

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 # 136 & 69.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #136. *What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment?*

A. The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are, all taking away the life of ourselves,¹ or of others,² except in case of public justice,³ lawful war,⁴ or necessary defence;⁵ the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life;⁶ sinful anger,⁷ hatred,⁸ envy,⁹ desire of revenge;¹⁰ all excessive passions,¹¹ distracting cares;¹² immoderate use of meat, drink,¹³ labor,¹⁴ and recreations;¹⁵ provoking words,¹⁶ oppression,¹⁷ quarreling,¹⁸ striking, wounding,¹⁹ and whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.²⁰

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #69. *What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?*

A. The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbour unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.²¹

Question 1—*What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment?*

Answer—This command forbids all suicides, whether it be self-murder of soul or body: *Of soul* when we: 1.) Neglect the means of grace and salvation, Prov. 8:34, 36. 2.) By opposing and fighting the Lord's work in the soul. Prov. 29:1; either by fair words, Acts

¹ Acts 16:28.

² Gen. 9:6.

³ Num. 35:31, 33.

⁴ Jer. 48:10, Deut. 20:1 *and throughout*.

⁵ Ex. 22:2, 3.

⁶ Matt. 25:42, 43; Jas. 2:15, 16; Eccl. 6:1, 2.

⁷ Matt. 5:22.

⁸ 1 John 3:15; Lev. 19:17.

⁹ Prov. 14:30.

¹⁰ Rom. 12:19.

¹¹ Eph. 4:31.

¹² Matt. 6:31, 34.

¹³ Luke 21:34; Rom. 13:13.

¹⁴ Eccl. 12:12; 2:22, 23.

¹⁵ Isa. 5:12.

¹⁶ Prov. 15:1; 12:18.

¹⁷ Ezek. 18:18; Ex. 1:14.

¹⁸ Gal. 5:15; Prov. 23:29.

¹⁹ Num. 35:16-18, 21.

²⁰ Ex. 21:18-36.

²¹ Acts 16:28; Gen. 9:6.

25:25; or by means of violent suppression, Gen. 4:8. 3.) By continuing in sin impenitent, wilful impenitency is soul-murder, Ezek. 18:30, 31. 4.) By continued unbelief and refusal to come to Christ, John 5:40. *Of body*, when we fail to heed the warning, Acts 16:28; and plunge into that desperate act of self-murder, such as Saul, Ahithophel and Judas, 1 Sam. 31:4; 2 Sam. 17:23; Matt. 27:5. The admonition of the apostle ought to put us off all thoughts of suicide, 1 John 3:15.

Likewise, this command forbids all homicides, the murdering of others, whether in soul, Matt. 18:7; or in body, Gen. 9:6.

Question 2—*Is homicide ever allowed by Scripture?*

Answer—This command is to be understood as prohibiting all *unlawful* homicides the exceptions falling broadly under the following categories: 1.) Cases of public justice, in order to the condign punishment of all wilful murderers, Num. 35:31, 33. However, taking away men's lives under color of law, and forms of justice, when the law is unjust, and there is no real crime, incurs a stain that shall chase those persecutors out of this world and, if they die impenitent, shall bind them to eternity, 1 Kings 21:12, 13, 19; Rev. 22:15. 2.) Cases of lawful war, wherein it stands a sin to refuse to take up the sword, Jer. 48:10; Judg. 5:23. Therefore, Scripture puts down a series of commands concerning conduct in lawful wars, Deut. 20. Yet, this is no allowance to engage in unlawful wars for unjust causes, Hab. 2:12. 3.) Cases of necessary self-defense, Ex. 22:2, 3.

Question 3—*Wherein do men transgress the spirit and force of this command?*

Answer—The first class of transgressions are any actions which amount to omission that tend to neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life, Matt. 25:42, 43; Jas. 2:15, 16; or, through carelessness or neglect causing the taking away of the life of yourself or another, Eccl. 6:1, 2.

Additionally, this command prohibits all murderous passions, such as: 1.) Sinful anger, or anger that is devoid of a concern for righteousness, Matt. 5:22. The longer it is kept, the worse it becomes, Eph. 4:26, 27. 2.) Hatred, which is murder inchoate, 1 John 3:15; and, which is the real reason men allow other men to remain in soul-destroying sin without rebuke, Lev. 19:17. Hatred is the characteristic of persons estranged from God, Tit. 3:3. 3.) Envy, which is a cancer on the soul, Prov. 14:30. It often destroys both the envious soul, Job 5:2; as well as the party envied, Prov. 27:4. 4.) Desire of revenge, which nurtures all other murderous passions, Rom. 12:19. Indeed, we should beware of rejoicing when mischief befalls others, Prov. 24:17, 18.

Again this command forbids all excessive passions, Eph. 4:31; whereby the reason of men is displaced and brute interests are elevated over spiritual interests, 2 Pet. 2:12. Likewise, those who through too much love of this world are fixed upon distracting cares study this life to the prejudice of that life to come, Matt. 6:31, 34.

Question 4—*Wherein does the disregard toward this commandment become apparent?*

Answer—The disregard of this command is manifest by all who: 1.) Engage in an immoderate use of food, which is gluttony, Luke 21:34; or drink, wherein is drunkenness, Rom. 13:13. 2.) Overwork themselves or others, whereby they weary the flesh in those lawful pursuits designed to enrich life, especially when conducted at the expense of spiritual pursuits, Eccl. 2:22, 23; 12:12. 3.) Spend their time in recreations, especially those wherein the name of the Lord is neglected or profaned, Isa. 5:12.

Question 5—*What must we avoid to fulfill this commandment?*

Answer—The fulfilling of this command entails forbidding all: 1.) Provoking words, which seek to draw men into a murderous frame, Prov. 15:1. It is the better part of that wisdom bespeaking Christians to avoid words designed to strike like a sword, Prov. 12:18. Shimei, for his murderous and provocative speaking, 2 Sam. 16:5-7; suffered as a murder under Solomon, 1 Kings 2:42-46. This would include all mocking, scoffing and deriding in speech, by which the martyrs were said to suffer, Heb. 11:36. The soldiers mocking of Christ, John 19:3; is called by the Psalmist the baiting of dogs, Ps. 22:16. Its severity is registered in how the children were paid who used Elisha in this way, 2 Kings 2:23, 24. 2.) Oppression, whereby men are made to grieve in their souls and often become desirous of revenge, Ezek. 18:18; Ex. 1:14. This occurs whenever men strike at the living of others, their means and way of subsistence, Ezek. 22:7. This occurs whenever men by their actions prejudice the affairs of others often to the destruction of honest families, which calls forth God's judgments, Isa. 3:14, 15. This is accounted by God as a kind of murder, Mic. 3:3. 3.) Quarrelling, which often leads to violence and bloodshed, especially when men are engaged in excess of drink, Gal. 5:15; Prov. 23:29. 4.) Striking, or wounding, whereby there is an intent to do serious violence or harm to another person, Num. 35:16-18, 21. 5.) Any other action whereby the safety of another is compromised or brought into grave doubt as tending to the destruction of the life of any, Ex. 21:18-36.

Men fall into this sin by occasioning in others things whereby our neighbors sin against their own souls, such as causing in them discontent, fretfulness or immoderate sorrow, 1 Sam. 1:6. They also violate this command who are informers against the Lord's people during times of persecution, Ezek. 22:9. As do those who approve, or consent, in any way, to the unjust slaying of men, Acts 8:1.