

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 # 108 & 50.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #108. *What are the duties required in the second commandment?*

A. The duties required in the second commandment are, the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath instituted in his word;¹ particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ;² the reading, preaching, and hearing of the word;³ the administration and receiving of the sacraments;⁴ church government and discipline;⁵ the ministry and maintainance thereof;⁶ religious fasting;⁷ swearing by the name of God,⁸ and vowing unto him:⁹ as also the disapproving, detesting, opposing, all false worship;¹⁰ and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry.¹¹

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #50. *What is required in the second commandment?*

A. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his Word.¹²

Question 1—*Does the second commandment require that we receive, observe and keep pure and entire all the religious worship and ordinances which God has appointed in his Word?*

Answer—Yes, Ex. 34:14. Religious worship is that whereby men seek to address themselves to a God who is a God of infinite perfection, Matt. 5:48. The divine testimony regarding God's gracious redemption of his people and his character as a just and holy God are given as motives for men to adhere with care and precision to the law of God and to transmit the same to posterity, Deut. 32:46, 47. It is the duty of the ministry to teach even the smallest part of the command that it might receive due observance, Matt. 28:20. It is the duty of the people of God to take care that they seek to observe what they have received in purity and entirely, Acts 2:42. In so doing, the church resembles her Lord, who

¹ Deut. 32:46, 47; Matt. 28:20; Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 6:13, 14.

² Phil. 4:6; Eph. 5:20.

³ Deut. 17:18, 19; Acts 15:21; 2 Tim. 4:2; Jas. 1:21, 22; Acts 10:33.

⁴ Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-30.

⁵ Matt. 18:15-17; Matt. 16:19; 1 Cor. 5 *chapter*; 1 Cor. 12:28.

⁶ Eph. 4:11, 12; 1 Tim. 5:17, 18; 1 Cor. 9:7-15.

⁷ Joel 2:12, 13; 1 Cor. 7:5.

⁸ Deut. 6:13.

⁹ Isa. 19:21; Ps. 76:11.

¹⁰ Acts 17:16, 17; Ps. 16:4.

¹¹ Deut. 7:5; Isa. 30:22.

¹² Deut. 32:46; Matt. 28:20; Acts 2:42.

witnessed a good confession in the days of his passion, and she will be adjudged faithful at the appearing of the Lord, 1 Tim. 6:13, 14.

As ordinances, the attendance of his people depends upon the divine command, Deut. 5:32. God had annexed a promise of his gracious presence, whereby our expectations are raised, that we shall obtain some blessings from him, when we engage therein in a right manner, in which respect they are instituted means of grace, with pledges of special favor which he promises to bestow upon his people, Matt. 18:20. These promises are to be attended whether the ordinances are solitary or social, Matt. 6:6.

Question 2—*Wherein consist the religious worship that we ought to observe according to the second commandment?*

Answer—The first part of religious worship consists in *prayer*, whereby we tender the homage to him due from the creature, 1 Thess. 5:17; Phil. 4:6. Acceptable prayer ought to consist of petitions, Luke 11:2-4; confession, Ps. 41:4; and, thanksgiving, Eph. 5:20. This ought to be accorded in public assemblies, Acts 2:42; and, in families, Jer. 10:25. In this, we are tied to no form, Matt. 6:9.

The second part of worship consists of *praise* in singing of psalms, whereby we render due praise to the God of heaven, 1 Chron. 16:9. This, too, is appointed to be done in the public assemblies, Ps. 149:1; and, in less public settings, Jas. 5:13. It ought to be done with all simplicity as becomes the Gospel, singing with grace in the heart, Col. 3:16. Since the dispensation of types and shadows has ended, Col. 2:17; Heb. 3:5, 6; it behooves men to make the melody in the heart, and not upon musical instruments for which no trace of evidence can be found to recommend it in Gospel worship, Eph. 5:19.

The third part of worship consists in *reading* God's word and *hearing* it be read, whereby we honor God by consulting his oracles, 1 Tim. 4:13; Deut. 17:18, 19; Jas. 1:21, 22. Again, this is to be done both publicly, Acts 15:21; 10:33; and, in private, John 5:39; Acts 8:30.

Question 3—*What particularly are the appointed ordinances enforcing the duties of the second commandment?*

Answer—The first particular ordinance is the *preaching* of the word and the *hearing* of it preached, 2 Tim. 4:2; 2 Kings 4:22, 23. Hearing is the appointed means by which men receive the Spirit of promise, Gal. 3:2. Consequently, the ministry is an ordinance of God, Rom. 10:15; Eph. 4:11, 12; and, therefore the maintenance of it is by the ordinance of God, 1 Cor. 9:14. Although the maintenance be the primary concern of the church, 1 Cor. 9:13; yet, it is prophesied of the Gospel era that magistrates shall assume the maintenance, Isa. 60:10, 16; and, to this end, the church is instructed to pray, 1 Tim. 2:2.

The second particular ordinance is administration and receiving of the *sacraments*, which are signs, indicating the divine intention in the covenant, and seals, whereby the blessing of the covenant, are displayed, Rom. 4:11. Under the simplicity of the Gospel administration, these are but two, baptism, Matt. 28:19; and, the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. 11:23-30. By receiving these, we solemnly avouch ourselves to be the Lord's; in giving these, the Lord avouches us to be his people, Deut. 26:17, 18.

The third particular ordinance is *church government* and *discipline*, Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Cor. 5:4-7. He has appointed for ordinary officers, pastors and teachers (*i.e.*, doctors), Eph. 4:11; as well as, ruling elders and deacons, 1 Cor. 12:28. The first three are to be accounted the rulers of the church unto whom the keys have been given, Matt. 16:19; and,

unto whom the power of discipline is entrusted, Matt. 18:15-18. Amongst these there is parity in matters of rule, Matt. 20:26.

The fourth particular ordinance is *fasting*, which is to be accompanied with prayer, when the Lord calls for it by providence, as when tokens of his anger appear in a special manner, Est. 4:3. This is to be done publicly, in the congregation, Joel 2:12, 13; and, privately, in the family, 1 Cor. 7:5; Zech. 12:12-14; and, even each man alone in secret, Matt. 6:17, 18.

The fifth particular ordinance is *swearing, vowing, or covenanting* to God, Ps. 76:11. This is to be undertaken whenever the Lord calls for it by his providence, as when men formerly asleep to their disobedience or laxity in the keeping of his commands or honoring him publicly do engage to renew their obedience in expectation of his blessing, Jonah 1:16; 2 Kings 23:3. Thus, vowing, or covenanting, is described as taking hold of the covenant and a yielding unto the Lord, Isa. 56:4, 6; 2 Cor. 8:5. This is to be engaged in publicly, both in the congregation, Jer. 50:4, 5; and, in the nation, 2 Kings 11:4, 17; Isa. 19:21; as well as privately, Eccl. 5:4. It is the duty of all men to swear only in the name of the Lord, Deut. 6:13.

Question 4—*What are our duties toward violations of the second commandment?*

Answer—Our duties toward violations of the second commandment are twofold, respecting both our inward and outward disposition: 1.) We are enjoined to cultivate a disapproval, detestation and attitude of opposition toward all false worship—anything that is a violation of the second commandment, Acts 17:16, 17. This requires a complete separation from these practices, which necessarily holds them in utter contempt, Ps. 16:4. 2.) We must study, according to each one's place and calling, the removal of all false worship *and* all monuments of idolatry, Deut. 7:5; Isa. 30:22.