

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 # 121.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #121. *Why is the Word Remember set in the beginning of the fourth commandment?*

A. The word *Remember* is set in the beginning of the fourth commandment,¹ partly, because of the great benefit of remembering it, we being thereby helped in our preparation to keep it,² and, in keeping it, better to keep all the rest of the commandments,³ and to continue a thankful remembrance of the two great benefits of creation and redemption, which contain a short abridgment of religion;⁴ and partly, because we are very ready to forget it,⁵ for that there is less light of nature for it,⁶ and yet it restraineth our natural liberty in things at other times lawful;⁷ that it cometh but once in seven days, and many worldly businesses come between, and too often take off our minds from thinking of it, either to prepare for it, or to sanctify it;⁸ and that Satan with his instruments much labour to blot out the glory, and even the memory of it, to bring in all irreligion and impiety.⁹

Question 1—*Why is the word Remember set at the beginning of this command?*

Answer—This command begins with the word *Remember* because it is the command which requires the most forethought and preparation for its keeping, Ex. 20:8.

Beginning the command with this word also insinuates the renovation of an older command and not the giving of a new command, Ex. 16:16, 22, 23. It is likely that this command had been greatly neglected during the time of Egyptian bondage under the sore labor of their taskmasters, Deut. 15:15. This command is renewed by way of *momento*, the word *remember*, Deut. 5:15. Thereby, it imports that we are to call to mind, that this particular day which God has sanctified, is a Sabbath, Gen. 2:2, 3; or to know what day it is, in the order of the days of the week, 1 Cor. 16:1, 2; but, it also imports, that we ought to endeavor to have a frame of spirit becoming the holiness of the day, Isa. 56:2, 4; or, to remember it, so as to keep it holy, Ex. 31:14.

Question 2—*What is the great benefit of remembering the sabbath?*

Answer—The duty of remembering the Sabbath is a great help in preparing for its keeping, Mark 15:42. The necessity of which appears: 1.) Because we are naturally carnal and unfit for spiritual work, Eph. 2:3; and, being involved in worldly business

¹ Ex. 20:8.

² Ex. 16:23; Luke 23:54, 56; Mark 15:42; Neh. 13:19.

³ Ps. 92 *title*, 13, 14; Ezek. 20:12, 19, 20.

⁴ Gen. 2:2, 3; Ps. 118:22, 24; Acts 4:10, 11; Rev. 1:10.

⁵ Ezek. 22:26.

⁶ Neh. 9:14.

⁷ Ex. 34:21.

⁸ Deut. 5:14, 15; Amos 8:5.

⁹ Lam. 1:7; Jer. 17:21-23; Neh. 13:15-23.

through the week, some previous care is needful to abstract our thoughts from earthly things, in order to fit us for Sabbath employments and enjoyments, Neh. 13:19. 2.) Because God calls us to make a near and solemn approach to him, who is infinitely holy, in Sabbath ordinances, which requires preparation, Ps. 26:6. 3.) It was the practice of God's ancient people to prepare for the Sabbath upon the foregoing day, which was called a preparation day, Luke 23:54, 56.

The duty of remembering the Sabbath also is a great help, being a fence to the other commands, helping us to keep them, Ps. 92 *title*, 13, 14. This is necessary because: 1.) Profanation of the Sabbath is generally the first step to all manner of wickedness, and a making of great advances to a total apostasy from God, Ex. 31:13, 16. 2.) The observance of the Sabbath is reckoned a sign between God and his people, Ezek. 20:12, 19, 20. 3.) We cannot reasonably expect that God should bless us in what we undertake on other days, if we neglect to own him on his own day, Isa. 58:13, 14.

Again, the illative particle *wherefore*, Ex. 20:11; brings us to the reason for this remembrance which is to help us to contemplate the works of God in the short abridgment of religion which is presented in creation, Gen. 2:2, 3; and, in redemption, Ps. 118:22, 24; Acts 4:10, 11; Rev. 1:10.

Question 3—*Why is remembering so necessary to us?*

Answer—The command to remember is necessary because: 1.) We are very apt and ready to forget and, therefore, profane the Sabbath, Ezek. 22:26. 2.) There is less of the light of nature whereby we find a natural resonance for its keeping, Neh. 9:14. 3.) It helps us to learn to put restraints upon those things wherein we might exercise a natural liberty at other times, Ex. 34:21. 4.) The Sabbath day comes only one day in seven and, therefore, from Sabbath to Sabbath, there is much worldly business which transpires whereby our minds are easily lead off of thinking about keeping Sabbath, either by preparing or actually sanctifying it, Deut. 5:14, 15; Amos 8:5. 5.) It is a great work of Satan and his instruments to seek to blot out, not only the glory, but even the memory, of the Sabbath, to bring about all manner of irreligion and impiety, Lam. 1:7; Jer. 17:21-23; Neh. 13:15-23.

Question 4—*What may we infer from this command to Remember?*

Answer—We may infer that: 1.) This may serve to confute those who think the observance of days, in general, or, that the keeping of the first day of the week as a Sabbath, is a setting up of the ceremonial law, without distinguishing rightly between a ceremonial and a moral precept, Gal. 4:9; John 20:19. 2.) It also means that they are to blame who think that every day is to be kept as a Sabbath, as though we have entered into a state of gospel perfection, Heb. 4:9. 3.) It condemns those of great error who think the Sabbath is to be observed, but without any strictness so as only to be a time designed to maintain the public worship of God in the world, Lev. 23:3. 4.) It is directly contrary to the opinion of those who think the Lord's day to be a mere human institution without considering that what the apostles prescribed was by divine direction, Eph. 2:20; Acts 20:7.