

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

HAVING SEEN WHAT THE SCRIPTURES PRINCIPALLY TEACH US CONCERNING GOD, IT FOLLOWS TO CONSIDER WHAT THEY REQUIRE AS THE DUTY OF MAN

QUESTION # 96.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #96. *What particular use is there of the moral law to unregenerate men?*

A. The moral law is of use to unregenerate men, to awaken their consciences to flee from wrath to come,¹ and to drive them to Christ;² or, upon their continuance in the estate and way of sin, to leave them inexcusable,³ and under the curse thereof.⁴

Question 1—*Is the moral law of use to unregenerate men to awaken their consciences to flee from the wrath to come?*

Answer—Yes. 1 Tim. 1:9, 10. As it gives all men a discovery of the pollution and guilt of sin, 1 John 1:10; it has peculiar work on the conscience of the unregenerate, Rom 2:1. Sin may be charged on the conscience, and the guilt thereof make it very uneasy, so that a person may apprehend himself under the condemning sentence of the law without the benefit of saving advantage, Jer. 6:10. He may have a sight of sin, yet not be truly humbled for it or turned from it, Rev. 6:16.

Question 2—*Does the moral law drive unregenerate men to Christ?*

Answer—Yes. Gal. 3:24. Through the keeping of the law, unregenerate men are convinced of their inability to find justification before God in so doing, Rom. 3:20-22. Through the attempt to keep the law arises a purification of conception, they are led from the shadows, wherein they constantly fail, Jas. 3:2; to the contemplation of the reality that is Christ, Col. 2:17. This is why the law was suffered to be constantly annulled under the Old Testament dispensation in order that men be led to see the futility of the ability of the flesh to find hope apart from the promised hope of the Messiah, Heb. 7:18, 19.

Question 3—*Does the moral law leave the unregenerate who continue in the estate of sin and way of sin without excuse?*

Answer—Yes. Rom. 1:20; 2:15. These see themselves as lost, or condemned by the law, but they have no sight of Christ as coming into the world to save sinners, John 3:17-19. There is an open wound with no healing salve in sight, Jer. 6:14. Many are, thereby, convinced of sin, and this may be attended with some external humiliation which arises from the dread of God's judgment, Ex. 10:16, 17; 1 Kings 21:27-29. They may be convinced to quit some particular sins while they indulge in others, hoping by a partial reformation to free themselves from the condemning sentence of the law, Jas. 2:10. Like Lot seeking rest for his soul, they see some sinful choices as small and without danger, Gen. 19:20. Indeed, some men, seeking to disentangle themselves from the condemnation of the law render their condition worse, Rom. 7:8. They are compared to wild beasts resisting domestication, Isa. 51:20; Acts 9:5.

¹ 1 Tim. 1:9, 10.

² Gal. 3:24.

³ Rom. 1:20 compared w/ Rom. 2:15.

⁴ Gal. 3:10.

Question 4—*Does the moral law serve to convince men they are under the curse thereof?*

Answer—Yes. Gal. 3:10. Unregenerate men, though they may seek to ease their burden of conscience from guilt by selective personal reformation, yet remain under the curse and condemning sentence of the law, Luke 18:9-13. It is the property of the law, in unregenerate men (*i.e.*, apart from Christ), to work wrath, Rom. 4:15. Thus, those that are convinced of sin by the law, who fail to embrace Christ in the Gospel, often despair of obtaining mercy and become despondent, Gen. 4:13; Job 15:22. Yet, there is no power in the law to bring men to condign repentance, Rev. 16:11. Unregenerate men may regret the loss of sin but they do not find repentance for sin, Heb. 12:15-17. Failing this, some foolishly are even brought to a point of self-destruction, 1 Sam. 31:4; 2 Sam. 17:23; Matt. 27:3-5. Seeking relief from the sense of the curse of the law, they demonstrate they are alienated from the life of Christ, 1 John 3:15. Instead of coming to Christ, they cast themselves into a Christ-less eternity, John 8:21.