

## 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 # 144 & 77.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #144. *What are the duties required in the ninth commandment?*

A. The duties required in the ninth commandment are, the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man,<sup>1</sup> and the good name of our neighbour, as well as our own;<sup>2</sup> appearing and standing for the truth;<sup>3</sup> and from the heart,<sup>4</sup> sincerely,<sup>5</sup> freely,<sup>6</sup> clearly,<sup>7</sup> and fully,<sup>8</sup> speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice,<sup>9</sup> and in all other things whatsoever;<sup>10</sup> a charitable esteem of our neighbours;<sup>11</sup> loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name;<sup>12</sup> sorrowing for,<sup>13</sup> and covering of their infirmities;<sup>14</sup> freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces,<sup>15</sup> defending their innocency;<sup>16</sup> a ready receiving of a good report,<sup>17</sup> and unwillingness to admit of an evil report,<sup>18</sup> concerning them; discouraging tale-bearers,<sup>19</sup> flatterers,<sup>20</sup> and slanderers;<sup>21</sup> love and care of our own good name, and defending it when need requireth;<sup>22</sup> keeping of lawful promises;<sup>23</sup> studying and practicing of whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report.<sup>24</sup>

*(Shorter Catechism)*

Q #77. *What is required in the ninth commandment?*

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<sup>1</sup> Zech. 8:16.

<sup>2</sup> 3 John 12.

<sup>3</sup> Prov. 31:8, 9.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. 15:2.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Chron. 19:9.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Sam. 19:4, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Josh. 7:19.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Sam. 14:18-20.

<sup>9</sup> Lev. 19:15; Prov. 14:5, 25.

<sup>10</sup> 2 Cor. 1:17, 18; Eph. 4:25.

<sup>11</sup> Heb. 6:9; 1 Cor. 13:7.

<sup>12</sup> Rom 1:8; 2 John 4; 3 John 3, 4.

<sup>13</sup> 2 Cor. 2:4; 12:21.

<sup>14</sup> Prov. 17:9; 1 Pet. 4:8.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Cor. 1:4, 5, 7; 2 Tim. 1:4, 5.

<sup>16</sup> 1 Sam. 22:14.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Cor. 13:6, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Ps. 15:3.

<sup>19</sup> Prov. 25:23.

<sup>20</sup> Prov. 26:24, 25.

<sup>21</sup> Ps. 101:5.

<sup>22</sup> Prov. 22:1; John 8:49.

<sup>23</sup> Ps. 15:4.

<sup>24</sup> Phil. 4:8.

A. The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man,<sup>25</sup> and of our own and our neighbour's good name,<sup>26</sup> especially in witness-bearing.<sup>27</sup>

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Question 1—*To what or whom does this commandment relate?*

*Answer*—This commandment bears a triple relation: 1.) As it pertains to the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man, Zech. 8:16. 2.) As it pertains to the preserving and promoting of truth and our neighbor's good name, 3 John 12. 3.) As it pertains to the preserving and promoting of truth and our own good name, Acts 10:22.

Question 2—*How does this relate to truth between man and man in general?*

*Answer*—It is a special concern for men when a society becomes so depraved that truth is no longer valued, Isa. 59:14; it is a great part of keeping this commandment that men are forward to take the part of justice in the affairs of men, Prov. 31:8, 9.

The duty to hold forth the truth in those affairs which concern man and man must begin with a speaking of that truth from the heart, Ps. 15:2. This concern for truth doth hold forth a man's desire for what engenders both life and good, Ps. 34:12, 13. When men understand this duty to tell the truth and are convinced in their hearts that it is accounted amongst the best of things, Isa. 63:8; they will be careful to tell the truth: 1.) Sincerely, without any influence of malice, without partial counsel, without feud or favor, 2 Chron. 19:9. This sincerity is rooted in the fear of the Lord and a righteous regard for all equity, Isa. 11:3-5. 2.) Freely, not being held in awe by anyone's person or countenance, or any evil that may thereby come unto us by the guilty or otherwise, 1 Sam. 19:4, 5. 3.) Clearly, not mincing, obscuring, and wrapping up the truth, so as they who hear it do not know what to make of it or how to interpret it, Josh. 7:19. 4.) Fully, so as not to conceal the truth, or any part of it known to us, which may make for the clearing of any matter in question, 2 Sam. 14:18-20.

Question 3—*When must we be especially careful about speaking the truth?*

*Answer*—This commandment would commend to us especial care in the matter of witness-bearing, which is to be understood in two ways:

*First*, there must be a concern to speak the truth and nothing but the truth in matters wherein we are called upon by competent authority, in church or state, to speak the truth judicially, Lev. 19:15. We must study to be faithful witness-bearers in all testimony given, Prov. 14:5; after all, faithful witness-bearing is an important means appointed for the deliverance of others, Prov. 14:25.

*Second*, in all matters of extra-judicial witness-bearing wherein we are called upon to declare the truth, although no human authority be interposed to oblige, whether in controversies or otherwise, 2 Cor. 1:17, 18. Although we must not always be speaking, yet we must speak the truth at all times that we do speak, Eph. 4:25.

Question 4—*How do we preserve and promote truth and our neighbor's good name?*

*Answer*—The preservation and promoting of truth and our neighbor's good name ought to be pursued as far as the two are able to coincide, *cf.* Matt. 24:35. To this end, it is required of us: 1.) To hold a charitable opinion and esteem of our neighbors, 1 Cor. 13:7; we should be ready to hope the best of them, unless the contrary becomes evident,

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<sup>25</sup> Zech. 8:16.

<sup>26</sup> 3 John 12.

<sup>27</sup> Prov. 14:5, 25.

Heb. 6:9. 2.) To have a love, desire and rejoicing in their good name as increasing the esteem of truth, Rom. 1:8. Such should be our love to them that we should be glad of the increase of their good name, though their reputation should overtake our own, for the sake of the truth, 2 John 4; 3 John 3, 4. 3.) To sorrow and grieve for their faults, as an expression of our love to them, 2 Cor. 2:4. The darkening of anybody's name by their sins should make us mourn, knowing that the same root of bitterness dwells in us all naturally and there are very few that make it through this world with unblemished reputation, 2 Cor. 12:21. 4.) To cover their infirmities with the mantle of love, 1 Pet. 4:8. Everyone has weaknesses which stand in need of cover from others in love; it is a dangerous business to aggravate and publish abroad these things, Prov. 17:9. 5.) To freely acknowledge the gifts and graces that are in any, 2 Tim. 1:4, 5; as there are none who are so good as to have no infirmity, so there are none so bad but they have some one thing or other praiseworthy, 1 Cor. 1:4, 5, 7. 6.) To defend their innocence when they are assailed, especially if they are absent, lest we consent to the tongue-murder of him, in God's accounting, 1 Sam. 22:14. 7.) To be ready to receive any good report of them, 1 Cor. 13:6, 7; as well as an unwillingness to receive any evil report of them, Ps. 15:3.

To all of this should be joined a disposition to discourage those who go about gathering the filth they can find to throw upon the name and reputation of others, such as: 1.) Tale-bearers, who kindle strife and bring wounds from afar, Prov. 26:20, 22. Against which we are to maintain stoutness of face to drive such away, Prov. 25:23. 2.) Flatterers, who by their smooth words conceal the enmity and deceit in their hearts and by which they dissemble the truth, Prov. 26:24, 25. 3.) Slanderers, who raise false charges to the detriment of his neighbor's good name, Ps. 101:5.

All of this is contrary to the duty to give sound and seasonable admonitions, rebukes, checks and reproofs, for what is ill or ill like in others, to themselves, without unnecessary speaking of such to others, Lev. 19:16, 17.

Question 5—*How do we preserve and promote truth and our own good name?*

*Answer*—It should be everyone's care to procure and maintain their reputation, for a good name is a precious thing, of which we should both love and be careful of, Prov. 22:1. It is cared for and maintained by both words and deeds.

In words, when: 1.) We are careful to speak nothing but the truth concerning ourselves, for those who seek a name by lying and boasting, ordinarily lose what they have, instead of getting more, Prov. 25:14. 2.) We prudently conceal those secrets concerning ourselves which we are not obliged to discover, for we sin against God and ourselves when we entrust our reputation to others, Prov. 25:9, 10. However, this is not to be extended to concealing of scandalous sins, which men are lawfully called upon to confess, Prov. 28:13. A confessing penitent is better than an obstinate scandalous sinner, Luke 18:13, 14. 3.) We defend our good name when it is unjustly attacked, John 8:49.

In deeds, when: 1.) We are careful to follow through with all lawful promises, even to our own hurt, Ps. 15:4. 2.) We do not do what is like unto evil, 1 Thess. 5:22. They who take liberty to themselves to engage in suspicious practices, or questionable activities, throw away their own reputation and violate the apostolic command to pursue that which is true, honest and of good report, Phil. 4:8.