

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTIONS # 27 & 19.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #27. *What misery did the fall bring upon mankind?*

A. The fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God,¹ his displeasure and curse; so as we are by nature children of wrath,² bond slaves to Satan,³ and justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come.⁴

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #19. *What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?*

A. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God,⁵ are under his wrath and curse,⁶ and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.⁷

Question 1—*Wherein consists the misery of the loss man has by the fall?*

Answer—By the fall of our first parents, all mankind lost communion with God, Gen. 3:8, 10, 24. This was something man enjoyed at the first, as implied by the question asked of him immediately after the fall, Gen. 3:9; for God made man with faculties capable of this privilege, designing him to have converse with himself, Gen. 1:27; Isa. 43:7. By this fall, mankind lost that which it shared, or had in common, with God and, so, could no longer walk together with God, Amos 3:3; by reason of his great sin, against which God's withdrawal testifies, Isa. 59:2.

This loss of communion implies two things: 1.) Man has lost his saving interest in God, *cf.* Matt. 27:46. Whereas prior to the fall man could call God his own God, his Maker, his Husband, his Friend, his Portion, being in covenant with him, *cf.* Ps. 73:26; Isa. 54:5; after the fall, this has become a state of enmity, Rom. 8:7. 2.) Man lost that sweet and comfortable society and friendship with God, Rom. 4:15; Gal. 3:19; and all this without a mediator, for God and man were not enemies or yet at variance, 1 Tim. 2:5.

The result of lost communion is that man lost God, which is the greatest and the fountain of all other losses, Eph. 2:12. He is no more the God of fallen men, until by a new covenant they get a new interest in him, Jer. 30:22. Consequently, man has become nothing in his nature without his common presence, Ps. 30:5; and a nothing in happiness without his gracious presence, Ps. 63:3.

Question 2—*What is man brought under by reason of the fall?*

Answer—*First*, men are brought under the wrath of God, so that they are become by nature children of wrath, Eph. 2:2, 3. Thus, through the entrance of sin, original sin, men have gotten not only a distempered nature, inclined to every kind of evil, Tit. 3:3; but, they

¹ Gen. 3:8, 10, 24.

² Eph. 2:2, 3.

³ 2 Tim. 2:26.

⁴ Gen. 2:17; Lam. 3:39; Rom. 6:23; Matt. 25:41, 46; Jude 7.

⁵ Gen. 3:8, 10, 24.

⁶ Eph. 2:2, 3; Gal. 3:10.

⁷ Lam. 3:39; Rom. 6:23; Matt. 25:41, 46.

have become persons subject to the wrath of God, Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6. By wrath, we should understand that this represents no perturbation, or disturbance, external to the divinity, for God is impassioned, Mal. 3:6. Yet, it does arise from a natural discomposure toward all that is contrary to his own will, Rom. 1:18.

Coming under the wrath of God involves two distinct aspects: 1.) Sinners have come under the displeasure of God, so that he takes no delight in them, but his soul abhors them, Ps. 11:5, 6. There is a holy fire of indignation burning in God against such an affront to his nature, Nah. 1:6. The dreadfulness of this divine anger exceeds the comprehension of man, Ps. 90:11. 2.) God deals with fallen men as enemies, those who have become his adversaries, Nah. 1:2. To such, God's response is certain, they shall be pursued as men in contest with their Creator, against whom they have no defense, Isa. 1:24.

Second, men are brought under the curse of God, which binds the sinner over to all the effects of his wrath, Gal. 3:10. This is the dreadful yoke of the broken law of God, which ties the sinner to the stake, so that the law and justice of God might fall upon him with all alacrity, Deut. 29:20. We were at the first separate from God, subsequently, the sin of our nature tends, according to its various aggravations, to make the breach wider, and our condemnation much greater, Rom. 2:5.

Third, men have become bond slaves of Satan, 2 Tim. 2:26. Sinners have been brought under the power of death, which is under the devil, Heb. 2:14. Therefore, sinners conduct themselves according to the bidding of their master, Eph. 2:2; for Satan has power over natural men as their master, Rom. 6:16. Since it is impossible to serve two masters, Matt. 6:24; so long as men continue bond slaves of Satan, we contract greater guilt, and the dominion of sin increases, Rom. 5:20. Satan himself is described as the strong man keeping the prison house for sinners, Luke 11:21, 22; whereby it behooved Christ to come to set the prisoners of sin and the devil free, Isa. 61:1.

Question 3—*What liabilities have come upon man as a result of the fall?*

Answer—The liabilities which have come upon man as a result of the fall are twofold:

First, there are those punishments which attend to this world, punishments which are of a temporal sort, Deut. 28:15-20. These punishments are the consequences of: 1.) Original sin, whereby all are made subject to the curse of death, Gen. 2:17. 2.) Actual sins, whereby our guilt is daily increased, Rom. 6:23; and the proportionality of punishment is increased to answer the guilt contracted, Lam. 3:39.

Second, those punishments which attend the world to come, including the vengeance of eternal hell fire, Jude 7; the eternal loss of communion with God, Matt. 25:41; together with the loss of all the felicity that is to attend those who are saved through Jesus Christ, Matt. 25:46.