

from The Shorter Westminster Catechism (1647)

Agreed upon by the Reverend Assembly of DIVINES at Westminster.

Quest. WHAT is the chief end of man ?

Ans. Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him ?

A. The word of God which is contained in the scriptures of the old and new testament is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify God and enjoy him.

Q. 3. What do the scriptures principally teach ?

A. The scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requireth of man.

Q. 4. What is God ?

A. God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

Q. 5. Are there more Gods then one ?

A. There is but ONE only, the living and true GOD.

Q. 6. How many persons are there in the God-head ?

A. There are three persons in the God-head, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one GOD, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

Q. 7. What are the decrees of God ?

A. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his own will, whereby for his own glory he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Q. 8. How doth God execute his decrees ?

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

Q. 9. What is the work of creation ?

A. The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

Q. 10. How did God create man ?

A. God created man male & female after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, with dominion over the creatures

Q. 11. What are God's works of providence ?

A. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise and powerful, preserving & governing all his creatures and all their actions.

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Q. 12. What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the state wherein he was created ?

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.

Q. 13. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created ?

A. Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

Q. 14. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God.

Q. 15. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created ?

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

Q. 16. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression ?

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.

Q. 17. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind ?

A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

Q. 18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate where into man fell ?

A. The sinfulness of that estate where into man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, & the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin, together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

Q. 19. What is the misery of that state whereinto man fell ?

A. All mankind by the fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath & curse, and so made liable to the miseries in this life, to death itself, & to the pains of hell forever.

Q. 20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the State of sin and misery ?

A. God having out of his mere good pleasure from all eternity elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of a state of sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer.