

The
WESTMINSTER
LARGER
CATECHISM
A C O M M E N T A R Y

J O H A N N E S G . V O S

Edited by G. I. Williamson

Introduction by W. Robert Godfrey

R&R
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Editor's Preface

I once heard the late Professor John Murray describe the *Blue Banner Faith and Life* magazine as the best periodical of its kind in the world. I became a faithful reader and, in doing so, became aware of the high quality of the work of its editor, the Rev. Johannes Geerhardus Vos. One of the finest things that he wrote for that periodical, in my opinion, was his series of studies on the Larger Catechism of the Westminster Assembly.

Office-bearers in conservative Presbyterian churches such as my own are required to “receive and adopt” this catechism as one of the three documents “containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures.” But it is common knowledge that the Larger Catechism has received far less attention than either the Shorter Catechism or the Confession of Faith. One reason for this has been the paucity of good study material expounding it. A reprint of the work by Thomas Ridgeley, originally published in 1731, is the only other study I have seen, and for various reasons it is not nearly as usable as this study by Dr. Vos.

I am therefore most happy that Mrs. Marion Vos—Dr. Vos’s widow—encouraged me to edit this work, and that the editorial board of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America authorized its publication.

May our sovereign Lord bless this study as a teacher of many who were not present to see it in the original pages of the *Blue Banner Faith and Life*.

An Introduction to the Westminster Larger Catechism

W. Robert Godfrey

In 1908 B. B. Warfield showed himself a master of understatement when he observed: “In the later history of the Westminster formularies, the Larger Catechism has taken a somewhat secondary place.”¹ Compared to the prominence and influence of the Shorter Catechism in Presbyterian circles, the Larger Catechism is a very distant second indeed. At least in the United States the Larger Catechism is seldom mentioned, much less studied, as a living part of the Presbyterian heritage. This situation is not new. From the seventeenth century on, the Shorter Catechism received much more attention than did the Larger. Francis Beattie commented a century ago: “For an exposition of the Larger Catechism alone, Ridgeley’s *Body of Divinity* is deserving of notice, when so few treatises deal directly with the Larger Catechism.”² In fact Thomas Ridgeley’s two-volume work printed in 1731–33 seems to be the only major work to focus on the Larger Catechism.

Is such neglect of the Larger Catechism justified? Is there value almost 350 years after the writing of the catechism in renewing our appreciation of it? The answer certainly is yes. The Larger Catechism is a mine of fine gold theologically, historically, and spiritually. This study will delve into this mine by looking briefly at the preparation of the catechism, the purposes it was to fulfill, and the continuing value of the catechism for the church today.

The Larger Catechism’s Preparation and Purpose

The catechetical concerns of the Westminster Assembly were grounded in the Solemn League and covenant that England and Scotland had signed in 1643. Article 1 of that covenant declared that we “shall endeavour to bring the Churches of God in the three kingdoms [England, Scotland, and Ire-

land] to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, confession of faith, form of church-government, directory for worship and catechising; that we, and our posterity after us, may, as brethren, live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us.”³ Clearly the preparation of a catechism was a significant goal of the alliance.

The responsibility of preparing a catechism was taken very seriously by the Assembly, which appointed a committee to undertake that work.⁴ Although much of the committee’s work cannot be reconstructed, we do know some of the issues that were debated. The committee proposed a directory of catechizing⁵ and discussed a variety of approaches to writing a catechism. Herbert Palmer wrote a draft of a catechism, but even though he had the reputation as the best catechist in England, his draft was not acceptable to the entire committee. The committee also debated whether or not to include an exposition of the Apostles’ Creed, which historically had been a central feature of catechisms.⁶ Since the creed was not inspired Scripture, the committee ultimately decided not to include such an exposition.

A key breakthrough in the work of the committee came in January 1647 with the decision to write two catechisms instead of one.⁷ That decision seemed to clarify and simplify the work of the committee, after which they progressed rapidly. On January 14, 1647, the Assembly had adopted a motion “that the committee for the Catechism do prepare a draught of two Catechisms, one more large and another more brief, in which they are to have an eye to the Confession of Faith, and to the matter of the Catechism already begun.”⁸ George Gillespie observed that the Larger Catechism would be “for those of understanding” while other Scottish Commissioners referred to it as “one more exact and comprehensive.” They acknowledged that it had been “very difficult . . . to dress up milk and meat both in one dish.”⁹ Clearly the Larger Catechism was intended for the more mature in the faith.

How was this Larger Catechism intended to be used? Certainly it was to help the study and growth of those Christians who were ready for the meaty things of the faith. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in approving the Larger Catechism in 1648 called it “a Directory for catechizing such as have made some proficiency in the knowledge of the grounds of religion.”¹⁰

Philip Schaff suggests that the Assembly had another purpose in mind for the Larger Catechism. He wrote that the Assembly prepared “a larger one for the public exposition in the pulpit, according to the custom of the Reformed Churches on the continent.”¹¹ Schaff’s suggestion is intriguing,

but not one that is supported either by his own footnotes or by other evidence. Schaff may have reasoned that since the general aim of the Assembly was to bring the British churches into conformity with continental Reformed practice, the Assembly would also promote the kind of catechism preaching found in the Genevan, German, and Dutch Reformed churches. Without clear evidence to support it, this reasoning seems to run contrary to other actions of the Assembly. For example, the Assembly's decision not to provide an exposition of the Apostles' Creed in the catechism because it was not inspired by God would make it unlikely that the Assembly would expect an uninspired catechism to be preached in the churches. Also the statement on preaching in the *Directory for the Publick Worship of God* seems to stand against Schaff: "Ordinarily, the subject of his sermon is to be some text of scripture, holding forth some principle or head of religion, or suitable to some special occasion emergent; or he may go on in some chapter, psalm, or book of the holy scripture, as he shall see fit."¹² T. F. Torrance probably expresses better than Schaff the purpose of the catechism for preachers when he writes, "*The Larger Catechism* was designed chiefly as a directory for ministers in their teaching of the reformed faith Sunday by Sunday."¹³

The Larger Catechism's Value

If the purpose of the Larger Catechism was to catechize those already introduced to Christian truth, it must be asked in what ways the catechism can still fulfill that purpose. What is its continuing value for the church today?

First, the value of the catechism should be seen in some of the outstanding summaries of doctrine to be found there. For example, questions 70–77 provide an excellent statement of the Reformation doctrines of justification and sanctification. Question 77 shows the relation of those two truths to each other in a very succinct and powerful way:

Q. *Wherein do justification and sanctification differ?*

A. *Although sanctification be inseparably joined with justification, yet they differ, in that God in justification imputeth the righteousness of Christ; in sanctification his Spirit infuseth grace, and enableth to the exercise thereof; in the former, sin is pardoned; in the other, it is subdued; the one doth equally free all believers from the revenging wrath of God, and that perfectly in this life, that they never fall into condemnation; the*

other is neither equal in all, nor in this life perfect in any, but growing up to perfection.

Second, some expositors of the catechism have argued that the Larger Catechism on some doctrinal points is superior to the formulations in the Westminster Confession of Faith. John Murray, for example, maintains that the statement of the covenant of grace in the Larger Catechism, questions 30–32, is superior to chapter 7, section 3 of the Confession. He also states that on the imputation of the guilt of Adam’s sin the Larger Catechism, question 22, relates the imputation to the covenant of works more clearly than the Confession of Faith, chapter 6, section 3.¹⁴

Third, the Larger Catechism provides an especially full and rich exposition of the Ten Commandments. The writing of this section of the catechism has been especially associated with the name of Anthony Tuckney, a noted Puritan moral theologian. Many regard this part of the catechism as an outstanding introduction to Puritan ethical thought.

Not all scholars, however, have regarded this section as a helpful expression of Reformed reflection on the law. Philip Schaff commented: “It serves also in part as a valuable commentary or supplement to the Confession, especially on the ethical part of our religion. But it is over-minute in the specification of what God has commanded and forbidden in the Ten Commandments, and loses itself in the wilderness of details.”¹⁵ T. F. Torrance is even more critical. He suggests that Calvin’s Genevan Catechism on the law is “more evangelical” while the Larger Catechism is “highly moralistic.”¹⁶

Despite these criticisms other commentators give a much more positive evaluation. Frederick Loetscher, for example, wrote: “Particularly admirable is the exposition of the law. No doubt, there is here a tendency toward excessive elaboration in specifying what is enjoined and what is forbidden by the several Commandments; but no work of the kind offers a more suggestive and helpful treatment of the ethical and social teachings of the New Testament.”¹⁷

Are the criticisms of this section of the catechism justified? One response must be that the Larger Catechism devotes a significantly lower percentage of questions to the law than does the Shorter Catechism (see table 1 at the end of this introduction).¹⁸ If the charge of moralism were true at all, it would be more true of the Shorter Catechism than of the Larger.¹⁹

More significantly, however, while the exposition of the Ten Commandments in the Larger Catechism is detailed and pointed, it does not fall into trivial or subtle matters. Nor does it take on a legalistic tone. The exposition follows the practice of Calvin in seeing all of man's moral responsibility as summed up in the Ten Commandments. Many of the answers in this section of the catechism are long, but all of the commandments except two are treated in just three or four questions. Not surprisingly the fourth commandment gets longer exposition—seven questions—in view of its importance to Puritans and the controversial nature of sabbatarianism in the seventeenth century. Perhaps it is surprising that eleven questions are devoted to the fifth commandment. Such lengthy treatment probably reflects the unsettled social and political circumstances in England at the time of the Assembly and the need to deal fully with issues of obedience to superiors. The Larger Catechism's exposition of the law is in fact a useful basis for meditation and self-examination as it opens up the meaning of the commandments for the benefit of the believer who seeks to lead a godly life.

David Wells has recently praised the kind of integration of Christian living with Christian theology which is exhibited in the Larger Catechism. Wells wrote that in the past theology had "three essential aspects": "(1) a confession element, (2) reflection on this confession, and (3) the cultivation of a set of virtues that are grounded in the first two elements."²⁰ He adds, "The third element, the virtues of life, have [sic] not always been seen as central to the work of the theologian *as theologian*. This has at times been a significant weakness in Protestant theology, as compared with Catholic, but Puritanism is a reminder that it need not be excluded from the interests of a genuinely Protestant theology."²¹ The discussion of the law in the Larger Catechism seeks to cultivate virtue in a most pointed way and provides a vital encouragement for theologian and believer.

Fourth, the value of the Larger Catechism rests in its presentation of the doctrine of the church. The Larger Catechism develops a full-orbed doctrine of the church—a subject almost entirely absent from the Shorter Catechism. Alexander Mitchell noted about the Shorter Catechism:

While . . . it is a thoroughly Calvinistic catechism, it has nothing of church censures, church courts, or church officers, as many similar productions have. Nay, it does not even have a definition of the Church, whether visible or invisible, like the Larger Catechism and

the Confession of Faith, but only an incidental reference to it in connection with the answer to the question, To whom is baptism to be administered?²²

Mitchell saw this as a strength rather than a weakness. He wrote:

It would seem as if in this their simplest yet noblest symbol they wished, as far as Calvinists could do so, to eliminate from their statements all that was subordinate or unessential—all relating to the mere organisation of Christians as an external community—all in which they differed from sound Protestant Episcopalians on the one hand, and from the less unsound of the sectaries on the other, and to make a supreme effort to provide a worthy catechism in which all the Protestant youth in the country might be trained.²³

The doctrine of the church, however, cannot be seen as “subordinate or unessential.” None of the Westminster divines would have regarded the doctrine of the church as an insignificant matter. The absence of a doctrine of the church in the Shorter Catechism reflects its purpose, which, as Torrance put it, was to aid “the inquirer”²⁴ with “the appropriation of salvation and with the Christian life.”²⁵ The Assembly intended the Larger Catechism to supplement the Shorter, treating some topics—such as the church—not covered in the Shorter.

The intention that the Larger Catechism supplement the Shorter can be clearly seen by comparing the sections of the two catechisms that occur just before the exposition of the law.²⁶ Questions 37 and 38 of the Shorter Catechism speak of the benefits derived from the death and resurrection of Christ, whereas questions 82–90 of the Larger Catechism speak of “communion in glory” with Christ rather than benefits. What is striking is that while the Larger Catechism speaks of the communion in glory for “the invisible church,” the Shorter Catechism speaks of benefits for “believers.” The Shorter Catechism deliberately focuses on individuals while the Larger Catechism focuses much more on the Christian community.

The Larger Catechism’s Doctrine of the Church

The decision to eliminate a doctrine of the church from the Shorter Catechism may have made sense in a context where it was assumed that cate-

chumens would move on to the fuller instruction of the Larger Catechism. Where the Larger Catechism no longer functions in that way, however, a very serious omission exists. The doctrine of the church is an integral element of true Calvinism.

Indeed a distinctive doctrine of the church is of the very essence of Calvinism. Calvinism is a form of Christianity that avoids two extremes in its understanding of the church. On the one hand, it rejects a form of sacramental Christianity that sees the offices and sacraments as inevitably or automatically bearing the grace of God. On the other hand, it rejects an interior, mystical form of Christianity that sees the outward means of grace as irrelevant. The institution of the church as the mother of the faithful is essential to genuine Calvinism.

John Calvin makes the centrality of the church very clear in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. In broad terms book 1 is about the Father and creation; book 2, the Son and the accomplishment of redemption; book 3, the Holy Spirit and the application of redemption to the individual; and book 4, the Holy Spirit applying redemption through the church. Calvin begins book 4 with these words:

It is by the faith in the gospel that Christ becomes ours and we are made partakers of the salvation and eternal blessedness brought by him. Since, however, in our ignorance and sloth (to which I add fickleness of disposition) we need outward helps to beget and increase faith within us, and advance to its goal, God has also added these aids that he may provide for our weakness. And in order that the preaching of the gospel might flourish, he deposited this treasure in the church. He instituted “pastors and teachers” [Eph. 4:11] through whose lips he might teach his own; he furnished them with authority; finally, he omitted nothing that might make for holy agreement of faith and for right order.²⁷

Indeed book 4 is the longest book of the *Institutes* (more than one-third of the whole work) and is almost entirely devoted to the church and the sacraments.²⁸

Calvin’s commitment to the centrality of the church is maintained in the various Reformed standards. For example, the Belgic Confession says that the church is necessary to the preservation of true religion.²⁹ The Westminster-

ster Confession of Faith declares that outside the visible church “there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.”³⁰

A Reformed doctrine of the church is fully developed in the Larger Catechism. The references to the church appear in many different contexts in the Larger Catechism. In discussions of the work of Christ the church is mentioned as the object of his love. Christ is “king of his church” and prophet “to the church.” Christ “doth gather and defend his church” and is “the Saviour only of his body the church.”³¹ The exposition of the law also contains references to the church. The second commandment requires purity in the worship and the government of the church.³² The fifth commandment requires proper obedience to church authorities.³³ A summary reflection on the law notes that sin is aggravated if committed against church censures.³⁴ Six questions on the sacraments mention the church, stressing that the sacraments are instituted in and for the church and are administered under the authority of the church.³⁵ The catechism’s section on prayer calls three times for prayer on behalf of the church.³⁶

The key element in the Larger Catechism’s definition of the church is the distinction made between the visible and invisible church.³⁷ The visible church is all who profess Christ along with their children. The invisible church is all the elect who do or will enjoy union and communion with him.

This distinction between the visible and invisible church is one expression of the distinction between the outward means through which God ordinarily acts to save and the inward reality of salvation enjoyed by the saved. The visible church has the privilege of God’s special protection and “of enjoying the communion of saints, the ordinary means of salvation, and offers of grace by Christ to all the members of it in the ministry of the gospel, testifying, that whosoever believes in him shall be saved, and excluding none that will come unto him.”³⁸ The invisible church includes those who actually share in the salvation held forth in the visible church.

In Reformed theology the “ordinary means of salvation” are a crucial element in God’s saving economy. Both the Shorter and Larger Catechisms make this clear. The Shorter Catechism speaks strongly: God requires “the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.”³⁹ The Larger Catechism speaks in the same manner, also referring to the outward means as “the ordinary means of salvation.”⁴⁰

The Shorter Catechism is relatively brief in its treatment of the means of salvation. It does state the importance of worship and the ordinances in expounding the second commandment.⁴¹ It also lists the Word (especially preaching), the sacraments, and prayer as means.⁴² Not surprisingly the Larger Catechism develops these means much more fully in its questions. The Larger Catechism is also more specific about the ordinances of God. In discussing the second commandment, for example, the catechism mentions worship and the ordinances and then specifies: “particularly prayer in the name of Christ; the reading, preaching, and hearing of the Word; the administration and receiving of the sacraments; church government and discipline; the ministry and the maintenance thereof; religious fasting; swearing by the name of God, and vowing unto him.”⁴³

While both catechisms discuss the outward means of salvation, in the Larger Catechism the means are clearly tied to the church, while in the Shorter Catechism they are not. For example, the role of the ministry is mentioned several times in the Larger Catechism,⁴⁴ but is left only implicit in the Shorter Catechism’s reference to preaching.⁴⁵ The Larger Catechism clearly has a necessary and vital supplement to offer to the Shorter Catechism on the doctrine of the church and the outward means of salvation.

A Mature Summary of the Faith

A final and most important value of the Larger Catechism is that it is a full, balanced, edifying summary of the Christian faith. The Larger Catechism is a useful and worthy aid to the believer as he grows in a knowledge of God’s truth. The catechism is not at all difficult to read and understand. In fact, it is simpler in its statements than the Confession. (Compare, for example, the discussion of the decrees of God where the Confession, 3:1, mentions “the liberty or contingency of second causes” and the Larger Catechism, question 12, does not.) The difficulty of using the Larger Catechism is mainly in the length of its sentences, which can be daunting for the contemporary reader. It is in fact easy to understand if taken one clause at a time.

The Westminster Assembly was remarkable in many ways. The standards it produced are one of the great treasures in Christ’s church. The Larger Catechism is a crucial part of that treasure, and churches of the Reformed tradition—and especially Presbyterian churches—impoverish themselves if they fail to use it.

As Givens Strickler asked at the celebration of Westminster a century ago, "Why cannot the ministers and officers in our denomination so instruct our people as to these great doctrines, that in every church there shall be a number, at least, who shall know how to maintain them against any of the popular assaults that are so frequently made upon them? We shall never succeed as we may and ought until this is done."⁴⁶

Today the churches face a greater educational task than they have for several centuries. Doctrinal ignorance is widespread. Pastors and teachers are often looking for useful, effective study materials. In response to this need the church must reclaim its great educational resources from the past. The Larger Catechism is a neglected tool the church needs today to help believers develop vital and balanced Christian faith and life.

Table 1. The number of questions given to various subjects in four Reformed catechisms

	Calvin's Genevan Catechism (374 qq.)	Heidelberg Catechism (129 qq.)	Westminster Shorter Catechism (107 qq.)	Westminster Larger Catechism (196 qq.)
On the person and work of Christ	59 (15.8%)	31 (24%)	11 (10.3%)	27 (13.8%)
On the law	102 (27.1%)	24 (18.6%)	43 (40%)	59 (30%)
On prayer	64 (17%)	14 (10.9%)	10 (9.3%)	19 (9.6%)
On the sacraments	78 (20.7%)	17 (13.2%)	7 (6.5%)	17 (8.7%)
Making explicit reference to the Holy Spirit	34 (9.1%)	30 (23.3%)	10 (9.3%)	36 (18.4%)
Using the word <i>church</i>	22 (5.9%)	6 (4.7%)	1 (0.9%)	26 (13.2%)

Notes

1. B. B. Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931), 64.

2. Francis R. Beattie, "Introduction," *Memorial Volume of the Westminster Assembly, 1647–1897*, 2d ed. (Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1897), xxxvi.
3. Cited from *The Confession of Faith* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian, 1966), 359.
4. For the membership of that committee and the details of how the committee worked and changed, see Alexander F. Mitchell, *The Westminster Assembly: Its History and Standards* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publications, 1884), 409ff.; Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly*, 62ff.; and Givens B. Strickler, "The Nature, Value, and Special Utility of Catechisms," *Memorial Volume*, 121ff.
5. Robert Baillie, *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, 1841), 2:148. "As for our Directorie, the matter of Prayer which we gave in, is agreed to in the Committee. Mr. Marshall's part, anent Preaching, and Mr. Palmer's, about Catechizing, though the one be the best preacher, and the other the best catechist, in England, yet we no wayes like it: so their papers are past in our hands to frame them according to our mind."
6. Mitchell, *The Westminster Assembly*, 416.
7. By April discussion of the Larger Catechism began in the Assembly, and by October the work (except for the Scripture proofs) was completed. For a reconstruction of the original effort to produce a single catechism, see Wayne R. Spear, "The Unfinished Westminster Catechism," appendix A in *To Glorify and Enjoy God: A Commemoration of the 350th Anniversary of the Westminster Assembly*, ed. John L. Carson and David W. Hall (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1994), 259–66.
8. Cited in John Murray, "The Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly," *Presbyterian Guardian*, December 25, 1943, 362.
9. Quotations from Mitchell, *The Westminster Assembly*, 418.
10. Cited from *The Confession of Faith*, 128.
11. Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 1:784.
12. Cited from *The Confession of Faith*, 379.
13. Thomas F. Torrance, *The School of Faith* (New York: Harper, 1959), 183. Frederick W. Loetscher makes a similar observation: "[The Larger Catechism is] chiefly designed as an adaptation of the Confession to the didactic functions of the preacher and pastor." "The Westminster Formularies: A Brief Description," in *The Westminster Assembly* (Department of History, Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1943), 17.
14. Murray, "The Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly," 363. This portion of Murray's article was reprinted in *Presbyterian Reformed Magazine* 8 (spring 1993): 14.
15. Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, 1:786.
16. Torrance, *The School of Faith*, xviii.
17. Loetscher, "The Westminster Formularies," 17.
18. See table 1. While a higher percentage of questions on the law is found in the Shorter Catechism, the amount of space given to the exposition of the law is about 33% in the Shorter and about 35% in the Larger.
19. Torrance does accuse the Shorter Catechism of being moralistic (*The School of Faith*, xvi). But he does not specify the grounds for this charge beyond observing that a substantial proportion of both the Shorter and Larger Catechisms is given to the exposition of the law.

Moralism is usually defined in terms of the way in which the law is related to justification, not in terms of the amount of attention given to it.

20. David Wells, *No Place for Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 98.

21. *Ibid.*, 99n.4.

22. Mitchell, *The Westminster Assembly*, 432. Others have noticed this as well. In a general way Thomas Ridgeley noted at the beginning of his work on the Larger Catechism: "It is the larger of them that we have attempted to explain and regulate our method by; because it contains several heads of divinity, not touched on in the shorter." Thomas Ridgeley, *A Body of Divinity*, ed. J. M. Wilson (New York: Carter, 1855), 1:2. Torrance notes the absence of any doctrine of the church in the Shorter Catechism. *The School of Faith*, xvi.

23. Mitchell, *The Westminster Assembly*, 432.

24. Torrance, *The School of Faith*, 262.

25. *Ibid.*, xvi.

26. The Larger Catechism is divided into two halves, one on belief (questions 6–90) and one on duty (91–196). The Shorter Catechism is not explicitly divided in this way, but follows the same order as the Larger.

27. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. J. T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 4.1.1.

28. Only the last chapter of book 4 on civil government is not specifically on the church or the sacraments.

29. Belgic Confession, article 30. See table 1 on the church.

30. Westminster Confession of Faith, 25.2.

31. Larger Catechism, questions 42–43, 54, 60.

32. *Ibid.*, question 108.

33. *Ibid.*, question 124.

34. *Ibid.*, question 151.

35. *Ibid.*, questions 162, 164–66, 173, 176.

36. *Ibid.*, questions 183–84, 191.

37. See especially Larger Catechism, questions 61–65.

38. Larger Catechism, question 63.

39. Shorter Catechism, question 85; see also question 88.

40. Larger Catechism, questions 153, 63.

41. Shorter Catechism, question 50.

42. Shorter Catechism, question 88. These three means are then examined in questions 89–107: two questions on the Word, seven on the sacraments, and ten on prayer.

43. Larger Catechism, question 108.

44. *Ibid.*, questions 108, 156, 158, 176, 191.

45. Shorter Catechism, question 89.

46. *Memorial Volume*, 136–37.

- 5 K. Why the Mediator was called "Jesus" (41)
- 6 K. Why the Mediator was called "Christ" (42–45)
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 - 2 L. How Christ is a Priest (44)
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PART

1

What Man
Ought to Believe

1



Foundational Doctrines

1. **Q.** *What is the chief and highest end of man?*

A. *Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him for ever.*

Scripture References

- Rev. 4:11. All things were created for God's pleasure.
- Rom. 11:36. All things exist for God.
- 1 Cor. 10:31. It is our duty to glorify God in all we do.
- Ps. 73:24–28. God teaches us how to glorify him, and that we shall enjoy him in glory.
- John 17:21–24. Our supreme destiny is the enjoyment of God in glory.

Commentary

1. What is the meaning of the word *end* in this question? It means the purpose for which something exists.

2. Could a consistent evolutionist agree with the catechism's answer to question 1? No. A consistent evolutionist could not agree that man's chief and highest end is to glorify and enjoy God, for he must hold that the human race has evolved from a brute ancestry by a process which originated in blind chance. Therefore he must hold that the human race cannot exist for any purpose outside of itself. There are "theistic evolutionists" who believe that evolution was God's method of creation, but they are not con-

sistent, for creation concerns the origin of things, while evolution starts by assuming that things already exist and seeks to show their development to other forms. The consistent evolutionist cannot believe in creation by the sheer power of God, and therefore he cannot believe that the human race exists not for itself but for God.

3. What is wrong with the following statement: “Man’s chief and highest end is to seek happiness”? This statement makes the purpose of human life something within man himself. This cannot be reconciled with the Scripture teaching that all things exist for God because they were created by God for his own glory. To say that man’s chief end is to seek happiness is contrary to belief in the God of the Bible. Of course man’s real happiness results from his recognizing and seeking his true end, namely, to glorify and enjoy God his Creator.

4. What is wrong with the following statement: “Man’s chief and highest end is to seek the greatest good of the greatest number”? This statement involves the same error as the one just discussed, for it makes the purpose of human life something within man himself. The difference is that the present statement makes the happiness or welfare of the human race in general the purpose of human life, whereas the former statement made the happiness of the individual the purpose of human life. Both are contrary to the Bible teaching concerning God the Creator and End of all things. Both are essentially the same as the pagan idea that “man is the measure of all things.” Because modern life is largely dominated by this false idea, it is essentially pagan rather than Christian. Even some churches have absorbed this pagan viewpoint and talk about God as “a democratic God.”

5. Why does the catechism place glorifying God before enjoying God? Because the most important element in the purpose of human life is glorifying God, while enjoying God is strictly subordinate to glorifying God. In our religious life, we should always place the chief emphasis on glorifying God. The person who does this will truly enjoy God, both here and hereafter. But the person who thinks of enjoying God apart from glorifying God is in danger of supposing that God exists for man instead of man for God. To stress enjoying God more than glorifying God will result in a falsely mystical or emotional type of religion.

6. Why can the human race, or any member of it, never attain true happiness apart from glorifying God? Because true happiness depends

on our consciously aiming to serve the purpose for which we were created, namely, to glorify God and enjoy him. Consciously to serve the purpose for which God created him is man's glory, and apart from a conscious consecration of himself to that purpose, there can be no real, deep, and satisfying happiness. As Augustine said in his *Confessions*, "Thou hast created us for Thyself, O God, and our heart is restless until it finds repose in Thee."



2. **Q.** *How doth it appear 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; but his word and Spirit only do sufficiently and effectually reveal him unto men for their salvation.*

Scripture References

- Rom. 1:19–20. God revealed by the light of nature and by his works.
- Rom. 2:14–16. The law of God revealed in the human heart.
- Ps. 19:1–3. God revealed by the heavens.
- Acts 17:28. Human life totally dependent on God.
- 1 Cor. 2:9–10. God's natural revelation inadequate; not equal to his special revelation by his Spirit.
- 2 Tim. 3:15–17. Holy Scripture a sufficient revelation for salvation.
- Isa. 59:21. God's Word and Spirit given to his covenant people, unlike his natural revelation, which is given to all mankind.

Commentary

1. What is meant by the "light of nature in man"? This means the natural revelation of God in the human heart and mind. This "light of nature" is common to all mankind. The heathen who have never received God's special revelation, the Bible, have a certain knowledge of God by nature, and a certain consciousness of the moral law in their own hearts (Rom. 2:14–16). To believe in God is natural to mankind; only "the fool" says in his heart that there is no God.

2. What is meant by "the works of God"? This expression means the revelation of God in nature outside of human nature. It includes the whole

realm of nature, great and small. The starry heavens as observed by the largest telescope, and the tiniest particles of matter that can be photographed by the electron microscope, all disclose the God who is their Creator and Ruler. The works of God also include all living creatures, and all God's works in the course of human history. All bear witness to the invisible God who created, preserves, and controls them all.

3. What message do the light of nature and the works of God bring to mankind? The light of nature and the works of God bring to mankind a message concerning the existence of God, his eternal power and deity (Rom. 1:19–20), his glory (Ps. 19:1), and his moral law (Rom. 2:14–16). This natural revelation of God and of his will is sufficient to leave men without excuse for their sins (Rom. 1:20–21).

4. Why is this message of the light of nature and the works of God inadequate for mankind's spiritual needs? This natural revelation of God and of his will is insufficient for mankind's spiritual needs, in his present fallen and sinful condition, for two reasons. (a) When mankind fell into sin, his spiritual need changed. He now needs more than he did when he was created. Man now needs salvation from sin by divine grace through a Mediator. But the light of nature and the works of God have nothing to say about salvation from sin. They reveal no gospel suited to the sinner's need. (b) Man's fall into sin changed his capacity to receive and understand even the message which the light of nature and the works of God do bring to him. Man's heart and mind became darkened by sin (Rom. 1:21–22). The result of this was that the natural revelation of God was misinterpreted and corrupted into idolatry (Rom. 1:23). This lapse into false religion in turn resulted in terrible moral corruption and degradation (Rom. 1:24–32). But in spite of all this, the natural revelation of God and of his will still leaves men without excuse, because their changed need and their present inability to understand that natural revelation are their own fault. Mankind is responsible not only for falling into sin, but also for all the consequences of falling into sin.

5. What fuller revelation of God and of his will do we have? Besides the natural revelation of God, we have the supernatural revelation of God, which exists today only in the form of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. This supernatural revelation of God is sometimes called his special revelation. It is called supernatural because it was given to man

not through the operation of the laws of nature, but by the miraculous working of God the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).

6. What are the principal differences between God's natural revelation and his revelation in the form of Holy Scripture? (a) The former is given to all men without exception; the latter is limited to those whom the Bible reaches. (b) The former is sufficient to leave men without excuse; the latter is sufficient for salvation. (c) God's revelation in the form of Holy Scripture is clearer and more definite than his natural revelation. (d) God's revelation in the form of Holy Scripture imparts many truths about God and his will which cannot be known from his natural revelation.

7. In order that God's revelation in the form of Holy Scripture may make us wise unto salvation, what is needed besides the Bible itself?

For Holy Scripture to make a person wise unto salvation there is required, besides the Bible itself, a true faith (2 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 4:2). This true faith is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8; Acts 16:14), being wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Holy Spirit of God (Eph. 1:17–19). Thus besides the Bible itself is required the illumination of the mind by the Holy Spirit, so that the sinner can understand and appropriate the truth unto his salvation. The Holy Spirit, in his illuminating work, does not reveal any truth in addition to what is revealed in the Bible, but only enables the sinner to see and believe the truth already revealed in the Bible.



3. **Q.** *What is the word of God?*

A. *The holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience.*

Scripture References

- 2 Tim. 3:16. All Scripture is divinely inspired.
- 2 Peter 1:19–21. The Scriptures not of human origin, but the product of the Holy Spirit.
- Eph. 2:20. The apostles (New Testament) and prophets (Old Testament) form the foundation of the Christian church.

- Rev. 22:18–19. Scripture, being of divine origin, character, and authority, may not be added to or subtracted from.
- Isa. 8:20. Scripture the standard of faith and obedience.
- Luke 16:29–31. No new revelation could supersede Scripture.
- Gal. 1:8–9. Anything contrary to Scripture to be rejected, no matter how appealing it may be.
- 2 Tim. 3:15–17. Scripture a complete and perfect rule of faith and life.

Commentary

1. Why is it proper that the Scriptures be called “holy”? Because they are the revelation of a holy God; because they set forth holy teaching; and because when accepted with true faith they lead to a holy life.

2. In what sense is it true that the Scriptures are the Word of God? The Scriptures are the Word of God in the plain, literal sense of the word *are*. They are the Word of God in written form, without any other limitations whatever. That is to say, the Bible itself, as a book, is the Word of God, and the actual written words of the book are the very words of God.

3. In what sense is it true that the Bible “contains” the Word of God? The Bible “contains” the Word of God in the sense that the Word of God forms the contents of the Bible, just as it is proper to say that the Bible contains two Testaments, or that the Bible contains sixty-six books.

4. In what senses is it not true that the Bible “contains” the Word of God? (a) It is not true that the Bible “contains” the Word of God in the sense that the Word of God forms only a part of the contents of the Bible, the rest being merely the words of men. (b) It is not true that the Bible “contains” the Word of God in the sense that there is a distinction between the actual written words of the Bible, on the one hand, and the Word of God “contained” in them, on the other hand. This distinction, which has been popularized by the Swiss theologian Karl Barth and his followers, cannot be reconciled with the statements of the Bible itself, nor with the doctrine concerning Scripture which is set forth in the Westminster Standards. If the written words of the Bible are not themselves actually the Word of God, then the Bible cannot be infallible.

5. If the Scriptures in their entirety are the Word of God, how can we explain the fact that they contain the words of Satan and of wicked men? The words of Satan and of wicked men are incorporated into

the Word of God as quotations, in order that we may learn the lessons that God wants us to learn. The statement “There is no God” is a human falsehood, but the statement “The fool hath said in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (Ps. 53:1) is a divine truth. The words “There is no God” are the words of the fool, but the complete sentence, including the words of the fool as a quotation, is the Word of God. “Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life,” was the devil’s lie; but the complete sentence, “And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life,” is the Word of God, a divinely inspired and infallible record of what Satan said. When we affirm that the Bible in its entirety is the Word of God, this does not mean that any verse or portion of the Bible may be taken out of its context and interpreted as if it stood alone.

6. For what two things are the Scriptures our rule? The Scriptures are our rule for faith and obedience.

7. Why are the Scriptures our only rule of faith and obedience? The Scriptures are our only rule of faith and obedience because as the written Word of God they are unique and infallible, and therefore no other rule of faith and obedience may be placed alongside of them. This principle of course does not rule out such subordinate standards as the Larger Catechism itself, which present not another rule in addition to Scripture, but merely a systematic summary of what Scripture teaches. The Larger Catechism, for example, is a legitimate rule of faith and obedience only because, and only so far as, it is faithful to the teachings of the Scriptures. It possesses no inherent authority of its own.

8. What is wrong with saying that conscience is our guide for faith and conduct? The human conscience cannot tell a person what to believe or how to live. It cannot tell a person what is right and what is wrong. The conscience can only tell a person whether or not he is acting according to what he already believes to be right. If a savage believes it is right to practice cannibalism, his conscience will not reprove him for eating human flesh. If a person somehow believes it is wrong to consult a physician, take medicine, or wear eyeglasses, his conscience will reprove him when he does these things. The conscience can only indicate whether a person’s conduct is in accordance with his beliefs; it cannot tell him whether his beliefs are true or not. Therefore the conscience cannot be the rule for faith and life.

9. If we add some other rule along with the Bible, what effect will this have on the authority of the Bible for our faith and life? The inevitable result will be that the Bible will take second place, and something else will become our real authority for faith and life. It is not possible to have two supreme authorities in any field. Nor is it possible to have two equal authorities without making one of them the standard for interpreting the other.

10. What large church makes tradition a rule of faith and conduct along with Scripture? The Roman Catholic Church. The effect, of course, is to make void the Word of God by the tradition of the church. For the Bible is interpreted in accordance with the tradition, not the tradition in accordance with the Bible.

11. How do the followers of Mary Baker Eddy violate the principle that the Scriptures are our only rule of faith and life? By placing Mrs. Eddy's book, *Science and Health with the Key to the Scriptures*, alongside the Bible as an authority, with the inevitable result that Mrs. Eddy's book is their real authority and the Bible is nullified. "Christian Science" cannot stand with the Bible alone as its guidebook; it has to have Mrs. Eddy's writings, which are utterly contrary to the Bible, to prop it up.

12. How do the Friends or Quakers violate the principle that the Scriptures are our only rule of faith and life? By their emphasis on the mystical "inner light" as their guide for faith and life. There are various sects of Quakers; not all are alike. But historically the "Friends" movement has emphasized the "inner light" and has tended to subordinate the Bible to the "inner light."

13. Is the New Testament more fully or more truly the Word of God than the Old Testament? No. The New Testament itself shows that our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles regarded the Old Testament as the Word of God in the fullest and strictest sense, and taught this high view of the Old Testament consistently.

14. Are the words of Christ, which in some Bibles are printed in red ink, more truly the Word of God than the other parts of the Bible? No. The whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is the Word of Christ. The Old Testament is Christ's Word through Moses and the prophets; the New Testament is Christ's Word through the apostles and evangelists;

included in the New Testament is the record of Christ's sayings during his earthly ministry; but these sayings, although spoken by God more directly than most of the other parts of the Bible, nevertheless are not more truly the Word of God than the other parts of the Scriptures. See 2 Samuel 23:1–2; 1 Corinthians 14:37; Revelation 1:1; 22:16.

15. If we think of our Christian belief as a building, what part of the building would the answer to question 3 of the Larger Catechism be? The foundation, on which all the rest must stand. Sometimes objection has been made to this statement on the ground that the Bible represents Christ as the only legitimate foundation. This objection is without weight, as it seeks to employ a metaphor—the idea of a foundation—without analyzing its meaning. Christ is the foundation of our reconciliation with God, by his blood and righteousness. Christ is the foundation of the church, by his finished work of redemption and his present exaltation in glory. But an acknowledgment that the Scriptures are the Word of God and the only rule of faith and obedience must be the foundation of any legitimate formulation of Christian doctrine.



4. **Q.** *How doth it appear that the Scriptures are the word of God?*

A. *The scriptures manifest themselves to be the word of God, by their majesty and purity; by the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God; by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation; but the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very word of God.*

Scripture References

- Hos. 8:12; 1 Cor. 2:6–7, 13; Ps. 119:18, 129. The majesty of the Scriptures.
- Pss. 12:6; 119:140. The purity of the Scriptures.
- Acts 10:43; 26:22. The consent of all the parts of the Scripture.
- Rom. 3:19, 27. The scope of the Scriptures as a whole.

- Acts 18:28; Heb. 4:12; James 1:18; Ps. 19:7–9; Rom. 15:4; Acts 20:32; John 20:31. The power of the Scriptures to convert sinners and edify saints.
- John 16:13–14; 1 John 2:20, 27. The witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart.

Commentary

1. What is meant by the “majesty” of the Scriptures? The “majesty” of the Scriptures means their lofty or wonderful character, which lifts them far above all human writings. In the Scriptures are indeed found things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, but which God has revealed by his Spirit, who searches all things, even the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:9–10).

2. What is the position of the Bible among the books of the world? The position of the Bible among the books of the world is altogether unique. It has been translated into more languages than any other book; more copies have been circulated than of any other book. It is recognized as the world’s greatest book from the literary point of view. But the Bible is unique especially with respect to its teachings. Among the sacred books of the religions of the world there is none that can compare with the Bible in inherent loftiness or majesty.

3. What is meant by the “purity” of the Scriptures? The “purity” of the Scriptures means their character as the true Word of God, wholly free from all impurities of error and foreign matter.

4. Why can other books not equal the Bible in purity? Because the Bible is the only book whose very words are the product of supernatural inspiration of God, and therefore it is the only book which is infallible and wholly free of errors.

5. Why do we believe that the Scriptures are entirely free from errors? We believe that the Scriptures are entirely free from errors, not because we find no apparent errors in the Bible, for it cannot be denied that a few apparent errors have been pointed out in the Bible, but because the Bible itself claims to be free from errors. Our belief about the Scriptures must not be an inference from facts of our own experience, but a formulation of the teachings of the Scriptures themselves about themselves. If we find some apparent errors in the Bible, that is a matter of our own experience as finders. But if we observe that the Bible represents itself as being free from errors, that is an observation concerning the teaching of the Bible. We must accept

the Bible's teaching about hell and other matters. The fact is that the Bible teaches that the Bible is inerrant. Even though we may have some unsolved problems concerning apparent errors in the Bible, still these problems do not justify setting aside the Bible's teaching about itself, unless it can be proved that the Bible really contains errors, and that they exist in the genuine text of the Hebrew or Greek original. If that could be proved, the trustworthiness of the Bible as a teacher of truth on all subjects would thereby be destroyed. If we are to trust the Bible in what it says about God and man, sin and salvation, we must also trust the Bible in what it says about its own infallibility.

6. What is meant by “the consent of all the parts” of the Scriptures?

By “the consent of all the parts” of the Scriptures is meant: (a) that there are no real contradictions in the Bible; (b) that all the parts of the Bible form a unity, an organism, a harmonious whole, not merely a collection of separate writings with diverse ideas and viewpoints. This beautiful harmony of the various parts of the Bible is an evidence that back of all the human writers there was a divine Author, the Spirit of God, controlling them all so that a harmonious whole would be produced.

7. How many books are there in the Bible? By how many human writers were these books written? How many centuries did the work of writing require? There are sixty-six books in the Bible. These books were written by about forty different writers. The work of writing required about fourteen centuries, from Moses to the apostle John.

8. How can the absence of contradictions in the Bible be explained?

The absence of contradictions in the Bible cannot be explained on the theory that the Bible is merely a collection of human writings. Forty men writing a collection of sixty-six books over a period of 1,400 years could not possibly avoid a vast multitude of contradictions. The absence of contradictions in the Bible can be explained only by the fact that all the human writers were supernaturally controlled by God the Holy Spirit, so that the product is truly the Word of God, and therefore wholly free from errors and contradictions.

9. What is the “scope” of the Bible as a whole? The scope of the Bible as a whole is to give all glory to God. In this the Bible is contrary to the spirit of paganism, ancient and modern, which is to give all glory to man.

10. Why must a book which gives all glory to God be genuine? It must be genuine, that is, it must be what it claims to be, the Word of God, because no one but God could have had a motive for writing it. Wicked men would not write a book which condemns wickedness and gives all glory to a holy, sin-hating God. Good men could not write a book on their own initiative and represent it falsely as the Word of God, for if they did that they would be deceivers, and therefore not good men. For the same reasons neither devils nor holy angels could have written it. Therefore God is the only person who could be the real Author of the Bible.

11. What fruits or results of the Bible show that it is the Word of God? Where the Bible is known and believed, wickedness and crime are curbed, human life and property are secure, education is widespread, institutions of mercy for the care of the sick, unfortunate, and insane are established, and civil liberty is honored and safeguarded.

12. What is the condition of human society in places where the Bible is entirely or practically unknown? “The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty” (Ps. 74:20). Where the Bible is unknown or almost unknown, human life is cheap and insecure; dishonesty is almost universal; men live in bondage to superstitions and fears; moral corruption and degradation abound.

13. In addition to the evidences that have been mentioned, what else is needed to give us full conviction, or certainty, that the Bible is God’s Word? In addition to the evidences that have been discussed, the almighty work of God the Holy Spirit in our hearts is needed to give us full conviction that the Bible is the Word of God. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). The evidences that have already been discussed are valid in themselves, and may lead to a conviction of probability that the Bible is the Word of God. But this work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in the heart results in full conviction or certainty that the Bible is the Word of God.

14. Why do many highly educated and intelligent people refuse to believe that the Bible is God’s Word? First Corinthians 2:14, quoted above, provides the answer to this question. These highly educated unbelievers lack the testimony of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. They are what

Paul called “natural” men, that is, not born again. Being spiritually blind, of course they cannot see the light.

15. Why are intelligence and education not enough to enable a person to believe with certainty that the Bible is the Word of God?

Because in the sinful human heart there is strong prejudice against God and the truth of God. The ordinary evidences are sufficient to convince a neutral, unprejudiced inquirer that the Bible is the Word of God. But the fact is that there are no neutral, unprejudiced inquirers. The whole human race has fallen into sin; the human heart has been darkened; the “natural” man is gripped by a tremendous prejudice against accepting the Bible as God’s Word. Apart from the special work of the Holy Spirit in men’s hearts, there would not be a single true Christian believer in the world. There are of course unconverted people who readily assent to the statement that the Bible is God’s Word, by mere custom or tradition rather than by personal conviction. Such people are not really convinced that the Bible is God’s Word; they merely have a hearsay or secondhand faith which reflects the true spiritual faith of other persons.



5. **Q.** *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.*

Scripture References

- 2 Tim. 1:13. Scripture is sound words to be believed.
- Deut. 10:12–13. What the Lord requires of his people.
- John 20:31. Scripture is to be believed, the way of life.
- 2 Tim. 3:15–17. Scripture a complete and perfect rule of faith and life.

Commentary

1. What are the two principal parts of the teaching of the Bible?

The two principal parts of the Bible’s teaching are (a) a message of truth to be believed, and (b) a message of duty to be obeyed.

2. Why is belief mentioned before duty? Belief is mentioned before duty because in the Christian life, as in the natural world, the root must come before the fruit. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Belief is the root and determiner of life. Therefore the truth to be believed must be set forth before the duties to be performed can be considered.

3. What is wrong with the present-day popular slogan: "Christianity is not a doctrine but a life"? This saying is one of the subtle half-truths of our day. It would be correct to say: "Christianity is not only a doctrine but also a life." It is not a question of "either . . . or" but of "both . . . and." When anyone says that Christianity is not a doctrine but a life, he is setting doctrine and life in opposition to each other. This is a very perverse tendency and is thoroughly characteristic of the antidoctrinal prejudice of our day. Of course according to the Bible Christianity is both a system of doctrine and a life. Moreover the doctrine and the life are organically related, and the life cannot exist and grow apart from the doctrine. After all, roots are important things.

4. Which is more important in the Christian life, belief or conduct? Or should we say that both are equally important? Which is the more important part of a building, the foundation or the roof? No doubt each is equally important for its own proper purpose. Which is more important for an automobile, a motor or four wheels? No doubt each is equally important for its own proper purpose. Our Lord said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment" (Matt. 22:37-38). Since to love the Lord our God with all the mind is required in the first and great commandment, we may say with confidence that nothing is more important than belief of the truth. Of equal importance in its own sphere is adorning the truth by a godly and consistent life.

We have now studied the first five questions of the catechism, which constitute The Foundation, dealing with the purpose of human life, the existence of God, and the Word of God. Having completed this introductory section, we now come to the first of the two major divisions of the material contained in the Larger Catechism, namely, what man ought to believe concerning God. Questions 6 to 90 deal with this subject, which we shall now proceed to study.