

## 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 # 146 & 79.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #146. *Which is the tenth commandment?*

A. The tenth commandment is, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*<sup>1</sup>

*(Shorter Catechism)*

Q #79. *Which is the tenth commandment?*

A. The tenth commandment is, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*<sup>2</sup>

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Question 1—*Why is this command the tenth?*

*Answer*—Again, we must remember the warning of John the Baptist to the soldiers, that covetousness is the third way in which men offend in the things of this life, Luke 3:14. Once the safety of the outward estate is secured, Ex. 20:15, and the sanctity of that outward estate is maintained, Ex. 20:16; then, it remains to study the satisfaction which is to be held regarding the outward estate, Ex. 20:17. Just as the ninth command reflects the third command in its concern for sanctity toward the name, or outward estate, of men, Ps. 101:7; so, too, this tenth command reflects the fourth command in its concern to limit our desires toward this world, Eccl. 4:8.

Question 2—*Wherein does this command differ from the others?*

*Answer*—This command differs from the others, particularly in the second table, in that it speaks not about new objects, but about a new way of relating to these objects, Deut. 5:21. This command works to show us that the law itself is spiritual and obedience thereunto goes well beyond simple outward compliance, Rom. 7:7.

This command prohibits all inordinate heart affection being set upon the things of this world, especially as they pertain to the outward estate of our neighbor, as contrary to that love commanded to our neighbor, Rom. 13:9. It commends to us an earnest care and regard for his property, not only for its own sake, but chiefly out of regard to and for the sake of God, Deut. 22:1. This is the great depth of spiritual regard that ought to be desired for our neighbor's welfare, both temporal and spiritual, as well as eternal, Ps. 35:13.

Question 3—*Wherein does the scope of this command appear?*

*Answer*—This commandment enjoins upon and requires in us a full contentment with that condition in which the providence of God has cast our lot, including: 1.) A hearty reconciliation to the will of God, as the only universal standard for regulating our lot, both as to its form and degree, Ps. 47:4. 2.) An absolute resignation and entire submission to the will of God, as wise and holy, and just and good, and gracious in all his providential

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<sup>1</sup> Ex. 20:17.

<sup>2</sup> Ex. 20:17.

disposals in us, or of anything belonging to us, Phil. 4:11, 12. This disposition is that unto which we are called in the Gospel, Matt. 16:24. 3.) An inward calmness under His denial of outward comforts, and a satisfaction in our lot, as good, even as that which is best for us, 2 Sam. 15:25, 26; 16:10. So calm should our resignation be that we find our rejoicing in the Lord despite outward afflictions, Hab. 3:17, 18. Nonetheless, we ought to avoid becoming either insensible or unconcerned under an afflicted condition, Jer. 5:3; which is not so much calmness as it is spiritual stupor, Hos. 7:9.

Now this commandment requires in us a due weanedness of affection from every created enjoyment; because, all such heart immodesty as to terminate our affections upon the creature rather than the Creator is covetous, that is, in fact, godless idolatry, Col. 3:5. Thus, we must observe the following things: 1.) Our hearts must be habitually indifferent towards all created enjoyments, Luke 14:26; lest we fall into that habit of our hearts being lifted up above heaven in our concern for this world, Ps. 131:1. 2.) We must expect nothing from them but what God puts in them, Isa. 17:10; apart from which we shall only find weariness of seeking, Isa. 57:10. 3.) We must derive all our comfort from God Himself alone, in the midst of plenty, as well as in poverty, Ps. 18:46; wherein we shall find all comfort in the midst of a hostile world, 1 Sam. 2:1. Man's help will fail and fade, but in the Lord is a sure portion even in this life, Ps. 142:4, 5. 4.) We must use all created enjoyments as fading and transitory, whilst seeking to mortify every degree of lustful desire after them, 1 Sam. 14:32; 1 Cor. 7:29.

*Question 4—How do we come to obtain the required contentment?*

*Answer*—In order that we might obtain full contentment with our lot, which so much glorifies God, and prevents sin in thought, word and action, the following is necessary: 1.) We must receive God in Christ, as our God, as He is offered in the Gospel, as the only true source and sum of all that is good which is to be found in the creation, Ps. 73:23-26. 2.) We must believe that God, as the new covenant God of His people, and as their friend and father, is the maker, manager and disposer of all things, Job 34:33. He it is Who carries and preserves His people, Isa. 46:3, 4.

*Question 5—How do we strengthen and promote that required contentment?*

*Answer*—In such a state of contentment, it is necessary that we take care to strengthen and promote it by considering these things: 1.) That we ourselves are dependent upon God's mere goodness, grace and bounty for all things, Gen. 32:10; Isa. 63:7. 2.) That the wants and afflictions of our own outward lot are likely to be its most useful part to our souls, which are most precious, 2 Cor. 4:17; it is by means of these afflictions that we learn obedience, Ps. 119:67, 71. 3.) That worldly enjoyments are always very empty, and often very hurtful, Prov. 23:5; Deut. 32:15. 4.) That our temptations, burdens, services, and final account, are proportioned to our enjoyments, Matt. 25:14; Luke 12:47, 48. 5.) That the more that we enjoy in this world, the more dangerous is our spiritual situation, Mark 10:23. 6.) That Jesus Christ has marked the way through every trouble, and it is He who attends us to bear, to carry and to deliver us, Isa. 46:3, 4. 7.) That death and eternity, in which earthly enjoyments can do us no service whatever, and in which we shall reap the happy fruits of our troubles and afflictions, are made daily nearer at hand than before, John 16:33; Acts 14:22.