

## 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 # 98 & 41.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #98. *Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?*

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments, which were delivered by the voice of God upon Mount Sinai, and written by him in two tables of stone;<sup>1</sup> and are recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. The four first commandments containing our duty to God, and the other six our duty to man.<sup>2</sup>

*(Shorter Catechism)*

Q #41. *Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?*

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.<sup>3</sup>

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Question 1—*Is the moral law summarily comprehended in the ten commandments?*

*Answer*—Yes. Ex. 20:1-17. We understand that the law is more largely and fully set forth in the whole of the Word of God, Ps. 119:105; which we are told consists of the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments, 2 Tim. 3:16, 17. Indeed, the moral law was first promulgated, not upon Mount Sinai, but in the heart of the first man Adam and is as vast as that law of nature written upon the creature in the Creation, Eccl. 7:29; so that there is nothing in the law of nature that is not moral, Rom. 2:14, 15. Thus, it stands in need of an epitome or summation of the duties to be performed and the evils to be shunned for ease of reference and comprehension by the creature, Matt. 19:17. For this reason, summaries of the moral law appear in Scripture, Rom. 13:9. This sum is expressed in what we call the *Ten Commandments*, but the Hebrew designates the summary nature as ten *words*, or *things*, (*hād-dəvarîm*; הַדְּבָרִים), Deut. 10:4.

Yet, the moral law does differ from the law of nature in this respect, it contains as well some commands of positive institution, *cf.* Gen. 2:16. This addition of positive institution to natural law stands in the very summary of the moral law in the Ten Commandments, *cf.* Ex. 20:10. Therefore, we distinguish between moral-natural and moral-positive law.

It is called the “summary” of the moral law because: 1.) It displays the sum and chief heads of the law therein contained, Luke 18:19-21; Rom. 7:7-11. 2.) Much more is included in every command than is expressed, as our Lord has shown in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5:21-48.

Question 2—*Was this delivered by the voice of God and written by him in two tables of stone?*

*Answer*—Yes. Ex. 20:1. In the giving of the Ten Commandments this peculiarity attaches—they were delivered by the lively voice of God, which made out part of the glory of Israel, Deut. 4:33, 36. Additionally, this revelation was certified by the finger of God

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<sup>1</sup> Deut. 10:4; Ex. 34:1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 22:37-40.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. 10:4; Matt. 19:17.

writing these upon two tables of stone, Deut. 9:10. These theophanies of voice and finger, we assured by the writers of the New Testament, were none other than the Person of the Son speaking to them, Acts 7:37, 38; even Jesus, whose voice shook the earth, Hebrews 12:24-26. When the Son had spoken all these commands in the ears of all Israel, he then engraved them upon two tables of stone, Deut. 5:4, 22. The writing being said upon both sides, Ex. 32:15; in order to signify that nothing could be added or taken away from this moral law, Deut. 4:2.

The writing of these commands upon tables of stone (Ex. 24:12) represented the covenant action taken in this enactment, stones being used to establish a more permanent witness or testimony to the transaction, Gen. 31:44-52; 1 Sam. 7:12. Stones are said to speak, or bear testimony, against those breaking covenant, Jos. 24:27; 22:34 (*Ed*; *τῶν*). The permanence is emphasized by the prescribed method of execution for offenses committed against this testimony of law, Lev. 20:2; which is why stones are used to mark graves—death being the result of a breaking of this covenant, Jos. 7:26; Matt. 27:60. These stones also represent the natural hardness of our hearts in which the Spirit must write the new covenant, Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:26, 27.

The first tables being broken by Moses on account of the idolatry of Israel, Ex. 32:19; the second set was written containing the very matter of the first, Ex. 34:1-4. The only difference being that the second were hewed by Moses, the typical mediator, who then deposited them in the ark, Deut. 10:3-5.

*Question 3—What difference is noted between the first four and the last six commandments?*

*Answer—*The first four have respect to our duty toward God and the last six to our duty toward man, Matt. 22:37-40. These commands summarize what must be believed and practiced comprising the whole duty of man, Eccl. 12:13.