

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 # 105 & 47.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #105. *What are the sins forbidden in the first commandment?*

A. The sins forbidden in the first commandment are, Atheism, in denying or not having a God;¹ Idolatry, in having or worshipping more gods than one, or any with or instead of the true God;² the not having and avouching him for God, and our God;³ the omission or neglect of any thing due to him, required in this commandment;⁴ ignorance,⁵ forgetfulness,⁶ misapprehensions,⁷ false opinions,⁸ unworthy and wicked thoughts of him;⁹ bold and curious searching into his secrets;¹⁰ all profaneness,¹¹ hatred of God;¹² self-love,¹³ self-seeking,¹⁴ and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of our mind, will, or affections upon other things, and taking them off from him in whole or in part;¹⁵ vain credulity,¹⁶ unbelief,¹⁷ heresy,¹⁸ misbelief,¹⁹ distrust,²⁰ despair,²¹ incorrigibleness,²² and insensibleness under judgments,²³ hardness of heart,²⁴ pride,²⁵ presumption,²⁶ carnal

¹ Ps. 14:1; Eph. 2:12.

² Jer. 2:27, 28; 1 Thess. 1:9.

³ Ps. 81:11.

⁴ Isa. 43:22-24.

⁵ Jer. 4:22; Hos. 4:1, 6.

⁶ Jer. 2:32.

⁷ Acts 17:23, 29.

⁸ Isa. 40:18.

⁹ Ps. 50:21.

¹⁰ Deut. 29:29.

¹¹ Tit. 1:16; Heb. 12:16.

¹² Rom. 1:30.

¹³ 2 Tim. 3:2.

¹⁴ Phil. 2:21.

¹⁵ 1 John 2:15, 16; 1 Sam. 2:29; Col. 3:2, 5.

¹⁶ 1 John 4:1.

¹⁷ Heb. 3:12.

¹⁸ Gal. 5:20; Tit. 3:10.

¹⁹ Acts 26:9.

²⁰ Ps. 78:22.

²¹ Gen. 4:13.

²² Jer. 5:3.

²³ Isa. 42:25.

²⁴ Rom. 2:5.

²⁵ Jer. 13:15.

²⁶ Ps. 19:13.

security,²⁷ tempting of God;²⁸ using unlawful means,²⁹ and trusting in lawful means,³⁰ carnal delights and joys;³¹ corrupt, blind, and indiscreet zeal;³² lukewarmness,³³ and deadness in the things of God;³⁴ estranging ourselves, and apostatizing from God;³⁵ praying, or giving any religious worship, to saints, angels, or any other creatures;³⁶ all compacts and consulting with the devil,³⁷ and hearkening to his suggestions;³⁸ making men the lords of our faith and conscience;³⁹ slighting and despising God and his commands;⁴⁰ resisting and grieving of his Spirit,⁴¹ discontent and impatience at his dispensations, charging him foolishly for the evils he inflicts on us;⁴² and ascribing the praise of any good we either are, have or can do, to fortune,⁴³ idols,⁴⁴ ourselves,⁴⁵ or any other creature.⁴⁶

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #47. *What is forbidden in the first commandment?*

A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying,⁴⁷ or not worshipping and glorifying the true God as God,⁴⁸ and our God;⁴⁹ and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.⁵⁰

Question 1—*What is the first species of sin forbidden in the first commandment?*

Answer—The first species of sin prohibited in the first commandment is that of Atheism, Ps. 14:1. The wickedness of which appears in the fact few are so bold and profane as to cast off all dictates of nature, or avail themselves of the exercise of the faculties of reason with which God has endowed them, Rom. 2:14, 15; yet, they live in

²⁷ Zeph. 1:12.

²⁸ Matt. 4:7.

²⁹ Rom. 3:8.

³⁰ Jer. 17:5.

³¹ 2 Tim. 3:4.

³² Gal. 4:17; John 16:2; Rom. 10:2; Luke 9:54, 55.

³³ Rev. 3:16.

³⁴ Rev. 3:1.

³⁵ Ezek. 14:5; Isa. 1:4, 5.

³⁶ Rom. 10:13, 14; Hos. 4:12; Acts 10:25, 26; Rev. 19:10; Matt. 4:10; Col. 2:18; Rom. 1:25.

³⁷ Lev. 20:6; 1 Sam. 28:7, 11; 1 Chron. 10:13, 14.

³⁸ Acts 5:3.

³⁹ 2 Cor. 1:24; Matt. 23:9.

⁴⁰ Deut. 32:15; 2 Sam. 12:9; Prov. 13:13.

⁴¹ Acts 7:51; Eph. 4:30.

⁴² Ps. 73:2, 3, 13-15, 22; Job 1:22.

⁴³ 1 Sam. 6:7-9.

⁴⁴ Dan. 5:23.

⁴⁵ Deut. 8:17; Dan. 4:30.

⁴⁶ Hab. 1:16.

⁴⁷ Ps. 14:1.

⁴⁸ Rom. 1:21.

⁴⁹ Ps. 81:10, 11.

⁵⁰ Rom. 1:25, 26.

such contempt of his government, denying the divine perfections and a providence over creation, Eph. 2:12. This degree of wickedness (called *speculative* atheism) none proceed to until, by long continuance in sin, they are given up to judicial hardness of heart, and blindness of mind, Rom. 1:28; Eph. 4:17-20.

Question 2—*What is the second species of sin forbidden in the first commandment?*

Answer—The second species of sin prohibited in the first commandment consists in idolatry—a *practical* atheism, Jer. 2:27, 28; which is the common estate of unbelievers, 1 Thess. 1:9. For every speculative atheist, we confess there are a thousand practical atheists, Tit. 1:16.

The practical atheism of many is displayed in the following considerations: 1.) They are chargeable with atheism who are grossly ignorant of God but the name, being utter strangers to those perfections whereby he makes himself known to the world, Jer. 4:22; which thing is accounted aggravated sin in nations favored with the light of revelation, Hos. 4:1, 6. 2.) When persons being formerly enlightened become, whether through indolence or indifference, forgetful, Jer. 2:32; this forgetfulness is a degree of atheism and will be severely punished, Ps. 9:17. 3.) It is a degree of atheism when men, remaining blind to the truth, entertain misapprehensions of the Deity, Acts 17:23, 29. 4.) Any holding of false opinions regarding the nature of the Godhead or the Persons therein is another degree of atheism, Isa. 40:18. 5.) When men entertain carnal conceptions of him, as though he were altogether such as themselves, they hold unworthy and wicked thoughts of him, Ps. 50:21; again, incurring severe punishment, v. 22. 6.) Any bold and curious searching into the secrets of the Almighty, Deut. 29:29; it is a sign of belief to stay fixed upon principles of revelation, Ps. 139:6. 7.) Profaneness, in parting with the privilege of God's covenant, is a degree of atheism, Heb. 12:16. 8.) Those who, through disregard of his commands, are accounted haters of God and, thereby, atheists, Rom. 1:30. 9.) Men who act from the principle of self-love, rather than the glory of God, are chargeable, 2 Tim. 3:2; this leads to atheistic self-seeking, Phil. 2:21.

Whenever the mind, will or affections, through inordinate or immoderate use, are set upon things other than God, it is a degree of atheism, 1 John 2:15, 16; Col. 3:2. This occurs whenever: 1.) We entertain idle and vain speculations involving the nature of the Deity or his providence, it is vain credulity, 1 John 4:1. 2.) We allow place for thoughts of unbelief, Heb. 3:12. 3.) We entertain or embrace some form of heresy, Gal. 5:20; Tit. 3:10. 4.) Whenever, instead of the truth, we hold some kind of misbelief, Acts 26:9. 5.) Whenever we evidence any expression of distrust, it is a degree of atheism, Ps. 78:22.

It is another form of atheism when we kick against his providence, especially when: 1.) We despair in the midst of divine punishments, Gen. 4:13. 2.) Display an incorrigibility by refusing to heed the chastisements administered for our recovery, Jer. 5:3. 3.) Remain insensible to divine judgments as if they came by chance, misfortune or bad luck, Isa. 42:25.

We display an atheism "natural" to sinful men when: 1.) We remain obdurate; clinging to the hardness of heart which characterizes fallen men, Rom. 2:5. 2.) When we, through pride, are set in opposition to the conscionable hearing of his word, Jer. 13:15. 3.) We act from a principle of presumption that fails to account for the divine providence, Ps. 19:13. 4.) We embrace that false notion of Deism that asserts that the Lord takes no interest in the affairs of men, Zeph. 1:12.

We display this atheism whenever we think or do anything that provokes the divine nature without any thought concerning such provocation, Matt. 4:7. Such as: 1.) Using unlawful means to attain some presumed good, Rom. 3:8. 2.) Trusting in lawful means in such a way that the emphasis falls upon the means rather than God, Jer. 17:5. 3.) When we engage in carnal delights and joys that lead us to exclude God from all our thoughts, 2 Tim. 3:4. 4.) Whenever we exhibit any kind of zeal which is corrupt, blind or indiscreet whilst laying claim to divine approbation, Gal. 4:17; John 16:2; Rom. 10:2. 5.) Whenever we appear to exhibit a lukewarmness, Rev. 3:16; or, even, a deadness in or about the things of God, Rev. 3:1. 6.) When we estrange ourselves or depart from the living God by way of apostatizing, Ezek. 14:5; Isa. 1:4, 5.

Additionally, it is practical atheism whenever we presume, under whatever guise (*i.e.*, whether or not it be joined with speculative atheism), to yield the honor due to the true God to any other by: 1.) Praying, or giving any religious worship to saints, angels or any other creatures, regardless of pretext, Hos. 4:12; Acts 10:25, 26; Rev. 19:10; Rom. 1:25. 2.) Any direct or indirect appeals to the devil, demons, or other infernal spirits for any purpose whatsoever, Lev. 20:6; 1 Sam. 28:7, 11; 1 Chron. 10:13, 14. 3.) Yielding our hearts to hearken to the suggestions of Satan, howsoever they be tendered, Acts 5:3. 4.) Whenever we allow men to be lords over either our faith or consciences by giving place to their thoughts or suggestions contrary or besides those principles held forth in God's word, 2 Cor. 1:24; Matt. 23:9. 5.) Whenever we slight or despise God and his commands by ignoring, refusing or otherwise failing to heed his word, 2 Sam. 12:9; Prov. 13:13. 6.) By resisting the influences of the Holy Spirit and, thereby, grieving him, Acts 7:51; Eph. 4:30.

Finally, we enter upon practical atheism when we: 1.) Become discontent and impatient at the divine dispensations especially when, for our sins and the trial of our faith, God inflicts evil on us, Ps. 73:2, 3, 13-15, 22; Job 1:22. 2.) Ascribe the praise of any good we are, have or can do to fortune, 1 Sam. 6:7-9; idols, Dan. 5:23; ourselves, Deut. 8:17; Dan. 4:30; or to any other creature, Hab. 1:16.