

# Instruction In The Westminster Standards

The Historic Standards of Presbyterian Denominations.

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## STUDIES IN THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 8. How doth God execute his decrees?

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

Scripture References: Rev. 4:11. Eph. 1:11. Isa. 46:10. Mark 13:31.

### Questions:

1. To what can we compare the decrees of God to enable us to better understand them?

"We compare the decrees of God to the plans an architect draws for a great building. If most of us saw the blue-prints for this building we could not imagine what the building would look like . . . But when the building was all complete then we would see what was in the architect's mind and what was the meaning of his blue-prints. So we cannot read God's mind except by what He has said and done and by what He is doing." (The Christian Faith According to the Shorter Catechism, by Dr. Wm. Childs Robinson, Pgs. 12-13).

2. What is the meaning of God executing His decrees?

The meaning is God bringing His will to pass, doing what He purposed from all eternity.

3. Is it possible for the decrees of God to fail?

It is not possible. No man can stay the hand of God or question what He is doing. (Dan. 4:35)

4. Where does redemption fit in the division of his decrees?

Redemption comes to pass in His providence as His majestic gift to some men through Jesus Christ.

5. What is the difference between His works of creation and providence?

Creation is His work of making all things out of nothing by the word of His power. Providence is His work of constant support and control of the universe and all that is in it.

6. What can be learned from the execution of God's decrees?

Two verses are suggested to teach us great lessons: (1) Rev. 4:11 - the fact that He created all things for His own glory and therefore we should attribute to Him the glory, honor and power. (2) Heb. 1:3 - the fact that He is upholding all things by His power and therefore our complete sense of security is in Him.

## SECURITY

According to some teachers of psychology, the child is not to be punished; the young person is to be allowed freedom; the older person must have everything going his way — all of this so that none will lose his sense of security. The word “security” has rapidly become one of the most important words in our language. Adjustment, success, marriage and many other facets of life have all come to depend on security.

Is this matter of security so important for our lives? Does so much really depend on it? Is it possible to live without a sense of security? These questions, and others, are questions asked in our age.

Our Catechism Question gives the answer to many of these inquiries. Our Lord recognized that security is important — though it is not the security fashioned by the modern psychologist. The security that comes to the Christian is the recognition of Isaiah 46:10 - “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” This is the basis of a security that is lasting, a security that places its confidence in the God of the Scriptures.

In Hebrews 13:5 the writer states: “. . . be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Immediately following we find: “So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” Certainly it is important for us to understand that we have this security. We are taught that we are not alone in the providences of life but that we have, in God, the One who is upholding us by His power. We are taught that His power is executed in His decrees and He is doing what He purposed from all eternity.

This type of security is important. This security is not lost on the basis of whether or not we are punished, or allowed freedom, or have everything going our way. It is based first on our having a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, by His grace. Second, it is based on our keeping the commandments of God. At that point we recognize that God can uphold us and keep us — and we are secure.

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**Published By:**

**THE SHIELD and SWORD, INC.**

Dedicated to instruction in the Westminster Standards for use as a bulletin insert or other methods of distribution in Presbyterian churches.

For information write to: The Shield and Sword, Inc., Box 237, Port Gibson, Mississippi. A non-profit religious organization.

Vol. 1      No. 8  
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August, 1961

Price

To Churches — \$1.50 per 100  
Individuals — \$1.00 per year  
Back Copies  
To Churches — \$2.00 per 100  
Individuals — 10c each