

# **The Principles of Christian Religion**

**A Study through the Baptist  
Catechism using Benjamin  
Beddome's *Scriptural Exposition***

# Outline of the BC

- I. Introductory Questions: 1-6
- II. What We are to Believe: 7-43
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# Question and Answer 15

Q. 15: What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?

A. 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 pain of death.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Galatians 3:12; Genesis 2:17

# Question and Answer 15

- This is what we more commonly refer to as the Covenant of Works.
  - Different Names for the Same Thing:
    - Covenant of Works (its Condition)
    - Covenant of Life (its Promise)
    - Covenant of Creation (its Time)
    - Covenant of Nature (Man's Nature as Image-Bearer; Law of Nature)

# Question and Answer 15

- Did this covenant really exist?
  - Some – even Reformed – theologians have claimed that the CoW is a purely theoretical construct and that it has no basis in Scripture.
  - Does Scripture ever refer to God's relationship with Adam in the Garden as a covenant?
    - Admittedly, the word "covenant" does not appear in the first three chapters of Genesis.
    - But compare II Sam. 7 with II Sam. 23:5; Ps. 89.

# Question and Answer 15

- Did this covenant really exist?
  - Does Scripture ever refer to God's relationship with Adam in the Garden as a covenant?
    - Yes, in two places: Hos. 6:7 and Jer. 33:20-26.
    - Also, consider the parallelism between God's relationship with Adam and God's (covenantal) relationship with Christ, the Second Adam: Rom. 5 (cf. Luke 22:29; Psa. 110:4; Heb. 7:21-22).
    - And the parallelism Adam and Israel under the Mosaic Covenant.

# Question and Answer 15

- Did this covenant really exist?
  - Though the word itself might not appear in Gen. 1-3, all of the elements of a covenant are clearly in place.
    - Two Parties: God and Adam
    - A Condition: Obedience
    - A Promise: Reward of Life
    - A Threat: Punishment of Death
    - A Sacrament: Tree of Life?

# Question and Answer 15

- Why is it Important that We Affirm the Covenant of Works?
  - Because if we misunderstand Adam, we will misunderstand Christ (Rom. 5:12-21).
  - Consequently, many who have denied the CoW have gone on to deny the gospel itself, especially the doctrine of justification by faith.



# Question and Answer 15

## 1. Man as Creature

- God made man perfectly holy (Eccl. 7:29).
- And perfectly happy (Gen. 1:28).
  - Why emphasize these?
- He gave him a law (Gen. 2:16).
  - Beyond just the specific, negative prohibition: this included the whole moral law of God written on man's heart (Rom. 2:14-15).
- Man as God's creature was obliged to obey that law (Isa. 44:21).

# Question and Answer 15

## 2. Adam as Covenant Partner

- The covenant which God entered into with Adam was a covenant of life (Gal. 3:12).
- There was a special command given him by way of trial (Gen. 2:17).
  - This was given as a focused, specific test of Adam's obedience.
- Death was threatened in case of disobedience (Gen. 2:17).
- He was under no natural necessity to break this law (Gen. 2:16).

# Question and Answer 15

## 3. Adam as Covenant Head

- This covenant was made with Adam as a public head (Rom. 5:14).
  - This means that we would share either in his success or failure, reward or punishment.
- Eve was included in it (Gen. 3:13).
- This law was worthy of God (Gen. 8:25).
  - Why make this point?
- The second covenant is better than the first (Heb. 8:6).