

## 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 # 131.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #131. *What are the duties of equals?*

A. The duties of equals are, to regard the dignity and worth of each other,<sup>1</sup> in giving honour to go one before another;<sup>2</sup> and to rejoice in each others' gifts and advancement, as their own.<sup>3</sup>

---

Question 1—*What do the duties of equals regard?*

*Answer*—The duties of equals proceed from the principle of mutual honor, 1 Pet. 2:17. They must begin with a general regard for the dignity, or excellence, of others, Gen. 49:3; together with a charitable estimate of their worth, or value, 2 Pet. 1:7. This principle of mutual honor and esteem is rooted in that natural love of brethren which is fanned by the Spirit of grace, 1 Pet. 1:22. It is the manifestation of the love which Christ expects of those who claim to be His disciples, John 13:35; without which the bond of brotherhood ceases to be, Zech. 11:14.

Regard for the dignity and worth of others should lead to: 1.) Encouraging and strengthening the hands of one another in the ways of God, Isa. 35:3, 4; Luke 22:32. This is, in fact, the great end and design of all Christian societies, Heb. 10:23-25. 2.) Sympathizing with one another in weakness, Job 16:5; as well as, warning and helping each other, when exposed to temptations, or overcome by them, Gal. 6:2; 1 Thess. 5:11, 14. 3.) Defending one another when reproached by the enemies of God and true religion, John 18:10; Acts 7:24; 22:1. Failure to do so is the result of malice, or ill-will, on the one hand, Eph. 4:31; or, on the other, consulting ease and policy, Dan. 8:25.

Regard for their dignity and worth would move us to confess not only our own sins but the sins of others, apart from which our prayers are hindered, Isa. 1:12-15. While hatred may commit murder, indifference, selfish ease and policy permits it to be done, Zech. 7:9-14. We are commanded to reprove such, not only for the sake of those whom they might injure by the commission or permission of acts of injustice, but also for the sake of their own souls, Matt. 5:23, 24. If such should sin against us, we are to seek that middle course which neither ignores the fault nor aggravates the offense, Luke 17:3. Rebuke is necessary to remove sin from the brother, Lev. 19:17. Forgiveness is to be extended in order to gain that which is good for thy brother, Matt. 18:15; including his spiritual welfare, Jas. 5:20.

Question 2—*Why ought equals to be possessed of such mutual regard?*

*Answer*—Those who are equals are such precisely because they occupy relations in common, John 13:35. These commonly held relations ought to move men to lay aside striving and contending over matters of shared interest in order that all might profit from

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. 2:17.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 12:10.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 12:15, 16; Phil. 2:3, 4.

the resulting concord, Gen. 13:7, 8. After all, even those things, whether gifts or graces, which are of common relation yield most profit for all when all possess them with common, or mutual, regard as matters of community rather than matters of distinction, Acts 4:32-35. It is through this motion of community amongst equals that brotherly love continues, Heb. 13:1. Love which fails to light upon its brother is self-defeating and hypocritical, 1 John 4:20, 21. It is by means of this mutual regard, or concern, that genuine righteousness is displayed, 1 John 3:10-14. This is that mutual regard enjoined by Christ upon all who profess His name, John 15:17; it is a mutual regard that embraces a mutual service, Gal. 5:13.

Question 3—*What is the first course of actions most conducive to regarding the dignity and worth of others who are our equals?*

*Answer*—The first course of action consists in giving honor to go before one another, Rom. 12:10; whereby we perceive and anticipate the needs of those our equals and yield them the position of preference or first choice, Gen. 13:9. The relation of equals is one of parity in which neither party holds any preeminence over the other, Mark 9:34; and, as a result, it is a part of virtue to approach it modestly and with reserve, Luke 14:10. It is a relation which must proceed from a principle of unity, Ps. 133:1; in which ministering to one another ought to be held as the only appropriate avenue for achieving recognition amongst equals, Matt. 20:26.

Question 4—*What is the second course of actions most conducive to regarding the dignity and worth of others who are our equals?*

*Answer*—The second course of action consists in a rejoicing, or taking delight, in one another's welfare, Luke 1:58; whether it is in their gifts, 1 Pet. 4:10; or their advancements, 1 Pet. 5:5; even as one is inclined to rejoice in those of his own, Rom. 12:15, 16. This can only be achieved when men, through humbleness of mind, study the charitable improvement of others, Phil. 2:3, 4. In consideration of the unity which exists amongst all who are equals, the honor accruing to one redounds to the other, 1 Cor. 12:26. Self-conceit, or concernment for oneself alone, is so far from elevating one from a relation of equals to that of being superior that it actually reveals one to be the inferior in the relation, Prov. 26:12. God resists the proud and exalts those of low estate, Luke 18:14.