

## 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

### QUESTION # 118.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #118. *Why is the charge of keeping the sabbath more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors?*

A. The charge of keeping the sabbath is more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors, because they are bound not only to keep it themselves, but to see that it be observed by all those that are under their charge; and because they are prone oftentimes to hinder them by employments of their own.<sup>1</sup>

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Question 1—*To whom is the charge of keeping the sabbath specially directed?*

*Answer*—The charge of keeping the Sabbath is directed more specially to those who are governors of families and other superiors, Ex. 20:10.

Governors, or masters, of families are not only to restrain immoralities in those who are under their care, on the Sabbath day, but to lay their commands on them, to engage them in the worship of God therein, as they expect a blessing from Him on their undertakings, Jos. 24:15. Thus, the LORD speaks to the honor of Abraham, when He acknowledges his resolve to command his children to worship and serve God, Gen. 18:19.

This charge demands the worship of God in families because: 1.) The light of nature teaches men to yield honor to the founders of those societies to which they belong and God is the founder of families, or houses (*baytāh*, בַּיְתָא), Ps. 68:6. 2.) The light of nature teaches masters of families, and societies, to use all proper means for preventing hurt to the family, and family-prayer is one means for keeping from danger, Jon. 1:4, 5. 3.) The light of nature teaches all men to do all they can to promote the good of their families with respect to all things pertaining to this life and shall it not teach them to use means to preserve and further their eternal well-being? Prov. 22:6. 4.) Nature's light directs even the heathens to have their household gods, Gen. 31:30. 5.) The command to pray every where and with all manner of prayer includes families, 1 Tim. 2:8; Eph. 6:18.

Amongst those superiors are to be accounted: 1.) Ministers, whose duties extend to the rule of the church, 1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12. 2.) Magistrates and other civil rulers, whose duty includes the keeping holy this day, Neh. 13:15, 17.

Question 2—*What are the duties of superiors with regard to the sabbath day?*

*Answer*—The duties of superiors, with regard to the Sabbath day, are to *promote*, *procure* and *preserve* the sanctification of the day, Jer. 17:20-22. They may not ask the propriety, of those under their power to command, as did Cain at another time, Gen. 4:9. He that does not hinder another's sin, when he may, commands him to sin, Jer. 23:14.

The *promotion* of the Sabbath stands in two things: 1.) Making men aware of the obligation of the keeping of this set time unto God, Ex. 34:21. 2.) Actively encouraging the keeping of this set time for an holy rest unto God, Deut. 5:12-14.

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<sup>1</sup> Ex. 20:10; Josh. 24:15; Neh. 13:15, 17; Jer. 17:20-22; Ex. 23:12.

The *procuring* of these ends may be seen in the duty: 1.) To take care that this time be marked off so as to be kept holy, Luke 23:54, 56. 2.) To effect the keeping of this day by underscoring its sanctity by his added authority, Neh. 13:21. 3.) To use all means to encourage the keeping of this day unto the LORD, Neh. 10:31.

The *preserving* of the Sabbath includes: 1.) Protecting this set time for its intended use, Ezek. 20:12, 20. 2.) Keeping or maintaining it without regard to change, whether personal or social, Ezek. 44:24. 3.) Seeing that it is kept whole and entire, Ex. 16:29.

Question 3—*Why are they to have this special regard?*

*Answer*—The commandment has special regard to superiors because they occupy a position of headship, or covenantal point of unity, over those placed under them in the providence of God, Ex. 23:12. The guilt of broken Sabbaths is laid to the charge of those in positions of authority, Ezek. 22:6. Superiors have no power to dispense with any of God's commandments, to disengage those who are under them, from yielding obedience, when judgments fall, they fall on the whole covenanted society, Ezek. 20:13.

The reasons that they are given this special charge are: 1.) They themselves are required to keep the Sabbath day holy, Ps. 101:2. 2.) They are commanded to see that it is observed by all those under their charge and authority by commanding them to refrain from taking their own diversions or seeking their own pleasures upon the Lord's day, Ezek. 22:26; Isa. 58:13. 3.) They are to be careful to arrange matters so as not to hinder those under them from keeping of this day holy and wholly, Jer. 17:24, 27.

Question 4—*What lesson may we derive from this mention of superiors in connection with this command?*

*Answer*—The keeping of each command encompasses the keeping of all of the commands, Jas. 2:10. It is impossible to keep properly any of the commandments without having an understanding of what each one entails, Rom. 7:7. Nor may any command us to observe any other Sabbath than the Lord's day under the New Testament, Col. 2:16, 23.