

Magnum

THE
CATECHISM
OF THE
METHODIST CHURCH



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THREEPENCE NET

TO ALL WHO TEACH THE CATECHISM

In issuing this Catechism, the Conference seeks to place in the hands of parents, class-leaders, Sunday-school teachers, and others a statement of Christian truth as it is held in the Methodist Church, which shall be fairly simple and complete. The Catechism is meant primarily for the use of those who teach, and only through them for the use of those who learn. It is not intended for children under nine years of age, and nothing should be learnt by heart until it has been explained and illustrated by a parent or teacher. It is only by such explanation and illustration that any catechism can be made interesting. Further, it is not always possible to express a great Christian truth in two or three sentences without using words that need explaining to a child. It is an important part of the purpose of a Catechism to explain words which every Christian should understand. Where the Catechism is only used once a week, as in Sunday-schools, it is expected that it will take some years to cover the whole series of Questions and Answers. At least one entire lesson should be given to each Question. Some will require several lessons. The later Questions and Answers have been deliberately framed for elder scholars only.

The Catechism has been divided into sections in order to show its general plan. The title of each section is not meant to give an exhaustive account of its contents, but only to indicate the subjects dealt with in the majority of the Questions that it contains.

While this Catechism is based upon the Bible, it will be noticed that no 'proof texts' are

appended to the Answers, and that they do not often include direct quotations from Scripture. It seems better to lay upon the teacher the responsibility of showing the way in which the Answers depend upon Scripture, rather than to attempt to do so by the quotation of isolated texts.

In more ways than one, therefore, the right use of the Catechism will make great demands on the teacher. It is neither possible nor desirable to avoid this. In order further to help teachers in their great work the Methodist Publishing House has issued a work by the Rev. C. F. Hunter, B.A., entitled *Lesson Helps on the New Catechism of the Methodist Church*. Mr. Hunter shows the way in which the Answers summarize the teaching of the Bible, and explains and illustrates them. If the Catechism is rightly and widely used, the Conference confidently anticipates that the Methodist youth of today will in the future be able to give an intelligent account of the faith that is in them.

I.—GOD AND MAN

When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers,

The moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained;

What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?

And the son of man, that Thou visitest him?

For Thou hast made him but little lower than God.

(Ps. viii. 3-5).

(Memory passages: Ps. viii.; Ps. cxxxix. 1-12; Luke xii. 22-28).

1. Who is God?

God is our Father in heaven, made known to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. How ought we to think of our Father in heaven?

Our Father in heaven is the one living and true God, perfectly holy, loving and good.

3. What further do we believe about God?

God is Spirit, one who always has been and always will be; He is everywhere and knows all things.

4. By whom have all things been made?

God has made all things, and He loves and cares for all that He has made.

5. What is man?

Man is the highest creature on earth; for, being made in the likeness of God, he thinks, and wills, and loves.

6. Why did God make man?

God made man that he might know, love, and serve Him and be with Him for ever.

7. What is the law of God for man?

The law of God is His will made known to man for his welfare; it declares what every man ought to be and to do.

8. How did our Lord sum up the whole law?

Our Lord summed up the whole law in two great Commandments: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind'; and 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

9. How are we taught to show our love to our neighbour?

Jesus taught us in the Sermon on the Mount: 'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them.'

10. **What is sin?**

Sin is disobedience to the will of our heavenly Father in thought, word, or deed.

11. **Can we be saved from sin?**

We have all sinned, and cannot save ourselves; but God our Father, in His great love, has given us a Saviour to take away the sins of the whole world.

II.—CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

(John iii. 16).

(Memory passages: Ps. li.; Luke iv. 16-21; Rom. v. 1-11).

12. **Who is this Saviour?**

The Saviour of mankind is our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

13. **How did the Son of God give Himself for us?**

The Son of God became man, in order that He might reveal the love of the Father, teach men His holy will, die for our sins, and rise again, that He might destroy sin and give us life eternal.

14. **How did Jesus show that He was divine?**

Jesus showed that He was divine by His perfect knowledge of God, His sinless life, the wisdom and authority of His words, His wonderful works, and His rising again from the dead.

15. **How did Jesus show that He cared for children?**

Jesus, who was once Himself a child, said:

'Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God'; and He took them in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them.

16. **What does the life of Christ on earth teach us?**

The life of Christ on earth teaches us what God is, and what man ought to be.

17. **What does the death of Christ teach us?**

The suffering and death of Christ for sinners teaches us the terrible evil of sin and the wonderful love of God.

18. **What does the resurrection of Christ teach us?**

The resurrection of Christ teaches us that He has conquered the power of sin, has triumphed over death, and reigns for ever as our Forerunner, Redeemer and Lord.

III.—THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SALVATION

There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

(Rom. viii. 1).

(Memory passages: Rom. viii. 1-4, 12-17, 31-39).

19. **How does Christ still continue His work for men?**

Christ still continues His work for men, by giving His Holy Spirit according to His promise, to work in their hearts and to fulfil the purpose of His grace.

20. **What is the grace of God?**

The grace of God is His undeserved love which yearns over all men, and seeks to bring them into holy and happy communion with Himself.

21. **What must we do to be saved from sin ?**
In order to be saved we must repent of our sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.
22. **What is repentance ?**
To repent is to be truly sorry for sin, and to seek forgiveness from God, with steadfast purpose to sin no more.
23. **What is saving faith ?**
The faith that saves us is such a trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as leads us to rely on Him alone as our Saviour, and binds us to Him as our Lord and Master.
24. **How can we repent and believe ?**
We are enabled to repent of sin and believe in Christ as our Saviour, because the Holy Spirit is ever working in our hearts.
25. **What more does the Holy Spirit do for those who believe ?**
The Holy Spirit 'bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God'; He enables us to know and do the will of Christ; He helps us in prayer, cleanses us from sin, and fills our hearts with love to God and man.
26. **What is meant by the Holy Trinity ?**
We learn from the New Testament that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, three Persons, are one God.

IV.—CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of

your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

(Rom. xii. 1, 2).

(Memory passages: Matt. v. 3-10; Rom. xii. 19-21; Eph. iv. 23-v. 21).

27. **How should Christians show that they are true disciples of Christ ?**
A true Christian should in all things show his love to Christ by obeying His commandments and thus fulfilling his duty towards God and towards men.
28. **What is your duty towards God ?**
My duty towards God is to believe in Him as our Father in heaven, to worship Him reverently as Maker and Lord of heaven and earth, and to love Him with all my heart and mind and soul and strength.
29. **How ought a Christian to behave towards others ?**
In all things a Christian ought to act as Jesus would have him act;—not to hurt any one by deed of word, nor even in thought or feeling; but to be truthful, honest, just, and loving in all his dealings with others, doing to them as he would they should do to him.
30. **How ought you as a Christian to serve others ?**

I ought to do all the good I can; to help those who are in need or in trouble; to bear patiently any wrong done to me, and to forgive those who may injure me, and to return good for evil; to give as much happiness as I can to those about me; and especially to try to bring others to know the Saviour.

31. What are some of your daily duties ?

It is my duty to love, honour, and obey my father and mother, to show love and loyalty in home and school, to be both just and generous to those with whom and for whom I work, to show respect to all lawful authority, and to take my part in serving the Church, my country, and mankind.

32. What is your duty to yourself ?

As my life is a trust from God, I ought to keep my body and mind clean and pure and fit for His service, to be cheerful and brave in spirit, to use and improve all my powers, and to seek by industry and thrift both to provide for my own needs and to be of service to my fellow-men.

V.—THE CHURCH

For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.

(Matt. xviii. 20).

(Memory passages: Matt. xviii. 15-20; xxviii. 18-20; John xvii. 20-23; Acts ii. 41-47).

33. What is the Church of Christ ?

The Church of Christ is the whole company of those who accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

34. What is the duty of the Church to the world ?

The duty of the Church to the world is to set forth in its own fellowship the Christian way of living, to 'go into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation', and thus bring every part of the life of every nation under His sway.

35. Are there more Churches than one ?

There are many communions of Christians in the world, differing in race and language, in doctrine and usage; yet all these, though now scattered and divided, form one Church universal in Him by whose name they are called.

36. What is the Methodist Church ?

The Methodist Church is an organized communion of Christians which has grown out of the work of John Wesley, who was raised up by God in the eighteenth century to revive religion in Britain, and 'to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land'.

37. Are there other Methodist Churches ?

John Wesley claimed that the world was his parish, and through the labours of his helpers and followers great Methodist Churches have been established in other lands.

38. What are the characteristic features of Methodist doctrine ?

Methodist doctrine lays stress upon the truth of universal redemption; upon a personal experience of salvation by faith, assured to the believer by the witness of the Holy Spirit; and upon the possibility of a Christian life made perfect here in love.

39. What are characteristic usages of Methodism ?

Methodism makes special provision for the practice of Christian fellowship, and for the laity to serve with the ministry in the preaching and pastoral offices of the Church.

VI.—THE SACRAMENTS & WORSHIP

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. (Acts ii. 42).

(Memory passages: Matt. vii. 7-11; Pa. c.; 1 Cor. xi. 23-26).

40. What are the Sacraments ?

The Sacraments are the two sacred rites of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which were appointed by Christ Himself to be outward signs and means of inward grace and spiritual blessing.

41. What is the Sacrament of Baptism ?

Baptism with water into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is the sacrament of admission into the visible Church of Christ.

42. What is the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ?

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the partaking of bread and wine in thankful remembrance of Christ's death upon the Cross for the redemption of the world.

43. What is signified by this bread and wine ?

The bread and wine in the Lord's Supper signify the body and blood of Christ, which are spiritually received by the faithful to the strengthening and refreshing of their souls.

44. Why should Christians regularly partake of the Lord's Supper ?

All Christians should regularly partake of the Lord's Supper, because our Lord Himself has bidden us come, and because in it the faithful have union with Him, who is verily present.

45. What further meaning has this Sacrament ?

In the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper the servants of Christ renew their pledge of loyalty to Him, and in Him have fellowship one with another.

46. What is prayer ?

Prayer is communion with God in Christ; in it we adore Him, give thanks for His blessings, confess our sins, ask His good gifts for ourselves and others, renew our vows, and listen to His inward voice.

47. What is the Bible ?

The Bible is the name given to the sacred writings of the Old and New Testaments, which are the inspired record of God's gradual revelation of Himself, given to mankind and perfected in Jesus Christ. So understood, the Holy Scriptures are for Christians the sufficient rule of faith and practice.

48. Why do we observe the Lord's Day ?

It is the will of God that one day in seven should be kept for rest and worship. Christians keep Sunday as this day, because Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week, which is therefore called 'the Lord's Day'.

49. What is the purpose of the public worship of God ?

In public worship Christians meet in the name of Christ that together they may pray to God, praise His holy name, offer their gifts, hear His word, build each other up in their most holy faith, and proclaim the gospel of His grace.

VII.—THE FUTURE LIFE

In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. (John xiv. 2).

(Memory passages: Matt. xxv. 31-46; Rom. viii. 18-23).

50. What do we mean by the Future Life?

By the Future Life we mean that death is not the end for any man, but that there is a life of the world to come—for the good, blessedness with God; for the evil, misery without Him.

51. What are we taught concerning the Second Coming of Christ?

Jesus taught us that, at a time known only to the Father, He will appear in glory, and that for His appearing we should always be ready.

52. What is meant by the last judgement?

All men must appear before 'the judgement-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad'.

53. What do Christians hope for when they die?

Christians believe that at death they will depart to be with Christ: that He will change the body of our low estate and fashion it like unto the body of His glory; and that so we shall be for ever with the Lord.

54. What do we mean by the Resurrection?

By the Resurrection we mean the complete and final victory over death and the grave, assured to the children of God by the resurrection of Christ Himself.

55. What is meant by the consummation of all things?

We believe that God's world is at present only in the making; and that, when the kingdom of Christ through the work of His Church is complete, God's purposes of grace for the whole creation will be gloriously accomplished, 'that God may be all in all'.

The Ten Commandments.

God spake all these words, saying:—

1. Thou shalt have none other gods before Me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.
4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is a sabbath unto the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days

* *i.e.* beside (R. V. Marg.).

the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

5. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
6. Thou shalt do no murder.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. (Exod. xx. 1-17).

The Ten Commandments in shorter form

God spake all these words, saying:—

1. Thou shalt have none other gods before* Me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.
4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is a sabbath unto the LORD thy God.
5. Honour thy father and thy mother.
6. Thou shalt do no murder.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

* i.e. beside (R. V. Marg.).

8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness.
10. Thou shalt not covet.

The Two Great Commandments

Jesus said:—

Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets. (Matt. xxii. 37-40).

The New Commandment

Jesus said:—

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love^{to} one to another.

(John xiii. 34, 35).

The Beatitudes

Jesus opened His mouth and taught, saying:—

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. v. 3-10).

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil : For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth :

And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into hell* ; The third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty ; From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost ; The holy Catholic Church ; The Communion of Saints ; The Forgiveness of sins ; The Resurrection of the body, And the life everlasting. Amen.

* i.e. Hades ; or the abode of departed spirits.