

FOREWORD

“Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

PRODUCING A CATECHISM

The process of actually working on a catechism, at the request of the General Synod, grew on us all, the members of the Doctrine Commission. We found it surprising, for some of our members have remained sceptical about its *practical use* in the Church, and perhaps even more of us shared reservations about the educational theories underlying the traditional *form* of a catechism. It would be true, too, that in the very beginning it all seemed a great chore.

All of that changed, radically, due mainly to the creative energy of the Reverend Dr. Peter Jensen, now Principal of Moore College, Sydney. The Church will acknowledge its debt to him the more closely it examines, and uses, our finished text. For that's what it became, *our* text. Despite the abovementioned scepticism and hesitation, every member of the Doctrine Commission became thoroughly involved in the whole process — of writing sections, framing questions, criticising answers, disagreeing violently with one another's theology — realising gradually what a large investment we all shared in reaching a satisfactory summary of Christian faith as received by, and worthy to be transmitted to, fellow Anglicans.

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TRIAL USE AND EVALUATION

We believe that what has now been published, and is in your hands, needs to be used by as many of our clergy, teachers and learners as we can muster. We believe that if you use this catechism for the purposes for which it has been published, you will share in a very rewarding discussion of matters fundamental to Christian faith and life.

We do not look for your passive acceptance of our work, and we dare not expect your total agreement with all of our answers. We request you to give this catechism trial use, and to inform us directly of your reactions to our work.

May I be forgiven if I ask your indulgence, too? Would you please remember that the General Synod asked for a catechism — so we have foregone any attempt to justify the form, or to discuss educational theory: that, properly, should be argued in the Synod itself, whose servants we are privileged to be.

We now submit "What We Believe" to the Church, expecting that it will be returned to the General Synod of 1989 for acceptance. The intervening four year period will give ample opportunity for experiment and use, as well as time for you to report your findings to us.

The Rt. Rev. M. M. Thomas, M.A., B.D., Th.D.,
Chairman of the
Doctrine Commission of General Synod

PREFACE

The task of learning and teaching the Christian faith is fundamental to the existence of the Church. Catechisms have helped this process for hundreds of years, by providing brief and accurate introductions to Christian doctrines.

Since General Synod 1977, the Doctrine Commission has had before it the challenge of producing a statement suitable for instruction in the faith. The Commission had access to revised catechisms produced in England and America, but it chose to create its own statement, as is appropriate for the Australian Church.

While the Commission aimed at simplicity in form, it did not attempt to produce a catechism for young children. Nor does it intend to suggest that the catechism on its own is a sufficient basis for Christian Education.

Rather, the catechism should be thought of as a standard of doctrine for the instruction of those of teenage years and above, to be used by a teacher who would present supplementary material, expand as desirable and explain Biblical references. It is hoped that a set of accompanying lessons may be produced to assist in this process.

The tradition has been observed of making the catechism in the main an exposition of the Creed, Lord's Prayer and Commandments, using the question and answer method. The catechism is personal in tone, however, as is indicated by the opening question and answer:

What is the purpose of your life?

To love God as he loves me. JOHN 17:26

This personal tone is meant to give expression to the fact that relationships with God and with others are at the heart of the Christian faith. This principle guided the order and treatment of topics also: Knowing God (the Creed), Growing in God (Scripture, prayer, church, sacraments), Obeying God (love of God and neighbours), and Hoping in God (present assurance of future glory).

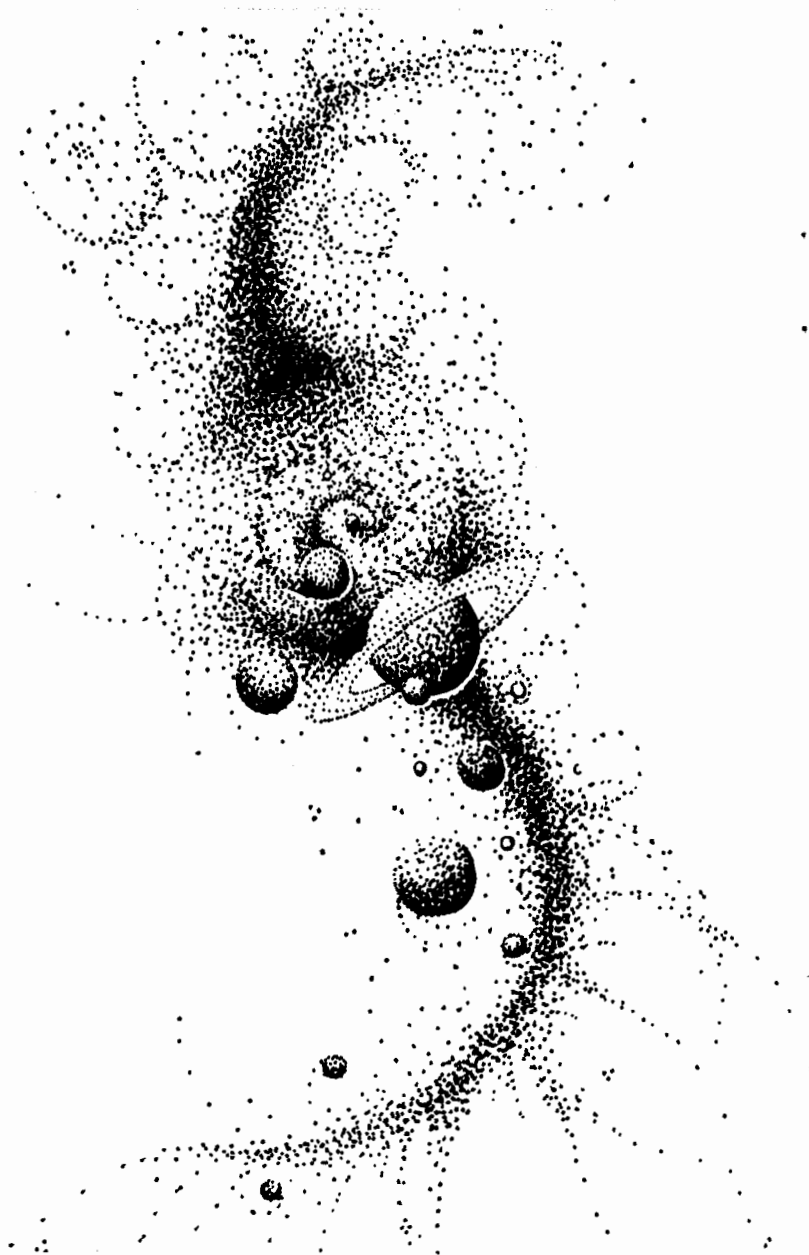
The Commission hopes that the catechism will be used to strengthen Christian faith and obedience and unite us in a common commitment to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

J. R. Gaden, M.A., Th.D.
Secretary

On behalf of the
Doctrine Commission of the General Synod

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PART I

Knowing God

1. What is the purpose of your life?

To love God as he loves me. JOHN 17:26

2. How do you come to know God's love?

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. JOHN 1:18

3. How do you respond to God's love?

By putting my faith in Jesus Christ
through the Holy Spirit, ROMANS 10:9
I am strengthened to trust, love and
hope in God, 1 CORINTHIANS 13:13
to pray to him
and to become obedient to him. ROMANS 6:16, 17

4. Who is this God whom you know and love?

The one true and living God, ISAIAH 46:9
who is holy and merciful, loving
and gracious, EXODUS 33:19
and is made known to us
as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. 2 CORINTHIANS 13:14

5. Why do you call God holy?

Because God is distinct from us and all
created things, ISAIAH 40:25, 26
and yet heaven and earth are full of
his glory. ISAIAH 6:3
God alone is perfectly just and good,
HOSEA 11:9
hating evil, yet forgiving our sins. EXODUS 34:6, 7

6. Who is the Lord Jesus Christ?

He is God the eternal Son, the Word of
God become man. JOHN 1:1
When the time had fully come,
God kept his promises to Abraham, Moses,
David and all his prophets.
He sent his Son into the world,
born of the virgin Mary,
so that we may become God's children. GALATIANS 4:4, 5
Although he lived without sin
amongst God's people
he was put to death on a cross for us. ROMANS 5:6
But God raised him from death
and made him Lord of all.
He now reigns in heaven, saving those who
come to God through him
and praying for them without ceasing. HEBREWS 7:25
He will come again as our
Saviour and Judge. 1 THESSALONIANS 1:9, 10

7. Why do you call him Lord and Saviour?

Because by his coming, his death,
his resurrection and ascension,
he has conquered evil,
rescuing me from darkness
and the condemnation I deserve, 1 PETER 2:9
bringing me into his marvellous light, COLOSSIANS 1: 12-14
forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. JOHN 3:16
He is, therefore, my Lord and Saviour ROMANS 10:13
and, in grateful obedience,
I make it my aim in all things
to follow and to please him. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:9

8. Who is God the Father?

He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the holy Creator of all that is.
Through his Word and by his Spirit
he made the universe,
and sustains every part of it
for his glory and delight.
In love, he sent his Son Jesus Christ to his
chosen people, Israel,
so that they,
with all who were without God
and without hope,
might have peace with God
and access in the one Spirit to him.

PSALM 33:6
REVELATION 4:11
MATTHEW 10:29, 30
EPHESIANS 2:17, 18

9. Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God.
He is the Lord,
the giver of life,
and he has spoken by the prophets.
The Lord Jesus sent him to be with his
first disciples at Pentecost,
and he sends him now so that he might
dwell with us,
to pour God's love into our hearts,
enabling us to grow in his likeness
and to serve one another in love.
By him I understand that God is my Father
who cares for me continually,
and I learn to trust him and
to pray to him.

ROMANS 8:9
PSALM 104:30
ROMANS 5:5
2 CORINTHIANS 3:18
EPHESIANS 4:1-3
GALATIANS 4:6

10. Why do you call him the giver of life?

Because he breathes life into all things
and gives God's children new birth.
He opens the word of God to us
and leads us into truth,
empowering us to call God our Father
and Christ our Lord.

JOHN 3:5
1 CORINTHIANS 12:3

11. What is the summary of your belief as found in the Apostles' Creed?

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

Amen.



PART II

Growing In God

12. What is faith?

Faith is trust in God,
who always remains
faithful to his promises.

ROMANS 4:5
PSALM 145:13

13. How does faith begin?

Through hearing God's word,
responding to his call
and turning to Christ.

ROMANS 10:17

**14. How does your faith and confidence
in God grow stronger?**

By my experience of God's love,
as I offer my life to him
and learn to rely on his promises.

1 PETER 2: 2,3

**15. How does God teach us about himself
and his promises?**

God teaches us through the Holy Scriptures
which come to us as the word.
In them God addresses us by his Spirit,
calls us into salvation in Christ Jesus
and equips us for every good work
in his service.

ROMANS 15:4
1 THESSALONIANS 1:5
2 TIMOTHY 3:16, 17



**16. How else do you grow in your
knowledge and love of God?**

My friendship with him also deepens
as I grow in prayer,
as I gather with God's people,
as I receive the sacraments and
as I do God's will.

ACTS 2:42

17. What is prayer?

Prayer is my response to God
in which I listen to his word and
converse with him,
lift up my heart to him to adore and
thank him for his goodness,
confess my sins to him and
ask him to bless us.

PHILLIPIANS 4:6, 7

**18. What gives you the confidence
to pray?**

Only the love of God, who has made us
his children.
I know that God the Father gives good
gifts to his children;
God the Son tells us to pray
in his name;
God the Spirit helps us pray,
and prays for us
according to the will of God.

LUKE 11:13
JOHN 16:24

ROMANS 8:26, 27

19. For what should you pray?

I may cast all my cares on our heavenly Father,
but I should pray in particular that:
God may be known truly as God in all the world;
God's kingdom may come and the Lord Jesus
be revealed in all his glory and power;
God's character may be seen clearly
as people everywhere do his will;
God's provision for our needs may continue,
especially that he will give us his Holy Spirit;
God may forgive us our sins
for the sake of his Son;
God may give us the victory
when we are tempted by the world,
the flesh and the devil.

MATTHEW 6:9-13

20. What is the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples?

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours now and forever. Amen.

MATTHEW 6:9-13

21. Who are the people of God?

God's people are those,
in heaven or on earth,
who have been redeemed and purified
by Jesus Christ and so belong to him.
God's people are also known as
the church of God,
the temple of the Lord,
God's household,
Christ's Body,
Christ's Bride
and by many other titles.

TITUS 2:14

MATTHEW 16:18

1 PETER 2:5

EPHESIANS 2:19,20

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12

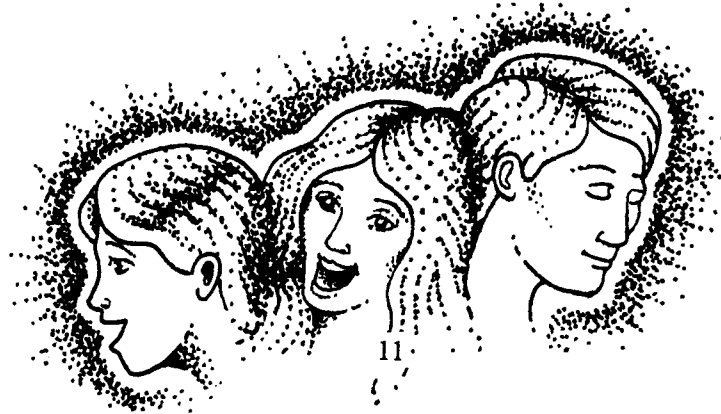
EPHESIANS 5:23-27

22. How do you recognise the church of God on earth?

The true church is seen to worship God
as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
It serves the Lord Jesus Christ
as its Head.
He guides and nourishes it through his word
and by his sacraments as they are preached,
administered and faithfully received.

EPHESIANS 4: 15,16

COLOSSIANS 3:16



23. How else does the church help you to grow in Christ?

Christ blesses his people, the church,
through the ministry of word
and sacrament

and other gifts of his Spirit:

He meets our needs through
such ministries as
prophecy and prayer,
counselling and absolution,
generosity and service
and special care for the sick and dying.

ROMANS 12:3-8

By obeying his word and using these gifts
in love

the members of Christ's body help each
other

to become more and more like Christ,
and are equipped for their service of the Gospel
in the world.

EPHESIANS 4:11-14

24. What is promised in the Gospel?

Through the Gospel we receive the good
news of God's steadfast love for us and for all,

the forgiveness of sins,
his promised Holy Spirit,
eternal life and the kingdom of God.

All these gifts of God are found
in Jesus Christ,

who loved us and gave himself for us.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:20

GALATIANS 2:20

**25. What are the sacraments instituted
by Christ himself in his Gospel?**

Baptism and the Lord's Supper
are the sacraments, or signs,
of the Gospel of salvation
in which the promises of the Gospel
are proclaimed, appropriated
and enjoyed through faith.

MATTHEW 26:26-29

MATTHEW 28:18-20

26. What does God promise you in Baptism?

God forgives me my sin,
gives me new birth as the child of God
and inheritor of his kingdom
and admits me to membership of
Christ's Body, the Church.

ACTS 22:16

ROMANS 6:3,4

For my part, I promise to repent of my sins,
to renounce evil and to trust steadfastly
in the Lord Jesus Christ.

ACTS 2:38

**27. Why then are infants baptised,
when they cannot make
or perform these promises?**

Because they too are heirs
to what God has promised.
And others who make the promises for them
can claim their adoption as
children of God.

When they are old enough
they must make these promises themselves.

ACTS 2:39

28. What is Confirmation?

In Confirmation I renew the promises
made on my behalf in Baptism,
and I am further strengthened
by the Holy Spirit, through prayer and
the laying on of hands by the bishop,
to continue my life in Christ.

29. What is promised to you in the Lord's Supper?

As we lift up our hearts to the Lord
in the sacrifice of praise
and thanksgiving
with all the company of heaven,
God assures me that,
in the sharing the bread and wine
and thus proclaiming the Lord's death
until he comes, 1 CORINTHIANS 11:26
I feed on the body and blood of the Lord
in my heart by faith
and partake of the forgiveness of sins,
eternal life,
and all other benefits of
his death and resurrection. MATTHEW 26:26
For my part, I must repent of my sin,
trust steadfastly in the promises of God,
love my neighbour and
serve Christ in the world. 1 CORINTHIANS 11:28



PART III

Obeying God

30. What is your aim in life?

To live as God wants me to live and,
by his grace, to honour him
in all that I think and say and do. 1 CORINTHIANS 10:31

31. What do you mean by grace?

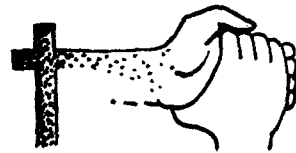
Grace is the loving kindness of God towards us,
completely undeserved by us. JOEL 2:13

It is especially shown in that mercy
by which he forgives us,
not because of what we do,
but through our faith in Christ. EPHESIANS 2:8, 9

By his grace he prepares good works
for us to walk in and enables us
by the leading of his Spirit to do them. EPHESIANS 2:10

32. How do you honour God in all things?

The Lord Jesus taught his disciples
to love the Lord our God
and to love our neighbour as ourselves. MARK 12:29-31
LUKE 10:29-37



33. How do you love God?

I love God by making him first in
my heart and life,
allowing no created thing to take
his place, 1 JOHN 5:21
bringing honour to his Name by my
thoughts and deeds, 1 CORINTHIANS 10:31
trusting and worshipping him
with constant thankfulness. PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7
EXODUS 20:1-11

34. How do you love your neighbour?

I love my neighbour by acting with
justice and kindness, MICAH 6:8
honouring my parents, AMOS 5:24
and those in authority, EPHESIANS 6:1-4
caring for all people, ROMANS 13:7
and especially those of God's family, GALATIANS 6:10
holding marriage in honour
and living a pure and upright life, HEBREWS 13:4,5
trusting God for the provision of
all my needs, MATTHEW 6:33
being free from the longing to own
other people,
their relationships and their goods, 1 TIMOTHY 6:6-10
speaking the truth in love, EPHESIANS 4:15
and resisting evil thoughts, PHILIPPIANS 4:8
and desires. EXODUS 20:12-17

35. Why is it necessary to be led by the Spirit of Christ?

Because anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him, and cannot live for him.

ROMANS 8:9
JOHN 15:5

36. What fruit does the Spirit produce in our lives?

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

By these we become like Christ.

GALATIANS 5:22-25

37. What is the opposite to the fruit of the Spirit?

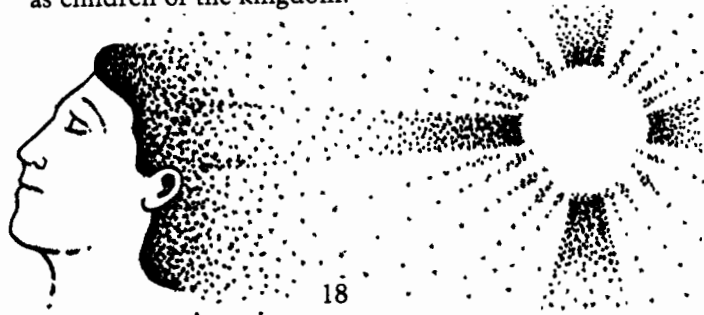
The works of the flesh, such as immorality, idolatry, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, envy and drunkenness.

GALATIANS 5:16-21

38. What is the Holy Spirit doing in us?

We are being changed by him into the likeness of Christ from glory to glory as children of the kingdom.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:14-18
COLOSSIANS 3:10



39. How did Jesus describe the children of his kingdom?

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

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

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

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

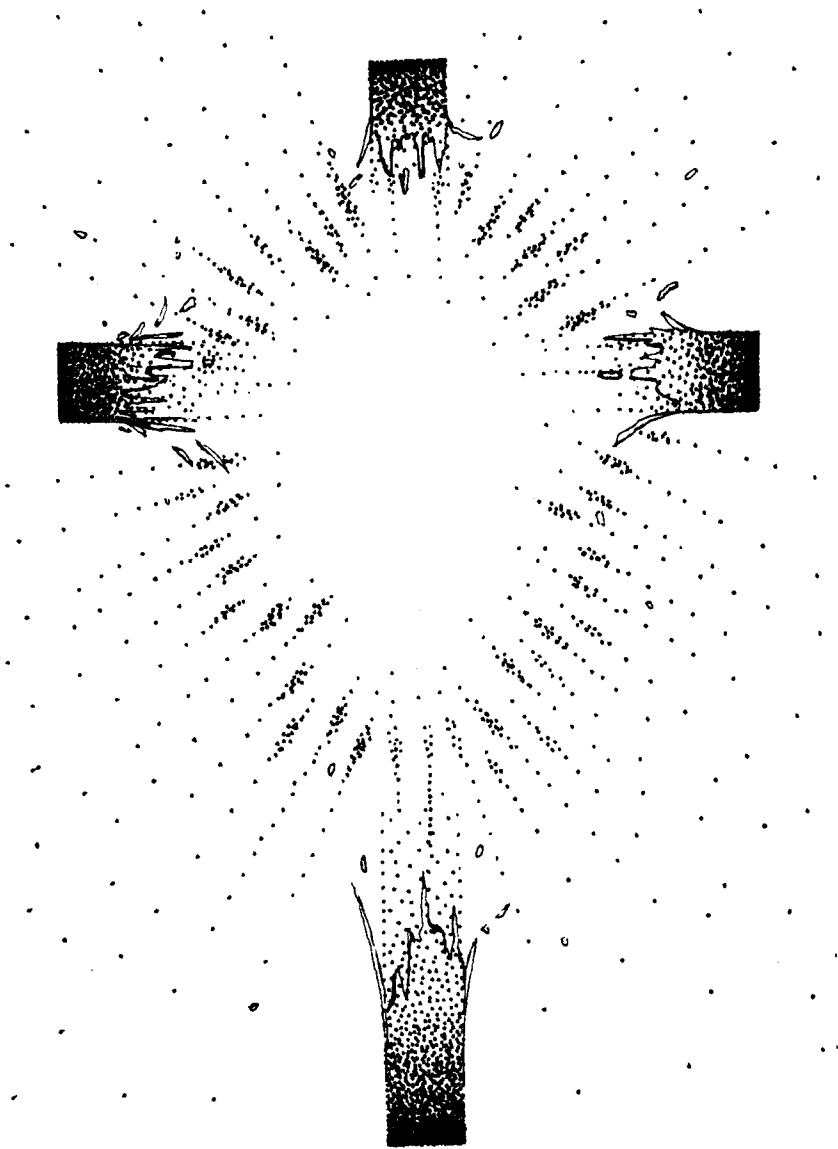
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

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

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

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

MATTHEW 5:3-10



PART IV

Hoping In God

40. What is hope?

Hope is the confident expectation of
the fulfilment of God's promises,
for it is God himself who works
in everything for good with those
who love him,
who are called according to his purpose.

HEBREWS 11:1

ROMANS 8:28

41. Why is your hope so sure?

Because it is based on the faithfulness
of God
who raised Jesus Christ from the dead,
and has given us the firstfruits
of the Spirit.

1 PETER 1:3,21

HEBREWS 6:19,20

ROMANS 8:23

42. What then of the sufferings of the present time?

The children of God,
like creation itself,
experience pain, frustration and death
in this age,
especially as they seek to follow Christ
in doing the will of God.
But the sufferings of this present time
are not worth comparing with the glory
that is to be revealed to us,
when the Lord Jesus comes again
to judge the world,
and the whole creation shares
in the glorious freedom
of the children of God.

ROMANS 8:22

ROMANS 8:17

ROMANS 12:2

ROMANS 8:18-21

43. What is the future glory of the children of God?

It is to be like Christ,
for we know that when he appears
we shall be like him.
Then we shall see him as he is
and live with him forever.
Even now we strive to be like him
and we are being changed into his likeness
by the power of the Holy Spirit.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:17

1 JOHN 3:2,3

44. How, then, do we persevere?

We run our race with endurance,
fixing our thoughts on Jesus,
and remembering that,
having endured the cross,
he is now seated
at God's right hand in glory.
We draw strength, too,
from the witness and fellowship
of God's people who have hoped in him,
Noah, Abraham, Sarah,
Moses, David, Samuel
and all his prophets,
with Mary the mother of Jesus,
John, Peter, Stephen, Paul
and countless others
who have considered that obedience
to Christ
is greater wealth
than any earthly reward.

HEBREWS 12:1-3

HEBREWS 11:26

