
Classics

A Catechism

By C.H. Spurgeon

"I am persuaded that the use of a good Catechism in all our families will be a great safeguard against the increasing errors of the times, and therefore I have compiled this little manual from the Westminster Assembly's and Baptist Catechisms, for the use of my own church and congregation. Those who use it in their families or classes must labour to explain the sense; but the words should be carefully learned by heart, for they will be understood better as years pass.

May the Lord bless my dear friends and their families evermore, is the prayer of their loving Pastor."

■ C. H. Spurgeon

Introduction

A catechism simply sets out teaching in the form of questions & answers. We normally think of catechisms in the instruction of children, but catechisms have been used to instruct God's people young and old for over 1500 years.

Spurgeon's catechism was originally published as "A Puritan Catechism" in October 1855, for use in his own New Park Street church in London, in when he was 21 years old. It combines the Westminster Shorter Catechism and a Baptist catechism based on the 1689 London Baptist Confession.

The Catechism

Question 1. *What is the chief end of man?*

Answer. Man's chief end is to glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31), and to enjoy him forever (Psalm. 73:25-26).

Question 2. *What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify him?*

Answer. The Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Ephesians 2:20; 2 Timothy 3:16) is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify God and enjoy him (1 John 1:3).

Question 3. *What do the Scriptures principally teach?*

Answer. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man (2 Timothy 1:13; Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Question 4. *What is God?*

Answer. God is Spirit ([John. 4:24](#)), infinite ([Job 11:7](#)), eternal ([Psalm 90:2](#); [1 Timothy 1:17](#)), and unchangeable ([James. 1:17](#)) in his being ([Exodus 3:14](#)), wisdom, power ([Psalm 147:5](#)), holiness ([Revelation 4:8](#)), justice, goodness and truth ([Exodus 34:6-7](#)).

Question 5. *Are there more Gods than one?*

Answer. There is only one ([Deuteronomy 6:4](#)) living and true God ([Jeremiah 10:10](#)).

Question 6. *How many persons are there in the Godhead?*

Answer. There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory ([1 John 5:7](#); [Matthew 28:19](#)).

Question 7. *What are the decrees of God?*

Answer. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his own will, by which, for his own glory, he has foreordained everything that happens ([Ephesians 1:11-12](#)).

Question 8. *How does God execute his decrees?*

Answer. God executes his decrees in the works of creation ([Revelation 4:11](#)), and providence ([Daniel 4:35](#)).

Question 9. *What is the work of creation?*

Answer. The work of creation is God making all things ([Genesis 1:1](#)) out of nothing, by the Word of his power ([Hebrews 11:3](#)), in six days ([Exodus 20:11](#)), and all very good ([Genesis 1:31](#)).

Question 10. *How did God create man?*

Answer. God created man, male and female, in his own image (**Genesis 1:27**), in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness (**Colossians 3:10**; **Ephesians 4:24**) with dominion over the other creatures (**Genesis 1:28**).

Question 11. *What are God's works of providence?*

Answer. God's works of providence are his most holy (**Psalms 145:17**), wise, (**Isaiah 28:29**) and powerful (**Hebrews 1:3**), preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions (**Psalms 103:19**; **Matthew 10:29**).

Question 12. *What special act of providence did God exercise toward man when he was created?*

Answer. When God created man, God entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, (**Galatians**

3:12) forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death. (Genesis 2:17)

Question 13. *Did our first parents continue in the condition in which they were created?*

Answer. Left to the freedom of their own will, our first parents fell from the condition in which they were created by sinning against God (Ecclesiastes 7:29) when they ate the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:6-8).

Question 14. *What is sin?*

Answer. Sin is lack of conformity to or transgression of the law of God (1 John. 3:4).

Question 15. *Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?*

Answer. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself but for his offspring, all mankind descending from him

naturally, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression ([1 Corinthians 15:22](#); [Romans 5:12](#)).

Question 16. *Into what condition did the fall bring mankind?*

Answer. The fall brought mankind into a condition of sin and misery ([Romans 5:18](#)).

Question 17. *What is the sinfulness of the condition into which all mankind has fallen?*

Answer. The sinfulness of the condition into which man has fallen is the guilt of Adam's first sin ([Romans 5:19](#)), the lack of original righteousness, ([Romans 3:10](#)) and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin ([Ephesians 2:1](#); [Psalm 51:5](#)), together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it ([Matthew 15:19](#)).

Question 18. *What is the misery of that all mankind has fallen?*

Answer. By the fall, all mankind has lost fellowship with God (**Genesis 3:8, 24**), are under his wrath and curse (**Ephesians 2:3; Galatians 3:10**) and are subject to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever (**Romans 6:23; Matthew 25:41**).

Question 19. *Did God leave all mankind to perish in the condition of and misery?*

Answer. God, out of his good pleasure from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life (**2 Thessalonians 2:13**), entered into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the condition of sin and misery, and to bring them into a condition of salvation by a Redeemer (**Romans 5:21**).

Question 20. *Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?*

Answer. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5), who being the eternal Son of God, became man (John 1:14), and so was and continues to be God and man, in two distinct natures and one person forever (1 Timothy 3:16; Colossians 2:9).

Question 21. *How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?*

Answer. Christ, the son of God, became man by taking to himself a real body (Hebrews 2:14) and a reasonable soul (Matthew 26:38; Hebrews 4:15), being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary, and born of her (Luke 1:31, 35), yet without sin (Hebrews 7:26).

Question 22. *What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?*

Answer. As our Redeemer, Christ executes the offices of a prophet (Acts 3:22), of a priest

([Hebrews 5:6](#)), and of a king ([Psalm 2:6](#)), both in his humiliation and exaltation.

Answer. *How does Christ execute the office of a prophet?*

Answer. Christ executes the office of a prophet by revealing to us ([John 1:18](#)) the will of God for our salvation, by his Word ([John 20:31](#)) and Spirit ([John 14:26](#)).

Question 24. *How does Christ execute the office of a priest?*

Answer. Christ executes the office of a priest by offering up himself once as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice ([Hebrews 9:28](#)) and to reconcile us to God ([Hebrews 2:17](#)) and in making continual intercession for us ([Hebrews 7:25](#)).

Question 25. *How does Christ execute the office of a king?*

Answer. Christ executes the office of a king by bringing us under his rule, ([Psalm 110:3](#)) in ruling and defending us ([Matthew 2:6](#); [1 Corinthians 15:25](#)), and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Question 26. *What is meant by Christ's humiliation?*

Answer. By Christ's humiliation means that he was born in a lowly condition ([Luke 2:7](#)), born under the law ([Galatians 4:4](#)), underwent the miseries of this life ([Isaiah 53:3](#)), the wrath of God ([Matthew 27:46](#)), the cursed death of the cross ([Philippians 2:8](#)), was buried, and continued under the power of death for a time ([Matthew 12:40](#)).

Question 27. *What is meant by Christ's exaltation?*

Answer. By Christ's exaltation means his rising again from the dead on the third day ([1 Corinthians 15:4](#)), in ascending up into

heaven, and sitting at the right hand of God the Father (**Mark 16:19**), and in coming to judge the world at the last day (**Acts 17:31**).

Question 28. *How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?*

Answer. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ by the effective application of it to us (**John 1:12**), by his Holy Spirit. (**Titus 3:5-6**)

Question 29. *How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?*

Answer. The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us (**Ephesians 2:8**) and uniting us to Christ in our effective calling (**Ephesians 3:17**).

Question 30. *What is effective calling?*

Answer. Effective calling is the work of God's Spirit (2 Timothy 1:9) who convicts us of our sin and misery (Acts 2:37), who enlightens our minds in the knowledge of Christ (Acts 26:18) and who renews our wills (Ezekiel 36:26), and thus persuading and enabling us to receive Jesus Christ, who is freely offered to us in the gospel (John 6:44-45).

Question 31. *What benefits are those who are effectively called receive in this life?*

Answer. In this life those who are effectively called receive justification (Romans 8:30), adoption (Ephesians 1:5), sanctification, and the other benefits which do either go with or flow from them (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Question 32. *What is justification?*

Answer. Justification is an act of God's free grace by which he pardons all our sins ([Romans 3:24](#); [Ephesians 1:7](#)) and accepts us as righteous in his sight ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)), because of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us ([Romans 5:19](#)) and received by faith alone ([Galatians 2:16](#); [Philippians 3:9](#)).

Question 33. *What is adoption?*

Answer. Adoption is an act of God's free grace ([1 John 3:1](#)) by which we are received into the elect and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God ([John 1:12](#); [Romans 8:17](#)).

Question 34. *What is sanctification?*

Answer. Sanctification is the work of God's Spirit ([2 Thessalonians 2:13](#)) by which we are renewed in our whole person in the image of God ([Ephesians 4:24](#)) and are enabled more and more to become dead to sin and alive to

righteousness (**Romans 6:11**).

Question 35. *What are the benefits in this life which either goes with or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?*

Answer. The benefits in this life which go with or flow from justification (**Romans 5:1-2, 5**) are: assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit (**Romans 14:17**), increase of grace, and perseverance in grace to the end (**Proverbs. 4:18; 1 John 5:13; 1 Peter 1:5**).

Question 36. *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at their death?*

Answer. At their death, believers are made perfect in holiness (**Hebrews 12:23**) pass immediately into glory, (**Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Luke 23:43**), and their bodies, still united to Christ (**1 Thessalonians 4:14**), rest in their graves (**Isaiah 57:2**) until the resurrection (**Job**

19:26).

Question 37. *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?*

Answer. At the resurrection, believers, raised in glory (1 Corinthians 15:43), will be publicly acknowledged and acquitted in the Day of Judgment (Matthew 10:32), and made perfectly blessed both in soul and body, in the full enjoying of God (1 John 3:2) forever (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Question 38. *What will be done to the wicked at their death?*

Answer. At their death, the wicked will be cast into the torments of hell (Luke 16:22-24), and their bodies remain in their graves until the resurrection and judgment of the great day (Psalms 49:14).

Question 39. *What will be done to the wicked*

at the Day of Judgment?

Answer. At the day of judgment the bodies of the wicked will be raised from their graves and together with their souls, will be sentenced to unspeakable torments with the devil and his angels forever (**Daniel 12:2**; **John 5:28-29**; **2 Thessalonians 1:9**; **Matthew 25:41**).

Question 40. *What did God reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?*

Answer. The rule that God first revealed to man for his obedience is the moral law (**Deuteronomy 10:4**; **Matthew 19:17**), which is summarized in the Ten Commandments.

Question 41. *What is the sum of the Ten Commandments?*

Answer. The sum of the Ten Commandments is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and to love

our neighbor as ourselves ([Matthew 22:37-40](#)).

Question 42. *What is the first commandment?*

Answer. The first commandment is: "You shall have no other gods before me."

Question 43. *What is required in the first commandment?*

Answer. The first commandment requires us to know ([1 Chronicles 28:9](#)) and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God ([Deuteronomy 26:17](#)), and to worship and glorify him accordingly ([Matthew 4:10](#)).

Question 44. *What is the second commandment?*

Answer. The second commandment is: "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or

any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."

Question 45. *What is required in the second commandment?*

Answer. The second commandment requires the receiving, observing (Deuteronomy 32:46; Matthew 28:20), and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances as God has appointed in his Word (Deuteronomy 12:32).

Question 46. *What is forbidden in the second commandment?*

Answer. The second commandment forbids the worshipping of God by images (**Deuteronomy 4:15-16**), or any other way not appointed in his Word (**Colossians 2:18**).

Question 47. *What is the third commandment?*

Answer. 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."

Question 48. *What is required in the third commandment?*

Answer. The third commandment requires the holy and reverent use of God's names (**Psalms 29:2**), titles, attributes (**Revelation 15:3-4**), ordinances (**Ecclesiastes 5:1**), Word (**Psalms 138:2**), and works (**Job 36:24**; **Deuteronomy 28:58-59**).

Question 49. *What is the fourth commandment?*

Answer. The fourth commandment is:
"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

Question 50. *What is required in the fourth commandment?*

Answer. The fourth commandment requires the keeping holy to God such set times as he has appointed in his Word, expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself ([Leviticus 19:30](#); [Deuteronomy 5:12](#)).

Question 51. *How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?*

Answer. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days ([Leviticus 23:3](#)), and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship ([Psalm 92:1-2](#); [Isaiah 58:13-14](#)), except so much as is taken up in the works of necessity and mercy ([Matthew 12:11-12](#)).

Question 52. *What is the fifth commandment?*

Answer. The fifth commandment is: "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you."

Question 53. *What is required in the fifth commandment?*

Answer. The fifth commandment requires the preserving the honor and performing the duties belonging to every one in their various positions and relationships as superiors ([Ephesians 5:21- 22; 6:1, 5; Romans 13:1](#)), inferiors ([Ephesians 6:9](#)), or equals ([Romans 12:10](#)).

Question 54. *What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?*

Answer. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is: a promise of long life and prosperity – as far as it shall serve for God's glory, and their own good – to all such as keep this commandment ([Ephesians 6:2-3](#)).

Question 55. *What is the sixth commandment?*

Answer. The sixth commandment is: "You shall not murder."

Question 56. *What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?*

ANSWER. The sixth commandment forbids the taking away our own life ([Acts 16:28](#)), or the life of our neighbor unjustly ([Genesis 9:6](#)), or whatever tends to it ([Proverbs 24:11-12](#)).

Question 57. *What is the seventh commandment?*

Answer. The seventh commandment is: "You shall not commit adultery."

Question 58. *What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?*

Answer. The seventh commandment forbids all unholy thoughts ([Matthew 5:28](#); [Colossians 4:6](#)), words ([Ephesians 5:4](#); [2 Timothy 2:22](#)), and actions ([Ephesians 5:3](#)).

Question 59. *What is the eighth commandment?*

Answer. The eighth commandment is: "You shall not steal."

Question 60. *What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?*

Answer. The eighth commandment forbids whatever does or may unjustly hinder our own (1 Timothy 5:8; Proverbs 28:19; Proverbs 21:6), or our neighbor's wealth, or outward condition (Ephesians 4:28).

Question 61. *What is the ninth commandment?*

Answer. The ninth commandment is: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

Question 62. *What is required in the ninth*

commandment?

Answer. The ninth commandment requires the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man (**Zechariah 8:16**), and of our own (**1 Peter 3:16**; **Acts 25:10**), and our neighbor's good name (**3 John 1:12**), especially in witness-bearing (**Proverbs 14:5, 25**).

Question 63. *What is the tenth commandment?*

Answer. The tenth commandment is: "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

Question 64. *What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?*

Answer. The tenth commandment forbids all discontentment with our own

condition (1 Corinthians 10:10), envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, (Galatians 5:26) and all impure emotions and affections to anything that is his (Colossians 3:5).

Question 65. *Can anyone perfectly keep the commandments of God?*

Answer. Since the fall, no one in this life can perfectly keep the commandments of God (Ecclesiastes 7:20), but fall short every day in thought, (Genesis 8:21) word (James 3:8), and deed (James 3:2).

Question 66. *Are all transgressions of the law equally evil?*

Answer. Some sins in themselves and because of the harm that results from them are more evil in the sight of God than others (John 19:11; 1 John 5:15).

Question 67. *What does every sin deserve?*

Answer. Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life and in the life come ([Ephesians 5:6](#); [Psalm 11:6](#)).

Question 68. *How may we escape God's wrath and curse which we deserve for our sin?*

Answer. To escape the wrath and curse of God which we deserve for our sin, we must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ ([John 3:16](#)), trusting alone to his blood and righteousness. This faith is accompanied by repentance for the past ([Acts 20:21](#)) and leads to holiness in the future.

Question 69. *What is faith in Jesus Christ?*

Answer. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace ([Hebrews 10:39](#)) by which we receive ([John 1:12](#)) and rest on Christ alone for salvation ([Philippians 3:9](#)), as he is set forth

in the gospel ([Isaiah 33:22](#)).

Question 70. *What is repentance unto life?*

Answer. Repentance unto life is a saving grace ([Acts 11:18](#)) by which a sinner, with true awareness of his sins ([Acts 2:37](#)) and understanding of the mercy of God in Christ ([Joel 2:13](#)), grieves and hates his sins and turns from them to God ([Jeremiah 31:18-19](#)), fully intending to pursue new obedience ([Psalm 119:59](#)).

Question 71. *What are the outward means by which the Holy Spirit communicates to us the benefits of redemption?*

Answer. The outward and ordinary means by which the Holy Spirit communicates to us the benefits of Christ's redemption are: the Word (by which souls are begotten to spiritual life), Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Prayer, and Meditation, all by which believers are further edified in their most holy faith ([Acts 2:41-42](#);

James 1:18).

Question 72. *How is the Word made effective for salvation?*

Answer. The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effective means of convicting and converting sinners (**Psalm 19:7**), and of building them up in holiness and comfort (**1 Thessalonians 1:6**)—through faith for salvation (**Romans 1:16**).

Question 73. *How is the Word to be read and heard that it may become effective for salvation?*

Answer. For the Word to become effective for salvation, we must attend to it with diligence (**Proverbs 8:34**), preparation (**1 Peter 2:1-2**), prayer (**Psalm 119:18**), faith (**Hebrews 4:2**), love (**2 Thessalonians 2:10**), while treasuring it in our hearts (**Psalm 119:11**) and practicing it in our lives (**James**

1:25).

Question 74. *How do Baptism and the Lord's Supper become spiritually helpful?*

Answer. Baptism and the Lord's Supper become spiritually helpful, not from any virtue in them, or in him who administers them (1 Corinthians 3:7; 1 Peter 3:21), but only by the blessing of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:6) and the working of the Spirit—in those who receive them by faith (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Question 75. *What is Baptism?*

Answer. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, Instituted by Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19), as a sign of fellowship with Christ in his death, and burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3; Colossians 2:12), of being engrafted into him (Galatians 3:27), of forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16), and of surrendering oneself to God through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of

life (**Romans 6:4-5**).

Question 76. *To Whom is Baptism to be administered?*

Answer. Baptism is to be administered to all those who actually profess repentance towards God (**Acts 2:38; Matthew 3:6; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12, 36-37; Acts 10:47-48**) and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and to none other.

Question 77. *Are the infants of such as are professing to be baptized?*

Answer. The infants of such as are professing believers are not to be baptized, because there is neither command nor example in the Holy Scriptures for their baptism (**Exodus 23:13; Proverbs 30:6**).

Question 78. *How is Baptism rightly administered?*

Answer. Baptism is rightly administered by immersion, or dipping the whole body of the person in water ([Matthew 3:16](#); [John 3:23](#)), in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, according to Christ's institution, and the practice of the apostles ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)), and not by sprinkling or pouring of water, or dipping some part of the body, according to the tradition of men ([John 4:1-2](#); [Acts 8:38-39](#)).

Question 79. *What is required of those who are rightly baptized?*

Answer. Those who are rightly baptized are required are submit themselves to some particular and orderly local church of Jesus Christ ([Acts 2:47](#); [9:26](#); [1 Peter 2:5](#)), that they may walk in all the commandments and decrees of the Lord blameless ([Luke 1:6](#)).

Question 80. *What is the Lord's Supper?*

Answer. The Lord's Supper is a holy

ordinance of the church. By eating the bread and drinking the cup as Christ directed, we proclaim his death (1 Corinthians 11:26). Those who eat and drink in the right way share in Christ's body and blood, not physically, but spiritually by faith, and receive nourishment and growth in grace, with the benefits he purchased (1 Corinthians 10:16).

Question 81. *What is required to rightly receive the Lord's Supper?*

Answer. It is required of those who would rightly receive the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves of: their knowledge to discern the Lord's body (1 Corinthians 11:28-29), their faith to feed on him (2 Corinthians 13:5), their repentance (1 Corinthians 11:31), their love (1 Corinthians 11:18-20), and their new obedience, (1 Corinthians 5:8) lest coming in a wrong way, they eat and drink judgment to themselves (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

Question 82. *What is meant by the words "until he comes," which are used by the apostle Paul in reference to the Lord's Supper?*

Answer. They plainly teach us that our Lord Jesus Christ will come a second time, which is the joy and hope of all believers ([Acts 1:11](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:16](#)).

THE APOSTLES' CREED

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