

“Christ our hope in life and death.”

The Heidelberg Catechism (1563) was written less than 20 years after the death of Martin Luther. It comprises of **52 sets of questions & answers** – one for each ‘Lord’s Day’ of the year. It summarises Protestant Reformed theology and stands as a solid framework on which the more familiar catechisms of the following century are based.

We are probably familiar with the first Q & A of the **Westminster Catechism** of 1646 (along with the identical 2nd Q & A of the Baptist Catechism of 1689):

Q: What is the chief end of man. **A:** To glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.

The Heidelberg Catechism **begins rather differently** but with a **most wonderful** question and answer:

Question 1. What is your only hope and comfort in life and death?

Answer: That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me, that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; yes, that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready henceforth to live unto Him.

Just before the current ‘lock down’ a number of well-known contemporary hymn writers came together to write **a new hymn inspired by this lovely answer**. The words are shown below.

Jonathan Rea conducts The New Irish Orchestra & Christian Choir and **despite the ‘lock down’**, managed to get them to come together to sing this encouraging hymn in a ‘virtual’ performance. The result is really excellent. Please click on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsmk8Df5saw> to view it. **You will find yourself joining in!**

What is our hope in life and death?

Christ alone, Christ alone.
What is our only confidence?
That our souls to Him belong.
Who holds our days within His hand?
What comes, apart from His command?
And what will keep us to the end?
The love of Christ, in which we stand.

*O sing hallelujah!
Our hope springs eternal;
O sing hallelujah!
Now and ever we confess
Christ our hope in life and death.*

What truth can calm the troubled soul?
God is good, God is good.
Where is His grace and goodness known?
In our great Redeemer’s blood.
Who holds our faith when fears arise?
Who stands above the stormy trial?
Who sends the waves that bring us nigh
Unto the shore, the rock of Christ?

*O sing hallelujah!
Our hope springs eternal;
O sing hallelujah!
Now and ever we confess
Christ our hope in life and death.*

Unto the grave, what shall we sing?
“Christ, He lives; Christ, He lives!”
And what reward will heaven bring?
Everlasting life with Him.
There we will rise to meet the Lord,
Then sin and death will be destroyed,
And we will feast in endless joy,
When Christ is ours forevermore.

*O sing hallelujah!
Our hope springs eternal;
O sing hallelujah!
Now and ever we confess
Christ our hope in life and death.
Repeat.*

Words and Music by Keith Getty, Matt Boswell,
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