

^aEphesians 1:13; ^bIsaiah 50:10; Psalm 88; ^cPsalm 77:1–12; Song of Solomon 5:2–3, 6; Psalm 51:8, 12; Psalm 31:22; Psalm 22:1; ^d1 John 3:9; Job 13:15; Psalm 73:15, 23; Isaiah 54:7–10

Q. 82. What [are the times of] the communion in glory that the members of the invisible Church have with Christ?

A. The [times of the] communion in glory that the members of the invisible Church have with Christ are:

- In this life^a
- Immediately after death^b
- At last perfected at the resurrection and day of judgment^c

^a2 Corinthians 3:18; ^bLuke 23:43; ^c1 Thessalonians 4:17

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

A. In this life, the members of the invisible Church have transferred to them the first-fruits of glory with Christ because they are members of Him, their head. Thus, in Him, they share in that glory of which He is fully possessed.^a And, as an earnest of this glory, they enjoy the sense of God's love,^b peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, and hope of glory.^c On the contrary, the sense of God's revenging wrath, horror of conscience, and a fearful expectation of judgment are the beginning of torments that the wicked will endure after death.^d

^aEphesians 2:5–6; ^bRomans 5:5 *with* 2 Corinthians 1:22; ^cRomans 5:1–2; Romans 14:17; ^dGenesis 4:13; Matthew 27:4; Hebrews 10:27; Romans 2:9; Mark 9:44

Q. 84. Will all men die?

A. Death is threatened as the wages of sin.^a It is appointed to all men to die once,^b because all have sinned.^c

^aRomans 6:23; ^bHebrews 9:27; ^cRomans 5:12

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

A. The righteous will be delivered from death itself at the last day. Even in death they are delivered from the sting and curse of it.^a Thus, although they die, it is out of God's love

[that He uses death]^b to free them perfectly from sin and misery^c and to make them capable of further communion with Christ in glory, which they then enter into.^d

^a1 Corinthians 15:26, 55–57; Hebrews 2:15; ^bIsaiah 57:1–2; 2 Kings 22:20; ^cRevelation 14:13; Ephesians 5:27; ^dLuke 23:43; Philippians 1:23

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

A. The communion in glory with Christ that the members of the invisible Church enjoy immediately after death is:

- Their souls are at that time made perfect in holiness^a and received into the highest heavens^b where they behold the face of God in light and glory^c
- They wait for the full redemption of their bodies,^d which even in death continue united to Christ.^e Their bodies rest in their graves, as in their beds,^f until at the last day when they are again united to their souls^g

On the other hand, at their death, the souls of the wicked are cast into hell where they remain in torments and utter darkness. Their bodies are kept in their graves, as in their prisons, until the resurrection and judgment of the great day.^h

^aHebrews 12:23; ^b2 Corinthians 5:1, 6, 8; Philippians 1:23 *with* Acts 3:21 *and* Ephesians 4:10; ^c1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 13:12; ^dRomans 8:23; Psalm 16:9; ^e1 Thessalonians 4:14; ^fIsaiah 57:2; ^gJob 19:26–27; ^hLuke 16:23–24; Acts 1:25; Jude 6–7

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

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

^aActs 24:15; ^b1 Corinthians 15:51–53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15–17; John 5:28–29; ^c1 Corinthians 15:21–23, 42–44; Philippians 3:21; ^dJohn 5:27–29; Matthew 25:33

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

A. Immediately after the resurrection there will be the general and final judgment of angels and men.^a No man knows the day and hour, so that all may watch and pray and be always ready for the coming of the Lord.^b

^a2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6–7, 14–15; Matthew 25:46; ^bMatthew 24:36, 42, 44; Luke 21:35–36

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

A. At the day of judgment the wicked will be set on Christ's left hand.^a There, upon clear evidence and full conviction of their own consciences,^b they will have the fearful, but just, sentence of condemnation pronounced against them.^c They will thus be cast into hell, out from the favorable presence of God and the glorious fellowship with Christ, His

saints, and all His holy angels. In hell, they will be punished with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul, with the devil and his angels forever.^d

^aMatthew 25:33; ^bRomans 2:15–16; ^cMatthew 25:41–43; ^dLuke 16:26; 2 Thessalonians 1:8–9

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

A. At the day of judgment, the righteous will be caught up to Christ in the clouds.^a They will be set at His right hand, and there openly acknowledged and acquitted.^b They will join with Him in judging reprobate angels and men.^c They will be received into heaven,^d where they will be:

- Fully and forever freed from all sin and misery^e
- Filled with inconceivable joys^f
- Made perfectly holy and happy, both in body and soul
- In the company of innumerable saints and holy angels,^g 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^h

This is the perfect and full communion that the members of the invisible Church will enjoy with Christ in glory at the resurrection and day of judgment.

^a1 Thessalonians 4:17; ^bMatthew 25:33; Matthew 10:32; ^c1 Corinthians 6:2–3; ^dMatthew 25:34, 46; ^eEphesians 5:27; Revelation 14:13; ^fPsalms 16:11; ^gHebrews 12:22–23; ^h1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 4:17–18

Questions 91 – 100

Having seen what the Scriptures principally teach us to believe concerning God, we next consider what they require as the duty of man.¹⁷

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

A. The duty that God requires of man is obedience to His revealed will.

Romans 12:1–2; Micah 6:8; 1 Samuel 15:22

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

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

Genesis 1:26–27; Romans 2:14–15; Romans 10:5; Genesis 2:17

Q. 93. What is the moral law?

A. The moral law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind. It directs and binds everyone to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience to it in:

- The frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body^a

¹⁷ This interposed sentence is part of the WLC.

- Performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness that he owes to God and man^b

The moral law promises life on fulfilling it, and threatens death on the breach of it.^c

^aDeuteronomy 5:1–3, 32–33; Luke 10:26–27; Galatians 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; ^bLuke 1:75; Acts 24:16; ^cRomans 10:5; Galatians 3:10, 12

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

A. Since the fall, no man can attain to righteousness and life by the moral law.^a However, it is greatly useful, both in ways common to all men, and in ways that are particular either to the unregenerate or the regenerate.^b

^aRomans 8:3; Galatians 2:16; ^b1 Timothy 1:8

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

A. The moral law is of use to all men to:

- Inform them of the holy nature and will of God,^a and of their duty, binding them to walk accordingly^b
- Convince them of their inability to keep it and of the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts, and lives^c
- Humble them, giving them a sense of their sin and misery,^d and thus help them to a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ^e and of the perfection of His obedience^f

^aLeviticus 11:44–45; Leviticus 20:7–8; Romans 7:12; ^bMicah 6:8; James 2:10–11; ^cPsalms 19:11–12; Romans 3:20; Romans 7:7; ^dRomans 3:9, 23; ^eGalatians 3:21–22; ^fRomans 10:4

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

A. The moral law is of use to unregenerate men to awaken their consciences to flee from wrath to come^a and to drive them to Christ.^b Or, if they continue in the state and way of sin, to leave them inexcusable^c and under the curse of the law.^d

^a1 Timothy 1:9–10; ^bGalatians 3:24; ^cRomans 1:20 *with* Romans 2:15; ^dGalatians 3:10

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

A. Those who are regenerate and believe in Christ are delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works.^a Thus they are neither justified^b nor condemned by it.^c However, besides the general uses of the moral law that are common to them with all men, it is of special use to show them how much they are bound to Christ for His fulfilling it and enduring the curse of it in their stead and for their good.^d Thus, the moral law provokes them to more thankfulness^e and to expression of thankfulness in their greater care to conform themselves to the moral law as the rule of their obedience.^f

^aRomans 6:14; Romans 7:4, 6; Galatians 4:4–5; ^bRomans 3:20; ^cGalatians 5:23; Romans 8:1; ^dRomans 7:24–25; Galatians 3:13–14; Romans 8:3–4; ^eLuke 1:68–69, 74–75; Colossians 1:12–14; ^fRomans 7:22; Romans 12:2; Titus 2:11–14

Q. 98. Where is the entire moral law summarized?

A. The entire moral law is summarized in the Ten Commandments, which were delivered by the voice of God upon Mount Sinai and written by Him in two tablets of stone.^a They are recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. The first four Commandments contain our duty to God, and the other six our duty to man.^b

^aDeuteronomy 10:4; Exodus 34:1–4; ^bMatthew 22:37–40

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

For a right understanding of the Ten Commandments, these rules [of interpretation] are to be observed:

- The law is perfect, and
 - Forever binds everyone to:
 - Full conformity in the whole man to the righteousness of it
 - Entire obedience
 - so as to:
 - Require the utmost perfection of every duty
 - Forbid the least degree of every sin.^a
- The law¹⁸ is spiritual, and therefore, reaches the understanding, will, emotions, and all other powers of the soul, as well as words, works, and gestures^{19, b}
- One and the same thing, in diverse respects, is [often] required or forbidden in different Commandments^c
- Where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden.^d Where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded.^e Where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included.^f Where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included^g
- What God forbids is at no time to be done.^h What He commands is always our duty,ⁱ yet every particular duty is not to be done at all times^j
- Under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded. This applies to all causes, means, occasions, and appearances of them, and also provocations to them^k
- What is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, according to our places [stations in life], to endeavor that it may be avoided or performed by others according to the duty of their places^l
- In what is commanded to others, we are bound according to our places and callings to be helpful to them.^m We must also take heed of partaking with others in what is forbidden themⁿ

^aPsalm 19:7; James 2:10; Matthew 5:21–48; ^bRomans 7:14; Deuteronomy 6:5 *with* Matthew 22:37–39; Matthew 5:21–22, 27–28, 36–48; ^cColossians 3:5; Amos 8:5; Proverbs 1:19; 1 Timothy 6:10; ^dIsaiah 58:13; Deuteronomy 6:13 *with* Matthew 4:9–10; Matthew 15:4–6; ^eMatthew 5:21–25; Ephesians 4:28; ^fExodus

¹⁸ The original has “it.” The editor believes its antecedent is “the law,” but cannot be completely certain it is not the Ten Commandments.

¹⁹ gestures: as used at the time of writing, the primary reference was to conscious and deliberate actions such as bowing, kneeling, or standing in public worship. Included also would be other formal gestures such as offering a chair to someone, or standing when someone enters a room. This would not at all exclude conversational gestures.

20:12 with Proverbs 30:17; [§]Jeremiah 18:7–8; Exodus 20:7 with Psalm 15:1, 4–5 and Psalm 24:4–5; ^hJob 13:7–8; Romans 3:8; Job 36:21; Hebrews 11:25; ⁱDeuteronomy 4:8–9; ^jMatthew 12:7; ^kMatthew 5:21–22, 27–28; Matthew 15:4–6; Hebrews 10:24–25; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Jude 23; Galatians 5:26; Colossians 3:21; ^lExodus 20:10; Leviticus 19:17; Genesis 18:19; Joshua 24:15; Deuteronomy 6:6–7; ^m2 Corinthians 1:24; ⁿ1 Timothy 5:22; Ephesians 5:11

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

A. In the Ten Commandments, we are to consider the preface, the substance of the Commandments themselves, and the different reasons annexed to some of them in order to more enforce them.

(No proof texts)

Questions 101 – 110

Q. 101. What is the preface to the Ten²⁰ 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 bondage” (NKJV).^{21, a} In this statement, God clearly shows His sovereignty, that He is Yahweh, the eternal, unchangeable, and almighty God,^b who has His being in and of Himself.^c He gives being to all His words^d and works.^e He is a God in covenant with all His people, just as with Israel of old.^f Just as God brought them out of their bondage in Egypt, so He delivers us from our spiritual slavery.^g Therefore we are bound to take Him alone for our God and to keep all His Commandments.^h

^aExodus 20:2; ^bIsaiah 44:6; ^cExodus 3:14; ^dExodus 6:3; ^eActs 17:24, 28; ^fGenesis 17:7 with Romans 3:29; ^gLuke 1:74–75; ^h1 Peter 1:15–18; Leviticus 18:30; Leviticus 19:37

Q. 102. What is the sum of the four Commandments that 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, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind.

Luke 10:27

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 knowing and acknowledging God to be the only true God, and our God,^a and to worship and glorify Him accordingly^b by:

- Thinking^c and meditating^d about Him

²⁰ The original text omits “Ten,” inserted here and in the answer by the RPCNA *Constitution*, and by the editor for clarity.

²¹ All Scripture quotations in the answers are from the New King James Version (NKJV). See text following the *Table of Contents* for acknowledgments and copyright information.

- Remembering,^e highly esteeming,^f honoring,^g adoring,^h choosing,ⁱ loving,^j and desiring^k Him
- Fearing^l Him
- Believing^m Him
- Trusting,ⁿ hoping,^o delighting,^p and rejoicing in Him^q
- Being zealous for Him^r
- Calling upon Him
- Giving Him all praise and thanks^s
- Yielding all obedience and submission to Him with the whole man^t
- Being careful in all things to please Him^u
- Being sorrowful when in anything He is offended^v
- Walking humbly with Him^w

^a1 Chronicles 28:9; Deuteronomy 26:17; Isaiah 43:10; Jeremiah 14:22; ^bPsalms 95:6–7; Matthew 4:10; Psalm 29:2; ^cMalachi 3:16; ^dPsalms 63:6; ^eEcclesiastes 12:1; ^fPsalms 71:19; ^gMalachi 1:6; ^hIsaiah 45:23; ⁱJoshua 24:15, 22; ^jDeuteronomy 6:5; ^kPsalms 73:25; ^lIsaiah 8:13; ^mExodus 14:31; ⁿIsaiah 26:4; ^oPsalms 130:7; ^pPsalms 37:4; ^qPsalms 32:11; ^rRomans 12:11 *with* Numbers 25:11; ^sPhilippians 4:6; ^tJeremiah 7:23; James 4:7; ^u1 John 3:22; ^vJeremiah 31:18; Psalm 119:15; ^wMicah 6:8

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^a
- Idolatry, in having or worshiping more gods than one, or any with or instead of the true God^b
- Not having and acknowledging Him for God and our God^c
- Omitting or neglecting anything due to Him that is required in this Commandment^d
- Ignorance,^e forgetfulness,^f misunderstandings,^g false opinions,^h or unworthy or wicked thoughts of Himⁱ
- Bold and curious searching into His secrets^j
- Profaneness,^{22, k} hatred of God,^l self-love,^m self-seekingⁿ
- All other inordinate or²³ immoderate setting of our mind, will, or emotions on other things, or taking them off Him, in whole or in part^o
- Vain credulity,^p unbelief,^q heresy,^r false or erroneous belief,^s distrust,^t despair,^u incorrigibility,^v insensibility under judgments,^w hardness of heart,^x pride,^y presumption,^z or carnal security^{aa}
- Putting God to the test^{ab} using unlawful means^{ac}
- Trusting in lawful means,^{ad} carnal delights, or joys^{ac}
- Corrupt, blind, or indiscreet zeal^{af}
- Lukewarmness^{ag} or deadness in the things of God^{ah}
- Estranging ourselves or apostatizing from God^{ai}
- Praying or giving any religious worship to saints, angels, or any other creatures^{aj}

²² profane: as used here, impure, defiled, or not holy

²³ The WLC, when listing sins, often uses “and” as a connective. On one level, this makes sense in the same way that apples, peaches, *and* oranges are all fruit; all items in such lists are sins. At the same time, to the modern reader, there is an implication that more than one of the items in the list must be present for sinfulness. Thus, the editor sometimes will substitute “or” for “and.” This is along the lines of, “Please do not drop an egg, peach, *or* tomato.”

- All compacts or consulting with the devil,^{ak} or giving heed to his suggestions^{al}
- Making men the lords of our faith and conscience^{am}
- Slighting or despising God or His commands^{an}
- Resisting or grieving His Spirit^{ao}
- Discontent or impatience at His dispensations
- Charging Him foolishly for distress or suffering that He inflicts on us^{ap}
- Ascribing the praise of any good we are, have, or can do, to fortune,^{aq} idols,^{ar} ourselves,^{as} or any other creature^{at}

^aPsalm 14:1; Ephesians 2:12; ^bJeremiah 2:27–28 *with* 1 Thessalonians 1:9; ^cPsalm 81:11; ^dIsaiah 43:22–24; ^eJeremiah 4:22; Hosea 4:1, 6; ^fJeremiah 2:32; ^gActs 17:23, 29; ^hIsaiah 40:18; ⁱPsalm 50:21; ^jDeuteronomy 29:29; ^kTitus 1:16; Hebrews 12:16; ^lRomans 1:30; ^m2 Timothy 3:2; ⁿPhilippians 2:21; ^o1 John 2:15–16; 1 Samuel 2:29; Colossians 3:2, 5; ^p1 John 4:1; ^qDeuteronomy 9:6, 24; Hebrews 3:12; ^rGalatians 5:20; Titus 3:10; ^sActs 26:9; ^tPsalm 78:22; ^uGenesis 4:13; ^vJeremiah 5:3; ^wIsaiah 42:25; ^xRomans 2:5; ^yJeremiah 13:15; ^zPsalm 19:13; ^{aa}Zephaniah 1:12; ^{ab}Matthew 4:7; ^{ac}Romans 3:8; ^{ad}Jeremiah 17:5; ^{ae}2 Timothy 3:4; ^{af}Galatians 4:17; John 16:2; Romans 10:2; Luke 9:54–55; ^{ag}Revelation 3:16; ^{ah}Revelation 3:1; ^{ai}Ezekiel 14:5; Isaiah 1:4–5; ^{aj}Romans 10:13–14; Hosea 4:12; Acts 10:25–26; Revelation 19:10; Matthew 4:10; Colossians 2:18; Romans 1:25; ^{ak}Leviticus 20:6; 1 Samuel 28:7, 11 *with* 1 Chronicles 10:13–14; ^{al}Acts 5:3; ^{am}2 Corinthians 1:24; Matthew 23:9; ^{an}Deuteronomy 32:15; 2 Samuel 12:9; Proverbs 13:13; ^{ao}Acts 7:51; Ephesians 4:30; ^{ap}Psalm 73:2–3, 13–15, 22; Job 1:22; ^{aq}1 Samuel 6:7–9; ^{ar}Daniel 5:23; ^{as}Deuteronomy 8:17; Daniel 4:30; ^{at}Habakkuk 1:16

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

A. The words “before me,” or *before my face*, in the first Commandment teach us that God, who sees all things, takes special notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other god. Therefore it becomes an argument to dissuade [us] from this sin and to aggravate it as a most impudent provocation.^a It also persuades us to do, as in His sight, whatever we do in His service.^b

^aEzekiel 8:5–18; Psalm 44:20–21; ^b1 Chronicles 28:9

Q. 107. Which is the second Commandment?

A. The second Commandment is, “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—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 to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

Exodus 20:4–6

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

A. The duties required in the second Commandment are:

- Receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire all religious worship and ordinances that God has instituted in His Word:^a
 - Particularly, prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ^b
 - The reading, preaching, and hearing of the Word^c
 - The administration and receiving of the sacraments^d

- Church government and discipline^e
- The ministry²⁴ and support²⁵ of it^f
- Religious fasting^g
- Swearing by the name of God^h and vowing to Himⁱ
- Disapproving, detesting, and opposing all false worship^j
- According to each one's place and calling, removing false worship and all monuments of idolatry^k

^aDeuteronomy 32:46–47; Matthew 28:20; Acts 2:42; 1 Timothy 6:13–14; ^bPhilippians 4:6; Ephesians 5:20; ^cDeuteronomy 17:18–19; Acts 15:21; 2 Timothy 4:2; James 1:21–22; Acts 10:33; ^dMatthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23–30; ^eMatthew 18:15–17; Matthew 16:19; 1 Corinthians 5; 1 Corinthians 12:28; ^fEphesians 4:11–12; 1 Timothy 5:17–18; 1 Corinthians 9:7–15; ^gJoel 2:12–13; 1 Corinthians 7:5; ^hDeuteronomy 6:13; ⁱIsaiah 19:21; Psalm 76:11; ^jActs 17:16–17; Psalm 16:4; ^kDeuteronomy 7:5; Isaiah 30:22

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

A. The sins forbidden in the second Commandment are:

- All devising,^a counseling,^b commanding,^c using,^d or otherwise approving of any religious worship not instituted by God Himself^e
- Tolerating a false religion^{26, f}
- Making any representation of God, or of all or any of the three Persons:
 - Inwardly in our mind
 - Outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatever^g
 - All worshiping of any image,^h or God in it or by itⁱ
- Making any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them or service belonging to them^j
- All superstitious devices,^k corrupting the worship of God,^l adding to it, or taking from it,^m whether invented and taken up by ourselvesⁿ or received by tradition from others,^o even though under the authority of antiquity,^p custom,^q devotion,^r good intent, or any other pretense whatsoever^s
- Simony^{27, t}
- Sacrilege^{28, u}
- All neglect,^v contempt,^w hindering,^x or opposing the worship and ordinances that God has appointed^y

^aNumbers 15:39; ^bDeuteronomy 13:6–8; ^cHosea 5:11; Micah 6:16; ^d1 Kings 12:33; ^eDeuteronomy 12:30–32; ^fDeuteronomy 13:6–12; Zechariah 13:2–3; Revelation 2:2, 14–15, 20; Revelation 17:12, 16–17; ^gDeuteronomy 4:15–19; Acts 17:29; Romans 1:21–23, 25; ^hDaniel 3:18; Galatians 4:8; ⁱExodus 32:5, 8; ^j1 Kings 18:26, 28; Isaiah 65:11; ^kActs 17:22; Colossians 2:21–23; ^lMalachi 1:7–8, 14; ^mDeuteronomy 4:2;

²⁴ ministry: ordained ministers

²⁵ support: typically financial support, but more broadly, the provision of whatever a minister needs to do his job and support himself and his family and dependents

²⁶ This statement comes from the view of the Westminster Divines that the civil government should exercise jurisdiction in ecclesiastical affairs. However, both then and now, refusal to tolerate a false religion does not imply disrespect for, or lack of love of, persons who believe or practice a false religion. Editorial opinion: The civil government has no authority in ecclesiastical matters. See Appendix A in the editor's translation of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.

²⁷ simony: the purchase or sale of ecclesiastical offices or benefits, from Acts 8:18.

²⁸ sacrilege: irreverence, contempt or violation of that which is holy to God

^aPsalm 106:39; ^oMatthew 15:9; ^{p1}1 Peter 1:18; ^qJeremiah 44:17; ^rIsaiah 65:3–5; Galatians 1:13–14; ^{s1}1 Samuel 13:11–12; ^t1 Samuel 15:21; ^uActs 8:18; ^vRomans 2:22; Malachi 3:8; ^wExodus 4:24–26; ^xMatthew 22:5; Malachi 1:7, 13; ^yMatthew 23:13; ^zActs 13:44–45; ¹1 Thessalonians 2:15–16

Q. 110. What are the reasons annexed to the second Commandment to more strongly enforce it?

A. The reasons annexed to the second Commandment, to more strongly enforce it, are contained in these words: “For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”^a Thus the reasons are:

- Notably, God’s sovereignty over us and ownership of us^b
- His fervent zeal for His own worship,^c and His revengeful indignation against all false worship, as being a spiritual whoredom^d
- He accounts the breakers of this Commandment as those who hate Him and threatens to punish them for multiple generations^e
- He esteems the observers of it as those who love Him and keep His commandments, and promises mercy to them for many generations^f

^aExodus 20:5–6; ^bPsalm 45:11; Revelation 15:3–4; ^cExodus 34:13–14; ^{d1}1 Corinthians 10:20–22; Jeremiah 7:18–20; Ezekiel 16:26–27; Deuteronomy 32:16–20; ^eHosea 2:2–4; ^fDeuteronomy 5:29

Questions 111 – 120

Q. 111. Which 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,^a ordinances,^b the Word,^c sacraments,^d prayer,^e oaths,^f vows,^g lots,^h His works,ⁱ and whatever else there is by which He makes Himself known, be holily and reverently used in thought,^j meditation,^k word,^l and writing.^m [God’s name is treated as holy] by a holy professionⁿ and suitable conduct of life,^o to the glory of God^p and the good of ourselves^q and others.^r

^aMatthew 6:9; Deuteronomy 28:58; Psalm 29:2; Psalm 68:4; Revelation 15:3–4; ^bMalachi 1:14; Ecclesiastes 5:1; ^cPsalm 138:2; ^{d1}1 Corinthians 11:24–25, 28–29; ^{e1}1 Timothy 2:8; ^fJeremiah 4:2; ^gEcclesiastes 5:2, 4–6; ^hActs 1:24, 26; ⁱJob 36:24; ^jMalachi 3:16; ^kPsalm 8; ^lColossians 3:17; Psalm 105:2, 5; ^mPsalm 102:18; ⁿ¹1 Peter 3:15; Micah 4:5; ^oPhilippians 1:27; ^{p1}1 Corinthians 10:31; ^qJeremiah 32:39; ^{r1}1 Peter 2:12

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

A. The sins forbidden in the third Commandment are:

- Not using God’s name as is required^a
- Abuse of God’s name, in an ignorant,^b vain,^c irreverent, profane,^d superstitious,^e or wicked mentioning. Likewise abusing His titles, attributes,^f ordinances,^g or works^h
- Blasphemyⁱ or perjury^j
- All sinful cursing,^k oaths,^l vows,^m or lots^{29, n}
- Violating our oaths or vows if lawful^o
- Fulfilling sinful oaths or vows^p
- Murmuring against, quarreling at,^q curious prying into,^r or misapplying God’s decrees^s or providences^t
- Misinterpreting,^u misapplying,^v or in any way perverting the Word, or any part of it,^w for the purpose of profane jests,^x curious or unprofitable questions, vain jangling,³⁰ or maintaining false doctrines^y
- Abusing God’s name, any creature, or anything contained under the name of God, for [magical or occult] charms,^{31, z} or sinful lusts or practices^{aa}
- Maligning,^{ab} scorning,^{ac} reviling,^{ad} or in any way opposing God’s truth, grace, and ways^{ae}
- Making profession of religion in hypocrisy or for sinister ends^{af}
- Being ashamed of religion^{ag}
- Being a shame to religion by unbecoming,^{32, ah} unwise,^{ai} unfruitful,^{aj} or offensive walking,^{ak} or by backsliding from it^{al}

^aMalachi 2:2; ^bActs 17:23; ^cProverbs 30:9; ^dMalachi 1:6–7, 12; Malachi 3:14; ^e1 Samuel 4:3–5; Jeremiah 7:4, 9–10, 14, 31; Colossians 2:20–22; ^f2 Kings 18:30, 35; Exodus 5:2; Psalm 139:20; ^gPsalm 50:16–17; ^hIsaiah 5:12; ⁱ2 Kings 19:22; Leviticus 24:11; ^jZechariah 5:4; Zechariah 8:17; ^k1 Samuel 17:43; 2 Samuel 16:5; ^lJeremiah 5:7; Jeremiah 23:10; ^mDeuteronomy 23:18; Acts 23:12, 14; ⁿEsther 3:7; Esther 9:24; Psalm 22:18; ^oPsalm 24:4; Ezekiel 17:16, 18–19; ^pMark 6:26; 1 Samuel 25:22, 32–34; ^qRomans 9:14, 19–20; ^rDeuteronomy 29:29; ^sRomans 3:5, 7; Romans 6:1; ^tEcclesiastes 8:11; Ecclesiastes 9:3; Psalm 39; ^uMatthew 5:21–48; ^vEzekiel 13:22; ^w2 Peter 3:16; Matthew 22:24–31; ^xIsaiah 22:13; Jeremiah 23:34, 36, 38; ^y1 Timothy 1:4, 6–7; 1 Timothy 6:4–5, 20; 2 Timothy 2:14; Titus 3:9; ^zDeuteronomy 18:10–14; Acts 19:13; ^{aa}2 Timothy 4:3–4; Romans 13:13–14; 1 Kings 21:9–10; Jude 4; ^{ab}Acts 13:10; 1 John 3:12; ^{ac}Psalm 1:1; 2 Peter 3:3; ^{ad}1 Peter 4:4; ^{ae}Acts 13:45–46, 50; Acts 4:18; Acts 19:9; 1 Thessalonians 2:16; Hebrews 10:29; ^{af}2 Timothy 3:5; Matthew 23:14; Matthew 6:1–2, 5, 16; ^{ag}Mark 8:38; ^{ah}Psalm 73:14–15; ^{ai}1 Corinthians 6:5–6; Ephesians 5:15–17; ^{aj}Isaiah 5:4; 2 Peter 1:8–9; ^{ak}Romans 2:23–24; ^{al}Galatians 3:1, 3; Hebrews 6:6

Q. 114. What reasons are annexed to the third Commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the third Commandment are contained in these words: “The LORD your God” and “for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”^a He is the Lord and our God. Therefore His name is not to be profaned or in any

²⁹ As lots are no longer an ordinance under the New Testament, the use of lots to supposedly determine God’s revealed will is sinful. Lots such as to start a game or for fairness in distributing indivisible goods and such like are not sinful.

³⁰ jangling: idle, quarrelsome, unprofitable talk

³¹ God’s name is to be invoked in prayer, as witness and judge, or otherwise with due regard to His sovereignty, authority and holiness. To treat God’s name as a magical or occult charm is blasphemous. The distinction here is that to do so implies a supposed human control over God, the very idea of which is hideously loathsome.

³² RPCNA *Constitution* has “unconformable,” while Bower has “uncomfortable.” The latter is preferred, as implying an uncomfortable fit between profession and practice. The former, in the present context, means *not conforming to*. The editor thus chooses to translate it as “unbecoming,” as in the phrase, “conduct unbecoming an officer and gentleman.”

way abused by us.^b This is especially so because He will not at all acquit and spare the transgressors of this Commandment. Rather, He will not allow them to escape His righteous judgment,^c even though many offenders escape the censures and punishments of men.^d

^aExodus 20:7; ^bLeviticus 19:12; ^cEzekiel 36:21–23; Deuteronomy 28:58–59; Zechariah 5:2–4; ^d1 Samuel 2:12, 17, 22, 24 *with* 1 Samuel 3:13

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. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

Exodus 20:8–11

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

A. The fourth Commandment requires all men to sanctify, or keep holy to God, those set times that He has appointed in His Word, expressly one whole day in seven. This day was the seventh [day of the week] from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ. It is the first day of the week ever since and will continue so to the end of the world. This first day is the Christian Sabbath,^a and in the New Testament it is called “The Lord’s Day.”^b

^aDeuteronomy 5:12–14; Genesis 2:2–3; 1 Corinthians 16:1–2; Acts 20:7; Matthew 5:17–18; Isaiah 56:2, 4, 6–7; ^bRevelation 1:10

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

A. The Sabbath or Lord’s Day is to be sanctified by:

- On the Sabbath:
 - A holy resting all the day,^a not only from works that are sinful at all times, but also from worldly employments and recreations that are lawful on other days^b
 - Making it our delight to spend the whole time in public and private exercises of God’s worship,^d except for the time spent in works of necessity and mercy^c
- To assist these, prior to the Sabbath, we are to:
 - Prepare our hearts
 - Arrange and dispatch our worldly business in a timely manner with foresight, diligence, and moderation, so that we may be more free and fit for the duties of that day^e

^aExodus 20:8, 10; ^bExodus 16:25–28; Nehemiah 13:15–22; Jeremiah 17:21–22; ^cMatthew 12:1–13; ^dIsaiah 58:13; Luke 4:16; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1–2; Psalm 92 title; Isaiah 66:23; Leviticus 23:3; ^eExodus 20:8; Luke 23:54, 56; Exodus 16:22, 25–26, 29; Nehemiah 13:19

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 is observed by all those are under their charge. Also it is because superiors are often prone to hinder inferiors by assigning tasks to them.

Exodus 20:10; Joshua 24:15; Nehemiah 13:15, 17; Jeremiah 17:20–22; Exodus 23:12

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

A. The sins forbidden in the fourth Commandment, are:

- All omissions of the duties required^a
- All careless, negligent, or unprofitable performing of duties or being weary of them^b
- All profaning the day by idleness
- Doing that which is in itself sinful^c
- All needless works, words, and thoughts about our worldly employments and recreations^d

^aEzekiel 22:26; ^bActs 20:7, 9; Ezekiel 33:30–32; Amos 8:5; Malachi 1:13; ^cEzekiel 23:38; ^dJeremiah 17:24, 27; Isaiah 58:13

Q. 120. What are the reasons annexed to the fourth Commandment to more strongly enforce it?

A. The reasons annexed to the fourth Commandment to more strongly enforce it are:

- From the equity of it. God allows us six days of seven for our own affairs and reserves but one for Himself in these words: “Six days you shall labor and do all your work.”^a
- God strongly claims a special ownership of that day: “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God.”^b
- The example of God, who “in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.”
- From the blessing that God put upon that day, not only by sanctifying it to be a day for His service, but by ordaining it to be a means of blessing to us in our sanctifying it: “Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”^c

^aExodus 20:9; ^bExodus 20:10; ^cExodus 20:11

Questions 121 – 130

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:^a

- Partly because of the great benefit of remembering it. In remembering, we are helped in our preparation to keep it.^b In keeping it, we are helped to better keep all of the rest of the Commandments.^c We are also helped to continue a thankful remembrance of the two great benefits of creation and redemption. These benefits contain a short summary of religion^d
- Partly because we are very ready to forget it.^e This is because there is less light of nature for it,^f and yet it restrains our natural liberty in things that are at other times lawful.^g It also comes but once in seven days, and much worldly business comes between. Too often, this delay causes us to forget to prepare for it or to sanctify it^h
- Satan and his instruments labor much to blot out the glory and even the memory of it so as to bring in all irreligion and impietyⁱ

^aExodus 20:8; ^bExodus 16:23; Luke 23:54, 56 *with* Mark 15:42; Nehemiah 13:19; ^cPsalm 92 title *with* Psalm 92:13–14; Ezekiel 20:12, 19–20; ^dGenesis 2:2–3; Psalm 118:22, 24 *with* Acts 4:10–11; Revelation 1:10; ^eEzekiel 22:26; ^fNehemiah 9:14; ^gExodus 34:21; ^hDeuteronomy 5:14–15; Amos 8:5; ⁱLamentations 1:7; Jeremiah 17:21–23; Nehemiah 13:15–23

Q. 122. What is the sum of the six Commandments that contain our duty to man?

A. The sum of the six Commandments that contain our duty to man is to love our neighbor as ourselves^a and to do to others what we would have them do to us.^b

^aMatthew 22:39; ^bMatthew 7:12

Q. 123. Which is the fifth Commandment?

A. The fifth Commandment is, “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which 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,^a but all superiors³³ in age^b and gifts^c and especially those who, by God’s ordinance, are over us in a place of authority, whether in family,^d church,^e or commonwealth.^f

^aProverbs 23:22, 25; Ephesians 6:1–2; ^b1 Timothy 5:1–2; ^cGenesis 4:20–22; Genesis 45:8; ^d2 Kings 5:13; 2 ^eKings 2:12; 2 Kings 13:14; Galatians 4:19; ^fIsaiah 49:23

Q. 125. Why are superiors styled “father” and “mother”?

A. Superiors are styled “father” and “mother,” both:

- To teach superiors in all duties toward their inferiors. Like natural parents, they are to express love and tenderness to them according to their different relationships^a
- To motivate inferiors to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to their superiors as to their parents^b

³³ See footnote to Q. 126.

^aEphesians 6:4; 2 Corinthians 12:14; 1 Thessalonians 2:7–8, 11; Numbers 11:11–12; ^b1 Corinthians 4:14–16; 2 Kings 5:13

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

A. The general scope of the fifth Commandment is the performance of those duties that we mutually owe in our various relationships, as inferiors, superiors, or equals.³⁴

Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:17; Romans 12:10

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

A. The honor that inferiors owe to their superiors, so they may be an honor to the superior and his government, is:¹

- All due reverence, in heart,^a word,^b and behavior^c
- Prayer and thanksgiving for them^d
- Imitation of their virtues and graces^e
- Willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels^f
- Due submission to their corrections^g
- Fidelity to,^h defense,ⁱ and maintenance³⁵ of their persons and authority, according to their different ranks and the nature of their places [offices, positions]^j
- Bearing with their weaknesses,³⁶ and covering them in love^k

^aMalachi 1:6; Leviticus 19:3; ^bProverbs 31:28; 1 Peter 3:6; ^cLeviticus 19:32; 1 Kings 2:19; ^d1 Timothy 2:1–2; ^eHebrews 13:7; Philippians 3:17; ^fEphesians 6:1–2, 5–7; 1 Peter 2:13–14; Romans 13:1–5; Hebrews 13:17; Proverbs 4:3–4; Proverbs 23:22; Exodus 18:19, 24; ^gHebrews 12:9; 1 Peter 2:18–20; ^hTitus 2:9–10; ⁱ1 Samuel 26:15–16; 2 Samuel 18:3; Esther 6:2; ^jMatthew 22:21; Romans 13:6–7; 1 Timothy 5:17–18; Galatians 6:6; Genesis 45:11; Genesis 47:12; ^k1 Peter 2:18; Proverbs 23:22; Genesis 9:23; ^lPsalms 127:3–5; Proverbs 31:23

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^a
- Envy of,^b contempt of,^c or rebellion^d against their persons^e or places^f in their lawful counsels,^g commands, and corrections^h
- Cursing, mocking,ⁱ and all manner of refractory [stubborn, unruly] and scandalous behavior that proves a shame and dishonor to the superior and his government.^j

^aMatthew 15:4–6; ^bNumbers 11:28–29; ^c1 Samuel 8:7; Isaiah 3:5; ^d2 Samuel 15:1–22; ^eExodus 21:15; ^f1 Samuel 10:27; ^g1 Samuel 2:25; ^hDeuteronomy 21:18–21; ⁱProverbs 30:11, 17; ^jProverbs 19:26

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

A. It is required of superiors, according to the authority they receive from God and the relationship in which they stand, to:

- Love,^a pray for,^b and bless their inferiors^c

³⁴ These terms do not refer to human worth or value as creatures made in God's image.

³⁵ maintenance: provision of that support necessary for the superior to live and fulfill his office, includes, but is not limited to, monetary support such as tithes and taxes

³⁶ weaknesses: in the context of the WLC, any physical, mental, spiritual, or other weakness, sin, or struggle with sin

- Instruct,^d counsel, and admonish them^e
- Countenance,^f commend,^g and reward those who do well^h
- Discountenance,ⁱ reprove, and chastise those who do ill^j
- Protect them^k and provide for them all things necessary for soul^l and body^m
- Conduct themselves with grave, wise, holy, and exemplary behavior in order to procure glory to God,ⁿ honor to themselves,^o and thus preserve the authority that God has given to them^p

^aColossians 3:19; Titus 2:4; ^b1 Samuel 12:23; Job 1:5; ^c1 Kings 8:55–56; Hebrews 7:7; Genesis 49:28; ^dDeuteronomy 6:6–7; ^eEphesians 6:4; ^f1 Peter 3:7; ^g1 Peter 2:14; Romans 13:3; ^hEsther 6:3; ⁱRomans 13:3–4; ^jProverbs 29:15; 1 Peter 2:14; ^kJob 29:12–17; Isaiah 1:10, 17; ^lEphesians 6:4; ^m1 Timothy 5:8; ⁿ1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:3–5; ^o1 Kings 3:28; ^pTitus 2:15

Q. 130. What are the sins of superiors?

A. The sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them:^a

- An inordinate seeking of themselves,^b their own glory,^c ease, profit, or pleasure^d
- Commanding things unlawful^e or not in the power of inferiors to perform^f
- Counseling,^g encouraging,^h or favoring inferiors in that which is evilⁱ
- Dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing inferiors in that which is good^j
- Correcting inferiors unduly^k
- Careless exposing or leaving inferiors to wrong, temptation, or danger^l
- Provoking inferiors to wrath^m
- [In] any way dishonoring themselves or lessening their authority by unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or careless behaviorⁿ

^aEzekiel 34:2–4; ^bPhilippians 2:21; ^cJohn 5:44; John 7:18; ^dIsaiah 56:10–11; Deuteronomy 17:17; ^eDaniel 3:4–6; Acts 4:17–18; ^fExodus 5:10–18; Matthew 23:2, 4; ^gMatthew 14:8 *with* Mark 6:24; ^h2 Samuel 13:28; ⁱ1 Samuel 3:13; ^jJohn 7:46–49; Colossians 3:21; Exodus 5:17; ^k1 Peter 2:18–20; Hebrews 12:10; Deuteronomy 25:3; ^lGenesis 38:11, 26; Acts 18:17; ^mEphesians 6:4; ⁿGenesis 9:21; 1 Kings 12:13–16; 1 Kings 1:6; 1 Samuel 2:29–31

Questions 131 – 140

Q. 131. What are the duties of equals?

A. The duties of equals are:

- To regard the dignity and worth of each other^a
- To give preference to one another in honor^b
- To rejoice in each other's gifts and advancement, as in their own^c

^a1 Peter 2:17; ^bRomans 12:10; ^cRomans 12:15–16; Philippians 2:3–4

Q. 132. What are the sins of equals?

A. The sins of equals are, besides the neglect of the duties required:^a

- Undervaluing another's worth^b
- Envyng another's gifts^c
- Grieving at the advancement or prosperity of another^d

- Usurping preeminence over another^c

^aRomans 13:8; ^b2 Timothy 3:3; ^cActs 7:9; Galatians 5:26; ^dNumbers 12:2; Esther 6:12–13; ^e3 John 9; Luke 22:24

Q. 133. What is the reason annexed to the fifth Commandment to more strongly enforce it?

A. The reason annexed to the fifth Commandment is in the words, “that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.”^a This is an express promise to all who keep this Commandment of long life and prosperity, as far as it will serve for God’s glory and their own good.^b

^aExodus 20:12; ^bDeuteronomy 5:16; 1 Kings 8:25; Ephesians 6:2–3

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 studies³⁷ and lawful endeavors to preserve the life [and well-being]³⁸ of ourselves^a and others by:^b

- [Proactively]:
 - Resisting all thoughts and purposes^c
 - Subduing all passions^d
 - Avoiding all occasions,^e temptations,^f and practices that tend to the unjust taking of the life of any^g
- Just defense of ourselves and others against violence^h
- Patient bearing of the hand of God,ⁱ quietness of mind,^j cheerfulness of spirit,^k a sober use of food,^l drink,^m medical care,ⁿ sleep,^o labor,^p and recreation^q
- Charitable thoughts,^r love,^s compassion,^t meekness, gentleness, kindness^u
- Peaceable,^v mild, and courteous speech and behavior^w
- Forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiveness of injuries, and returning good for evil^x
- Comforting and succoring the distressed
- Protecting and defending the innocent^y

^aEphesians 5:28–29; ^b1 Kings 18:4; ^cJeremiah 26:15–16; Acts 23:12, 16–17, 21, 27; ^dEphesians 4:26–27; ^e2 Samuel 2:22; Deuteronomy 22:8; ^fMatthew 4:6–7; Proverbs 1:10–11, 15–16; ^g1 Samuel 24:12; 1 Samuel 26:9–11; Genesis 37:21–22; ^hPsalms 82:4; Proverbs 24:11–12; 1 Samuel 14:45; ⁱJames 5:7–11; Hebrews 12:9; ^j1 Thessalonians 4:11; 1 Peter 3:3–4; Psalm 37:8–11; ^kProverbs 17:22; ^lProverbs 25:16, 27; ^m1 Timothy 5:23; ⁿIsaiah 38:21; ^oPsalms 127:2; ^pEcclesiastes 5:12; 2 Thessalonians 3:10, 12; Proverbs 16:26; ^qEcclesiastes 3:4, 11; ^r1 Samuel 19:4–5; 1 Samuel 22:13–14; ^sRomans 13:10; Luke 10:33–34; ^tColossians

³⁷ “Careful studies” is not at all merely an archaic expression. People can come to many kinds of harm in many ways, often accidentally. The sixth Commandment requires of us, in many situations, careful consideration and planning so as to prevent and minimize such harm. In the Mosaic Law, God did not leave unpunished those guilty of human death, even when the cause was purely accidental (Numbers 35:9–28).

³⁸ From the context of this and the next question, it is clear that “life” includes not only life as opposed to death, but also all that pertains to a person’s living out his or her life, such as freedom and well-being.

3:12–13; ^vJames 3:17; ^w1 Peter 3:8–11; Proverbs 15:1; Judges 8:1–3; ^xMatthew 5:24; Ephesians 4:2, 32; Romans 12:17, 20–21; ^y1 Thessalonians 5:14; Job 31:19–20; Matthew 25:35–36; Proverbs 31:8–9

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

A. The sins forbidden in the sixth Commandment are:

- All taking of the life of ourselves^a or of others,^b except in cases of public justice,^c lawful war,^d or necessary defense^e
- Neglecting or withdrawing any lawful and necessary means of preservation of life^f
- Sinful anger,^g hatred,^h envy,ⁱ or desire of revenge^j
- All excessive passions^k or distracting cares^l
- Immoderate use of food, drink,^m labor,ⁿ or recreations^o
- Provoking words,^p oppression,^q quarreling,^r striking, wounding,^s and whatever else tends to the destruction of the life [or well-being] of any^t

^aActs 16:28; ^bGenesis 9:6; ^cNumbers 35:31, 33; ^dJeremiah 48:10; Deuteronomy 20; ^eExodus 22:2–3; ^fMatthew 25:42–43; James 2:15–16; Ecclesiastes 6:1–2; ^gMatthew 5:22; ^h1 John 3:15; Leviticus 19:17; ⁱProverbs 14:30; ^jRomans 12:19; ^kEphesians 4:31; ^lMatthew 6:31, 34; ^mLuke 21:34; Romans 13:13; ⁿEcclesiastes 12:12; Ecclesiastes 2:22–23; ^oIsaiah 5:12; ^pProverbs 15:1; Proverbs 12:18; ^qEzekiel 18:18; Exodus 1:14; ^rGalatians 5:15; Proverbs 23:29; ^sNumbers 35:16–18, 21; ^tExodus 21:18–36

Q. 137. Which is the seventh Commandment?

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

Exodus 20:14

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

A. The duties required in the seventh Commandment are:

- Chastity³⁹ in body, mind, emotions,^a words,^b and behavior^c
- Preservation of chastity in ourselves and others^d
- Watchfulness over the eyes, and all the senses^{40, e}
- Temperance^{41, f}
- Keeping of chaste company^g
- Modesty in apparel^h
- Marriage by those who do not have the gift of continence^{42, i}
- Conjugal love,^j and cohabitation^{43, k}
- Diligent labor in our callings^{44, l}
- Shunning all occasions of uncleanness and resisting temptations to them^m

^a1 Thessalonians 4:4; Job 31:1; 1 Corinthians 7:34; ^bColossians 4:6; ^c1 Peter 3:2; ^d1 Corinthians 7:2, 35–36; ^eJob 31:1; ^fActs 24:24–25; ^gProverbs 2:16–21; ^h1 Timothy 2:9; ⁱ1 Corinthians 7:2, 9; ^jProverbs 5:19–20; ^k1 Peter 3:7; ^lProverbs 31:11, 27–28; ^mProverbs 5:8; Genesis 39:8–10

³⁹ chastity: avoidance of sexual sin, *not* avoidance of relations with one’s own spouse

⁴⁰ To avoid temptation.

⁴¹ temperance: control of all bodily appetites, especially with respect to alcohol, which lowers inhibitions and dulls the conscience and thus, in excess, leads to sin. See also Ezekiel 16:49–50.

⁴² continence: self-control over one’s body, in this context biblical self-control over sexual activity

⁴³ Of husbands and wives.

⁴⁴ This appears to be an encouragement to avoid idleness, by which all manner of temptations may enter. See Ezekiel 16:49–50.

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,^a are:

- Adultery, fornication,^b rape, incest,^c sodomy, and all unnatural lusts^{45, d}
- All unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, or emotions [or desires]^e
- All corrupt or filthy communications, or giving any attention to such^f
- Unchaste searching [for partners in sexual sin]^g
- Immodest, or light [frivolous, unchaste] behavior
- Immodest apparel^h
- Prohibiting lawful marriagesⁱ or permitting unlawful marriages^j
- Allowing, tolerating, or keeping of whorehouses, or resorting to them^k
- Entangling vows of single life^l
- Undue delay of marriage^{46, m}
- Having more wives or husbands than one at the same timeⁿ
- Unjust divorce^o or desertion^p
- Idleness,⁴⁷ gluttony,⁴⁸ drunkenness,^q unchaste company^r
- Lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancing, stage plays^s
- All other provocations to, or acts of, uncleanness either in ourselves or others^t

^aProverbs 5:7; ^bHebrews 13:4; Galatians 5:19; ^c2 Samuel 13:14; 1 Corinthians 5:1; ^dRomans 1:24, 26–27; Leviticus 20:15–16; ^eMatthew 5:28; Matthew 15:19; Colossians 3:5; ^fEphesians 5:3–4; Proverbs 7:5, 21–22; ^gIsaiah 3:16; 2 Peter 2:14; ^hProverbs 7:10, 13; ⁱ1 Timothy 4:3; ^jLeviticus 18:1–21; Mark 6:18; Malachi 2:11–12; ^k1 Kings 15:12; 2 Kings 23:7; Deuteronomy 23:17–18; Leviticus 19:29; Jeremiah 5:7; Proverbs 7:24–27; ^lMatthew 19:10–11; ^m1 Corinthians 7:7–9; Genesis 38:26; ⁿMalachi 2:14–15; Matthew 19:5; ^oMalachi 2:16; Matthew 5:32; ^p1 Corinthians 7:12–13; ^qEzekiel 16:49; Proverbs 23:30–33; ^rGenesis 39:10; Proverbs 5:8; ^sEphesians 5:4; Ezekiel 23:14–16; Isaiah 23:15–17; Isaiah 3:16; Mark 6:22; Romans 13:13; 1 Peter 4:3; ^t2 Kings 9:30 *with* Jeremiah 4:30 *and* Ezekiel 23:40

Q. 140. Which is the eighth Commandment?

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

Exodus 20:15

Questions 141 – 150

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 man and man^a
- Rendering to everyone his due^b
- Restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the rightful owners of them^c
- Giving and lending freely according to our abilities and the necessities of others^d

⁴⁵ unnatural lust: in this context, any sexual desire or interaction between other than a man and a woman

⁴⁶ For the incontinent. See “continence” in footnote above.

⁴⁷ Idleness tends to open one to temptation. See also Ezekiel 16:49–50.

⁴⁸ Gluttony teaches one to gratify the lusts of the flesh. See also Ezekiel 16:49–50.

- Moderation of our judgments, wills, and emotions concerning worldly goods^e
- A provident care and study to get,^f keep, use, and manage those things that are necessary and convenient for sustaining our lives and are suitable to our condition^g
- A lawful calling,^h and diligence in itⁱ
- Frugality^j
- Avoiding unnecessary lawsuits^k and suretyship or other like engagements^l
- 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^m

^aPsalm 15:2, 4; Zechariah 7:9–10; Zechariah 8:16–17; ^bRomans 13:7; ^cLeviticus 6:2–5 with Luke 19:8; ^dLuke 6:30, 38; 1 John 3:17; Ephesians 4:28; Galatians 6:10; ^e1 Timothy 6:6–9; Galatians 6:14; ^f1 Timothy 5:8; ^gProverbs 27:23–27; Ecclesiastes 2:24; Ecclesiastes 3:12–13; 1 Timothy 6:17–18; Isaiah 38:1; Matthew 11:8; ^h1 Corinthians 7:20; Genesis 2:15; Genesis 3:19; ⁱEphesians 4:28; Proverbs 10:4; ^jJohn 6:12; Proverbs 21:20; ^k1 Corinthians 6:1–9; ^lProverbs 6:1–6; Proverbs 11:15; ^mLeviticus 25:35; Deuteronomy 22:1–4; Exodus 23:4–5; Genesis 47:14, 20; Philippians 2:4; Matthew 22:39

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

A. The sins forbidden in the eighth Commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required,^a are:

- Theft,^b robbery,^c manstealing,^d or receiving anything that is stolen^e
- Fraudulent dealing,^f false weights or measures,^g removing landmarks^h
- Injustice or unfaithfulness in contracts between man and manⁱ or in matters of trust^j
- Oppression,^k extortion,^l usury,^{49, m} bribery,ⁿ vexatious lawsuits^o
- Unjust appropriation of land or unjust eviction of people from land^p
- Cornering the market⁵⁰ in a commodity to enhance the price^q
- Unlawful callings^r
- All other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor what belongs to him
- All other unjust or sinful ways of enriching ourselves^s
- Covetousness^t
- Inordinate prizing or affection for worldly goods^u
- Distrustful [of God] and distracting cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using worldly goods^v
- Envyng the prosperity of others^w
- Idleness,^x squandering resources, wasteful gaming, and all others ways by which we unduly prejudice our own outward estate^y or defraud ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate that God has given us^z

⁴⁹ usury: in this context, unjust interest on money or goods. With the exception of Psalm 15:5 and Deuteronomy 23:19–20, all scriptural prohibitions against charging interest also refer to how we treat the poor. Jesus upheld commercial or investment interest in Matthew 25:27. Thus we understand that charging interest to the needy or in violation of the Golden Rule (in any context) is sinful interest. Although Christians have held other views, the view stated above appears to be the view of the Westminster Divines based upon commentaries of the period.

⁵⁰ corner the market: Purchase and storage of a large quantity of a commodity with no intent to use or distribute immediately, so as to raise the price by the law of supply and demand. It is significant that in such a case, no value is added such as in retailing which makes products conveniently available.

^aJames 2:15–16; ¹John 3:17; ^bEphesians 4:28; ^cPsalms 62:10; ^d1 Timothy 1:10; ^eProverbs 29:24; Psalm 50:18; ^f1 Thessalonians 4:6; ^gProverbs 11:1; Proverbs 20:10; ^hDeuteronomy 19:14; Proverbs 23:10; ⁱAmos 8:5; Psalm 37:21; ^jLuke 16:10–12; ^kEzekiel 22:29; Leviticus 25:17; ^lMatthew 23:25; Ezekiel 22:12; ^mPsalms 15:5; ⁿJob 15:34; ^o1 Corinthians 6:6–8; Proverbs 3:29–30; ^pIsaiah 5:8; Micah 2:2; ^qProverbs 11:26; ^rActs 19:19, 24–25; ^sJob 20:19; James 5:4; Proverbs 21:6; ^tLuke 12:15; ^u1 Timothy 6:5; Colossians 3:2; Proverbs 23:5; Psalm 62:10; ^vMatthew 6:25, 31, 34; Ecclesiastes 5:12; ^wPsalms 73:3; Psalm 37:1, 7; ^x2 Thessalonians 3:11; Proverbs 18:9; ^yProverbs 21:17; Proverbs 23:20–21; Proverbs 28:19; ^zEcclesiastes 4:8; Ecclesiastes 6:2; 1 Timothy 5:8

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:

- Preserving and promoting:
 - Truth between man and man^a
 - The good name of our neighbor as well as of our own^b
- Appearing and standing for the truth^c
- From the heart,^d sincerely,^e freely,^f clearly,^g and fully^h speaking the truth and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice,ⁱ and in absolutely all other things^j
- A charitable esteem of our neighbors^k
- Loving, desiring, and rejoicing in the good name of our neighbors^l
- Sorrowing for^m and covering our neighbor’s infirmitiesⁿ
- Freely acknowledging our neighbor’s gifts and graces^o
- Defending the innocence of our neighbor^p with a ready receipt of good report,^q and an unwillingness to admit an evil report concerning him^r
- Discouraging talebearers,^s flatterers,^t and slanderers^u
- Love and care of our own good name and defending it when need requires^v
- Keeping lawful promises^w
- Study and practice of whatever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report^x

^aZechariah 8:16; ^b3 John 12; ^cProverbs 31:8–9; ^dPsalms 15:2; ^e2 Chronicles 19:9; ^f1 Samuel 19:4–5; ^gJoshua 7:19; ^h2 Samuel 14:18–20; ⁱLeviticus 19:15; Proverbs 14:5, 25; ^j2 Corinthians 1:17–18; Ephesians 4:25; ^kHebrews 6:9; 1 Corinthians 13:7; ^lRomans 1:8; 2 John 4; 3 John 3–4; ^m2 Corinthians 2:4; 2 Corinthians 12:21; ⁿProverbs 17:9; 1 Peter 4:8; ^o1 Corinthians 1:4–5, 7; 2 Timothy 1:4–5; ^p1 Samuel 22:14; ^q1 Corinthians 13:6–7; ^rPsalms 15:3; ^sProverbs 25:23; ^tProverbs 26:24–25; ^uPsalms 101:5; ^vProverbs 22:1; John 8:49; ^wPsalms 15:4; ^xPhilippians 4:8

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

A. The sins forbidden in the ninth Commandment are:

- All prejudicing the truth or the good name of our neighbors as well as our own,^a especially in courts^b
- Giving false evidence^c
- Suborning^d false witnesses^e
- Wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause
- Corrupting or silencing the truth by intimidation or overpowering [others]^e

^d suborn: induce one to commit perjury or lie

- Passing unjust sentence^f
- Calling evil good or good evil
- Rewarding the wicked according to the work of the righteous or the righteous according to the work of the wicked^g
- Forgery^h
- Concealing the truth,⁵² undue silence in a just cause,ⁱ or holding our peace when iniquity calls for either a reproof from ourselves^j or complaint to others^k
- Speaking the truth unseasonably^l or maliciously to a wrong end^m
- Perverting truth to a wrong meaningⁿ
- Using ambiguous or equivocal expressions to the prejudice of truth or justice^o
- Speaking untruth,^p lying,^q slandering,^r backbiting,^s disparaging others,^t tale bearing,^u whispering,^{53, v} scoffing,^w reviling^x
- Rash,^y harsh,^z or partial [not impartial and fair, biased] censuring^{54, aa}
- [Willfully] misconstruing intentions, words, or actions^{ab}
- Flattery^{ac}
- Vainglorious boasting^{ad}
- Thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others^{ae}
- Denying the gifts and graces of God^{af}
- Aggravating smaller faults in others^{ag}
- Hiding, excusing, or minimizing sins when called to a free confession^{ah}
- Unnecessary exposure of infirmities in others^{ai}
- Raising false rumors^{aj}
- Receiving and approving of evil reports^{ak}
- Stopping our ears against just defense^{al}
- Evil suspicion^{55, am}
- Envy or grieving at the deserved credit of any,^{an} or endeavoring or desiring to impair it^{ao}
- Rejoicing in the disgrace or infamy of another^{ap}
- Scornful contempt^{aq}
- Foolishly credulous admiration^{ar}
- Breach of lawful promises^{as}
- Neglecting such things as are of good report^{at}
- Practicing, not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering what we can in others, things that cause an ill name^{au}

^{a1} Samuel 17:28; 2 Samuel 16:3; 2 Samuel 1:9–10, 15–16; ^bLeviticus 19:15; Habakkuk 1:4; ^cProverbs 19:5; Proverbs 6:16, 19; ^dActs 6:13; ^eJeremiah 9:3, 5; Acts 24:2, 5; Psalm 12:3–4; Psalm 52:1–4; ^fProverbs 17:15; 1 Kings 21:9–13; ^gIsaiah 5:23; ^hPsalm 119:69; Luke 19:8; Luke 16:5–7; ⁱLeviticus 5:1; Deuteronomy 13:8; Acts 5:3, 8–9; 2 Timothy 4:16; ^j1 Kings 1:6; Leviticus 19:17; ^kIsaiah 59:4; ^lProverbs 29:11; ^m1 Samuel 22:9–10 *with* Psalm 52:1–4; ⁿPsalm 56:5; John 2:19 *with* Matthew 26:60–61; ^oGenesis 3:5; Genesis 26:7, 9; ^pIsaiah 59:13; ^qLeviticus 19:11; Colossians 3:9; ^rPsalm 50:20; ^sPsalm 15:3; ^tJames 4:11; Jeremiah 38:4;

⁵² This is not a prohibition against privacy or having secrets. The context is that of concealing material facts in order to generate or propagate falsehood.

⁵³ whispering: in this context, malicious insinuations, suggestions, rumors, slander, and so on

⁵⁴ This refers to a censure that is not exactly fitted to the offense, whether falsely too light or falsely too heavy.

⁵⁵ The context is 1 Timothy 6:4. In an atmosphere of obsession with disputes, a person's envy, jealousy, and strife can cause one to be wrongly and uncharitably suspicious of those with whom they disagree.

^uLeviticus 19:16; ^vRomans 1:29–30; ^wGenesis 21:9 *with* Galatians 4:29; ^x1 Corinthians 6:10; ^yMatthew 7:1; ^zActs 28:4; ^{aa}Genesis 38:24; Romans 2:1; ^{ab}Nehemiah 6:6–8; Romans 3:8; Psalm 69:10; 1 Samuel 1:13–15; 2 Samuel 10:3; ^{ac}Psalm 12:2–3; ^{ad}2 Timothy 3:2; ^{ae}Luke 18:9, 11; Romans 12:16; 1 Corinthians 4:6; Acts 12:22; Exodus 4:10–14; ^{af}Job 27:5–6; Job 4:6; ^{ag}Matthew 7:3–5; ^{ah}Proverbs 28:13; Proverbs 30:20; Genesis 3:12–13; Jeremiah 2:35; 2 Kings 5:25; Genesis 4:9; ^{ai}Genesis 9:22; Proverbs 25:9–10; ^{aj}Exodus 23:1; ^{ak}Proverbs 29:12; ^{al}Acts 7:56–57; Job 31:13–14; ^{am}1 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Timothy 6:4; ^{an}Numbers 11:29; Matthew 21:15; ^{ao}Ezra 4:12–13; ^{ap}Jeremiah 48:27; ^{aq}Psalm 35:15–16, 21; Matthew 27:28–29; ^{ar}Jude 16; Acts 12:22; ^{as}Romans 1:31; 2 Timothy 3:3;⁵⁶ ^{at}1 Samuel 2:24; ^{au}2 Samuel 13:12–13; Proverbs 5:8–9; Proverbs 6:33

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, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor 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^a
- A charitable frame of the whole soul toward our neighbor

that as a result, all of our inward promptings and emotions concerning him tend toward, and further, all of the good that is his.^b

^aHebrews 13:5; 1 Timothy 6:6; ^bJob 31:29; Romans 12:15; Psalm 122:7–9; 1 Timothy 1:5; Esther 10:3; 1 Corinthians 13:4–7

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

A. The sins forbidden in the tenth Commandment are:

- Discontentment with our own condition^a
- Envy^b or grieving at the good of our neighbor^c
- All inordinate inward promptings or emotions toward anything that is his^d

^a1 Kings 21:4; Esther 5:13; 1 Corinthians 10:10; ^bGalatians 5:26; James 3:14, 16; ^cPsalm 112:9–10; Nehemiah 2:10; ^dRomans 7:7–8; Romans 13:9; Colossians 3:5; Deuteronomy 5:21

Q. 149. Is any man able to perfectly keep the Commandments of God?

A. No man is able, either of himself^a or by any grace received in this life, to perfectly keep the Commandments of God.^b Rather, he daily breaks them in thought,^c word, and deed.^d

^aJames 3:2; John 15:5; Romans 8:3; ^bEcclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8, 10; Galatians 5:17; Romans 7:18–19; ^cGenesis 6:5; Genesis 8:21; ^dRomans 3:9–21; James 3:2–13

⁵⁶ In the list of sins, the second item in the list in 2 Timothy 3:3 is “unforgiving” (NJKV), “unappeasable” (ESV), and “irreconcilable” (NASB). But in the AV (King James), the translation is “trucebreakers.” It is this last translation that links 2 Timothy 3:3 to “breach of lawful promises.” It is worthy of note in this context that the Westminster Divines quoted from the AV for the Ten Commandments and Lord’s Prayer.

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 various aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

John 19:11; Ezekiel 8:6, 13, 15; 1 John 5:16; Psalm 78:17, 32, 56

Questions 151 – 160

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

A. Sins receive their aggravations:

- From the persons offending,^a if they are:
 - Of riper age,^b greater experience, or grace^c
 - Eminent for profession,^d gifts,^e place,^f or office^g
 - Guides to others^h
 - Those whose example is likely to be followed by othersⁱ
- From the parties offended,^j if the sin is:
 - Directly against God,^k His attributes,^l or worship^m
 - Against Christ or His graceⁿ
 - Against the Holy Spirit,^o His witness,^p or workings^q
 - Against superiors, men of eminency,^r or those whom we stand especially related to or engaged to^s
 - Against any of the saints,^t particularly weak brethren,^u the souls of the saints or any other,^v or the common good of all or many^w
- From the nature and quality of the offense,^x if it is:
 - Against the express letter of the law,^y breaks many Commandments, or contains in it many sins^z
 - Not only conceived in the heart, but breaks forth in words and actions,^{aa} scandalizes others,^{ab} or for which no reparation is possible^{ac}
 - Against means [grace or by providence],^{ad} mercies,^{ae} judgments,^{af} light of nature,^{ag} conviction of conscience,^{ah} public or private admonition,^{ai} censures of the church,^{aj} civil punishments,^{ak} or our own prayers, resolutions, promises,^{al} vows,^{am} covenants,^{an} or engagements to God or men^{ao}
 - Done deliberately,^{ap} willfully,^{aq} presumptuously,^{ar} impudently,^{as} boastingly,^{at} maliciously,^{au} frequently,^{av} obstinately,^{aw} with delight,^{ax} or persistently^{ay}
 - A relapse after repentance^{az}
- From circumstances of time^{ba} and place,^{bb} if:
 - On the Lord's Day^{bc} or other times of divine worship,^{bd} or immediately before^{be} or after these^{bf} or other helps to prevent or remedy such miscarriages^{bg}

- In public or in the presence of others who are thus likely to be provoked or defiled^{bh}

^aJeremiah 2:8; ^bJob 32:7, 9; Ecclesiastes 4:13; ^c1 Kings 11:4, 9; ^d2 Samuel 12:14; 1 Corinthians 5:1; ^eJames 4:17; Luke 12:47–48; ^fJeremiah 5:4–5; ^g2 Samuel 12:7–9; Ezekiel 8:11–12; ^hRomans 2:17–25; ⁱGalatians 2:11–14; ^jMatthew 21:38–39; ^k1 Samuel 2:25; Acts 5:4; Psalm 51:4; ^lRomans 2:4; ^mMalachi 1:8, 14; ⁿHebrews 2:2–3; Hebrews 12:25; ^oHebrews 10:29; Matthew 12:31–32; ^pEphesians 4:30; ^qHebrews 6:4–5; ^rJude 8; Numbers 12:8–9; Isaiah 3:5; ^sProverbs 30:17; 2 Corinthians 12:15; Psalm 55:12–15; ^tZephaniah 2:8, 10–11; Matthew 18:6; 1 Corinthians 6:8; Revelation 17:6; ^u1 Corinthians 8:11–12; Romans 14:13, 15, 21; ^vEzekiel 13:19; 1 Corinthians 8:12; Revelation 18:13; Matthew 23:15; ^w1 Thessalonians 2:15–16; Joshua 22:20; ^xProverbs 6:30–35; ^yEzra 9:10–12; 1 Kings 11:9–10; ^zColossians 3:5; 1 Timothy 6:10; Proverbs 5:8–12; Proverbs 6:32–33; Joshua 7:21; ^{aa}James 1:14–15; Matthew 5:22; Micah 2:1; ^{ab}Matthew 18:7; Romans 2:23–24; ^{ac}Deuteronomy 22:22, 28–29; Proverbs 6:32–35; ^{ad}Matthew 11:21–24; John 15:22; ^{ae}Isaiah 1:3; Deuteronomy 32:6; ^{af}Amos 4:8–12; Jeremiah 5:3; ^{ag}Romans 1:26–27; ^{ah}Romans 1:32; Daniel 5:22; Titus 3:10–11; ^{ai}Proverbs 29:1; ^{aj}Titus 3:10; Matthew 18:17; ^{ak}Proverbs 27:22; Proverbs 23:35; ^{al}Psalm 78:34–37; Jeremiah 2:20; Jeremiah 42:5–6, 20–21; ^{am}Ecclesiastes 5:4–6; Proverbs 20:25; ^{an}Leviticus 26:25; ^{ao}Proverbs 2:17; Ezekiel 17:18–19; ^{ap}Psalm 36:4; ^{aq}Jeremiah 6:16; ^{ar}Numbers 15:30; Exodus 21:14; ^{as}Jeremiah 3:3; Proverbs 7:13; ^{at}Psalm 52:1; ^{au}3 John 10; ^{av}Numbers 14:22; ^{aw}Zechariah 7:11–12; ^{ax}Proverbs 2:14; ^{ay}Isaiah 57:17; ^{az}Jeremiah 34:8–11; 2 Peter 2:20–22; ^{ba}2 Kings 5:26; ^{bb}Jeremiah 7:10; Isaiah 26:10; ^{bc}Ezekiel 23:37–39; ^{bd}Isaiah 58:3–5; Numbers 25:6–7; ^{be}1 Corinthians 11:20–21; ^{bf}Jeremiah 7:8–10; Proverbs 7:14–15; John 13:27, 30; ^{bg}Ezra 9:13–14; ^{bh}2 Samuel 16:22; 1 Samuel 2:22–24

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

A. Every sin, even the least, is against the sovereignty, ^a goodness, ^b and holiness of God, ^c and is against His righteous law. ^d Therefore, it deserves His wrath and curse, ^e both in this life ^f and that which is to come. ^g Sin cannot be expiated except by the blood of Christ. ^h

^aJames 2:10–11; ^bExodus 20:1–2; ^cHabakkuk 1:13; Leviticus 10:3; Leviticus 11:44–45; ^d1 John 3:4; Romans 7:12; ^eEphesians 5:6; Galatians 3:10; ^fLamentations 3:39; Deuteronomy 28:15–68; ^gMatthew 25:41; ^hHebrews 9:22; 1 Peter 1:18–19

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

A. That we may escape the wrath and curse of God that are due to us by reason of the transgression of the law, He requires of us:

- Repentance toward God
- Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ^a
- Diligent use of the outward means by which Christ communicates to us the benefits of His mediation^b

^aActs 20:21; Matthew 3:7–8; Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 16:30–31; John 3:16, 18; ^bProverbs 2:1–6; Proverbs 8:33–36

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

A. The outward and ordinary means, by which Christ communicates to His Church the benefits of His mediation, are all His ordinances, especially the Word, sacraments, and prayer, all of which are made effectual to the elect for their salvation.⁵⁷

Matthew 28:19–20; Acts 2:42, 46–47

⁵⁷ These are commonly called *the means of grace*.

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,^a convincing, and humbling sinners^b
- Driving sinners out of themselves and drawing them to Christ^c
- Conforming sinners to His image^d and subduing them to His will^e
- Strengthening sinners against temptations and corruptions^f
- Building sinners up in grace^g and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith to salvation^h

^aNehemiah 8:8; Acts 26:18; Psalm 19:8; ^b1 Corinthians 14:24–25; 2 Chronicles 34:18–19, 26–28; ^cActs 2:37, 41; Acts 8:27–39; ^d2 Corinthians 3:18; ^e2 Corinthians 10:4–6; Romans 6:17; ^fMatthew 4:4, 7, 10; Ephesians 6:16–17; Psalm 19:11; 1 Corinthians 10:11; ^gActs 20:32; 2 Timothy 3:15–17; ^hRomans 16:25; 1 Thessalonians 3:2, 10–11, 13; Romans 15:4; Romans 10:13–17; Romans 1:16

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

A. All are not to be permitted to read the Word publicly to the congregation.^a Yet people of every kind are bound to read it apart [from the congregation] by themselves^b and with their families.^c For this purpose, the holy Scriptures are to be translated out of the original languages into everyday languages.^d

^aDeuteronomy 31:9, 11–13; Nehemiah 8:2–3; Nehemiah 9:3–5; ^bDeuteronomy 17:19; Revelation 1:3; John 5:39; Isaiah 34:16; ^cDeuteronomy 6:6–9; Genesis 18:17, 19; Psalm 78:5–7; ^d1 Corinthians 14:6, 9, 11–12, 15–16, 24, 27–28

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^a
- A firm persuasion that:
 - They are the very Word of God^b
 - Only God can enable us to understand them^c
- A desire to know, believe, and obey the will of God revealed in them^d
- Diligence^e and attention to the substance and purpose of them^f
- Meditation,^g application,^h self-denial,ⁱ and prayer^j

^aPsalm 19:10; Nehemiah 8:3–10; Exodus 24:7; 2 Chronicles 34:27; Isaiah 66:2; ^b2 Peter 1:19–21; ^cLuke 24:45; 2 Corinthians 3:13–16; ^dDeuteronomy 17:19–20; ^eActs 17:11; ^fActs 8:30, 34; Luke 10:26–28; ^gPsalm 1:2; Psalm 119:97; ^h2 Chronicles 34:21; ⁱProverbs 3:5; Deuteronomy 33:3; ^jProverbs 2:1–7; Psalm 119:18; Nehemiah 8:6, 8

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

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

^a1 Timothy 3:2, 6; Ephesians 4:8–11; Hosea 4:6; Malachi 2:7; 2 Corinthians 3:6; ^bJeremiah 14:15; Romans 10:15; Hebrews 5:4; 1 Corinthians 12:28–29; 1 Timothy 3:10; 1 Timothy 4:14; 1 Timothy 5:22

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

A. Those who are called to labor in the ministry of the Word are to preach:

- Sound doctrine^a
- Diligently,^b in season, and out of season^c
- Plainly,^d not in enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power^e
- Faithfully,^f making known the whole counsel of God^g
- Wisely,^h applying themselves to the necessities and capacities of the hearersⁱ
- Zealously,^j with fervent love to God^k and the souls of His people^l
- Sincerely,^m aiming at God's gloryⁿ and the people's conversion,^o edification,^p and salvation^q

^aTitus 2:1, 8; ^bActs 18:25; ^c2 Timothy 4:2; ^d1 Corinthians 14:19; ^e1 Corinthians 2:4; ^fJeremiah 23:28; 1 Corinthians 4:1–2; ^gActs 20:27; ^hColossians 1:28; 2 Timothy 2:15; ⁱ1 Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:12–14; Luke 12:42; ^jActs 18:25; ^k2 Corinthians 5:13–14; Philippians 1:15–17; ^lColossians 4:12; 2 Corinthians 12:15; ^m2 Corinthians 2:17; 2 Corinthians 4:2; ⁿ1 Thessalonians 2:4–6; John 7:18; ^o1 Corinthians 9:19–22; ^p2 Corinthians 12:19; Ephesians 4:12; ^q1 Timothy 4:16; Acts 26:16–18

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

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

- Give heed to it with diligence,^a preparation,^b and prayer^c
- Examine what they hear by the Scriptures^d
- Receive the truth as the Word of God^e with faith,^f love,^g meekness,^h and readiness of mindⁱ
- Meditate upon it^j and receive counsel from it^k
- Hide it in their hearts^l and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives^m

^aProverbs 8:34; ^b1 Peter 2:1–2; Luke 8:18; ^cPsalms 119:18; Ephesians 6:18–19; ^dActs 17:11; ^eHebrews 4:2; ^f2 Thessalonians 2:10; ^gJames 1:21; ^hActs 17:11; ⁱ1 Thessalonians 2:13; ^jLuke 9:44; Hebrews 2:1; ^kLuke 24:14; Deuteronomy 6:6–7; ^lProverbs 2:1; Psalm 119:11; ^mLuke 8:15; James 1:25

Questions 161 – 170

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

A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation only by the working of the Holy Spirit and the blessing of Christ, by whom they are instituted. They have no power in themselves and they have no virtue derived from the piety or intention of him by whom they are administered.

1 Peter 3:21; Acts 8:13, 23; 1 Corinthians 3:6–7; 1 Corinthians 12:13

Q. 162. What is a sacrament?

A. A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ in His Church^a for those who are within the covenant of grace^c to:

- Signify, seal, and exhibit^b the benefits of His mediation to them^d
- Strengthen and increase their faith and all other graces^e

- Oblige them to obedience^f
- [Enable them to] testify to and cherish their love and communion with one another^g
- Distinguish them from those that are without^h

^aGenesis 17:7, 10; Exodus 12; Matthew 28:19; Matthew 26:27–28; ^bRomans 4:11; 1 Corinthians 11:24–25; ^cRomans 15:8; Exodus 12:48; ^dActs 2:38; 1 Corinthians 10:16; ^eRomans 4:11; Galatians 3:27; ^fRomans 6:3–4; 1 Corinthians 10:21; ^gEphesians 4:2–5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; ^hEphesians 2:11–12; Genesis 34:14

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

A. The parts of a sacrament are two:

- An outward and sensible⁵⁸ sign used according to Christ’s own appointment
- An inward and spiritual grace to which the sign points

Matthew 3:11; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 2:28–29

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

A. Under the New Testament, Christ has instituted in His Church only two sacraments: baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:20, 23; Matthew 26:26–28

Q. 165. What is baptism?

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

- Engrafting into Himself^b
- Remission of sins by His blood^c
- Regeneration by His Spirit^d
- Adoption^e
- Resurrection to everlasting life^f

By baptism, the persons baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible Church^g and enter into an open and professed engagement to be entirely and only the Lord’s.^h

^aMatthew 28:19; ^bGalatians 3:27; ^cMark 1:4; Revelation 1:5; ^dTitus 3:5; Ephesians 5:26; ^eGalatians 3:26–27; ^f1 Corinthians 15:29; Romans 6:5; ^g1 Corinthians 12:13; ^hRomans 6:4

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

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any who are outside of the visible Church, and thus strangers from the covenant of promise, until they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to Him.^a But infants descended from parents, one or both of whom profess faith in Christ and obedience to Him, are in that respect within the covenant and are to be baptized.^b

^aActs 8:36–37; Acts 2:38; ^bGenesis 17:7, 9 *with* Galatians 3:9, 14 *and* Colossians 2:11–12 *and* Acts 2:38–39 *and* Romans 4:11–12; 1 Corinthians 7:14; Matthew 28:19; Luke 18:15–16; Romans 11:16

⁵⁸ sensible: in this context, able to be perceived by the senses of touch, sight, and so on.

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

A. The necessary 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.^a Baptism is improved 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
 - Our solemn vow made in it^b
- Being humbled for:
 - Our sinful defilement
 - Our falling short of, and walking contrary to, the grace of baptism and our engagements^c
- Growing up to the assurance of:
 - Pardon of sin
 - All other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament^d
- Drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for mortification of sin and enlivening of grace^e
- Endeavoring to:
 - Live by faith^f
 - Have our conduct of life in holiness and righteousness,^g as those who have given up their names to Christ in baptism^h
 - Walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit into one bodyⁱ

^aColossians 2:11–12; Romans 6:4, 6, 11; ^bRomans 6:3–5; ^c1 Corinthians 1:11–13; Romans 6:2–3; ^dRomans 4:11–12; 1 Peter 3:21; ^eRomans 6:3–5; ^fGalatians 3:26–27; ^gRomans 6:22; ^hActs 2:38; ⁱ1 Corinthians 12:13, 25–27

Q. 168. What is the Lord’s Supper?

A. The Lord’s Supper is a sacrament of the New Testament^a in which His death is displayed forth by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the appointment of Jesus Christ. Those who worthily receive the Lord’s Supper:

- Feed upon His body and blood to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace^b
- Have their union and communion with Him confirmed^c
- Testify of, and renew their:
 - Thankfulness^d and engagement to God^e
 - Mutual love and fellowship with each other as members of the same mystical body^f

^aLuke 22:20; ^bMatthew 26:26–28; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26; ^c1 Corinthians 10:16; ^d1 Corinthians 11:24–26; ^e1 Corinthians 10:14–16, 21; ^f1 Corinthians 10:17

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 the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, to:

- Set apart the bread and wine from common use by the word of institution, thanksgiving, and prayer
- Take and break the bread
- Give both the bread and the wine to the communicants

By the same appointment, the communicants are to take and eat the bread and drink the wine in thankful remembrance that the body of Christ was broken and given, and that His blood was shed for them.

1 Corinthians 11:23–24; Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20

Q. 170. How do those who worthily communicate in the Lord’s Supper feed upon the body and blood of Christ in it?

A. The body and blood of Christ are not corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper.⁵⁹ ^a Rather, the body and blood of Christ are spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are present to their outward senses.^b Therefore those who worthily communicate in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper do truly and really feed upon the body and blood of Christ,^c not after a corporal or carnal manner, but in a spiritual manner. By faith, they simultaneously receive and apply to themselves Christ crucified and all of the benefits of His death.^d

^aActs 3:21; ^bMatthew 26:26, 28; ^c1 Corinthians 11:24–29; ^d1 Corinthians 10:16

Questions 171 – 180

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

A. Those who receive the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves for it by examining themselves^a with respect to:

- Their being in Christ^b
- Their sins and moral defects^c
- The truth and measure of their knowledge,^d faith,^e repentance,^f love to God and the brethren,^g charity to all men,^h and forgiveness of those who have done them wrongⁱ
- Their desires after Christ^j and of their new obedience^k

They are to renew the exercise of these graces^l by serious meditation^m and fervent prayer.ⁿ

^a1 Corinthians 11:28; ^b2 Corinthians 13:5; ^c1 Corinthians 5:7 with Exodus 12:15; ^d1 Corinthians 11:29; ^e2 Corinthians 13:5; Matthew 26:28; ^fZechariah 12:10; 1 Corinthians 11:31; ^g1 Corinthians 10:16–17; Acts 2:46–47; ^h1 Corinthians 5:8; 1 Corinthians 11:18, 20; ⁱMatthew 5:23–24; ^jIsaiah 55:1; John 7:37; ^k1

⁵⁹ This false concept is called *consubstantiation*, is nowhere taught in Scripture, and completely misses the distinction between the sign and that which is signified by the sign. Similarly, *transubstantiation*, the idea that the elements are themselves invisibly transformed into the actual body and blood of Christ, is also false.

Corinthians 5:7–8; ¹1 Corinthians 11:25–26, 28; Hebrews 10:21–22, 24; Psalm 26:6; ^m1 Corinthians 11:24–25; ²2 Chronicles 30:18–19; Matthew 26:26

Q. 172. May one who doubts concerning his being in Christ or his due preparation come to the Lord’s Supper?

A. One who doubts regarding his being in Christ or his due preparation for the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper could truly belong to Christ, even though he is not yet assured of it.^a He could, in God’s account, belong to Christ if he duly fears not being in Christ^b and genuinely desires to be found in Christ^c and to depart from iniquity.^d Therefore, in such a case, because promises are made, and because this sacrament is appointed for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians,^e he is to grieve over his unbelief^f and labor to have his doubts resolved.^g Having done so, he may, and ought, to come to the Lord’s Supper that he may be further strengthened.^h

^aIsaiah 50:10; 1 John 5:13; Psalm 88; Psalm 77:1–12; Jonah 2:4, 7; ^bIsaiah 54:7–10; Matthew 5:3–4; Psalm 31:22; Psalm 73:13, 22–23; ^cPhilippians 3:8–9; Psalm 10:17; Psalm 42:1–2, 5, 11; ^d2 Timothy 2:19; Isaiah 50:10; Psalm 66:18–20; ^eIsaiah 40:11, 29, 31; Matthew 11:28; Matthew 12:20; Matthew 26:28; ^fMark 9:24; ^gActs 2:37; Acts 16:30; ^hRomans 4:11; 1 Corinthians 11:28

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

A. In spite of their profession of the faith and desire to come to the Lord’s Supper, those who are found to be ignorant or scandalous may, and ought, to be kept from that sacrament^a until they receive instruction and clearly display their reformation.^b Christ has given this power to His Church.^a

^a1 Corinthians 11:27–34 *with* Matthew 7:6 *and* 1 Corinthians 5 *and* Jude 23 *and* 1 Timothy 5:22; ^b2 Corinthians 2:7

Q. 174. During the time of the administration of it, what is required of those who receive the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper?

A. During the time of the administration of it, those who receive the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper are required to:

- With all holy reverence and attention, wait upon God in that ordinance^a
- Diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions^b
- Heedfully discern the Lord’s body^c
- Affectionately meditate on His death and sufferings,^d and thus stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces:^e
 - In judging themselves^f and sorrowing for sin^g
 - In renewing their covenant with Godⁿ and love to all the saints^o
 - In earnest:
 - Hungering and thirsting after Christ^h
 - Feeding on Him by faithⁱ
 - Receiving His fullness^j
 - Trusting in His merits^k
 - Rejoicing in His love^l
 - Giving thanks for His grace^m

^aLeviticus 10:3; Hebrews 12:28; Psalm 5:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17, 26–27; ^bExodus 24:8 *with* Matthew 26:28; ^c1 Corinthians 11:29; ^dLuke 22:19; ^e1 Corinthians 11:26; 1 Corinthians 10:3–5, 11, 14; ^f1 Corinthians 11:31; ^gZechariah 12:10; ^hRevelation 22:17; ⁱJohn 6:35; ^jJohn 1:16; ^kPhilippians 3:9; ^lPsalm 63:4–5; 2 Chronicles 30:21; ^mPsalm 22:26; ⁿJeremiah 50:5; Psalm 50:5; ^oActs 2:42

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 to seriously consider how they have behaved themselves at the sacrament and with what success:^a

- If they find renewal of life and comfort, they are to:
 - Bless God for it^b
 - Beg continuation of it^c
 - Watch against relapses^d
 - Fulfill their vows^e
 - Encourage themselves to a frequent attendance on the ordinance^f
- If they find no present benefit, they are to more exactly review their preparation for, and conduct at, the sacrament.^g In both:
 - If they can approve themselves to God and their own consciences, they are to wait for the fruit of it in due time^h
 - If they see that they have failed in either:
 - They are to be humbledⁱ
 - They are to attend upon it afterward with more care and diligence^j

^aPsalm 28:7; Psalm 85:8; 1 Corinthians 11:17, 30–31; ^b2 Chronicles 30:21–23, 25–26; Acts 2:42, 46–47; ^cPsalm 36:10; Song of Solomon 3:4; 1 Chronicles 29:18; ^d1 Corinthians 10:3–5, 12; ^ePsalm 50:14; ^f1 Corinthians 11:25–26; Acts 2:42, 46; ^gSong of Solomon 5:1–6; ^hPsalm 123:1 Psalm 42:5, 8; Psalm 43:3–5; ⁱ2 Chronicles 30:18–19; Isaiah 1:16, 18; ^j2 Corinthians 7:11; 1 Chronicles 15:12–14

Q. 176. In what ways are the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper alike?

A. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper are alike in that:

- The author of both is God^a
- The spiritual part of both is Christ and His benefits^b
- Both are seals of the same covenant^c
- Both are to be dispensed by ministers of the gospel and by none other^d
- Both are to be continued in the Church of Christ until His second coming^e

^aMatthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23; ^bRomans 6:3–4; 1 Corinthians 10:16; ^cRomans 4:11 *with* Colossians 2:12; Matthew 26:27–28; ^dJohn 1:33; Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23; 1 Corinthians 4:1; Hebrews 5:4; ^eMatthew 28:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:26

Q. 177. In what ways are the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper different?

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

- Baptism is:
 - To be administered just once with water
 - A sign and seal of our regeneration and engrafting into Christ^a
 - To be administered even to infants^b

- The Lord's Supper:
 - Is to be administered often, using the elements of bread and wine
 - Represents and exhibits Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul^c and confirms our perseverance and growth in Him^d
 - Is only for those who are of years and ability to examine themselves, and so partake^e

^aMatthew 3:11; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:27; ^bGenesis 17:7, 9; Acts 2:38–39; 1 Corinthians 7:14; ^c1 Corinthians 11:23–26; ^d1 Corinthians 10:16; ^e1 Corinthians 11:28–29

Q. 178. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up⁶⁰ of our desires to God,^a in the name of Christ,^b by the help of His Spirit,^c with confession of our sins,^d and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies.^e

^aPsalm 62:8; ^bJohn 16:23; ^cRomans 8:26; ^dPsalm 32:5–6; Daniel 9:4; ^ePhilippians 4:6

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

A. God alone is able to search the hearts,^a hear the requests,^b pardon the sins,^c and fulfill the desires of all.^d He alone is to be believed in^e and worshiped with religious worship.^f Thus, prayer, a special part of religious worship,^g is to be made by all [people] to Him alone,^h and to no other.ⁱ

^a1 Kings 8:39; Acts 1:24; Romans 8:27; ^bPsalm 65:2; ^cMicah 7:18; ^dPsalm 145:18–19; ^eRomans 10:14; ^fMatthew 4:10; ^g1 Corinthians 1:2; ^hPsalm 50:15; ⁱRomans 10:14

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

A. To pray in the name of Christ is to ask mercy on Christ's account. We do this in obedience to His command and in confidence in His promises.^a Praying in the name of Christ is not done by bare mention of His name,^b but rather by drawing our encouragement to pray, and our boldness, strength, and hope of acceptance in prayer from Christ and His mediation.^c

^aJohn 14:13–14; John 16:24; Daniel 9:17; ^bMatthew 7:21; ^cHebrews 4:14–16; 1 John 5:13–15

Questions 181 – 190

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

A. The sinfulness of man separates man a great distance from God. This distance is so great that we can have no access into His presence without a mediator.^a There is none in heaven or earth appointed to, or fit for, that glorious work, except Christ alone.^b Therefore, we are to pray in no other name except His only.^c

^aJohn 14:6; Isaiah 59:2; Ephesians 3:12; ^bJohn 6:27; Hebrews 7:25–27; 1 Timothy 2:5; ^cColossians 3:17; Hebrews 13:15

⁶⁰ offer (up): an act of worship in which something is presented to God as a sacrifice or given to Him in worship, whether material or spiritual, such as prayer or thanksgiving

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

A. We do not know what to pray for as we ought. Therefore, the Spirit helps our infirmities, by enabling us to understand both for whom and what, and how, prayer is to be made. He works in, and enlivens, our hearts to those perceptions, comprehensions, emotions [or desires], and graces that are necessary for the right performance of that duty. However, He does not work in the same measure in all persons or at all times.

Romans 8:26–27; Psalm 10:17; Zechariah 12:10

Q. 183. For whom are we to pray?

A. We are to pray for the whole church of Christ on earth,^a for magistrates^b and ministers,^c for ourselves,^d our brethren,^e even our enemies,^f and for all sorts of men living^g or who will live in the future.^h But, we are not to pray for the dead,ⁱ nor for those who are known to have sinned the sin to death.^j

^aEphesians 6:18; Psalm 28:9; ^b1 Timothy 2:1–2; ^cColossians 4:3; ^dGenesis 32:11; ^eJames 5:16; ^fMatthew 5:44; ^g1 Timothy 2:1–2; ^hJohn 17:20; 2 Samuel 7:29; ⁱ2 Samuel 12:21–23; ^j1 John 5:16

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

A. We are to pray for all things tending to the glory of God,^a the welfare of the Church,^b our own^c or others' good,^d but not for anything that is unlawful.^e

^aMatthew 6:9; ^bPsalm 51:18; Psalm 122:6; ^cMatthew 7:11; ^dPsalm 125:4; ^e1 John 5:14

Q. 185. How are we to pray?

A. We are to pray with:

- An awe-filled perception and comprehension of the majesty of God^a
- A deep sense of our unworthiness,^b necessities,^c and sins^d
- Penitent,^e thankful,^f and enlarged hearts^g
- Understanding,^h faith,ⁱ sincerity,^j fervency,^k love,^l and perseverance,^m while waiting on Himⁿ with humble submission to His will^o

^aEcclesiastes 5:1; ^bGenesis 18:27; Genesis 32:10; ^cLuke 15:17–19; ^dLuke 18:13–14; ^ePsalm 51:17; ^fPhilippians 4:6; ^g1 Samuel 1:15; 1 Samuel 2:1; ^h1 Corinthians 14:15; ⁱMark 11:24; James 1:6; ^jPsalm 145:18; Psalm 17:1; ^kJames 5:16; ^l1 Timothy 2:8; ^mEphesians 6:18; ⁿMicah 7:7; ^oMatthew 26:39

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.^a But the special rule of direction is that form of prayer that our Savior Christ taught His disciples, commonly called “The Lord’s Prayer.”^b

⁶¹ enlarged hearts: This phrase eludes exact definition. As generally used in the seventeenth century, it refers to swelling or filling up the heart with gratitude and affection or making room in the heart for these or other virtues. In the present context, it refers to having one’s heart open, obedient, and receptive to God, with praise and thankfulness, and ready to receive grace from God. It implies close communion with God. Elsewhere and more narrowly, it may mean being receptive to God’s wisdom. See: in AV or NKJV 1 Kings 4:29, in AV, 2 Corinthians 6:11, or in most translations including AV, NKJV, ESV, NASB, Psalm 119:32.

^a1 John 5:14; ^bMatthew 6:9–13; Luke 11:2–4

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

A. The Lord’s Prayer is for direction as a pattern according to which we are to make other prayers. And, the Lord’s Prayer itself may also be used as a prayer. It is given so that praying will be done with understanding, faith, reverence, and other graces necessary to the right performance of the duty of prayer.

Matthew 6:9 *with* Luke 11:2

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.

(No proof texts)

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

A. The preface of the Lord’s Prayer is contained in the words “Our Father in heaven.”^a The preface teaches us, when we pray, to draw near to God with:

- Confidence in His fatherly goodness and in our [graciously granted] claim to it^b
- Reverence and all other child-like dispositions^c
- Heavenly emotions^d
- Due perception and understanding of His sovereign power, majesty, and gracious condescension^e

The preface also teaches us to pray with and for others.^f

^aMatthew 6:9; ^bLuke 11:13; Romans 8:15; ^cIsaiah 64:9; ^dPsalms 123:1; Lamentations 3:41; ^eIsaiah 63:15–16; Nehemiah 1:4–6; ^fActs 12:5

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

A. In the first petition, which is, “Hallowed be Your name”:^a

- We acknowledge the utter inability and disinclination that is in ourselves and all men to honor God aright^b
- We pray that God would, by His grace:
 - Enable and incline us and others to:
 - Know, acknowledge, and highly esteem:
 - Him^c
 - His titles,^d attributes,^e ordinances, Word,^f and works
 - All by which He is pleased to make Himself known^g
 - Glorify Him in thought, word,^h and deedⁱ
 - Prevent and remove atheism,^j ignorance,^k idolatry,^l profaneness,^m and whatever is dishonorable to Himⁿ
 - By His overruling providence, direct and arrange all things to His own glory^o

^aMatthew 6:9; ^b2 Corinthians 3:5; Psalm 51:15; ^cPsalms 67:2–3; ^dPsalms 83:18; ^ePsalms 86:10–13, 15; ^f2 Thessalonians 3:1; Psalm 147:19–20; Psalm 138:1–3; 2 Corinthians 2:14–15; ^gPsalms 145; Psalm 8; ^hPsalms 103:1; Psalm 19:14; ⁱPhilippians 1:9, 11; ^jPsalms 67:1–4; ^kEphesians 1:17–18; ^lPsalms 97:7; ^mPsalms 74:18, 22–23; ⁿ2 Kings 19:15–16; ^o2 Chronicles 20:6, 10–12; Psalm 83; Psalm 140:4, 8

Questions 191 – 196

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

A. In the second petition, which is, “Your kingdom come”:^a

- We acknowledge ourselves and all mankind to be, by nature, under the dominion of sin and Satan^b
- We pray that:
 - The kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed^c
 - The gospel will be propagated throughout the world,^d the Jews called,^e and the fullness of the Gentiles brought in^f
 - The Church will be furnished with all gospel officers and ordinances^g
 - Corruption will be purged from the Church^h
 - The Church will be countenanced and maintained⁶² by the civil magistrate^{63, i}
 - The ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed and made effectual for:
 - Conversion of those who are yet in their sins
 - Confirming, comforting, and building up those who are already converted^j
 - Christ would rule in our hearts here^k and hasten the time of His second coming and our reigning with Him forever^l
 - He would be pleased to so reign in the kingdom of His power in all the world as may best suit these ends^m

^aMatthew 6:10; ^bEphesians 2:2–3; ^cPsalms 68:1, 18; Revelation 12:10–11; ^d2 Thessalonians 3:1; ^eRomans 10:1; ^fJohn 17:9, 20; Romans 11:25–26; Psalm 67; ^gMatthew 9:38; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; ^hMalachi 1:11; Zephaniah 3:9; ⁱ1 Timothy 2:1–2; ^jActs 4:29–30; Ephesians 6:18–20; Romans 15:29–30, 32; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17; ^kEphesians 3:14–20; ^lRevelation 22:20; ^mIsaiah 64:1–2; Revelation 4:8–11

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”:^a

- We acknowledge that, by nature, we and all men:
 - Are utterly unable and unwilling to know and do the will of God^b
 - Are prone to rebel against His word^c
 - Are prone to repine⁶⁴ and murmur⁶⁵ against His providence^d
 - Are completely inclined to do the will of the flesh, and of the devil^e

⁶² maintained: in this context, the use of tax funds to finance and support the Church

⁶³ Editorial opinion: As it is a duty of civil magistrates to praise those who do well, to countenance the true Church is fitting. However, civil magistrates have no authority in doctrinal, theological, or ecclesiastical matters. Further, there is no scriptural warrant for the use of tax or other public funds to support or finance churches. Yet, as ministers of God, they are to rule according to Scripture, under God. See *Appendix A* in the editor’s translation of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* at <http://www.BeForgiven.INFO/translations> for a full explanation.

⁶⁴ repine: feel or express dejection or discontent, complain

⁶⁵ murmur: grumble, a partially suppressed or muttered complaint

- We pray that God would, by His Spirit, take away from ourselves and others all blindness,^f weakness,^g disinclination [to good],^h and perverseness of heartⁱ
- We pray that God would, by His grace, make us able and willing to know, do, and submit to His will in all things,^j with similarly fitting humility,^k cheerfulness,^l faithfulness,^m diligence,ⁿ zeal,^o sincerity,^p and constancy,^q as the angels do in heaven^r

^aMatthew 6:10; ^bRomans 7:18; Job 21:14; 1 Corinthians 2:14; ^cRomans 8:7; ^dExodus 17:7; Numbers 14:2; ^eEphesians 2:2; ^fEphesians 1:17–18; ^gEphesians 3:16; ^hMatthew 26:40–41; ⁱJeremiah 31:18–19; ^jPsalms 119:1, 8, 35–36; Acts 21:14; ^kMicah 6:8; ^lPsalms 100:2; Job 1:21; 2 Samuel 15:25; ^mIsaiah 38:3; ⁿPsalms 119:4–5; ^oRomans 12:11; ^pPsalms 119:80; ^qPsalms 119:112; ^rIsaiah 6:2–3; Psalm 103:20–21; Matthew 18:10

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”:^a

- We acknowledge that:
 - In Adam, and by our own sin, we have forfeited our right to all of the outward blessings of this life
 - We deserve to be completely deprived of them by God and to have them cursed against us as we use them^b
 - Outward blessings, by themselves, are not able to sustain us^c
 - We cannot merit outward blessings^d or procure them by our own industry [apart from God]^e
 - We are prone to desire,^f get,^g and use outward blessings unlawfully^h
- We pray:
 - For ourselves and others, that both they and we may enjoy a suitable portion of His free gift of outward blessings:ⁱ
 - As we wait upon the providence of God from day to day in the use of lawful means
 - As will seem best to His fatherly wisdom
 - That we and they will have these gifts continued and blessed to us in our:
 - Holy and comfortable use of them^j
 - Contentment in them^k
 - That we will be kept from all things that are contrary to our temporal support and comfort^l

^aMatthew 6:11; ^bGenesis 2:17; Genesis 3:17; Romans 8:20–22; Jeremiah 5:25; Deuteronomy 28:15–68; ^cDeuteronomy 8:3; ^dGenesis 32:10; ^eDeuteronomy 8:17–18; ^fJeremiah 6:13; Mark 7:21–22; ^gHosea 12:7; ^hJames 4:3; ⁱGenesis 43:12–14; Genesis 28:20; Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:11–12; Philippians 4:6; ^j1 Timothy 4:3–5; ^k1 Timothy 6:6–8; ^lProverbs 30:8–9

Q. 194. 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”:^a

- We acknowledge that:
 - We and all others are guilty both of original and actual sin, and therefore become debtors to the justice of God
 - Neither we nor any other creature can make the least satisfaction for that debt^b

- We pray for ourselves and others that God would, of His free grace, through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, embraced and applied by faith:
 - Acquit us from both the guilt and punishment of sin^c
 - Accept us in His Beloved^d
 - Continue His favor and grace to us^e
 - Pardon our daily failings^f
 - Fill us with peace and joy in giving us daily more and more assurance of forgiveness^g
- We are more emboldened to ask these things and encouraged to expect them when we have this testimony in ourselves: that we from the heart forgive others their offenses^h

^aMatthew 6:12; ^bRomans 3:9–21; Matthew 18:24–25; Psalm 130:3–4; ^cRomans 3:24–26; Hebrews 9:22; ^dEphesians 1:6–7; ^e2 Peter 1:2; ^fHosea 14:2; Jeremiah 14:7; ^gRomans 15:13; Psalm 51:7–10, 12; ^hLuke 11:4; Matthew 6:14–15; Matthew 18:35

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

A. In the sixth petition, which is, “And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one”.^{66, a}

- We acknowledge that:
 - The most wise, righteous, and gracious God, for various holy and just purposes, may so order things that we may be assaulted, foiled, and, for a time, led captive by temptations^b
 - Satan,^c the world,^d and the flesh are ready to draw us powerfully aside and ensnare us^e
 - Even after the pardon of our sins, by reason of our corruption,^f weakness, and lack of watchfulness,^g we are subject to being tempted and eager to expose ourselves to temptations.^h But also, by ourselves, we are unable and unwilling to resist them, to recover out of them, or to learn from themⁱ
 - We are worthy to be left under the power of them^j
- We pray, that:
 - God would in such a manner:
 - Overrule the world and all in it^k
 - Subdue the flesh^l
 - Restrain Satan^m
 - Order all thingsⁿ
 - Bestow and bless all means of grace^o and enliven 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^p
 - If tempted, that by His Spirit we may be powerfully supported and enabled to stand in the hour of temptation^q
 - When fallen, be raised again and recovered out of it^r and have a sanctified use and education from the fall^s

⁶⁶ The Greek has, literally, “the evil.” This leads to the translation, “the evil one,” on the assumption that the evil one is implied. Other translators ignore the definite article and simply translate “evil.”

- Our sanctification and salvation may be perfected^t
- Satan will be trodden under our feet,^u and we will be fully freed from sin, temptation, and all evil forever^v

^aMatthew 6:13; ^b2 Chronicles 32:31; ^c1 Chronicles 21:1; ^dLuke 21:34; Mark 4:19; ^eJames 1:14; ^fGalatians 5:17; ^gMatthew 26:41; ^hMatthew 26:69–72; Galatians 2:11–15; 2 Chronicles 18:3 *with* 2 Chronicles 19:2; ⁱRomans 7:23–24; 1 Chronicles 21:1–4; 2 Chronicles 16:7–10; ^jPsalms 81:11–12; ^kJohn 17:15; ^lPsalms 51:10; 119:133; ^m2 Corinthians 12:7–8; ⁿ1 Corinthians 10:12–13; ^oHebrews 13:20–21; ^pMatthew 26:41; ^qPsalms 19:13; ^rEphesians 3:14–17; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; Jude 24; ^sPsalms 51:12; ^t1 Peter 5:8–10; ^u2 Corinthians 13:7, 9; ^vRomans 16:20; Zechariah 3:2; Luke 22:31–32; ^wJohn 17:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:23

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

A. The conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer is, “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”^{67, a} It teaches us to enforce our petitions with arguments,^b which are to be taken not from any worthiness in ourselves or in any other creature, but from God.^c It also teaches us to join praises to our prayers,^d ascribing to God alone eternal sovereignty, omnipotence, and glorious excellence.^e Due to these glorious attributes of God, He is able and willing to help us.^f Thus, by faith, we are emboldened to plead with Him that He will help us,^g and [then] rely upon Him quietly that He will fulfill our requests.^h And to testify that this is our desire and assurance, we say “Amen.”ⁱ

^aMatthew 6:13; ^bRomans 15:30; ^cDaniel 9:4, 7–9, 16–19; ^dPhilippians 4:6; ^e1 Chronicles 29:10–13; ^fEphesians 3:20–21; Luke 11:13; ^g2 Chronicles 20:6, 11; ^h2 Chronicles 14:11; ⁱ1 Corinthians 14:16; Revelation 22:20–21

⁶⁷ Some ancient manuscripts omit from the end of Matthew 6:13, “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” Thus some translations omit, even without mention, this final text. Whether or not to include this text is a matter of textual criticism and translator’s judgment into which this editor will not venture.

Appendix: Background and Editorial Philosophy

As related in the Introduction, accurate translation of the meaning of the original text of the *Westminster Larger Catechism* is a vital and important goal. Nonetheless, however accurate the translation may be, if it is not accessible to the reader all is lost. Thus, readability is a paramount and overriding consideration. For this purpose, the following changes have been made during translation:

- Spelling and punctuation are modernized.
- Obsolete words are replaced with contemporary synonyms.
- Words that may not be obsolete, but whose common or contemporary meaning is often unknown or differs from that of the text, are likewise replaced with contemporary synonyms or defined.
- Similarly, words with a precise theological meaning are explained in footnotes.
- Overly long and run-on sentences (by contemporary standards) are broken up into multiple sentences.
- Embedded lists are sometimes bulleted, particularly where the structure is complex, the list long, or the list items are complex phrases, clauses, or sentences.
- In some cases the order of phrases is altered for clarification or ease of reading.
- Other small changes are often made that make the text easier to read, such as substituting the antecedent for a pronoun.
- Occasionally, footnotes give longer explanations of terms or concepts so that the reader may more fully understand the WLC text.
- The contemporary text generally follows American usage per the *Chicago Manual of Style*.⁶⁸
- The Westminster Divines thoroughly and equally included women with men as human beings made in the image of God. They understood references to “men,” “mankind,” and so on, as completely including both sexes. This understanding and usage is also that of the Holy Scriptures. The editor therefore sees no reason to do violence to the text for the sake of “gender inclusiveness,” particularly when standards of English usage on this matter are currently in flux, to say nothing of frequently resulting in awkward constructions.

The original WLC has a certain majestic terseness and style which is, as is common in translations, greatly diminished by the editor’s current work. This is regrettable, but not so nearly regrettable as when a person is denied access to these eternal truths due to difficulties in reading comprehension. In particular, the frequent use of bulleted lists may surprise or irritate some readers. But quoting from Grammar-Quizzes.com:

Block text visually runs text together. It is wordy but saves space. Using more than three or four lines on a web page causes the reader to skip over the last few lines. Did you actually read this last

⁶⁸ Chicago University Press, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 2010.

line?

A bulleted or numbered list:

- Visually emphasizes information
- Capsulizes a concept
- Facilitates reading comprehension.⁶⁹

The quoted block text, particularly the last line, may shock the highly educated, but the editor wishes to serve as many readers as possible.

The editor used Bower's *The Larger Catechism, A Critical Text and Introduction*⁷⁰ as the source text, and *Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America*⁷¹ as a check text. Reference was also made to other published WLC texts, as well as primary and secondary historical sources where necessary, to ascertain the meaning of a word or phrase.

The editor welcomes constructive feedback and corrections at the email address given below. (The address is a graphic to foil harvesting by spammers.) The editor will particularly appreciate notice of errors that cause the translation to fail to faithfully convey the original meaning of the text of the WLC.

info@BeForgiven.INFO

⁶⁹ Grammar-Quizzes.com, <http://www.grammar-quizzes.com/punc-lists.html> (accessed November 29, 2014).

⁷⁰ Bower, John, R., *The Larger Catechism, A Critical Text and Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010).

⁷¹ *Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America*, A-5, <http://reformedpresbyterian.org/downloads/constitution2010.pdf> (accessed September 30, 2014).