

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

SHORTER CATECHISM

LESSON # 23 - (Q2LES10) BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION

1. **Prayer**
2. **Bible reading:** 1 John 3: 1 - 24
3. **Review:** We are still working on redemption. We have learned that those whom the Lord has chosen to effectively call partake of a number of benefits. These include justification, adoption, sanctification, and the several benefits which, in this life, accompany them. Last week we talked about sanctification (SC q35), and began our discussion of SC q36 concerning the several benefits which accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification. These consist of assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase in grace, and perseverance therein till the end, meaning the end of this life.
4. **Introduction:** The subject of the several benefits which, in this life, accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification is fairly complex. Just looking at the five benefits reveals them to be complex. But a part of the complexity is the difference between the language used in LC and the SC. So this lesson will continue our discussion of SC q36.

5. **Questions:**

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 flow from justification, adoption and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.**

6. **BENEFITS, SORTING THEM OUT!!!**

- a. As I've said before, there is much more to the LC, which was for church officials, than the SC, which was intended for the layman. There is also a difference in the terminology used. And sometimes terms explained in the LC are used in the SC without the support required for understanding in the SC. This is apparent in the section on benefits. To try to understand "benefits" we will first walk through them in the SC, then follow the same steps in the LC.

7. **BENEFITS IN THE SHORTER CATECHISM**

- a. We will take a look at the benefits of redemption as presented in the SC.
- b. We will start back at SC q32. The question asks what benefits do they that are effectually called partake of **in this life**?

The answer is: “They that are effectually called, do **in this life** partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.”

- The key words are “**in this life**”. SC q’s 33, 34 and 35 deal with justification, adoption and sanctification, in order. The following question Q36 again repeats this qualifying phrase. The question asks: “What are the benefits which **in this life** do accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification?”. The answer begins: “The benefits which, **in this life**, do accompany.....”
- Therefore, the understanding of “benefits” flows like this:
 - Benefits of effectual calling **in this life** are (SC q32)
 1. Justification – justification is forever, but applied in this life
 2. Adoption – adoption is forever, but applied in this life
 3. Sanctification – sanctification is a process of this life
 4. several benefits which **in this life**, do accompany j, a, and s.
 - Benefits accompanying or flowing from j, a, and s, **in this life**, are (SC q36):
 1. assurance of God’s love
 2. peace of conscience
 3. joy in the Holy Ghost
 4. increase in grace
 5. perseverance therein till the end.
- SC q’s 37 and 38 are still dealing with benefits of redemption, but are no longer dealing with benefits “**in this life**”, but we have now jumped to benefits at death and at the resurrection. TV asks in his discussion of question 36: “How many sorts of benefits are there which do belong to those who are justified, adopted and sanctified?” His answer: “there are three sorts of benefits which do belong unto those who are justified, adopted and sanctified, namely - 1. Benefits in this life. 2. Benefits at death. 3. Benefits at the resurrection.

- Benefits of effectual calling addressed in SC q's 32 through 36 are partaken of **in this life**. Benefits discussed in SC q's 37 and 38 deal with benefits after this life.

8. "BENEFITS IN THE LARGER CATECHISM

- a. Now we need to look at this same material as covered in the LC.
- b. The LC equivalent of SC q32 is LC q69. But, instead of asking about benefits of effectual calling, LC q69 asks: "What is the communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ". Instead of benefits, we have communion in grace.

Once again to my trusty Websters New 20th Century dictionary.

- communion -
 - fellowship; intercourse between two or more persons; interchange of thoughts or interests; a state of giving and receiving;
 - mutual intercourse or union in religious worship, or in doctrine and discipline
 - grace –
 - disposition to grant something freely; favor; good will
 - the condition or fact of being favored
 - a favor or privilege
 - In theology, (a) the free unmerited love and favor of God; (b) divine influence acting in man to restrain him from sin; (c) a state of reconciliation to God; (d) spiritual instruction improvement, and edification.
- c. And instead of "they that are effectually called", we have "members of the invisible church". Remember, the invisible church is all of God's elect, past, present and future.
 - d. The answer to LC q69 is basically the same as SC q32: "The communion in grace (read: benefits) which the members of the invisible church (read: effectually called) have with Christ, is their partaking of the virtue of his mediation (read: redeemer), in their justification, adoption, sanctification, and whatever else, in this life, manifests their union with him (read: and the several benefits which in this life accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification). Note also the qualifier "in this life" is again used for this discussion.
 - e. Justification, adoption and sanctification are then discussed in more detail than in the SC.

- f. After the discussion of justification, adoption, and sanctification, **but before the discussion of** whatever else, in this life, manifests their union with him, there is an additional clarifying question. LC q82 asks: “What is the communion in glory (read here: benefits) which the members of the invisible church (effectively called) have with Christ?” The answer: “The communion in glory which the members of the invisible church have with Christ, is in this life, immediately after death, and at last perfected at the resurrection and day of judgment.” So the LC has a question which introduces the benefits (communion of glory), not found in the SC.
- g. LC q83 then asks the same question asked by SC q36: “What is the communion in glory with Christ which the members of the invisible church enjoy in this life?” The answer is expanded, but basically the same.
- h. LC question 86 then asks the same question asked by question SC q37: “What is the communion in glory with Christ which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death?” The SC equivalent, q37, asks: “What benefit do believers receive from Christ at death?”
- i. Finally, LC question 90 asks: “What shall be done to the righteous at the day of judgment?” The SC equivalent, Q38, asks: “What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?”
- j. Benefits received from Christ at death (SC q37) and at the resurrection (SC q38) will be discussed next week.

9. BACK TO THIS WEEKS QUESTION

- a. What are the benefits belonging to those who are justified, adopted and sanctified?
 - Assurance of God’s Love - Knowledge that we are saved & God loves us. **(Rom 5:5 “And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”)**
 - Peace of conscience - Knowledge of forgiveness of our sins. **(Rom 5: 1 – 2 “⁽¹⁾Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: ⁽²⁾By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”)**
 - Joy in the Holy Ghost - **(Rom 14:17 “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”)**
 - Increase of grace - **(Proverb 4:18 “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”)**

- Perseverance therein to the end - (1 John 5:13 ***“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”***)

- g. Question 79 of the LC asks: *“May not true believers, by reason of their imperfections, and the many temptations and sins they are overtaken with, fall away from the spirit of grace?”*

The WCF, chapter 17, para 1 says: *“They, whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally, nor finally, fall away from the state of grace: but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.”* (John 10: 27 – 29 ⁽²⁷⁾ ***My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: (28) And I give them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. (29) My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”***)

The answer to LC question 79 is: *“True believers, by reason of the unchangeable love of God, and his decree and covenant to give them perseverance, their inseparable union with Christ, his continual intercession for them, and the Spirit and see of God abiding in them, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.”*

- h. Once we have been justified and adopted, and sanctification is in progress, can we again fall into sin?

Chapter 17, paragraph 3 of the WCF says: *“Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time continue therein: whereby they incur God’s displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgment upon themselves.”*

- k. LC questions 80 and 81 appear at first very similar, but they do ask a different question.

LC q80 asks:

“Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and that they shall persevere therein unto salvation?” (1 John 5:13 ***“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”***) **Yes**

LC q81 asks:

“Are all true believers at all time assured of their present being in the estate of grace and that they shall be saved?” This question is a little hard to understand, but the answers, both in the LC, and the WCF (chapter 18, para 3) are in agreement and make it clear. The LC says: *“Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith, true believers may wait long before they obtain it; and, after the enjoyment thereof, may have it weakened and intermitted, through manifold distempers, sins, temptations, and desertions; yet are they never left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God as keeps them from sinking into utter despair.”*. The WCF, Chapt 18, para 3 begins: *“This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it:....”*.

- I. TV asks an interesting question. Let’s see if anyone can relate to this one. Why is it that all that are justified, adopted & sanctified do not attain these benefits?

TV says: “Because all have not a sight and sense of their justification, adoption, and sanctification, **but are under doubts, and therefore fear that God doth hate them, and not love them; therefore they have troubles of conscience instead of peace, and sorrow in spirit instead of the joys of the Holy Ghost.**” How do we overcome this fear?

9. CONCLUSION

God’s elect receive many benefits through their faith in Christ. In this life they include justification, adoption, sanctification, and several associated benefits. Other benefits are received at death, and at the resurrection. There are several topics covered in the WCF which relate to these benefits, and we will discuss them in the next lesson.

WEEKLY READINGS

JUNE 1998

7 JUNE 1998

RR: David Lee DL
OT: Rich Stone RS
NT: Jonathan Eisenzoph JE

14 JUNE 1998

RR: Bill Phister BP
OT: Roger Forsyth RF
NT: Philip Payne PP

21 JUNE 1998

RR: Benjamin Elliot BE
OT: Jeff Holbrook JH
NT: Rick Hepburn RH

28 JUNE 1998

RR: Pete Kelly PK
OT: John Stallings JS
NT: Robert Thoburn RT