

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 # 110 & 52.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #110. *What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment, the more to enforce it?*

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment, the more to enforce it, contained in these words, *For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments;*¹ are, besides God's sovereignty over us, and propriety in us,² his fervent zeal for his own worship,³ and his revengeful indignation against all false worship, as being a spiritual whoredom;⁴ accounting the breakers of this commandment such as hate him, and threatening to punish them unto divers generations;⁵ and esteeming the observers of it such as love him and keep his commandments, and promising mercy to them unto many generations.⁶

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #52. *What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?*

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us,⁷ his propriety in us,⁸ and the zeal he hath to his own worship.⁹

Question 1—*Why does the Lord annex reasons to the second commandment?*

Answer—These reasons are so many arguments designed to engage reasonable creatures to obey, Acts 17:2. This is because man's nature is such that he would rather be drawn than simply commanded, Isa. 1:18. A simple law which commands or forbids is dead in comparison to that which is reasoned, Mic. 6:2. These reasons declare to man God's testimony concerning sin, especially the sin in view, Ps. 5:4-6. They are to induce us to embrace the divine testimony as to the nature of sin as our own testimony, 1 Pet. 4:1-3; which, if we do not, we occupy the place of the devil accusing God, 1 John 1:10.

By annexing reasons, God gives demonstration that the law does not contain a motive within itself, 1 John 5:3. The commandment, without reason, produces sin in sinful men, Rom. 7:8. Without understanding the divine reasons, or arguments, men use the law to establish a testimony apart from the divine testimony to their own ruin, Rom. 10:1-4. In so doing, they show themselves sinners after the similitude of Adam, Gen. 3:22; Jas. 4:11.

¹ Ex. 20:5, 6.

² Ps. 45:11; Rev. 15:3, 4.

³ Ex. 34:13, 14.

⁴ 1 Cor. 10:20-22; Jer. 7:18-20; Ezek. 16:26, 27; Deut. 32:16-20.

⁵ Hos. 2:2-4.

⁶ Deut. 5:29.

⁷ Ps. 95:2, 3, 6.

⁸ Ps. 45:11.

⁹ Ex. 34:13, 14.

Thus, in giving men reasons, in the form of the divine testimony respecting the breaking or keeping of the law, the Lord deals graciously with his people, 1 Sam. 12:7; it is that which the Spirit uses to write the law in the heart, Heb. 10:16.

Additionally, we should receive these reasons as so many engagements calling us to enter into covenant with God for the power to keep this command, Ps. 119:106. This is accounted a yielding of ourselves to God, Rom. 6:13, 16. In so doing, men learn to keep the law in the righteousness of it, which is Christ, Rom. 8:4; contrary to this is when men refuse to share in God's reasons, Rom. 8:7. Our motive to keep the law must always be found in Christ, whereby we come to share the heart of God concerning the keeping of his law, Jer. 7:31.

Question 2—*What is the first reason annexed to the second commandment?*

Answer—The first reason given is God's sovereignty over us, *I the Lord*, Ps. 95:2, 3, 6. He has the sole power and authority—the right of dominion—over us, Rom. 9:20-23. Therefore, it belongs to him to appoint the laws and ordinances by which we must be governed in his worship and service, Deut. 6:17. In this we see that God's claim to appoint acceptable worship and service is coordinate with his very being, John 4:24. Thus, the prerogative of absolute sovereignty concerning God's right in man, including the realm of worship and service, is asserted clearly by the prophets, Isa. 33:22.

The reasonableness of this is not only rooted in the nature of God but in the nature of man, Ps. 8:4. Thus, God has a twofold dominion over man; *first*, by reason of his being and, *second*, by reason of man's being, Gen. 1:26. The latter, now, is especially to be viewed in the light of sin, Eph. 4:17.

Question 3—*What is the second reason annexed to the second commandment?*

Answer—The second reason given is God's propriety in us, *thy God*, Ps. 45:11. In this is included a consideration, not merely of his dominion over us, but his gracious claim asserted, Dan. 4:34, 35 *with* Ex. 20:2. This is contained in the demands that we *yield* service and that that service be kept always with reference to the distance between us and God, Rev. 15:3, 4. Therefore, we must not go awhoring after our own or others' inventions, which alienate our hearts from God, Deut. 31:16; rather, we must carry as a chaste wife, who will be neither a whore nor behave like one, Hos. 9:1. Because he is *our* God, we are called neither to be idolaters nor superstitious thereby symbolizing with the idolaters, 2 Kings 17:15.

This proprietary right of God is that positive precept whereby we are no longer called to serve by right of dominion, or nature, but by grace, John 15:15.

Question 4—*What is the third reason annexed to the second commandment?*

Answer—This third reason given is the zeal God has for his own worship, *I—am a jealous God*, Ex. 34:13, 14. In this, God testifies to his own pleasure he takes in the relationship with his people whereby he accounts all false worship as demonic and spiritual whoredom, which provokes him to jealousy, 1 Cor. 10:20-22; Jer. 7:18-20; Ezek. 16:26, 27; Deut. 32:16-20.

The promised enforcement, or consequences, is twofold: 1.) Accounting them that commit idolatry as God haters, John 14:21; he promises to curse the issue of their idolatry, Hos. 2:2-4; Ps. 106:29. This curse carries across generations, Num. 14:18; Prov. 3:33; 1 Kings 15:29, 30; and, it may only be broken by the renewed covenant of the children to obey, Ezek. 18:14-17. 2.) Esteeming the observers of his commands and showing mercy to untold generations of covenant keepers, Deut. 5:29.