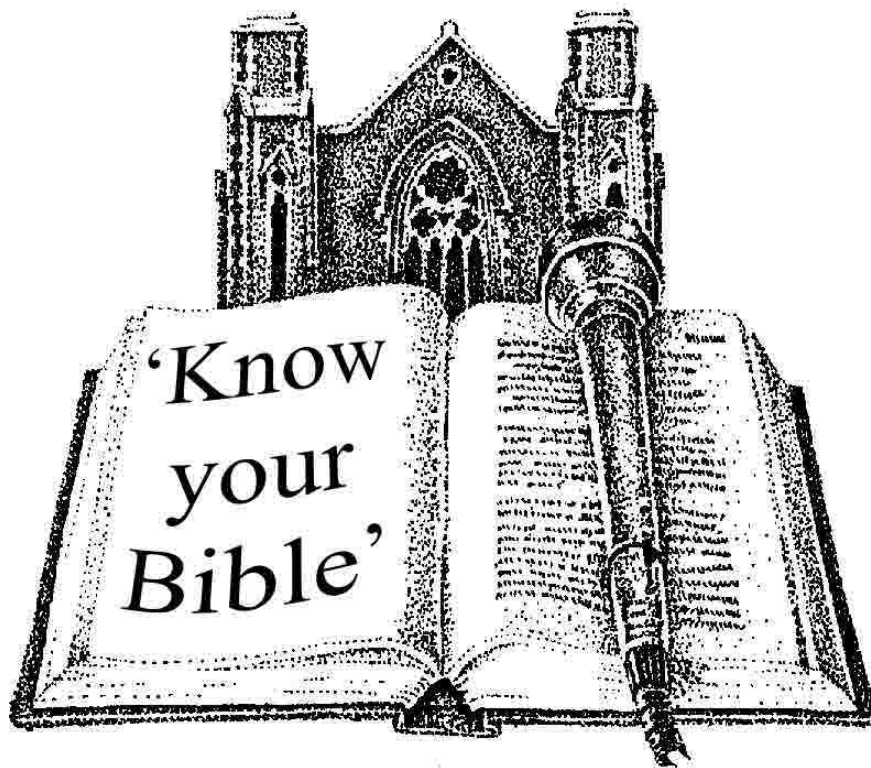


A summary of the Christian Faith “Doctrine” (The Shorter Catechism Questions 1-38)

Sermon Notes by Stuart Olyott



A summary of the Christian Faith “Doctrine” (The Shorter Catechism Questions 1 - 38)

Table of Contents of Study Notes by Stuart Olyott

	Sermon Title		Page No
1	Q 1	What is the chief end of man?	4
2	Q 2	What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him?	6
3	Q 3	What do the Scriptures principally teach?	8
4	Q 4	What is God?	10
5	Q 5	Are there more God's than one?	12
	Q 6	How many persons are there in the Godhead?	
6	Q 7	What are the decrees of God?	14
7	Q 8	How does God execute His decrees?	16
	Q 9	What is the work of creation?	
	Q 10	How did God create man?	
8	Q 11	What are God's works of providence?	18
	Q 12	What special acts of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate where in he was created?	
9	Q 13	Did our 1st parents continue in the estate where in they were created?	20
	Q 14	What is sin?	
	Q 15	What was the sin where by our 1st parents fell from the estate?	
10	Q 16	Did all mankind fall into Adam's first transgression?	22
	Q 17	Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?	
11	Q 18	Where in consists the sinfulness of that estate where in man fell?	
12	Q 19	What is the misery of that estate where into man fell?	26
13	Q 20	Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?	28

A summary of the Christian Faith “Doctrine”

Shorter Catechism

Table of Contents of Study Notes by Stuart Olyott Continued.

	Sermon Title	Page No
14	Q 21 Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?	30
15	Q 22 How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?	32
16	Q 23 What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?	34
17	Q 24 How does Christ execute the office of a prophet?	36
18	Q 25 How does Christ execute the office of a priest?	38
19	Q 26 How does Christ execute the office of a king?	40
20	Q 27 Where in did Christ's humiliation consist?	42
	Q 28 Where in consisted Christ's exaltation?	43
21	Q 29 How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?	44
	Q 30 How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?	
	Q 31 What is effectual calling?	
22	Q 32 What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?	46
	Q 33 What is justification?	
23	Q 34 What is adoption?	48
24	Q 35 What is sanctification?	49
25	Q 36 What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification? (Part 1)	51
26	Q 36 What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification? (Part 2)	53
27	Q 37 What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?	55
28	Q 38 What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?	57

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 1

Question 1: What is the chief end of man?

Answer Man's chief end is to glorify God (1) and to enjoy Him forever (2).

(1) "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God".
(1 Corinthians 10:31) "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created".
(Revelation 4:11)

(2) "Whom have I in heaven *but You?* And *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart fail; *But God is* the strength of my heart and my portion forever". (Psalm 73:25-26)

This first question and answer summarise the following Scriptural truths:-

1. There is a reason for the existence of human beings. There is a purpose in our being here.

- This cuts across modern thinking, which tells us that man is an evolutionary accident, who just 'happens' to be here. He is not here for any particular reason or purpose. His existence is meaningless.
- The Word of God says the exact opposite. It declares that man is a direct creation of God. God designed him for specific reasons. He is here for a definite purpose. Man's existence is full of meaning.
 - Obviously a man who does not know why he is here will be confused, frustrated, and unfulfilled. WHY did God design man?

2. We were designed, not to please ourselves, but to please God.

- This cuts across what man wants to believe. He is self-centred, and likes to think that if there is any reason for his existence, it is that he might benefit. He cannot bear the thought that he has been created for another.
- The Word of God, however, dogmatically declares that man was created not for his pleasure, but for God's.
 - Obviously, then, a man who does not live to please God is in open rebellion against God.
 - In what specific ways does God intend that man, His creature, should bring Him pleasure?

3. We please God glorifying Him.

- This does not mean that we are to make God glorious. He IS that!
- It means to set Him highest in our thoughts; to worship Him; to love Him; to submit to Him; - to live every aspect of our lives in a way which wins His approval.
- In other words, we were designed that God should be all that matters to us - the very Centre of our existence - our very Reason for being.

4. We please God by enjoying Him.

- God did not design us to be the unwilling slaves of an absent dictator - but to walk with Him to be fulfilled and happy in Him; to enjoy the bliss which is His.
- Not just for a short period - but forever.
 - all this is why God made us,
 - It is clear that man is very, very far from being what God intended. He is lost, rebellious, miserable and self-centred.
 - Yet the glory of the Gospel is that it teaches that a man may be restored to God in Christ, and may yet glorify Him, and enjoy Him forever!!
 - Where may we learn about this?
Catechism question 2 - next week - tells us.

Notes:-

+ Apart from this the Catechism 'proof – texts' Scripture references are not included on the sheets in this series. You are urged to search the Scriptures daily, to see whether what is taught here is truth. (See Acts 17:11).

+ Illustrations accompanied many of the talks.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 2

Question.2: What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him?

Answer. The Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (1) is the only rules to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him. (2)

(1) "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness". (2 Timothy 3:16)

(2) "If any one adds to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any one take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the book of life...." (Revelation 22:18-19).

Natural revelation. (The unveiling of God in Nature)

- creation reveals sufficient of God to leave man inexcusable.
but this is not enough. Even perfect Adam needed God's word, in addition to His works.
- now mankind has rebelled against God's word. One result is that sinful man is too blind to even see God in His natural revelation.
- and therefore God has revealed Himself in His Word, which has been committed to writing - The Holy Scriptures.

Special revelation.

- from the Son of God we learn that are to accept the 39 books of the Old Testament (and no more) as the Word of God.
- The 27 books of the New Testament were written by the apostles and their associates. They wrote under the inspiration of His Spirit, just as He, had promised; and their writings are on the same level as those of the Old Testament.
So the WHOLE Bible is to; be received as the Spirit-inspired Word of God.
Every single word is the truth of God.
No part is uninspired.
It IS the Word of God, from cover to cover.
It IS God's Word, even when those who read it don't believe it.

False views of the Bible.

The Unbelieving view - may admit the Bible is interesting, ancient, partly-true.
- may deny there is ANY truth in it.
- but ALWAYS denies that it is, in any way, the Word of GOD.

The view of Liberalism ('the older modernism')

- some parts are the Word of God, and some are the word of man.
- we must sort out which parts are true, and which false.

The view of Neo-Orthodoxy ('the new modernism'; Barthianism)

- the whole Bible is the fallible word of man.
- but as you read it, God may use them, so that you receive in your own mind the truth of God.
- any part of the Bible can be the means by which God brings his truth into your mind-
- the part which 'speaks' to one man may not 'speak' to another.

All these views are errors.

No-one who holds to them is a true Christian, for they are views which are opposed to Christ's own view of the Bible.

The ONLY correct view is the one outlined earlier in the talk.

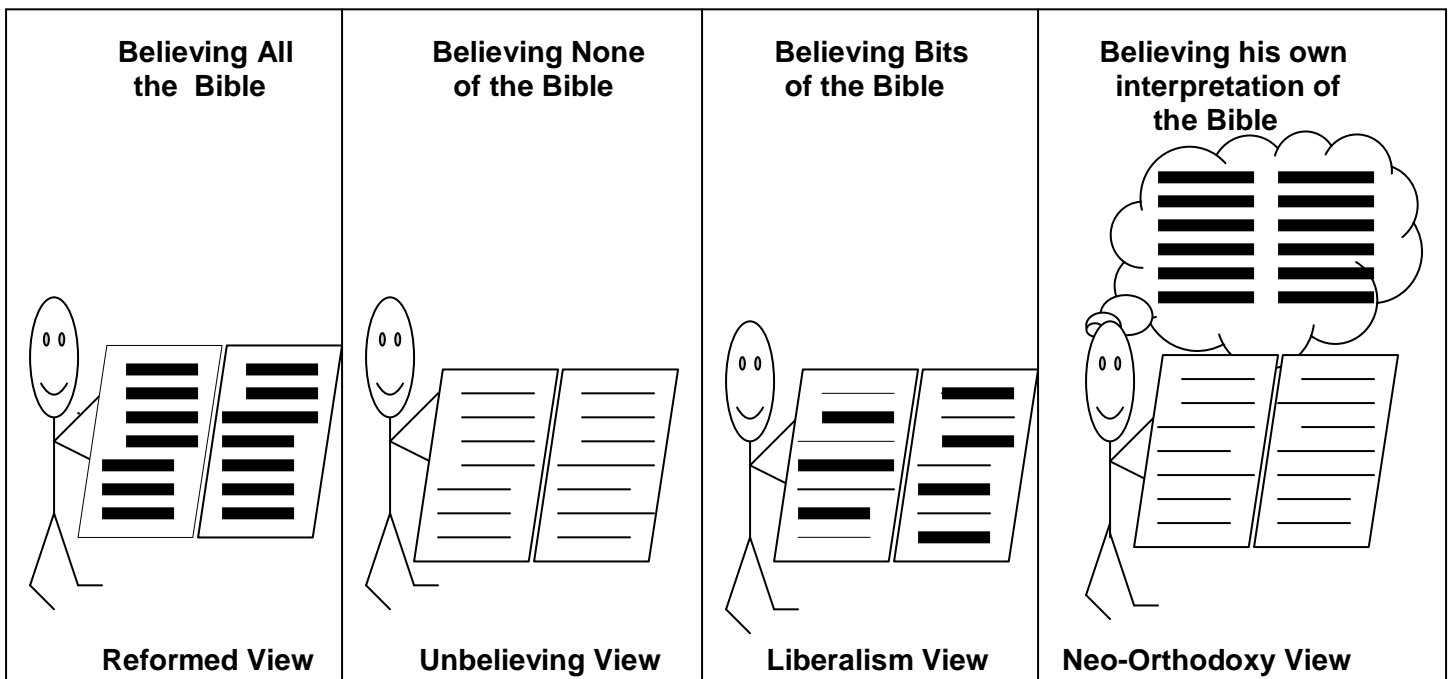
Some characteristics of the Bible.

It is infallible. - Every minute part of it is the very word of the Living God who cannot lie.

It is perspicuous. - Its meaning is clear. It is a revelation from God to ordinary men and women.' If they seek Him, His Spirit leads them into the truth. No specialised knowledge is needed.

It is sufficient. - It is the only, infallible revelation God has given to us. We need not look anywhere else to find out what He has to say to us. Nor ought we to do so. Instead we should spend effort getting to know everything it teaches.

[The Black board illustrations: on the Bible Thick lines = Gods Word & Thin lines = mans words]



What, then, DOES the Bible teach?
Catechism question 3 - next week - tells us.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 3

Question.3: What do the Scriptures, principally teach?

Answer. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, (1) and what duty God requires of man. (2)

1. "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life in His name." (John 20:30-31)

2. "He has showed you, O man, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy. And to walk humbly with your God"? (Micah 6:8)

1.The Bible does not teach us EVERYTHING.

- It does not give to us a complete history of the human race, a course in geology or astronomy, a grounding in botany or zoology etc...
- It does not give to us technical information, chemical formulae, the principles of electronics etc...
- It does not even tell us every detail about the Lord Jesus Christ, for instance, the details of his boyhood, education, or appearance.

Information for the first two must .come from a study of the proper sources, and by engaging in continuous research. The third point is something which we can discover nothing further about.'

2. Yet without the Bible we cannot have a true understanding about ANYTHING.

- many people study the subjects in point one above, but leave God out of their reckoning completely. God's Word teaches that everything is created, and is related to God. It reveals other important facts which have a direct bearing on each subject. If a man ignores God's truth, he is certain to go astray - both in his manner of study, and in his conclusions.
- many people study the subjects in point two above, but ignore the Bible's teachings that this is God's universe, made for His pleasure. Instead of glorifying God, they become proud of their discoveries; and very many of their discoveries and inventions are used-for the wrong purposes.
- If they studied the Bible and lived by it, they would be aware of Who God is, and just what He requires of them. Every branch of human activity and discovery would then be conducted in a God-glorifying and beneficial way.

3. Notice that the Scriptures teach TWO main thins.

The rest of the Catechism sums them up - doctrine, up to question 38.

- duty (the law, means of grace and prayer)
questions 39-107.

a. What we are to believe receives the greatest emphasis.

- many people say that it doesn't matter what you believe.
- but Scripture declares that what you believe decides how you behave, You cannot live a right life if you have a wrong faith.

b. But hand-in-hand with right belief goes right behaviour.

- any supposed faith which does not result in right behaviour is counterfeit
- God's Word teaches both doctrine and duty, and where one is lacking you do not have true Biblical Christianity.

4. In summarising Scripture's two main aspects, we deal with doctrine before duty.

It would not be wrong to do it the other way round.

After all - God gave the Law before He gave His Son.

- A study of duty leads to conviction of sin, which would cause people to study the doctrines which lead to their salvation.

But there are good reasons for our order of study:-

- it is the way many New Testament epistles tackle things.
- we do not want to give the impression that duty comes before doctrine.
- we do not even remotely want to give the impression that duty can save
- we do not want to give the impression that the Law is irrelevant to the Christian believer.

So next week we study the most important doctrine of all.
We shall learn what the Scriptures teach concerning GOD.
This is summarised for us in Catechism questions 4-6.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 4

Question. 4 What is God?

Answer. God is a Spirit, ¹ infinite, eternal ² and. Unchangeable ³ in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth ⁴.

(1) "God is a Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship him in spirit and in truth". (John 4:24)

(2) "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God". (Psalm 90:2)

(3) "For I am the Lord, I do not change". (Malachi 3:6)

(4) "And God said unto Moses, I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14) . "Great is our Lord...his understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:5). "And they do not rest day or night, saying Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty..." (Revelation 4:8). "...You alone are holy..." (Revelation 15:4). "The Lord...will by no means clearing the guilty..." The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Exodus 34:6-7)

1. God is a Spirit.

= to say "God is spirit" will not do.

- He is a Person, not a force.
- Such language might give the impression that other spirits are some how part of, or an aspect of,"

= God is **A Spirit**,

- These are other spirits, e.g. angels, demons, etc...
- But God is that Spirit who has attributes / characteristics / qualities which distinguish Him from all other beings in existence.

= It is impossible to give a precise definition or description of a spirit.

- The element of mystery always remains.
- But we certainly mean that God does not have ANY material substance,
- He does not have a body like men; but is invisible, unfelt, unmeasured.
- Which is why it is a sin to even attempt to make God visible by any kind of statue or picture, this is 'certain to misrepresent God.

"To whom then will you liken God? or what likeness will you compare to him " (Isaiah 40:18)

2. Incommunicable and Communicable attributes.

When a man looks in the mirror, he and his image are:-

= completely different - since one is real and alive, and one isn't.

= extremely alike - since the mirror-image is a copy of the original.

God is the Original. Man, in his original state, is His image. The two are:-

= completely different.

1. God has certain attributes which belong to Him alone, and man has nothing of them at all. These are called INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES.

2. God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable.
Man is not. He is finite, temporal, and changeable.

= extremely alike.

- God has certain attributes which man, made in His image, also has. These are called COMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES, and include being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.
- God has these as eternal attributes (intrinsic), but man only has them because God gave them to him (derived).
- So man never has these things in the same way as God does. For instance God's wisdom is eternal, infinite, and unchangeable – and so are all His communicable attributes. In man these things are always finite, temporal and unchangeable.

It is now clear that God is unique.

It is also clear in what sense man was made in God's image.

3. Two problems.

= If God is a Spirit, why does the Bible sometimes speak of Him had bodily parts?

- The Bible sometimes uses such expressions to make clear to us what we would otherwise be unable to understand: (anthropomorphisms).
- Other passages are genuine descriptions of what people actually saw. These were Old Testament appearances of Christ. (Theophanies).
[Isaiah In the year King Uzziah died I sore the LORD = GOD The Son = Jesus John 12:41]

= If God is unchangeable, why does the Bible; sometimes speak of him as if he had changed?

- such expressions are only used where a Man has changed in his attitude or relationship to God.
- God remains the same. But He does not treat unrepentant and repentant people alike. Where a person changes from one to the other he gets different treatment from the unchangeable God. (Its he child who changes and not the Father)

(Black Board Illustration)

GOD The Great Original
A Spirit

INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

INFINITE
ETERNAL
UNCHANGEABLE

Communicable Attributes

Being
Wisdom
Power
Holiness
Justice
Goodness
Truth

Man the Image
A Living soul

(as was made before sin)

FINITE
TEMPORAL
CHANGEABLE

INTRINCALLY GOD had all these ATTRIBUTES by RIGHT.
But Adam had them by a GIFT OF GOD. (Derived)

Before the Fall all men were
But today are defaced by sin.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 5

Question.5: Are there more Gods than one?

Answer. There is but one only, the living and true God. (1)

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

Answer There are tree persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, (2) and these three are one God, the same in substance; equal In power and glory. (3)

1. "There is no other God but one" (1 Corinthians 8:4).

2. "Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". (Matthew 28:19).

3. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all". (2 Corinthians 13:14),

We come today to the Scriptural doctrine of the Trinity.

ALL error somehow springs from a defective view of God.

We cannot be too certain of this important truth.

We believe in the unity and plurality of God. But:-

We are NOT unitarians = who ridicule the doctrine of the Trinity.

= who teach that only one Person, the Father, is God.

= who teach that Jesus is a created being; and the Holy Spirit is merely a name for the power of God.

We are NOT polytheists = who believe more than one being may be called God.

= who teach that these gods do not have one identical essence or substance of being.

These false views appear more reasonable -- but that is no reason for having them.

We believe in the Trinity = NOT because it seems reasonable.

= BUT because the Scriptures allow no other view.

= See Isaiah 55:8-9

1. There is but one living and true God.

This truth is emphatically and persistently taught in scripture.

Deuteronomy 6:4, 4:35 1 Kings 8:60. Isaiah 43:10-11, 44:6. 1 Corinthians 8:4-6. James 2:19.

2. There are three who are God.

The Father is God.

This is not generally disputed. John 1:18. Ephesians 4:6.

The Son is God.

He is called God. Isaiah 9:6. John 20:28. Hebrews 1:8.

He has the attributes of God. John 1:1, 2:24-25.

He does the works of God. John 5:21. Colossians 1:16.

He is given the worship that belongs to God. John 20:28. Revelation 5:12-14.

The Holy Spirit is God.

The four things above can also be said of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 5:3-4. 1 Corinthians 2:10. John 6:63. Matthew 12:31.

3. The three are distinct.

The Father is not the Son; the Son is not the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is not the Father.
Yet each is God; equal in power and glory.

We do NOT believe in "Modalism" - that God is one person playing three different parts.

- this it's contradicted by Matthew 3:16-17, where the three Persons of the Godhead manifest them selves at the same time.

We do NOT believe in "Monarchianism"

- that the Father is 'King', and superior to the Son and Holy Spirit; that He is God in a way in which they are not.
- this is contradicted by section 2 above.

But we Do believe in an order of relationship between the Persons of the Trinity.

- the Father begets the Son.
- the Son is eternally, begotten of the Father.
- the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son from all eternity.

Such is the mystery of the unity and plurality of God: the Trinity.

- clearly hinted at, even at the beginning of the Bible. Genesis 1:26-27.
- clearly taught in the New Testament. See esp Matthew 28:19.
- clearly beyond human comprehension:-

"O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are his judgements, and His ways past finding out: "
(Romans-11:33).

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 6

Question.7: What are the decrees of God?

Answer. The decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. (1)
(2)

(1) "Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world"...."being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will".
(Ephesians 1:4, 11)

(2) "God...endured... the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had prepared beforehand for glory".
(Romans 9:22-23)

What is happening in the world is not chance or accident.

There is a reason for every thing which happens.

The ultimate reason for everything is the plan of God.

God has planned everything that happens.

Romans 11:36. Isaiah 46:10. Job 14:5. Proverbs 16:4.

1. God's plan is eternal.

Unlike human plans, God's plan is something He has always had. Psalms 33:11.

Nor does His plan ever change - He is unchangeable.

There is no wisdom which He does not have nothing which He has not foreseen.

His plan is agreeable to His will - nobody else was consulted. Romans 11:33-34.

2. God's plan is absolute.

This means that nothing whatever happens, except what God has planned.

He determines absolutely everything. Evens-

(a). 'Accidental' events.

= matters of chance, like the falling of a dice. Proverbs 16:33.

= matters of chance, like the path of an arrow. 1 Kings 22:34.

There is no such thing as 'luck', either good or bad.

Only God's sovereign providence.

People do not like this teaching.

But submission to God's Word demands that we believe it.

(b). Human choices.

Yes, even these are planned by God and fulfil His purposes exactly.

= some human choices break God's commands, but still fulfil His decrees. Acts 2:23
Wicked men cannot overthrow God; but rather, they further His ultimate purposes!

= This being true of unbelievers, how much more is it true of believers!
Their choice to believe on Christ is fore Ordained. Ephesians 2:10. Acts 13:48

We may not like this teaching. We may not understand it...
But we MUST believe it - for God's Word teaches it.

3. God's plan is for His own glory.

- this does not mean God makes Himself more glorious than before, Unchangeable.
- it means that the reason for God's plan lies within Him.
He is not conditioned or influenced by anything outside Him self.
- He does what He does for it His holy pleasure to do so.
- A creature must not behave like this. It would be a denial of his creature hood, and therefore a sin.
- But God is Supreme and Holy. To be true to Himself He must do His own pleasure always, and seek His own glory NOT to do so would mean He denied that He is the only true God, and of supreme importance over all other beings. He CANNOT deny Himself.

Two safeguards.

= Although Scripture clearly teaches the truths we have, outlined,
it does not allow us to believe that God is the author of sin;

God's plan included sin, of course; but not in such a way as to make Him its author.

This is an incomprehensible mystery.
Once more our reason must submit to the teaching of Holy Scripture.

= It is true that God has determined the destiny every man. Jude 1:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:9.

But His decree does not IN ANY WAY weaken or destroy the responsibility of men and women.
The lost choose the way of damnation. The saved choose the path of life.

This too is an incomprehensible mystery. 'Scripture, being a Divine book, is full of teaching
which is too lofty for the minds of mortal men to grasp.
They are called on to believe these truths, and to leave their solution with God.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 7

Question.8: How does God execute His decrees

Answer. God executes His decrees in the works of creation and providence.

Question.9: What is the work of creation?

Answer. The work of creation is God's making all things .of nothing, by the word of His power, in the space a six days, and all very good. (1)

Question.10: How did God create man?'

Answer. God created man male and female, after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures. (2)

(1) Genesis chapter I. Hebrews 11:3.

(2) Genesis 1:26-28. Colossians 3:10. Ephesians 4:24.

We learned last week that God has plan.

We now find out the way in which He carries out His plan.

He does this in the works of creation and providence.

Today we look at creation, next time at providence.

Creation.

= When God created the world and all things, He did not use any existing materials

- it was creation out of nothing... Hebrews 11:3, Psalms 33:9.

God did His work of creation in the space of six days.

- the basic thought in the theory of evolution is atheistical, an irrational belief in random-°change, and the unproved proposition that "all things continue as they were from the beginning". (2 Peter 3:4) It bears all the well-known characteristics of a religious myth.
- The Christian attitude is that "by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Hebrews 11:3) .
- The Christian does not limit the power of God, but rather believes what God has plainly declared in His Word,
- The Christian can see the folly of believing that the creation must have taken a 'long time', when time itself was part of that creation.

= God made everything "very good". Nothing which God has created is evil.

Evil is an invasion which has perverted the character of man, who then uses God's gifts in an evil way... Mark 7:15, 1 Timothy 4:4,

The creation of man.

Man is the apex of God's creation.

= Some people acknowledge God as Creator,

but say that He superintended the process of evolution, and when man at last emerged gave him that 'something extra' which made him 'man' in the real sense, and bearer of God's image.

- this is expressly contradicted by Genesis, 2:7.
- the theory above ('theistic evolution') assumes-that various species lived and died before man at last appeared. But the Word of God declares "by man came death" (1 Corinthians 15:21) - there was NO death until AFTER man appeared.
- Theistic evolution teaches that man's soul comes to him in a way in which his body doesn't. 'It 'puts more value on the soul than the body. Scripture doesn't - man's 'soul' INCLUDES his body - hence the Bible's teaching on resurrection.

= We believe that Man was created in God's image.

- we have seen something of what this means when we studied God's communicable attributes.
 - Adam was created in knowledge - a prophet, He could see the true nature of things.
 - Adam was created in righteousness and holiness - a priest, He was totally set apart to the Lord.
 - Adam was created with dominion over the creatures - a king, He ruled the world in obedience to God.
- + THIS is what makes man distinct from the creatures.
- + THIS is why, when man fell, the last Adam and the second Man had to be a Prophet, Priest and King to save him.
- + THIS is why, to be a godly MAN, you should associate with a Church preaching the Word; administering the sacraments; and practising church discipline.

Thoughtful believers who would like to get to grips with main points .of the Biblical creation versus evolution controversy should read "The Early Earth" by John C. Whitcomb - published by the Evangelical Press.

"Creation, Evolution, and the Christian Faith" by Richard Acworth, and "Evolution or Creation" by Prof. H. Enoch (both Evangelical Press) are hard to get, but worth borrowing from anyone who has them.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 8

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

Answer. God's works of providence are, His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures, and all their actions. (1)

Question.12: What special act of providence did God exercise toward man estate where in he was created?

Answer. 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 the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death. (2)

(1) Psalm 145:17. Psalm 104:24. Isaiah 28:29. Hebrews 1:3, Psalm103:19, Matthew 20:29-31.

(2) Galatians 3:12, Genesis 2:17.

We have seen that God has a plan.

We are now learning about the way in which He carries out His plan.

He does it by creation, as we have seen.

He also does it by providence...

Providence.

God preserves.

= God is not absent from. His Creation, but present in it. Nothing could exist for a Moment longer should cease to uphold it. See Acts 17:27-28. Nehemiah 9:6. Colossians 1:17. Hebrews1:3.

= This makes God a sure refuge to His people in time of trouble. No trouble can harm them if God has chosen to preserve them. Psalm 46:1-2. Psalm 91:7.

God governs.

= Nature. Job 37:10, 12. Psalms 104:14. Matthew 5.45

= Nations. Daniel 2:21. 4:25. Acts17:26.

= Every single individual. 1 Samuel 2:6.8.

= Even the free actions of men & women. Psalms 76:10, Proverbs 16:1, Philipians 2:13.

- this applies to small things as well as large.
- this does not IN ANY WAY lessen or get rid of human responsibility.
- nor is God to be "thought of the author of sin.

Once more we stress that these are mysteries which we cannot grasp.

We believe them because God's Word teaches them.

We also rejoice in them - Romans 8:28, for instance, would have no meaning for us if these things were not true.

The Garden of Eden.

At the beginning of human history, God exercised His: government over man by means of the covenant of works: or covenant of life.

- He alone decided there should be such a covenant.
- He alone imposed that covenant upon man.
- He alone decided what its terms should be.
 - keeping of the covenant would not mean that Adam had earned life,
 - but God' had decreed that this was to be the condition upon which he would reward Adam.

So it was a covenant of life - because it was life God promised to Adam.

It was also a covenant of works - because God required Adam to obey Him before He gave the gift.

There was nothing 'unfair' about such a covenants-

- = Adam had the ability to do what God required.
- = God surrounded Adam with many attractions to keep him from sin.
- = God threatened disobedience with death; which was a most powerful inducement to obey,

God permitted Adam to fall.

- = in such a way that God is IN NO WAY the author of sin.
- = in such a way that Adam and ourselves are ENTIRELY responsible for what happened.
- = in such a way that God's plan was exactly fulfilled.
- = in such a way as meant that God did not lose control, even for a moment.
- = In such a way in other words as is entirely beyond our understanding.

This Adam was an actual history to person.

= Genesis is. 'sober history', and no doubt received as such by our Lord.

= The whole argument of Romans 5 depends on both Adam and Christ being as real as each other. If Adam didn't exist as an actual historic person, the argument fails; and Christ's work is meaningless.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 9

Question.13: Did our first parents continue in the estate where in they were created?
Answer. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate where in they were created, by sinning against God. (1)

Question.14: What is sin?
Answer. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God. (2)

Question.15: What was the sin where by our first parents, fell from the estate where in they were created?
Answer. The sin where by our first parents fell from the estate where in they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit. (3)

(1) Genesis 3:6-8, 13. Ecclesiastic 7:29. (2) 1 John 3:4. (3) Genesis 3:6, 12.

Adam and Eve.

Man was created in innocence.

He was God's true image - in knowledge, righteousness and holiness.

Adam and Eve were 'left to the freedom of their own will'

- to walk the path of obedience; and life.
- or to walk the path, of disobedience; and death.

It is important to stress:-

- + They had liberty to choose one path or the other.
- + They had ability to choose one path or the other.

- Since the Fall man still has liberty to choose good or evil, In as much as nothing outside himself forces him one way or the other.
- But since the Fall he has lost the natural ability to choose good or evil, such is his inner corruption and. Satanic bondage. His will serves his nature. Unless regenerated, he cannot choose God.

It is also important to stress again the HISTORIC FACT of the Fall as recorded.

It is true in its details; as well as its teachings.

Jesus and the apostles accepted the Genesis account - Matthew 19:4; Romans 5:12-21.

What sin is.

God alone has the right to declare what is right, and what is wrong.

He did this by His Word.

What GOD HAD SAID was the only rule that Adam had to decide this question.

Satan's temptation :-

- said that God's Word did not need to be accepted as the only sure rule.
- said that Adam could decide for himself what was best,
- is the same as modern 'permissiveness'.

God says sin is what breaks His Word.

Satan says sin is what is harmful to man.

- this difference is still with us.

We should note that God's Word tells us what we shouldn't do.

If we do, we have, like Adam sinned and transgressed:

God's Word also tells us what we should do.

If we don't, we fall short of the glory of God. This also is sin.

People who fall short are as wicked as those who transgress!

The enormity of the sin of Adam and Eve.

People often say that they cannot understand how so little a sin has brought so awful a result.

But we must squarely realise that the sin was 'NOT small, but immense.

= They despised the command of the Living God, given directly to them.

= They did so when they had full liberty and ability to do the right.

= They did so fully aware of the appalling consequences,

There has never been a sin like it.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 10

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

Answer. The covenant being made with Adams 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. (1)

Question.17: Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

Answer. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery. (2)

(1) Genesis' 2:16-17. Romans 5:12-21. 1 Corinthians 15:21-22.

(2) Romans 5:12.

We come today to truths which men and women detest, and refuse to accept. But this does not alter the fact that all are sinners, and all do die. Sin and misery is here.

As we look into God's Word we see the reason for this sin and misery. It is because ALL mankind fell with Adam in his first transgression.

We are one with Adam.

There is a unity. Adam and all men are members one of another. God..."He has made from one blood all the nations of men...." Acts 17:26

Out of evil only evil can come. Read Job 14:4 and 25:4.

We are descendants of Adam, and therefore inherit his corrupt nature. We are born sinners.

Our Lord Jesus Christ the One Exception.

- He did not descend from Adam by ordinary generation, as we have.
- He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Luke 1:30-38. Matthew 1:20.
- He was born to Mary, who at that point was still a virgin. Luke 1:34. Matthew 1:18-25.

So = He did not sin in Adam and fall in him

= He was born incorrupt, and without guilt; in fact, holy.

But all others fell with Adam in his first transgression. Adam's fall was their fall.

Adam is our representative head.

When Adam was in the Garden, we did not yet exist.

It is because he chose the wrong that we are now guilty.

This is because he is the father of the race, and acted for the race.

God Himself ordained that we should stand in this relationship to Adam.

- It is no good .arguing that we would have acted differently...

- It is no good complaining that God takes innocent people, and places them under Adam's sin whether they like it or not...
- = the facts are that from our earliest moments we show that we want to be sinners like Adam. Psalm 58:3.
- = our very own lives show that we thoroughly approve of what Adam did, and we partake of his sin in the fullest sense:
- = whether we like the Bible's teaching or not, the fact remains that we are guilty, sinful and miserable - and our rebellion against God's teachings is a farther, proof of it.

Also remember:-

- = the very representative principle which brought death and condemnation to us is also the very means of bringing salvation to us in Christ.
- = All in Adam God counts as guilty as Adam. This is strict justice
- = All in Christ God counts as righteous as Christ. This is sheer mercy.
- = The disobedience of one has ruined all joined to him.
- = The obedience of One has saved all joined to Him!

Those who hate the representative principle are not believers.

A point to note.

There are some who teach that physically we are descended from Adam, but that each person's spirit is a new creation, which only becomes polluted when it 'enters' a body descended from Adam.

- this view is called 'creationism'.
- it is a Greek view - pagan and unscriptural.

The Bible teaches what is now called 'traducianism'.
The WHOLE of you, physical and spiritual, is received, by ordinary' generation from your parents... and ultimately from Adam. See Genesis 5:3.

We are not in a state of sin and misery because a 'soul' came into contact with a body.

It is the FALL which is the cause of our ruin - and Adam's physical and spiritual death is both reckoned to us, and passed on to us.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 11

Question.18: Where in consists the sinfulness of that estate where into man fell?

Answer. The sinfulness of that estate where into man fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, (1) the want of original righteousness, (2) and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin, (3) together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it. (4)

- (1) Romans 5:10-20. (2) Romans 3:10, Ephesians 2:1-3.
(3) Genesis 6:5. (4) Matthew 15:19 James 1:14-15.

We have seen how Adam's sin is transmitted to us.

So we will not study 'the guilt of Adam's first sin', or 'the want of original righteousness'
- the loss of sinlessness that Adam had.

Tonight we are going to look at the corruption of man's whole nature.
We are going to consider the solemn doctrine of 'Original Sin'.

Man is totally depraved.

Genesis 6:5 sums up the nature of 'man's wickedness.

It is:

- inward. Deep down in our nature.
 - great. This is God's estimate, though it may not be ours.
 - continual. It is there always, not only sometimes.
 - universal. There is no man who is not evil.
- There is not one single human thought which is not wicked Sin, wickedness, ungodliness have affected all that man is and does. He is **TOTALLY** depraved.

This depravity is total in extent - the corruption of sin is found in EVERY part,

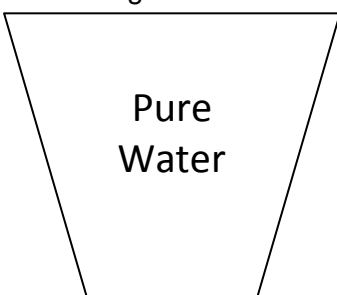
This depravity is NOT total in degree - man is not as wicked as can be. Only Satan is totally depraved in extent and degree.

So man's whole nature is corrupted by sin.

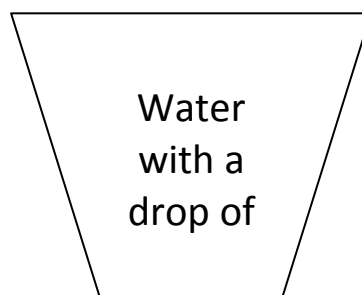
But evil has not gone as far as it possibly can - wickedness has not reached the fullest possible degree.

Illustrated with 3 beakers

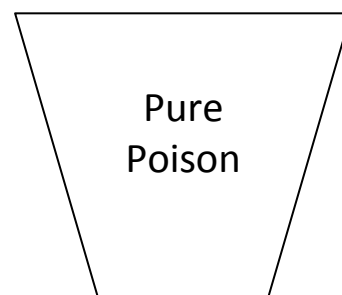
Christ
Pure, Holy
Righteous



Mankind
All tainted with sin
But not as wicked as could be



the devil
as wicked
as could be



Common grace.

The reason why man is not as wicked as he can be is due to the mercy of God. God shows kindness to all men by slowing down and restraining wickedness.

He does this:

- by leaving in all men the workings of conscience
- This does not make men good; but holds back their wickedness from going to its fullest, extent. Romans 2:15.
- by giving to the state the power to punish evil men Romans 13:1-5.
- by giving to the world many other things like marriage and family life, work and leisure; art and music, education; so even an unconverted man can find a measure of fulfilment and happiness in good things in this life.

These things do not make a man good in the eyes of God.

They may make him good in the eyes of other men; and keep him from worse evil.

Inability.

The fact remains that man cannot do anything which pleases God.

See Genesis 8:21, Psalm 58:3, Romans 3:12, 1 Samuel 16:47. Matthew 23:25, 28.

He is FREE to do good and godly things.

But such is his nature that he freely prefers ungodliness, and is UNABLE to prefer anything else.

(Your will is controlled by your nature).

He is FREE to choose God - the option is open.

But he has an ungodly nature, and is UNABLE to choose anything except ungodliness.

(Your will is controlled by your nature). Jeremiah 17:9.

So - man is corrupt in every part, though not as evil as it is possible to be.

- he is wholly unable to do anything good, or pleasing to God.

There is not any hope for him - unless his nature is changed.

Jesus said, "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God... You MUST be born again". John 3:3, 7

This new birth only comes about by the Spirit taking the Word of God. 1 Peter 1:23

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 12

Question.19: What is the misery of that estate where into man fell?

Answer. All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, (1) are under His wrath and curse, (2) and so made liable to all the miseries in this life, (3) to death itself, (4) and to the pains of hell forever. (5)

(1) Genesis 3:8, 10, 24. (2) Ephesians 2:3, Galatians 3:10.
(3) Lamentations 3:39. (4) Romans 6:23 (5) Matthew 25:41, 46.

Last week we saw that man's whole nature is corrupt – 'Original Sin'.

This being so, he is filled with miseries.

But he does not readily admit this - he is so corrupt that he deceives himself.

He has lost communion with God, and is under His wrath and curse.

Man is expelled from God's presence, and under His wrath. Genesis 3:24. Romans 1:18.
God's face is hidden, and God is angry.' Isaiah 59:2. Psalm 7:11.

Man was made for communion with God - as we have learned.

Only God can fill man's heart - but does not do so.

Man is restless and empty, and NOTHING that he does gives him final satisfaction.

This is spoken about throughout the book of Ecclesiastes.

There is miser in this life from which none can escape- .

"Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward". Job 5:7.

Within a short time disease, war, or disaster will have claimed us ALL.

Our years are like a shadow; a dream; swatch in the night; a fading flower.

EVERY person has either pains of body or sorrows of soul, or both.

All of us must die.

"It is appointed for men to die once..." Hebrews 9:27.

Death is an enemy which has not YET been destroyed. 1 Corinthians 15:26.

We are not to make light of death; or to treat it as a natural thing.

It is caused by sin, and is part of our misery.

The lost will be everlastingly punished.

This awe-ful truth was taught by our Lord Jesus Christ.

He spoke of "unquenchable fire", "the worm that death not and the fire that is not quenched",

"the torment in fire and brimstone", and "the outer darkness" and the "Weeping and gnashing of teeth".

He used the same word to make clear that the punishment of the lost would last as long as the blessedness of the saved. (Matthew 25:46).

ALL mankind was brought by Adam's sin into this condition of misery.
But there are important differences between believers and other men and women:-

The condition of believers:-

In this life:-

He enjoys communion with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
He is not over-whelmed by fear of death and everlasting condemnation.
He is not free from sickness and sorrow yet God uses these things to his good, and as a corrective discipline.
He is not delivered entirely from the state of misery, but is different' in it.

At death:-

Death has no sting for him - for he has already passed from death to life.
He finds nothing can separate him from Christ, and enters His blissful presence.
His body expectantly awaits the resurrection.

Eternally:-

He is delivered eternally from all misery.
In his resurrected and glorified body he enjoys complete happiness.
He is for ever with the Lord, together with all His people.

Jesus said:-

"Be not afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do.
But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him, who after he has killed has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear him." (Luke 12:4-5).

"Fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell". Matthew 10:28.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 13

Question.20: Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?
Answer. God having, out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, (1) did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer. (2)

(1) Ephesians 1:4. (2) Romans 3:20-22. Galatians 3:21-22.

We have seen that lost mankind, descended from Adam and Eve, has a corrupt nature, and is filled with miseries.

From now on in the Catechism we learn of God's wonderful mercy to sinners.

God's mercy ALONE has provided the way for sinners to escape.

God's power ALONE enables sinners to take that way of escape.

Unconditional election.

- = God has chosen out of the total human race a definite number to be saved.
- = This is not because of anything good in them - there is none good.
- = It is out of sheer kindness that He has chosen to save these rebels.
- = He has chosen them to be saved through the Lord Jesus Christ alone.
- = This unconditional election is from all eternity.

This truth is plainly taught in the Word of God.

See John 6:37-39. John 15:16, Acts 13:48. Ephesians 1:4-5.
2 Thessalonians 2:13-14. Romans 8:29-30, 9:6-26. 11:5-7.

Remember!:-

- God, BEING GOD, is free to save whom He will. Matthew 20:15.
- There can be no injustice in God. To suggest so is sinful arrogance. Romans 9:19-23.
- God who has decreed to save the elect has decreed, to do it by His Word so this doctrine does not stifle evangelism, but, in fact, encourages it.
- God who has decreed to save the elect has decreed to give them repentance and faith. You will not be saved without them. So you must turn from your sins to the Saviour
- and stop thinking you will be saved or left lost "no matter what I do".

Those who will not believe this doctrine deny the express teaching of Scripture.

This must be because of - plain unbelief - exaltation of human reason

- preferring one part of Scripture to another - having a God of their own imagination
- love of self - or some other reason.

All this adds up to SINFUL REBELLION.

The Covenant of Grace.

The people whom the Father chose.
The people for whom Christ died.
The people whom the Holy Spirit calls.

Are 'NOT 3 peoples -.but one and the same peoples!
John 6:37-44. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14. Romans 8:29-30-35.

There is AGREEMENT in the Godhead concerning these people.
They COVENANTED together to do this great work of GRACE.
It is a covenant of grace.

Once this is recognised, lots of Scriptures make sense:- Hebrews 13:20, Isaiah 42:6.
Psalm 89:3. Luke 22:29. John 19:18. John.17:4, 6, 9, 12, 24.

Adam stood for us in the covenant of works and failed. So we are all damned.
Christ stood for us in the covenant of grace, and successfully purchased our redemption,
as He had covenanted to do. So all in Christ are saved.

= These truths are awe-inspiring, and should fill us with worship and humility.

= It is an amazing act of mercy that God Should save us rebels DESPITE
ourselves - so these truths are a cause for thanksgiving and joy.

= But they also lay upon us the responsibility to make our calling and election sure. 2 Peter 1:10.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 14

Question.21: Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

Answer. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, (1) who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, (2) and so continues to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, (3) for ever. (4)

(1) 1 Timothy 2:5-6. (2) John 1:14, Galatians 4:4
(3) Luke 1:35 Colossians 2:9. (4) Romans 9:5. Hebrews 7:24-25.

We have learned that God has chosen to save a definite number out of lost humanity; and that He has chosen to do this by means of a Redeemer.
This evening we learn: Who this Redeemer IS.

Only one Redeemer.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Redeemer. There none other.
Acts 4:12, John 14:6. 1Timothy 2:5-6

The Bible contradicts what is called, Universalism which-teaches all will be saved; or teaches that people of all religions will be saved if they are good, sincere and earnest.

There is no doubt that all who do not receive Christ as He is offered in Gospel are eternally lost.
See also. Matthew 7:13-14.

ONLY the Lord Jesus Christ is able to save.
This is because of His eternal deity and His true humanity.

The Redeemer - the eternal Son of God.

Jesus Christ IS God as we clearly saw earlier in this series (part 5).

- some (like the 'Jehovah's Witnesses') teach that He only became divine, but not that He is .God as the Father is.
- many modernists also teach that' Jesus is only God in a lesser sense than; the Fatter is.
- many Evangelicals act as if Jesus was not God, in as high a sense as the Father (it comes out in their prayers; and in their willingness to make graven images / pictures of Christ).

The Lord Jesus Christ is equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit in power and glory, and of the same substance!

The Redeemer - Man.

The eternal Son of God became man by taking to Himself a complete human nature. He became man with out ceasing to be God.
The divine nature was united to the human nature "with out conversion, composition or confusion".

With out conversion. -

Neither nature was changed in any way.
The divine nature was not reduced, or made less divine.
The human nature was not exalted so that He ceased to be 'one of us'.

With out composition –

nor did the two natures join to make a different sort of nature half-way in-between deity and humanity.

With out confusion –

nor did Jesus have two different personalities (a divine Christ and a human Jesus).
No! He is a divine Person who has taken to Himself a human nature.
The natures are distinct. But He is ONE Person.

= "For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ"
(Creed of Athanasius)

= "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh..."
(1 Timothy 3:16)

Two distinct natures, yet one person – for ever!

= Christ is at this moment, and for ever, possessed of two natures; just as when He was on earth.

= His human nature is found only in one place at a time. Luke 25:6. Acts 3:21
It cannot be in many different places at the same time.
This is the lie of the Roman Mass.

= Yet Christ is with believers always! Matthew 28:20.
This is because of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. John 15:26, John 16:7.

He is the Lord Jesus Christ!.

Lord = Jehovah, The self-existent and self-sufficient God.

Jesus = The name that indicates the reality of His human nature.

Christ = The ONE Person with TWO natures anointed by God to redeem His people.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 15

Question.22: How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

Answer. Christ, the Son of God became man by taking to himself a true body, (1) and a reasonable soul, (2) being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, (3) without sin. (4)

(1) Hebrews 2:14, 16. Hebrews 10:5. (2) Matthew 26:38.

(3) Luke 1:26-43. Galatians 4:4. (4) Hebrews 4:15. Hebrews 7:26.

Last week we learned that the eternal Son of God became man, and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.

Tonight we learn how this came to be so:-

The virgin birth.

Roman Catholics emphasise the word 'virgin' - they lift her up, and hail her as Mother of God, and Queen of Heaven.

We emphasise the word 'birth' - and stress how Christ was humbled, and brought Himself low. We give the attention to HIM, not her.

- we dare not lift Mary up to the level of God.
- none the less, the child she brought forth was the God-man.
- Mary is the mother of Jesus, who is God.
- In this sense only is Mary 'the mother of God'

Two errors to avoid:-

- (i) The idea that Mary had to be holy for Jesus to be born sinless - and that for her to be holy she remained a perpetual virgin. Scripture contradicts this - Matthew 1:25, Mark 6:3. See 1 Corinthians 7:3-5. (at least 4 half brothers and at least 2 half sisters)
- (ii) The idea that Jesus could have been born sinless without being born of a virgin. No - If Jesus was born as we are, he would have had a sinful nature. See John 3:6.

The truth

The virgin birth was necessary for-Jesus to have a true human nature, and yet be without sin.

It was not Mary's virginity, but the Holy Spirit's activity, that ensured He was born sinless. The virtue was His, not hers. Luke 1:35.

A true body and a reasonable soul.

A true body:-

- Jesus took upon Himself the same sort of body as we have. (Luke 2:40, 52)
- The Bible contradicts 'Docetism' - the view that Christ only appeared to have a body like ours.
- This is why we read of Him growing, sleeping, being hungry or thirsty or in pain etc...

A reasonable soul:-

- Some teach that Christ's divine nature took the, place of the human soul.
- The Bible contradicts this - and speaks of Christ growing in wisdom, feeling sorrow, grief, joy etc... (Luke 2:40, 52.)

"...in ALL things He had to be made like His brethren...." Hebrews 2:17.

All this was essential for salvation.

- the work of saving sinners is so immense that it is impossible to anyone less than the True God.
- it was man that needed saving. As this could only be done by the obedience of man, it was essential that the Saviour be also truly human.
- the work of salvation is to bring sinful men to the Living God. This Christ alone can do - because He alone is God and Man, in two distinct natures, and one Person, for ever.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 16

Question.23: What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?

Answer. Christ, as our Redeemer, executes the offices of a prophet, (1) of a priest, (2) and of a King, (3) both in His estate of humiliation and exaltation.

1. Acts 3:21-22, Hebrews 12:25, 2 Corinthians 13:3
 2. Hebrews 5:5-7, 7;25
 3. Psalm2:6, Isaiah 9:6-7, Matthew 21:5.
-

(P.T.O. and work down the chart)

This truth shows the relationship between various aspects of the Faith.

The chart overleaf shows how it touches on:-

- man's original constitution
 - man's fallen condition
 - the Old Testament preparation for the Redeemer:
 - Christ's-earthly ministry (humiliation)
 - Christ's heavenly! Ministry (exaltation)
 - the nature of true conversion
 - the means by which a believer grows in grace in a true church.
-

WE MUST NEVER SEPARATE THESE OFFICES:

- if you do, you have a defective understanding of each of these subjects, and how they relate to each other.
- you may be lost - for the only person who is truly saved is the one who has Christ as his prophet, priest and king.
- your church will eventually depart from the faith – for Christ is truly present only in a local church which submits to His prophetic, priestly and: kingly ministries in the way the chart Shows.

	PROPHET	PRIEST	KING
MAN as he was (Adam)	Knowledge	Righteousness	Holiness
MAN as he is (fallen)	Ignorance	Guilt	Sinfulness
ISRAEL	Moses and the prophets	Aaron and his house	David and his house
CHRIST (on earth).	The Word Himself Teaching Hebrews 1:1-3	His one final sacrifice for sins	His claims His power
CHRIST (in heaven)	His Spirit inspired Scriptures and applies them	His intercession	All authority in heaven and earth
CONVERSION	The mind is taught the law and Gospel	The conscience is aware of its need of righteousness	The will is activated to choose and accept Christ
GROWTH IN GRACE (A true church).	Faithful preaching of the Word of God	Proper administration of both sacraments	Exercise of Scriptural discipline

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 17

Question.24: How, does Christ execute the office of a prophet?

Answer. Christ executes the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, (1) by his word and Spirit, (2) the will of God for our salvation. (3)

(1) John 1:18, 15:15. (2) 1 Corinthians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:10-12. (3) John 20:31, 2 Timothy 3:15.

We have learned that Christ fulfils, three offices, or functions, or tasks.

He is a prophet, a priest, and a king. . . .

We now look at these in a little more detail - starting with prophet.

THE Prophet.

All the prophets and apostles rest upon our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:21).

- the Old Testament prophets wrote and spoke the very word of God.
How? The Spirit of THE Prophet spoke through them. (I Peter 1:11).
They foretold what Christ would do.
- After Christ came there was no more need for such prophets any more,
The revelation was complete. Colossians 2:3... Hebrews 1;1-3.
With Christ we pass from the prophetic word to the apostolic era.
We pass from promise to fulfilment.
- The apostles were commissioned by Christ Himself to record, interpret
and apply His final revelation - their whole authority comes from Him.
While they finished their work, a form of prophet continued, giving inspired
instructions to the church - but ceased when the New Testament was complete.
- It is a mark of the finished work of Christ that there is no prophet or apostle in the
church today. Those 'extraordinary offices' only existed as long as God's complete
word had not been given.

But THE prophet has come.

False prophets.

Christ is the final prophet. All who deny this are false prophets.

Roman Catholicism - adds the authority of the church to the Prophet's Word.

The cults - have their own 'prophets'; and add to Scripture.

The charismatic movement - believes that God is giving 'fresh' revelations.

NO! God has given His final Word. There is nothing more to say.

But Christ is revealed by His Spirit working through the Word.

The place of human instruments.

Christ is only revealed by His Spirit working through the Word,

This does not mean that human instruments are useless:-

- He calls men to certain offices - evangelists and Pastor-teachers. Ephesians 4.8ff
- these men do not say anything new; but labour in the word and doctrine,
- so Christ remains the ONLY Prophet in the church - these men study and proclaim what He has ALREADY revealed.

The written Word thus proclaimed is "a more sure word of prophecy" than that heard at other times - we are at no disadvantage. 2 Peter 1:19-21.

Each believer is thus MORE BLESSED by Christ's prophetic office than any believer in the Old Testament - see Matthew 11:11.

How kind our Prophet is!

He has given us a clear, complete, perspicuous, written revelation.

He has given us the indwelling Spirit to enable us to understand it!

Closing comments:-

= Creeds; confessions and catechisms are not wrong – but are only valuable to the extent that they are true to Scripture. They help us to learn Bible truths, and to relate them to each other.

= Nonetheless no-one may be certain what is true and what isn't unless Christ has taught them by His Word. See 1 John 2:27.

= The importance of believers hearing the Bible expounded, and, if possible, reading it themselves, cannot be overstressed.

= It also becomes clear why people must hear the Word if they are to be saved.
(Romans 10:13-14)

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 18

Question.25: How does Christ execute the office of a priest?

Answer. Christ executes the office of a priest, in His once offering up of Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, (1) and reconcile us to God; (2) and in making continual intercession for us. (3)

(1) Hebrews 8:1. 9:14, 28.

(2) Hebrews 2:17.

(3) Hebrews 7:24-25.

Our forefathers who drew up the Catechism showed their grasp of Scripture by using the word “us” in this answer.

They therefore summed up a vital Scriptural truth – that Christ died as a substitute for some people, not all people.

He saved HIS from .their sins. (Matthew 1:21).

- **See how Christ’s priestly work is taught in the Bible.**

= He was an ACTUAL substitute for sins. Hebrews 2:9-10. Whose sins?

= He ACTUALLY turned away the righteous wrath of God. Romans 3:25,1 John 4:10,
Who from?

= He ACTUALLY reconciled a people to God. Romans 5:10, Hebrews 2:17. Precisely who?

= He ACTUALLY redeemed from the curse of the Law. Galatians 3:i3. Who?

= He ACTUALLY intercedes in heaven. Romans 8:34. Hebrews 7:24-25. On whose behalf?

In other word’s, He didn’t just make something POSSIBLE...

He actually DID something on the Cross; and DOES something now!!

WHO FOR??

- all men without distinction, says the Universalist.

But if Christ has ACTUALLY done that for all men, then all men are saved -
which is a clear contradiction of the Word of God.

- for no-one in particular, says the Arminian,

But if Christ has ACTUALLY done that for no-one in particular, then
no-one is Saved – which also contradicts the Word of God,

- for some people in particular, says the Bible..

Because Christ has ACTUALLY done that for some people in particular and not for
others, this explains why some are saved and some are lost. Some are received by God
and reconciled to Him on the basis of Christ’s redemption. Some are not redeemed.

Christ as Prophet speaks to some and not others.

As King he subdues some and not others.

Even so, as Priest, He brings to God some and not others.

True to His office as Priest, He represents a SPECIFIC people.

This truth is termed ‘particular redemption,

2. See how plainly Particular Redemption is stated.

Let us look at:-

Matthew 1:21, John 6:37-40. 10:11, 15, 26. 15:13. Acts 20:28.

Romans 8:31-39. 14:15. 1 Corinthians 8:11. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.

Ephesians 5:25-27. Hebrews 2:9-13. 1 John 2:2. 4:10. 5:13.

Verses which appear to teach the opposite When examined, in fact do not:-

2 Corinthians 5:14-15. 1 Timothy 2:6. John 1:29. 4:42. 1 John 2:2.

3. A return to this Scriptural truth would have, a profound effect upon us.

= Love and devotion would return.

You would see the Saviour, not as One who died for an anonymous group without any particular thought for you – but as the Son of God who died for you specifically, for your sins, for you by name.

= Assurance and comfort would return.

If He has done so much for you personally, will He withhold any other good thing from you personally? Can anything separate you from His personal love?
See Romans 8:32-39.

= Worship would return.

You would be filled with deep gratitude that God's distinguishing grace has saved you, and would adore Him love to worship and serve Him.

= Biblical evangelism would return.

Love for the Saviour. Would impel you to obey His great commission, and your continued service would be motivated by this, not results or the lack of them.
You would not vainly declare "Christ died for you" but would set forth the Gospel in a Biblical way.

Knowing that Christ **MUST** call home the sheep for whom He died you would-be filled with hope, knowing that the declared Word **MUST** be effectual in some.
What a support for flagging zeal, and in difficulty!

You would present Christ in a way Worthy of Him – not as One Who 'can be' a Saviour, but One Who **IS** a Saviour, One Who **DOES SAVE**, and. Does not merely make it 'possible'.

This is good news indeed for dying sinners!

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 19

Question.26: How does Christ execute the office of a king?

Answer. Christ executes the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, (1) in ruling and defending us, (2) and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies. (3)

(1) Psalm 110:3, Acts 1:5:14-16

(2) Isaiah 33:22, Isaiah 31:1-2.

(3) 1 Corinthians 15:25 Psalm 110.

“This is Jesus, the King of the Jews” said the inscription. Matthew 27:37.

He IS a king. Luke 23:42-43. Psalm 2. Acts 4:25ff.

In fact He is over all. Ephesians 1:20-23. Philippians 2:9-11. Revelations 19:11-16,

1. If Christ was not King, you would be lost.

= Think of what we have learned about human depravity. You could, never have regenerated or converted yourself. It is a kingly act. It is well illustrated in the conversions recorded in the Bible.

= Think of your present weakness and strivings with the world, flesh, Devil. You could never keep yourself in the faith. It is a kingly act. See John 10:27-30. Philippians 1:6. 1 Peter 1:3-5.

= Think of all that stands between you and your safe arrival in heaven. You have no power to finish ‘the journey on your own, It is a kingly act. Romans 8:35-39. John 6:39. Matthew 25:31-46.

But the moment you were born again you entered Christ’s kingdom. John 3:3, 5.

It is a present kingdom Colossians 1:13, Mark 1:15, Matthew 4:23, 24:14.

It is a spiritual and invisible kingdom – John 18:36. Luke 17:20.

It is a kingdom which will never end – Daniel 2:44, 2 Peter 1:11

= at the moment it is growing and extending. Matthew 13:31, 33

= at last it will be complete, and will give place to a better order of things,

Matthew 25:34. 2 Peter 1:11. Matthew 13:41-43.

It is wrong – to say that this is the “church age”: and to look for a future, earthly, visible, 1000 year kingdom, as do Dispensationalists.

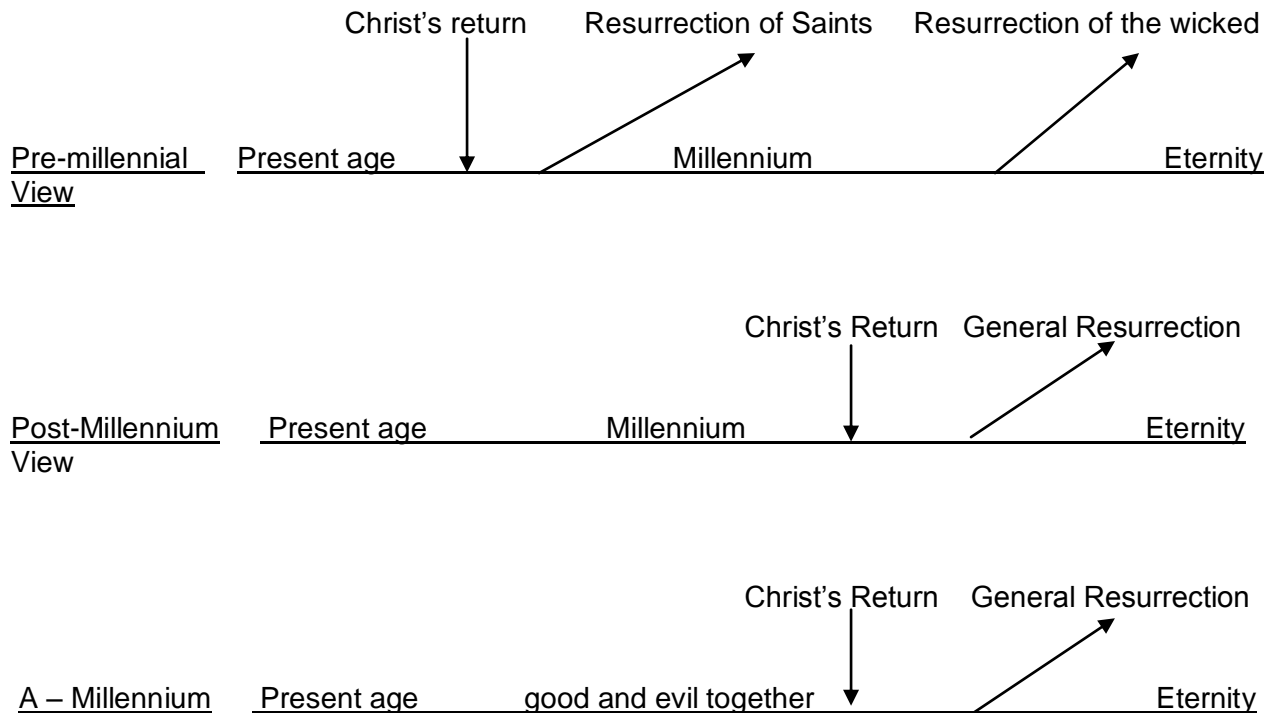
It is wrong – to say that visible institution of the Church and the kingdom are the same thing
- as do the Roman Catholics.

It is right - to see the elect of God as both a Church AND a Kingdom.

They are a Kingdom – for they are ruled by the King, and show, in embryo forms the ideal order among themselves.

They are a Church – for they are called to God out of the world, and are God’s instrument for preparing for the ideal order of things.

2. When can we expect to see “all enemies under his feet”?



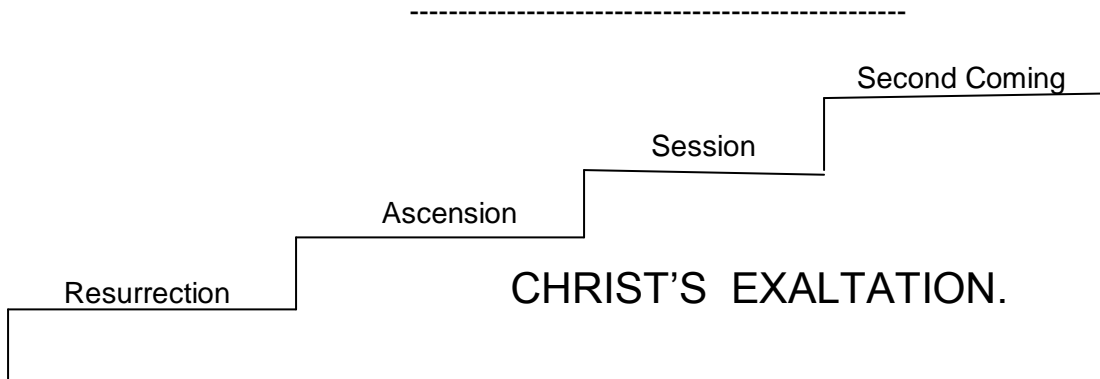
There are good and godly men holding to each of these views.
However, the a-millennial view has the most in its favour:-

-
- The Scriptures say that these are the “last days”.
We cannot then expect a millennium after these days have been ended by Christ’s Coming, particularly as that event is described as the last day”. See Hebrews 1:2, Acts 2:17. 2 Timothy 3:1. John 6:39. 11:24. 12:48.
 - The Scriptures say that no one can know when Christ will return.
This would not be so if we knew He was coming at the end of a millennium!
See Acts 1:7, Matthew 24:36ff...
 - In Christ’s parable of the wheat and tares “both grow together until the harvest”, and the “harvest is the end of the age” (world). See Matthew 13:24-30, 36-40-43.
-

Question.28 . Where in consisted Christ's exaltation?

Answer. Christ's exaltation consisted in his rising again from the dead on the third day, (1) in ascending up into heaven, (2) in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, (3) and in coming to judge the world at the last day. (4)

(1) 1 Corinthians 15:4. (2) Mark 16:19. Acts1:9. (3) Ephesians 1:20. (4) Acts 1:11 17:31.



The chief things to note about the Lord's Second Coming are:-

- =The time is unknown.
- = It will not be heralded by signs.
- = It will be sudden.
- = It will be visible, glorious, bodily.
- = It will be accompanied by the resurrection of just and unjust.
- = it will lead to the judgement, and our eternal state.

Christ's present mediation will end.
But His exaltation will never end.

"We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 21

Question.29: How are we made partaker of the redemption purchased by Christ?
Answer. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ by the effectual application of it to us (1) by his Holy Spirit. (2)

Question.30: 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 (3) and there by uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling. (4)

Question.31. What is effectual calling?
Answer. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, (5) where by, convincing us of our sin and misery, (6) enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, (7) .and renewing our wills, he does persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

(1) John 1:11-12. (2) Titus 3:5-6. (3) Ephesians 1:13-14, 2:8. John 6:37-39.
(4) Ephesians 3:17, 1 Corinthians 1:9. (5) 2 Timothy 1:9, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.
(6) Acts 2:37. (7) Acts' 26:18. (8) Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26-27. John 6:44-45, Philippians 2:13.

(Conversion is ALL & TOTALLY the WORK OF GOD and NOT PART OF MANS DOING)

The Spirit's work.

God the Father has given God the Son to be the redeemer of the elect.
God the Son has purchased redemption for them.
God the Holy Spirit applies' this redemption to them
 – so that they experience it themselves, and enter into it!

Some people teach that God cannot save people without their cooperation.
The Bible makes it plain that a sinful. Man will never cooperate!
By a sovereign act the Holy. Spirit brings him to experience salvation.
Where the Spirit does NOT work, a person just cannot be saved.

Why some accept the Gospel when they hear it, and some do not:

The reason is not the Gospel itself:-

- the same message is Preached 'to all.
- there is nothing in, the message itself which stops a man from accepting it.

The reason is not the nature of the hearers:-

- they are equally sinful, and equally dead spiritually.
- All of them, left to their own power, would certainly perish in their sins, and never accept: the saving Gospel.

The reason is that some are effectually called, and some are not:-

- all hear the same message.
- in some the Spirit performs a mighty work of quickening / creating / being born again / raising up from the dead – it is a miracle which gives a man spiritual understanding, and power to choose.
- the heart is overcome with sin, Christ is seen as God's appointed Saviour, and He is most freely, and gladly chosen and trusted.
- it is a miracle – just like Lazarus being raised!

This does not make men and women into mere pawns:-

- no one is lost or saved against their wills. Natural men do not want the Gospel, and called men do!
- Effectual calling is not an act of 'forcing', but an act of creation. A new nature and a new will is given. The called person WANTS to do what he did not want to do before.

= he sees the Gospel as true, as a blind man sees the sun.

= he sees his unworthiness and guilt before God.

= he sees the Saviour as Substitute and Advocate.

= he wants the Saviour and not his sin, so turns from it to Him.

= he trusts what the Saviour has done for sinners; he relies on this and nothing else for his standing with, God.

Two dangers to avoid.

= Effectual calling may be sudden, or it may be gradual.

It may be accompanied by strong feelings, or it may not.

Do not assume that because you have had a sudden religious experience accompanied by deep feelings, that you have been effectually called. TRUE calling leads to CONTINUING faith.

Where is your faith now? – that is the question to decide whether you are truly called or not.

= Some people say they would repent and believe if they could, but they can't, as God has not given them His Spirit.

Do not assume that you must feel that you have the Spirit before you repent and believe. You are COMMANDED to repent and believe, whatever you do or do not feel. Do so without delay.

God does not permit any one to know he is regenerated before, he believes.

But all who obey the Gospel invitation, and are trusting Christ NOW, can be certain that the Spirit has worked in them.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 22

Question.32: What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?
Answer. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, (1) adoption, (2) and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them. (3)

Question.33: What is justification,
Answer. Justification is an act of God a free grace, where in he pardons all our sins, (4) and accepts us as righteous in his sight, (5) only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

1. Romans 8:30.
2. Ephesians 1:5.
3. 1 Corinthians 1:26, 30
4. Romans 3:24-25, 4:6-8, Ephesians 1:7
5. 2 Corinthians 5:19, 21.
6. Romans 5:17-19, Galatians 2:16, Philippians 3:9.

Justification is "a declaration

Look at Deuteronomy 25:1.

When a judge "justifies" a man, he is declaring that the innocent man to be righteous. The opposite is condemnation.

But we are guilty (Romans 3:23.)

How can the righteous Lord "declare" the guilty to be righteous?

The answer lies in imputation.

Imputation.

Imputation means that God has reckoned or credited to one person what originally belonged to another person.

= for instance, the sin of Adam is imputed or 'laid to the account' of all Adam's race. We receive from Him. He receives nothing from us.

= In the case of Jesus Christ and His elect people there is a double imputation:-

- my sin is laid to His account – and He is treated as if He had sinned my sin. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21
- His perfect righteousness is laid to my account. God treats me as if I had never sinned. I am treated as if I had lived Christ's perfect life. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21 again.

It is GOD is the Author of justification.

“It is GOD that justifies” (Romans 8:33) .

- = Do not think that it is your faith which makes you righteous.
Faith is not a ‘good work’ which commends us into God’s favour.
Faith is not the ground of righteousness.
- = the work of Jesus Christ alone is the ground righteousness.
There is no other sin-bearer.
 - Faith is an INSTRUMENT ONLY – the hand by which we receive the righteousness of God – NOT the source of that righteousness.

Some other important point’s to grasp.

Justification is an ACT completed in a moment, NOT a process which is only gradually completed.

- you are either justified or you are not.
 - once justified you cannot be Unjustified! You are legally righteous with God for ever, and free from wrath and condemnation. Romans 8:1
- = No man is justified until He repents and believes the Gospel.
it is God’s plan to justify His people, but they are. NOT IN FACT justified until they are united to Chris in effectual calling. Up till then they are lost.
Galatians 2:16. Colossians 1:21-:22.
- = We are justified by faith alone, but the faith that justifies is never alone
- it is always accompanied by good works. James 2:26.
 - these works do not commend us to God.
 - but whoever God justifies He sanctifies (as we shall see), and their lives just cannot be the same as before.

This doctrine of justification by faith is the VERY CENTRE of the Gospel.

- = it is “the article of a standing or falling Church” (Luther)
- = it is the Gospel’s brightest jewel, in which the power and glory of the grace of God brightly shines.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 23

Question.34: What is adoption?

Answer. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, (1) whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God. (2)

(1) 1 John 3:1.

(2) John 1:12, Romans 8:17.

We are looking at the benefits which those who are effectually called enjoy in this life. We have looked at justification. Now we come to adoption.

Not all men are the children of God – only believers.

= in the Old Testament God is only the Father of Abraham's seed. Exodus 4:22. Hosea 11:1.

= in the New Testament God is only the Father of those who repent of their sins and turn to Christ as sin-bearer and master, therefore becoming Abraham's spiritual seed.

Galatians 3:26, 28b, 29. John 1:12. 14:6.

= this sonship is not natural. It is a gift of grace – an adoptive sonship. Galatians 4:4-7. Romans 8:14-17. Ephesians 1:4-5. 1 John 3:1-3.

Some important things to know about this adoption.

= It is the highest privilege which the Gospel offers.

= your sonship is to be the controlling thought in every point of your Christian life:-

- when you think what a disciple is.

Mark 3:35, Matthew 28:9-10, John 20:17-18. Hebrews 2:11-13.

- when you want to know how to behave. Matthew 5:43-45a, 48. 5:16. 6:1-18.

- when you pray. Matthew 6:7-18, 7:7-11.

- when you worry about material things. Matthew 6:25-32.

The moment you forget you are God's child, you will, not able to live your Christian life so as to please Him.

Some things which happen Christian who constantly remembers his adoption.

= **He is overcome by the greatness of God's grace.** 1 John 3:1-3. Luke 15:18, John 17:23.

= **He longs for heaven.**

Adoption means being a 'chosen heir'!

He cannot help thinking of what awaits him. Galatians 4:7. Romans 8:14-19.

= **He stops seeking second experiences.**

For he is well aware that the basic ministry of the Spirit is not to give us power etc, but to be to us the Spirit of adoption! Romans 8:5 Galatians 4:6.

= **He longs for personal holiness.**

He can see what it is – family likeness.

He has a motive for seeking it – to avoid shaming his Father.

He knows how it will come about – instruction and discipline.

How badly we need to recover this truth of adoption.

It is one of the choicest jewels in the treasure-box of God's Word and one of the most neglected.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 24

Question. 35: What is sanctification?

Answer. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, (1) whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, (2) and are gabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. (3)

(1) 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

(2) Ephesians 4:23-24.

(3) Romans 6:4, 6.

We are looking at the benefits which those who are effectually called enjoy in this life. We have looked at justification and adoption; and now come to sanctification, or growing in godliness.

God only sanctifies – so you cannot take any credit for it.

Yet you are active and responsible in, the process of sanctification.

4. Sanctification begins with an inward change,

= When God saved you, the Holy Spirit entered you. Romans 8:9.

= He made you clean, and renewed you inwardly. Titus 3:5.

= He gave you a new heart, - a heart which wants to obey God. Ezekiel 11:19-20.

= You are a new creation, the old has-gone, the new has come.

2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15,

= You have received a new nature. 2 Peter 1:4. Ephesians 4:24. Colossians 3:10.

BUT: - your whole nature was made new in a moment.

- yet it is not made perfect or complete in a moment.

- the new born babe must now grow.

- the new life must assert itself more and more against the remaining power of indwelling sin

2. Sanctification is a process.

= the believer falls into sin, yet is constantly at war with it. Romans 7:7-25.

= he endeavours continually to bring holiness to completeness. 2 Corinthians 7:1.

= this progressive work extends to every part of his personality. 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

= the goal is always likeness to Christ. Romans 8:29, Philippians 1:9-11.

= but entire sanctification will not be ours until are bodies are changed into the likeness of Christ's glorious body. Philippians 3:21. 1 John 3:2. Romans 7:24.

3. Sanctification is our work, yet God's.

= to us comes the call to be holy, the commands to throw off sinful ways, the directions to be like Christ. See 1 Thessalonians 4:3,7. . 1 Peter 1:16. Ephesians 4:17-5:21. 1 Corinthians 11:1. Philippians 2:5.

WE must work!

= from God comes the promise that He Himself is at work in us, and that He will strengthen and assist us. See Philippians 2:13. Romans 8:29. 2 Corinthians 3:18. 4:16. 1 Peter 1:2.

4. Sanctification is chiefly brought about by God's Word,

= It is declared to be God's chosen instrument. Psalms 119:9. John 17:17. 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

= This is why Christ has given to His church men who will enable the people of God to be instructed in His Word.' Ephesians 4:11-16. 1 Timothy 5:17

= So nothing is more important to us in our Christian lives than the proper hearing of the Word of God. Luke 8:18.

= That is our part. God also brings into our lives –experiences which are not pleasant at the time,
but which lead to greater, sanctification. Hebrews 12:10-11.

Let our remembrance of the mercies of God move us to holy living. Romans 12:1-2.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 25

Question.36: What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

Answer. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love.....(1) Romans 5:1-2, 5.

Once we are effectually called we enjoy Justification, adoption and sanctification. Hand-in-hand with these go many other blessings, which we enjoy in this life.' The first of these is ASSURANCE.

1. Why some believers do, not have assurance.

(i) Some look upon the very idea with suspicion.

Yet the Bible makes it plain that it is the believer's NORMAL experience.
See Romans 5:1-2. 2 Timothy 4:7-8. 1 John 3:14. Galatians 2:20 etc...

(ii) Some are put off by their failures and sins.

Because they are not sanctified as they should be, they doubt that they are even justified.

(iii) Some have a stereotyped idea of conversion.

This often Come from listening to many testimonies.
They do not fit the normal pattern - so they wonder if they are saved.

(iv) Some mix up 'faith' and 'strong faith'.

Because they are not as 'saintly' as everybody else, they doubt that they are saints at all.

2. Some people have false assurance.

They think they are true believers, when they are NOT.

NONE of the following things is a proof that you are a believe:-

= possession of spiritual gifts

= correct doctrine

= conviction of sin

= disillusionment with the world.

= the Bible 'speaking' to you

3. TRUE assurance.

True assurance comes this way:-

= you see how God describes true believers in His Word.

= you ask yourself whether you fit the description.

The marks of a Christian:-

- faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
- a unique attitude to indwelling sin
- brotherly love

The work of the Spirit :-

- He it is who has provided the description of true believers in the Word.
- He does not work independently of these evidences, these descriptions.
- But He takes hold of, the description, and BY MEANS of them persuades you, - that you are such a person as has been described. - that the general description is personally true of you.

So then

- assurance does not come by the Word alone,
- nor does it come by the Spirit alone....

It comes by the Spirit working through the Word.

- it was by this means that you were effectually called, and brought into the blessings of justification, adoption and sanctification.
- it is by the SAME means that you are brought to be SURE that you are in such a happy condition.

We may then expect

- your assurance to increase, the more you are exposed to the Word which the Spirit uses.
- your assurance to 'decrease, if you turn from the Word, or neglect it.

But it is important to stress that the ordinary-believer, by using ordinary means, may come to FULL ASSURANCE of his salvation.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 26

Question.36: What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

Answer. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance, of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, (1) increase of grace, (2) and perseverance therein to the end. (3)

(1) Romans 5:1-2, 5. (2) Proverbs 4:18. (3) 1 John 5:13. 1 Peter 1:5. 2 Peter 1:10.

All that we said about assurance last week also applies to peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost.

We covered the subject of increase in grace, when we looked at sanctification. So today we come to consider PERSEVERANCE TO THE END.

1. All true believers persevere to the end.

= God saves His people by giving them faith in His Son (Ephesians 2:8-10).
If they should lose their faith, they would lose their salvation (1 Peter 1:5).

= this would mean God's purposes would be defeated.
He would no longer be GOD: Isaiah 46:10, Ephesians 1:11 would not be true.

= For God thus to lose His elect would mean He had changed, denied Himself, and done something which did not stand for ever. This is impossible.
See Malachi 4:6. 2 Timothy 2:13, Ecclesiastes 3:14.

= Specific texts make it clear that true believers will never be lost, but will persevere to the end.
See John 10:27-30, Romans 8:28-30, Ephesians 1:13-14) Philippians 1:6, 1 Peter 1:3-5...

= The pictures used to: describe salvation make it clear that all true believers will persevere the end, and finally arrive in glory.

- eternal life
- born-again
- united to Christ as His bride; His building
- sons of God, and brothers of Christ'

This is a truth giving unspeakable comfort.

But it does not lead us to take our salvation for granted, and to live as we please, as we shall now make clear.

2. Those who do not persevere to the end are not true believers.

We are not talking here, about backsliders. There are such people. But backsliding in Scripture is exceptional, never normal. It is a temporary condition, eventually repented of; never a settled state in which a believer is content to remain permanently.

We are asserting that those who do not return to the faith but rather depart from it, are NOT God's children. They are not true believers; but lost.

= The Father chose His people to be His HOLY people; the Son died to purify them; the Spirit gives them a new nature. Ephesians 1:4. Titus 2:14, Ezekiel 36:26...

Those who fail to bring forth such continuing characteristics just cannot be considered to be the people of God.

= This is the whole point of the Parable of the Sower, Luke 8:5-15. The only genuine believers are those who hear the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

= This is the Lord's teaching in the figure of the Vine, John 15:1-8. Only' those who constantly bear fruit are true branches and real disciples. All others only appear to be joined to Him; and are ultimately lost.

= Nowhere in the New Testament is a professing believer who has failed to persevere in holiness permitted to think of himself as a true child of God; Romans 8:13, Galatians 4:11. 5:19-26. Hebrews 3:6, 14. 6:4-8. 2 Peter 2:20-22. 1 John 2:4-5, 15, 3:14. 1 John 5:1, 18.

So:-

= Do not say that just because you have made a profession you are 'eternally secure'. YOU are not exempt from falling away. 1 Corinthians 9:27. 10:12.

= Take steps to ensure that you DO persevere, counting on God's help.

Philippians 2:12-13, 2 Peter 1:10.

- mortify sin, Matthew 5:27-30, Romans 8:13.
- use the means of grace. Acts 2:42.

= And tenderly warn professing believers who sin wilfully that IF THEY STAY AS THEY ARE they will be- lost; and 'so urge them to repent and to return to the Lord. See Acts 8:20-24, Galatians 6:1.

For perseverance is the mark of a true Christian.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 27

Question.37: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?

Answer. The souls of believers are at death made perfect in holiness, (1) and do immediately pass into glory; (2) and their bodies, being skill united to Christ, (3) do rest in their graves till the resurrection.(4)

(1) Hebrews 12:23. (2) 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6, 8. Philippians 1:23. Luke 23:43.
(3) 1 Thessalonians 4:14. (4) Isaiah 57:22. John 5:128-29. Job 19:26-27.

We have seen the benefits which believers receive in this life.
We now consider the benefits they receive from Christ at death:

The Intermediate State.

At death we do not reach our final state; nor do we remain as we were.
It is therefore an intermediate state - between our present and final states.

- = you are not just a body, but body and soul (or spirit).
- = death is the separation of body and soul,
- = the body returns to the dust, and sees corruption. Genesis 3:9. Acts 13:36.
- = believers' souls pass into glory (see texts above).
- = unbelievers begin their torment. Luke 16:19-31.

As far as the body is concerned - death is the same for believers and unbelievers.
As far as the soul is concerned - death is entirely different for the two.

Two errors to reject.

Soul-sleep.

- this is contradicted by the texts above. (2. and Luke 16:19-31).
- death is sometimes described as 'asleep' for believers, because:-
 - o the body in death looks very similar to someone asleep.
 - o the body is unconscious, as in sleep,
 - o the soul is conscious; as it is, to some extent, in sleep.

Purgatory.

- this is the teaching that there is an intermediate place, which is neither heaven nor hell, where the redeemed must suffer and be purified from their sins, before entering heaven. Certain acts by people on earth can shorten the time of those in purgatory.
- there is NO mention at all of such teaching in the Word of God; the teaching arose very many centuries after our Lord returned to heaven.
- it is a complete denial of the truth that Christ has borne ALL our penalty, and reckoned to us PERFECT righteousness (the doctrine of justification).

The body is not forgotten.

- not only the soul matters to God, but also the body - the whole person.
- to be with Christ, but without a body, is to fall short of our ultimate hope. 2 Corinthians 5:1-8.
- the believer longs, not for the intermediate state, but the final state, the resurrection.
Romans 8:23. 2 Corinthians 5:4.
- he may be certain that this will take place, and that he will have the glorious body he waits for
- Job 19:26-27, John 5:28-29, 1 Corinthians 15:49-58. Philippians 3:20-21, 1 John 3:1-3.

Why believers die.

Death is the 'wages of sin'.

But Christ has borne our sin - so why do we need to die??

Be sure of this:-

= death will one day lose all power over the believer. 1 Corinthians 15:26.

= even now, it has already lost its sting. 1 Corinthians 15:55-56.

= if you die, even this will be for your good. Romans 8:28.

= and you will not be any further from God's love. Romans 8:38-39.

Remember this:-

= death is not something which happens at the end of life - it is the state we are in by nature, of which physical death is the logical consequence.
Genesis 2:17. Ephesians 2:1.

= when we are saved we are delivered from the spiritual condition called death. John 5:24. 1 John 3:14. This is the first resurrection.

= but we are NOT YET delivered from the physical condition called death.
In this way both saved and lost live side by side in the world, and God's method of saving (i.e. the preaching of His Word by mortal men) continues.

= But just as He HAS delivered our souls from death's power, He WILL deliver our bodies, John 5:25-29.

A summary of the Christian Faith (The Shorter Catechism) No 28

Question.38: What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

Answer. At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, (1) shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgement, (2) and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God(3) to all eternity. (4)

(1) John 5:28-29, 1 Corinthians 15:43.

(2) Matthew 10:32, 25:23.

(3) 1 Corinthians 13:12, 1 John 3:2.

(4) 1 Thessalonians 4:17-18.

We have seen what believers receive from Christ in this life; and at death.
We now consider what they receive from Him at the resurrection.

The Resurrection of the body.

This truth is offensive to the unconverted. Acts 26:8.

But is at the very centre of our faith. 1 Corinthians 15:13-19.

HOW the dead will be raised is explained in 1 –Corinthians 15:35-58.

- there will be continuity and identity between the old body and the new
- yet there will be diversity - the new body is infinitely more' glorious.
- it is patterned on Christ's resurrection body.
- it is to be free from corruption, dishonour, weakness, this-worldliness.
- it will be formed in a moment.

The Last Day.

When Christ comes:-

- all men without exception will be raised from the dead. John 5:28-29.
- believers, previously dead, or still alive, will be changed. 1 Corinthians 15:50-57.
- they will be like Christ. Philippians 3:20-21, 1 John 3:1-3.

- the world will burn; out of which will come the new heavens & earth. 2 Peter 3:11f.
- the whole human race will be judged. Matthew 25:31ff, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Revelation 20:11-13.
- and consigned to their eternal destinies. Matthew 13:41-43, 25:46, Revelation 20 & 21.

The full enjoying- of God to all eternity.

Heaven is beyond our mortal understanding:-

= Paul was caught up into heaven, and witnessed things which cannot, and must not, be put into words. 2 Corinthians 1:1-4.

= The Word of God uses pictures to give us a faint understanding of what heaven will be like:-

- a barn - Matthew 3:12, 13:30,43.
- the Father's house - John 14:2
- a city, heavenly Jerusalem - Hebrews 11:16, 12:22
- a country, better than anything here on earth - Hebrews 11:16
- an inheritance of treasure - 1 Peter 1:4

= We are clearly told what awaits us there:-

- the unveiled blessing of the Father. Matthew 25:34
- all we ever hoped for. Colossians 1:5
- a reward - Hebrews 10:34-35
- the perfect - 1 Corinthians 13:10,12.
- the presence and sight of the Lord:- John 17:24. 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Revelation 22:3-4.

= Yes, our destination is the new heavens and the "new earth in which dwells righteousness". Matthew 19:28, Acts 3:21, Hebrews 12:27, 2 Peter 3:13.

= The new Jerusalem will have descended. out of heaven from God; the present distinctions of material / spiritual, .Visible / invisible, will have been wiped away; we shall have entered on our final joy; AND GOD WILL BE ALL IN ALL. Revelation 21 & 22.

