

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 # 97.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #97. *What special use is there of the moral law to the regenerate?*

A. Although they that are regenerate, and believe in Christ, be delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works,¹ so as thereby they are neither justified² nor condemned;³ yet, besides the general uses thereof common to them with all men, it is of special use, to show them how much they are bound to Christ for his fulfilling it, and enduring the curse thereof in their stead, and for their good;⁴ and thereby to provoke them to more thankfulness,⁵ and to express the same in their greater care to conform themselves thereunto as the rule to their obedience.⁶

Question 1—*Are those who are regenerate, and believe in Christ, delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works?*

Answer—Yes. Gal. 4:4, 5. The moral law is to be considered in two respects, as a rule of life, and so no one is delivered from it, *cf.* Heb. 12:14; or else, as a covenant of works, in the same sense in which it was given to man in an estate of innocency, the condition of which was his performing perfect obedience, in default whereof he was liable to a sentence of death, *cf.* Gen. 2:17; Hosea 6:7. In this latter respect a believer is delivered from it, Rom. 6:14. As a covenant of works believers can be said to be dead to the law, for Christ has delivered all those that have faith in him from it as such, Rom. 7:4, 6.

Question 2—*Are they either justified or condemned by the law?*

Answer—No. Because: 1.) Since the Fall, no man can be justified through the keeping of the law, Rom. 3:20. This is because justification is to be expected only from him who our Righteousness, in whom all Israel, and only Israel, finds justification, Jer. 23:6; Isa. 45:25. 2.) Neither are they condemned by this law, because that is inconsistent with a state of justification, Rom. 8:1. Believers are called to a life which is beyond the condemning sentence of that law, Gal. 5:23. This does not exclude the fact that believers are called to condemn and abhor in themselves that which the law condemns (*i.e.*, sin), Rom. 7:15. Which thing, a justified sinner is able to do without concluding himself in a state of condemnation, Ps. 143:2.

Question 3—*Does the law show the regenerate how much they are bound to Christ for fulfilling it, enduring the curse in their stead and for their good?*

Answer—Yes. Rom. 8:3, 4. With due consideration of the severity of the condemning sentence of the moral law, believers ought to become keenly aware of the debt they owe

¹ Rom. 6:14; Rom. 7:4, 6; Gal. 4:4, 5.

² Rom. 3:20.

³ Gal. 5:23; Rom. 8:1.

⁴ Rom. 7:24, 25; Gal. 3:13, 14; Rom. 8:3, 4.

⁵ Luke 1:68, 69, 74, 75; Col. 1:12-14.

⁶ Rom. 7:22; Rom. 12:2; Tit. 2:11-14.

to Christ, Rom. 7:24, 25. For them, he has answered both the end and demand of the law, Rom. 10:4. Christ has performed that obedience required by the law and thereby procured justifying righteousness for all that believe in him, Gal. 3:13, 14. Realization of this truth lays believers under a superadded obligation (*i.e.*, “they are bound”) to an obedience activated, not only by the common command of God to men for universal holiness, but because of the great mercy held forth to them in Christ redeeming them, 2 Cor. 5:14.

Question 4—*Ought this to provoke them to more thankfulness?*

Answer—Yes. Luke 1:68, 69, 74, 75. Since there is no greater freedom than in keeping the commands of God, believers should rejoice that they might serve God in the keeping of this law without fear. Being delivered from the curse of the law, believers may now render thanks for a redemption that allows pursuit of holiness, Col. 1:12-14. The law, as a covenant of works, gives sin its condemning power, 1 Cor. 15:56. Christ, by destroying the power of sin (*i.e.*, its condemning covenantal penalty), makes obedience joyful not slavish, 1 John 5:3. We are not redeemed in our sin but from our sin because sin wages war against our soul, 1 Pet. 2:11.

Question 5—*Should the regenerate show their thankfulness by exercising great care to confirm this law?*

Answer—Yes. Tit. 2:11-14. For believers, the law does not constitute an oppressive requirement of salvation but a joyful opportunity to grow in grace, including a participation in that divine life opened in Christ, Zech. 13:1. Thus, Paul is led to proclaim that the law is not a burden according to the “new man,” Rom. 7:22. In the keeping of the law there is great delight, Ps. 119:77. In doing so, the regenerate *confirm* the law, by making a proof (or, “trial;” δοκιμάζειν) of it, they demonstrate that it is both reasonable and profitable to keep, Rom. 12:2.