

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTIONS # 22 & 15 & 16.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #22. *Did all mankind fall in that first transgression?*

A. The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation,¹ sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression.²

(Shorter Catechism)

Q. #15. *What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?*

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.³

Q #16. *Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?*

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.⁴

Question 1—*What was the sin whereby our first parents fell?*

Answer—The sin by which Adam, and all who were accounted his, fell from the original state of innocency was the eating of the forbidden fruit, Gen. 3:6. This was his first sin, and, as such, it carried with it a series of consequences that affected all who fell with him, Rom. 5:12. Other sins of Adam are not imputed to them, more than those of any other private persons, *cf.* Gen. 3:12. Eating of the forbidden fruit was that sin by which the covenant of life, as known as the covenant of works, that was made with Adam, was broken, Gen. 3:11.

The covenant of life, that was made with Adam, was upon the condition of his perfect, personal and perpetual obedience, Gen. 2:16, 17. The command did not stand in any law written upon his heart, *cf.* Rom. 2:14, 15; that would have made it a command rooted in nature, and its obedience a principle of natural morality, Eccl. 3:11. Instead, the command proceeded only from the will of God and was discernable only by his making it known to the man, Gen. 2:8, 9, 16, 17. This law was not designed to test the nature of man, which was good and holy as created, Eccl. 7:29; nor was it suspended upon some natural prohibition, 1 Tim. 4:4. What was placed on trial was the person, or agent, who, by virtue of his position, carried with him all his children, Ezek. 18:20; Heb. 7:10. This relation, established by covenant, *cf.* Hos. 6:7; whereby Adam was constituted, not merely the natural head of mankind, 1 Chron. 1:1; Luke 3:38; but the covenantal head of mankind, 1 Cor. 15:45, 47.

¹ Acts 17:26.

² Gen. 2:16, 17, Rom. 5:12-20; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22.

³ Gen. 3:6.

⁴ Gen. 2:16, 17; Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22.

Question 2—*Who sinned and fell in Adam?*

Answer—The fall, being the result of the sin of Adam, involved all mankind, descending from him by an ordinary generation, Acts 17:26. This includes:

First, Eve, who, though first in the transgression, was neither the head of mankind nor was she the one in whose person the sin was imputed to all others, 1 Tim. 2:14. The woman, being married to the man, had power to make a vow only with and by the consent of her husband, without which her choice and vow would not stand in the eyes of God, Num. 30:6-14. Thus, though not descended from him by an ordinary generation, the woman was still represented in the man by a natural covenant, marriage, Gen. 3:20; 5:2. By virtue of this covenant, the man is not without the woman nor is the woman without the man, 1 Cor. 11:11.

Second, all those members mankind, descending from him by an ordinary generation, are implicated and reckoned guilty for his sin of eating the forbidden fruit, if we consider: 1.) Scripture plainly testifies that all sinned in him, Rom. 5:12. It is plain that death has come into this world as a consequence of sin; all die, for all have sinned, Rom. 5:12-20. This consequence follows even young children and infants, Rom. 5:14. 2.) All fell with him into the misery which that sin conveys, especially: (a.) The guilt of eternal wrath, Rom. 5:16, 18. Where there is common guilt, there must be a common sin, for the law binds none to punishment without sin, 1 Cor. 15:56. Moreover, the apostle assures us of this connection, 1 Cor. 15: 21, 22. Now, since only the soul sinning shall die, Ezek. 18:4; therefore, all must have sinned in Adam, Rom. 6:23. (b.) All fell under the loss of God's image, and the corruption of nature with him, whereby all confess with David their conception in sin, Ps. 51:5. If the imputation of Adam's sin is removed, there is no foundation to maintain the corruption of the nature, Job 14:4. (c.) All the punishments inflicted upon Adam and Eve, for that sin, are common to mankind, *cf.* Gen. 3:16-19. Therefore, the sin must be common as well, Jer. 31:29, 30.

Third, Christ alone is excepted from this accounting, for he is separate from sinners, Heb. 7:26; Luke 1:35. For, although it appears in the genealogy of mankind, that he is a son of Adam, as to his nature, *cf.* Luke 3:23, 38; yet, being born of a virgin, he receives no human person which was represented by Adam, Matt. 1:23; thus, he avoided contracting the guilt of that first sin and, therefore, there could be no transmission of the native depravity consequent upon the sin of Adam, 1 Cor. 15:47-49. He is our near kinsman, as to his nature, so that the same nature that was involved in the first sin would be made to suffer, in the person of our kinsman redeemer, Lev. 25:47-49; Heb. 2:16, 17. Christ was born, not by virtue of the blessing and covenant of marriage, given prior to the fall, Gen. 1:28; but by virtue of the covenant promise made after the fall, Gen. 3:15. Thus, like Adam, he appeared as the head and representative of his people, 1 Cor. 15:22, 45; Heb. 2:11-13.

Question 3—*How does the first sin of Adam come to be imputed to those descending from him by ordinary generation?*

Answer—The first sin is imputed because Adam, being one of only two public persons, was the moral head and covenant representative of all mankind, 1 Cor. 15:22. He was able to occupy that position because: 1.) He was our natural head, being the fount of the human nature which is common to all men, Gen. 3:20; 9:19. 2.) He was our natural representative, being the common father of all men so descending, he impressed upon that nature an image they would bear, Mal. 2:10.