

## 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 # 150 & 83.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #150. *Are all transgressions of the law of God equally heinous in themselves, and in the sight of God?*

A. All transgressions of the law of God are not equally heinous; but some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.<sup>1</sup>

*(Shorter Catechism)*

Q #83. *Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?*

A. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.<sup>2</sup>

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Question 1—*Are there different degrees of guilt in the breaking of the law of God?*

*Answer*—Yes, for this is presumed in numerous places throughout the Scriptures, John 19:11; 1 Tim. 2:14.

That there are different degrees of guilt and offense in the breaking of the law of God appears from the following considerations: 1.) The sin offering, being of a more comprehensive character, as to be greater than the trespass offering, Lev. 5:1-5; 15-17. 2.) Some sins are more severely threatened and punished than others, Heb. 10:28, 29; Matt. 23:14. 3.) Some sins are declared not capable of pardon, Lev. 20:3; Matt. 12:31.

This question teaches us to contemplate all sin as it appears in the sight of God, Heb. 4:13. Although there exists a conceit amongst some professing Protestants that all sins are equal, this is both repugnant to the Word of God and the common sense of mankind, which easily perceives a difference between theft and murder; or, the telling of a lie and robbery, Matt. 23:23, 24. Thus, we must take note of this difference, if we would not fall under a greater condemnation ourselves, Luke 6:41, 42.

Question 2—*What should we understand by the word heinous?*

*Answer*—This word *heinous* is an old Saxon word which means *hateful, odious, or atrocious*, Job 31:11. If we come to adjudge all sin by the greatness of offense offered to a holy God, then we will perceive its heinousness, or offensiveness, to Him, Ezek. 8:6, 13, 15. All sin is hateful and offensive to God, but not equally so, Matt. 7:3-5. For sin to be heinous in the sight of God implies:

*First*, that it is offensive before God, even displeasing Him and grievous to His Spirit, Jer. 44:4. All sin is an abomination before Him, whereby it is called filthiness and uncleanness, even a thing which provokes loathing, Rev. 3:16. It is contrary to the divine nature and will for anything to exist in opposition to Him, Isa. 65:5.

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<sup>1</sup> John 19:11; Ezek. 8:6, 13, 15; 1 John 5:16; Ps. 78:17, 32, 56.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. 8:6, 13, 15; 1 John 5:16; Ps. 78:17, 32, 56.

*Second*, that it is offensive to His good pleasure, Ps. 5:4, 5. Thus, there is no sin about which God is either indifferent or unconcerned, but all sin shall bear the mark of His indignation, Ex. 34:7.

Every sin is done in the sight of God, who is the best judge of the heinousness of sins, Ps. 51:4; Job 36:9. Therefore, in all of this we may perceive two things: 1.) That all sin is heinous in the sight of God and, thus, there are no small sins before Him although some are greater than others, Hab. 1:13. 2.) That there are degrees of heinousness, whereby the greatness of the sinfulness of sins are magnified in the sight of God, 1 Sam. 2:25.

As some diseases are worse than others, and some poisons more venomous, so some sins are more heinous, regardless of the judgments of men, Ezek. 16:47; Jer. 16:12. All sin has a voice to speak, but some sins cry aloud, so, in the first table of the law, atheism and idolatry are sins of the greatest magnitude, Ex. 5:2; Ezek. 8:10. Likewise, against the second table, murder is more heinous, Gen. 4:10; as well as oppression, especially against the widows and fatherless, Ex. 22:23.

Question 3—*In what ways may we consider the heinousness of sin?*

*Answer*—The heinousness of sin may be considered two ways:

*First*, some sins are more heinous in themselves, that is in their own nature, though there be no other aggravating circumstances attending them, 1 John 5:16. Sins committed against the first table of the law are more immediately against God and are, therefore, in their own nature more heinous than any sins committed against man or any precept of the second table, Ps. 78:17, 32, 56. Thus, blasphemy against God is more heinous in its own nature than defaming or speaking ill of our neighbor, 1 Sam. 2:25. Likewise, some sins against the second table are more heinous in themselves than other sins by reason of their own nature, Gen. 9:6. Thus, we may conclude that adultery is more heinous than theft, Prov. 6:33-35.

*Second*, some sins are aggravated in their heinousness due to their various circumstances and other attendant factors, Rom. 7:13. For this reason, the most heinous of all sins in the world is the sin against the Holy Ghost, Mark 3:29. This sin consists in a denial of the acknowledged truth of God, and a willful opposition to it in connection with His will and works, concerning which the mind has been fully enlightened and convicted by the testimony of the Holy Ghost, not from any fear or infirmity, but from a determined hatred to the truth and a heart filled with bitter malice against it, Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26, 29; Tit. 3:10, 11.

Question 4—*Are other heinous and crying sins capable of forgiveness?*

*Answer*—The fact is, that ultimately all sin is against an infinitely holy God, Gen. 39:9. Yet, upon true faith and repentance, heinous and crying sins, other than that against the Holy Ghost, may find forgiveness with God, Isa. 1:18; 1 Cor. 6:11.

The fountain, or source, of all pardon which sinners must look unto is the free grace of God, and the meritorious blood of Jesus Christ, Luke 7:42; Eph. 1:7; 1 John 1:7.