

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

QUESTIONS # 104 & 46.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #104. *What are the duties required in the first commandment?*

A. The duties required in the first commandment are, the knowing and acknowledging of God to be the only true God, and our God;¹ and to worship and glorify him accordingly,² by thinking,³ meditating,⁴ remembering,⁵ highly esteeming,⁶ honouring,⁷ adoring,⁸ choosing,⁹ loving,¹⁰ desiring,¹¹ fearing of him;¹² believing him;¹³ trusting¹⁴ hoping,¹⁵ delighting,¹⁶ rejoicing in him;¹⁷ being zealous for him;¹⁸ calling upon him, giving all praise and thanks,¹⁹ and yielding all obedience and submission to him with the whole man;²⁰ being careful in all things to please him,²¹ and sorrowful when in any thing he is offended;²² and walking humbly with him.²³

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #46. *What is required in the first commandment?*

A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the holy true God, and our God;²⁴ and to worship and glorify him accordingly.²⁵

¹ 1 Chron. 28:9; Deut. 26:17; Isa. 43:10; Jer. 14:22.

² Ps. 95:6, 7; Matt. 4:10; Ps. 29:2.

³ Mal. 3:16.

⁴ Ps. 63:6.

⁵ Eccl. 12:1.

⁶ Ps. 71:19.

⁷ Mal. 1:6.

⁸ Isa. 45:23.

⁹ Josh. 24:15, 22.

¹⁰ Deut. 6:5.

¹¹ Ps. 73:25.

¹² Isa. 8:13.

¹³ Ex. 14:31.

¹⁴ Isa. 26:4.

¹⁵ Ps. 130:7.

¹⁶ Ps. 37:4.

¹⁷ Ps. 32:11.

¹⁸ Rom. 12:11; Num. 25:11.

¹⁹ Phil. 4:6.

²⁰ Jer. 7:23; Jas. 4:7.

²¹ 1 John 3:22.

²² Jer. 31:18; Ps. 119:136.

²³ Micah 6:8.

²⁴ 1 Chron. 28:9; Deut. 26:17.

²⁵ Matt. 4:10; Ps. 29:2.

Question 1—*What is the first duty of the first commandment?*

Answer—The first duty held forth in the first commandment is that we must know God, 1 Chron. 28:9. This supposes that our understanding be rightly informed concerning the divine perfections as they relate to both creation and providence, by which we are led to the knowledge of his eternal power and Godhead, which is a natural knowledge, Rom. 1:20. This knowledge comprehends the existence of God, Heb. 11:6; but not only that there is a God, but that the God of Israel is that true God, Isa. 55:3.

However, the knowledge to which we are called as believers is higher, even embracing and beholding the perfections of the divine nature in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Deut. 6:4; 1 John 5:7; displayed in and through the Mediator, John 17:3.

Question 2—*What is the second duty of the first commandment?*

Answer—The second duty of the first commandment consists in acknowledging this God and professing our subjection to him, Deut. 26:17. This subjection must be from a full and hearty choosing of this God for our God, Ps. 16:2; 119:57. We are on all occasions to testify that we count it our glory to be his servants, Isa. 43:10; Jer. 14:22. We are also to make it appear that he is the supreme object of our desire and delight, Ps. 142:5.

In particular, this subjection is to be made through the mediation of Jesus Christ, John 5:23. There is no right choosing of God as our God but in his covenant, so that, covenanting with God personally is a great and plain duty of this command, Isa. 44:5. This requires several things of us: 1.) Serious deliberation of the nature of this covenant that we may give full consent, Josh. 24:15; Luke 14:28. 2.) Breaking off the covenant with our lusts and idols, Matt. 5:24. 3.) Faith in Jesus Christ, as he is offered in the Gospel, which is accepting of the covenant, Matt. 22:4; 1 John 3:23. 4.) Faithfulness in the covenant, continuing with him, and cleaving to him, Ps. 73:25.

Question 3—*What is the third duty of the first commandment?*

Answer—The third duty of the first commandment requires us to worship and glorify God accordingly, Ps. 95:6, 7; Matt. 4:10; Ps. 29:2. The worship of God is twofold, internal and external; in the first commandment the internal is required.

This internal worship begins with our minds and understandings, where we are required: 1.) To think on God, Mal. 3:16. It is the character of the wicked that they do not keep him in their thoughts, Ps. 10:4. 2.) By meditating on him, Ps. 63:6. Fleeting thoughts of God are not enough; we must make him the subject of our fixed thoughts, Song 3:1, 2. 3.) By remembering him, Eccl. 12:1. The beginning of all disobedience is in forgetting, Deut. 8:11. 4.) By highly esteeming him, Ps. 71:19. In entertaining high and honorable thoughts of God, we prize him above all and, in our judgment prefer him to all persons and things, Ex. 15:11. 5.) By believing him, Ex. 14:31. He is a God that cannot lie, Heb. 6:18.

Again, this internal worship commands our wills, whereby we are required to: 1.) To choose God as our God and portion, Josh. 24:15, 22. 2.) To make him our chief and ultimate end, 1 Cor. 10:31. He is not our God, if he is not the great end and scope of our life, Rom. 14:8. 3.) To exercise self-denial, Matt. 16:24. God must be our master. 4.) To keep within the bounds of our calling, and meddling with nothing beyond our sphere, Ps. 131:1.

This also entails the direction of our affections that they glorify God by: 1.) Adoring God more than anything or anyone, Isa. 45:23. 2.) Loving God as the chief good, Deut. 6:5.

3.) Desiring God, Ps. 73:25. This is a very breathing after him which travels night and day from the bottom of the heart to heaven, Isa. 26:9. 4.) Fearing of God above all, Isa. 8:13. The lack of which is the opening of sin and wickedness, Ps. 36:1. 5.) Hoping in God above all, Ps. 130:7. This hope is a certain expectation of those good things which faith lays hold on, grounded on the word, Ps. 119:49. 6.) Delighting in God above all persons and things, Ps. 37:4. 7.) Rejoicing in God above all, Ps. 32:11.

To these we ought to join: 1.) Sorrowing most for offending him, Zech. 12:10; Ps. 119:136. To offend such a good and kind Father should be the source of much heart displeasure, Matt. 26:75. Inward groanings are that which go before the kind answers of the Lord, Jer. 31:18. 2.) Zeal for his honor and against sin, Rev. 3:19. Zeal is a fervor of affection for God, Rom. 12:11; by which, men are motivated to both serve God and resist sin, Num. 25:11. 3.) Trust and confidence in the Lord above all wherein is all our strength to perform our duties acceptably, Isa. 26:4.

This internal worship also touches the duty of conscience in the following particulars: 1.) Subjecting one's judgment to God and God alone; for the conscience is the candle of the Lord, Prov. 20:27. As his deputy, it must be subject to him alone lest we make the creature into a god, Matt. 23:9. 2.) Receiving the law from the mouth of God so that the conscience might be rightly informed of man's duty, lest the eye of conscience be so far an evil eye, Matt. 6:23. An erring conscience will not quench divine wrath, Isa. 5:20. 3.) To accuse or excuse, exactly and vigorously, according to the law of God, Rom. 2:15.

This internal worship places duties upon the whole soul, that the faculties of the soul might be employed in their several operations toward God, especially: 1.) In prayer and calling upon his name, Phil. 4:6. Which address cannot be accomplished without the mental being joined with the vocal, or the heart with the words, Ex. 14:15. 2.) Internal praise and thanksgiving, as we are ever in God's debt, Ps. 45:1.

In all things, we must be careful to yield all obedience to him from the whole soul, Jer. 7:23. This is that inward obedience which alone serves as a shield against temptation and the devil, Jas. 4:7. And, it is the ground of walking humbly before him, Micah 6:8.