

## 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 # 101 & 43 & 44.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #101. *What is the preface to the ten commandments?*

A. The preface to the ten commandments is contained in these words, *I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*<sup>1</sup> Wherein God manifesteth his sovereignty, as being JEHOVAH, the eternal, immutable, and almighty God;<sup>2</sup> having his being in and of himself,<sup>3</sup> and giving being to all his words<sup>4</sup> and works;<sup>5</sup> and that he is a God in covenant, as with Israel of old, so with all his people,<sup>6</sup> who, as he brought them out of their bondage in Egypt, so he delivereth us from our spiritual thralldom;<sup>7</sup> and that therefore we are bound to take him for our God alone, and to keep all his commandments.<sup>8</sup>

*(Shorter Catechism)*

Q #43. *What is the preface to the ten commandments?*

A. The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, *I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*<sup>9</sup>

Q #44. *What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us?*

A. The preface to the ten commandments teacheth us, That because God is the LORD, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.<sup>10</sup>

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Question 1—*What particular thing is held forth to us in the preface to the ten commandments?*

*Answer*—Although some interpret this preface to be part of the first commandment only, we understand this as pertaining to the whole of the ten commandments. After all, there is nothing to restrict the words from applying to the whole, Ex. 20:2. The preface serves to establish a basis for arguments to induce men to obey the law because the Lord would address man as a rational creature possessed of a nature capable of reasoning, Hos. 11:4. Free and cheerful obedience can only be elicited from those who act from a natural principle embracing rationality, Song 1:4. Thus, when God subdues a man, he

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<sup>1</sup> Ex. 20:2.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. 44:6.

<sup>3</sup> Ex. 3:14.

<sup>4</sup> Ex. 6:3.

<sup>5</sup> Acts 17:24, 28.

<sup>6</sup> Gen. 17:7; Rom. 3:29.

<sup>7</sup> Luke 1:74, 75.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Pet. 1:15, 17, 18; Lev. 18:30; 19:37.

<sup>9</sup> Ex. 20:2.

<sup>10</sup> Luke 1:74, 75; 1 Pet. 1:15-18.

“binds and drags” him according to those natural principles which include reason, John 6:44; Rom. 10:13-16.

These words ought to make us consider that the speaker and giver of these commands is the Lord *Jesus Christ*, as is plain from Scripture, Acts 7:38; Heb. 12:24-26. For it was He who brought the people out of Egypt and appeared in the bush that burned without being consumed when Moses was commanded to undertake the deliverance of the people of God, Ex. 3:2-8.

These words are not given to imply that the moral law is not obligatory upon all men, for all are bound to yield perfect obedience, Matt. 5:48. Yet, believers may find in this testimony reasons sufficient to inform their faith, even as Paul, 1 Cor. 9:21.

Question 2— *What is the first reason used to argue our obedience to the law?*

*Answer*—The first reason given declares that the One speaking is JEHOVAH (יהוה), Ex. 6:2, 3. This name signifies: 1.) The unity of the Godhead, that he is the one true God, having no partner, equal or rival, Isa. 44:6. 2.) The reality and certainty of his being, Deut. 4:35, 39. Therefore, idols are nothing, Isa. 43:10, 11. 3.) The necessity, eternity and unchangeableness of his being, Ex. 3:14. 4.) The constancy and perpetuity of the divine nature and will, 2 Sam. 22:3.

From this name are four reasons for our obedience to the commandments: 1.) He is the LORD of all his creatures, infinitely above and perfect in nature, Jer. 10:7. 2.) He is the LORD creator who gave us our being; we are his workmanship and, therefore, at his disposal, Ps. 100:2, 3. 3.) He is the LORD rector, our supreme lawgiver and governor, whose will is our law, Jas. 4:12. 4.) He is the LORD preserver of all his creatures, including men, Rev. 4:11.

Question 3— *What is the second reason used to argue our obedience to the law?*

*Answer*—The second reason given declares the One speaking to be thy God (lit., “thy Gods;” אֱלֹהֶיךָ), Ex. 20:2. This plurality indicates that the one God in three Persons is the true God in covenant with his people (lit., “thy makers thy husband;” עֲשֵׂיךָ), Isa. 54:5.

Now, the covenant by which he was Israel’s God before the giving of the law on Mount Sinai was that made with Abraham and his seed, Gen. 17:7; 15:18. It was by virtue of this covenant of promise that they were delivered out of Egypt, Gen. 15:13, 14. Clearly this was no covenant of works, Rom. 4:11-13. That God is the God of his people carries with it the sense of the promise made to Abraham which includes a complete salvation from sin, Matt. 22:32.

This covenant binds us to obey the commandments for four reasons: 1.) Consent to the covenant itself binds to complete obedience because the covenant consists in putting the law in the hearts and minds of the people of God, Heb. 8:10. Thus, consenting to the covenant entails taking upon ourselves the whole yoke of the commandments, 2 Cor. 8:5; Isa. 44:5. 2.) The honor of the covenant we, who are sinners by nature, are advanced into a near relation to God, as friends, servants and even spouse, Jas. 2:23; Rom. 6:16; Eph. 5:32. 3.) The privileges of the covenant, Jos. 24:18. 4.) The end of the covenant, which is to restore man to his primitive integrity, and bring him into a perfect assimilation to God, Song 3:9, 10.

Question 4— *What is the third reason used to argue our obedience to the law?*

*Answer*—The third reason is drawn from redemption and the various deliverances effected for his people wherein is commemorated: 1.) The faithfulness of God to his

promise and covenant with Abraham, Gen. 15:13-16. In like manner, he shows himself to be the LORD by visible demonstration working the promised deliverance before their eyes, Ex. 6:3. 2.) The strangeness of the deliverance which demonstrated its miraculous nature, Ps. 105:25-39. 3.) Because it was a great and most memorable benefit to be delivered from the cruelest bondage, Deut. 4:20. 4.) It was the very latest example in a long chain of mercies which demonstrated God's loving kindness to his people, Ps. 105:42-45. 5.) It was a type of our spiritual deliverance by Jesus Christ, Heb. 2:15, 16.

From this commemorating we find several reasons for obedience to the commands: 1.) Benefits received are the most powerful incitement and engagement to duty, Rom. 2:4. Redemption from spiritual bondage argues an increased obligation to keep the commands, Col. 1:13; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. 2.) This deliverance is wrought for that very end that men might be put in a capacity to serve the LORD, which they could not otherwise do, Luke 1:74, 75; Jer. 31:33, 34.