

## 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 # 111 & 53.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #111. *Which is the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.<sup>1</sup>

*(Shorter Catechism)*

Q #53. *Which is the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.<sup>2</sup>

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Question 1—*Why is this the third commandment?*

*Answer*—As the second commandment touches the means of our worshipping and serving God, this command speaks to our frame, or manner, Ps. 19:14. This, too, is conditioned by the preface, or grace going before the keeping of it, Heb. 12:28.

The proper worship of God (*i.e.*, the second commandment) is necessary to teach men how to frame their lives wholly to the service of God, 1 Cor. 10:31. Men are called and formed, through proper worship, to glorify God, Isa. 43:7. The second commandment leads to the third wherein we prove what is acceptable to the Lord, Eph. 5:10.

In the third commandment, then, we are taught that we must frame our entire conversation to mirror our confession (*i.e.*, our belief and our worship), Phil. 3:20. The third commandment teaches us to join heart with hand in a return to the Lord that manifests itself in the service of both God and one another, 2 Cor. 8:5. Herein, we are taught to yield our members instruments of God's service, Rom. 6:13, 16; and we learn to make God's will *our* will, 1 Thess. 4:3; 1 Pet. 2:15.

Question 2—*What is the particular value of the use of the singular personal pronoun herein?*

*Answer*—The particular value of this use is to remind us that all voluntary obedience is rendered by the individual, Ezek. 18:5, 9. The obedience of others can in no wise satisfy the demands placed upon us by the law, Ezek. 18:4. Thus, it behooves every man to seek the power to render a voluntary obedience, 2 Cor. 10:5. This frame, which is needed to render acceptable service to God, is not to be found outside of his Word, Col. 2:18, 19. It is the renewing of our minds, by the Spirit and Word of God, that makes us able to offer acceptable service—a service which proves God's will is our will, Rom. 12:1, 2; therefore, we need to give diligence to the hearing of the Word, Prov. 4:20-23.

Question 3—*Why is there such concern for the name of the LORD thy God?*

*Answer*—The name of God (אֱלֹהִים), is that by which He makes Himself known to all his creatures, Rom. 1:19, 20; particularly He is known by way of covenant, Isa. 44:6. His name encompasses everything by which He is pleased to make Himself known to men, *cf.*

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<sup>1</sup> Ex. 20:7.

<sup>2</sup> Ex. 20:7.

Matt. 5:33-37. Since the knowledge of God is not observable by us directly, John 1:18; we must seek our discovery through that which is revealed, Deut. 29:29. It is through His name that some knowledge of His nature and perfections are conveyed to us, Acts 9:15, 16. We are assured that this revelation and discovery of His name is most manifest in His Word, Ps. 138:2.

It was by His name El-Shaddai, (אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי), God Almighty, that He revealed Himself to Abraham as a covenant-making God, Gen. 17:1. However, it is to Moses, under the sacred name Jehovah (יהוה), that He first reveals Himself as a covenant-keeping God, Ex. 6:3.

By His various names He conveys: 1.) Knowledge of His absolute, eternal and immutable essence, by the name of *Jehovah*, Isa. 26:4; *Jah*, Ps. 68:4; and, *I AM*, Ex. 3:14. 2.) Knowledge of His excellency and sovereignty, by the names of *God* and *Lord*, Deut. 6:4. 3.) Knowledge of the essential relations of the three Divine Persons among themselves, by the names *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, Matt. 28:19.

Question 4—*What is the great scope of this third commandment?*

*Answer*—The Lord, whose name is Jealous, is concerned that His name be sanctified by all to those who call upon Him, Lev. 22:32. His judgments, as the covenant keeping God, fall upon the heathen and all who do not sanctify His name, Ezek. 36:23. This, His name, we fail to sanctify when we do not yield Him the obedience due as the great covenant-keeping God, Num. 20:12, 13.

The opposite of sanctifying His name is when we take it in vain, Ex. 20:7. It is a vain taking of the LORD's name, and contrary to His command, Isa. 8:13; when men profess His name but deny Him by their works, Tit. 1:16. It is an exchanging of the truth for a lie, when men take His name in vain, Rom. 1:25. Any interposing or light meddling with the name of God (which takes up any way in which He is pleased to make Himself known) that involves falsehood or deceit is a vain taking of His name, Prov. 12:22; for He is the God who cannot lie and his keeping covenant depends upon this assurance, Heb. 6:17, 18.