

The Westminster Shorter Catechism

Introduction

It has been my desire to put together a commentary on the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* for a while now. At the age of sixty-five, I have had sufficient experience in the ministry as well as in teaching catechism that I believe such an attempt is warranted. Surely, I am not the only one to have undertaken such an endeavor, and I surely will not be the last.

Previously, I put together a 400-page-plus workbook on the Heidelberg Catechism, and now it is time for me to do something similar with the Westminster Shorter Catechism. For the convenience of the reader, I have put the questions and answers into modern English (no slang), which basically means that I have removed the “-eths” from the words.

Unless otherwise specified, all of the Bible verses will be from the English Standard Version. I have also divided the questions up by age group. Adults will, therefore, have more in-depth questions than the younger participants.

In our day and age where precious few truly understand the Christian faith—even Christians—I am convinced that adults desperately need catechism as much, if not more, than young people. What kind of legacy can adults pass on to the younger generation if the adults are bereft of scriptural knowledge as well as having a good overview in the catechism? The short answer is: little or none.

In Thomas Manton’s introductory epistle to the reader of the Westminster Standards, he penned these trenchant words: “I cannot suppose you to be such a stranger in England as to be ignorant of the general complaint concerning the decay of the power of godliness, and more especially of the great corruption of youth. Wherever you go, you will hear men crying out about bad children and bad servants; whereas indeed the source of the mischief must be sought a little higher: it is bad parents and bad master that make bad children and bad servants; and we cannot blame so much their untowardness, as our own negligence in their education.” I totally agree and would also add: *and in our own negligence of our own spiritual education.*

Manton goes on to make the point that “A family is the seminary of Church and State.” Have you ever paused and considered the truth of what he says? In our day and age, people would look at you strangely if you suggested that their home is a seminary, let alone a seminary for Church and State. But modern man and the modern Christian are both wrong. Today we have fragmented homes where dad does his thing, mom is busier pursuing her career and goals than she is being a Christian homekeeper (by way of explanation I call the male spiritual leader the *homemaker*. He sets the tone and goals in the home. The wife is the *keeper* of the home the man makes.), and the kids are busy preparing to attend some prestigious secular university, where the left-wing tenured professors will brainwash them into believing that the Christian faith is just bunk.

Statistic after statistic reminds us of just how ignorant the modern Church is even of the elementary truths of the faith. It is my hope and prayer that this workbook will serve to shore up the spiritual knowledge of the adults, who will, in turn, pass a rich heritage and legacy along to their children, grandchildren, and covenant children in their local congregation.

It is my prayer that this workbook will serve to teach you what it means to live life in the presence of an audience of one—*the One*, our Triune God.

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