

# THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

## WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

### QUESTION # 28.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #28. *What are the punishments of sin in this world?*

A. The punishments of sin in this world are either inward, as blindness of mind,<sup>1</sup> a reprobate sense,<sup>2</sup> strong delusions,<sup>3</sup> hardness of heart,<sup>4</sup> horror of conscience,<sup>5</sup> and vile affections;<sup>6</sup> or outward, as the curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes,<sup>7</sup> and all other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments;<sup>8</sup> together with death itself.<sup>9</sup>

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Question 1—*What are the inward punishments of sin in this world?*

*Answer*—There are several punishments that are inward respecting the understanding, will, conscience and affections, such as:

*First*, all men, descending from Adam by ordinary generation, are exposed to an awful blindness of mind, Ps. 74:20. This ignorance and error of understanding leaves the minds of men unable and unwilling to inquire after the way of truth, Eph. 4:17, 18; and peace, Rom. 3:17. The cause of this blindness is traceable to several things: 1.) the pride of sinful man, Dan. 5:20. 2.) The agency of Satan, 2 Cor. 4:4. 3.) The judicial infliction of divine judgments, John 12:40; whereby God places himself under no obligation to remove men from this condition, Matt. 13:15. By reason of this blindness of mind, men are naturally inclined to deny those doctrines which are of the greatest importance, such as those pertaining to the glory of God, and their own salvation, Ps. 94:8-11; Rom. 8:7, 8; as well as neglecting of those duties which pertain to the true religion, 1 John 2:11.

*Second*, men are punished with a reprobate sense, whereby men are left of God so as to have no sense of discernment between good and evil, Rom. 1:28. This is a greater degree of judicial hardness given to those who did not like to retain the knowledge of God, Job 21:14, 15; Jer. 4:22. By this phrase, “reprobate mind,” is described those persons who, by a course of sin, have become so lost to sin that they continue in this estate in a continued course of presumptuous sins, as Ephraim, Hos. 12:8; whom God did rebuke, Hos. 12:14. Those given up to a reprobate mind eventually entertain favorable thoughts of the most vile of actions, confusing all distinctions of moral judgment, Isa. 5:20.

*Third*, they are delivered up by God to strong delusion as a consequence of their blindness of mind and reprobate sense, 2 Thess. 2:11. Whereby, we are to understand

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<sup>1</sup> Eph. 4:18.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 1:28.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Thess. 2:11.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 2:5.

<sup>5</sup> Isa. 33:14; Gen. 4:13; Matt. 27:4.

<sup>6</sup> Rom. 1:26.

<sup>7</sup> Gen. 3:17.

<sup>8</sup> Deut. 28:15-18, *to the end*.

<sup>9</sup> Rom. 6:21, 23.

that God gives up those who receive not the love of the truth to be deluded, by denying them the spiritual and saving illumination, which would effectually prevent their delusion, Ps. 81:11, 12. Thus, those who willingly entertain the most abominable absurdities in matters of religion, which are contrary to the divine perfections, and the whole tenor of Scripture, and subversive of those truths of greatest importance, are given over to believe a lie, Isa. 66:4. For such as are turned aside, the LORD himself chooses the deceiving spirit and makes it to prevail over those in the grip of this terrible punishment, 1 Kings 22:19-23.

*Fourth*, there is a hardness of heart inflicted wherein men are fixedly resolved to continue in sin, the desires of the heart being to remain in their own perverseness and obstinacy of nature, Rom. 2:5. The consequence of this is that men cannot bear reproof or correction that might reclaim or recover them from their sinful estate, Ezek. 3:7. This punishment sears their consciences so that they sin willfully with a resolute hatred of God and that which is good, 1 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 10:26; Job 15:25. Through this hardness of heart, the corrupt nature expresses its enmity against God, and by God's judicial hand against the wicked, they are suffered to go aside yet they must fulfill his decree, Rom. 9:17, 18. This hardness is compared to a stone, a rock and even adamant, which is hardly broken by a hammer, Ezek. 36:26; Jer. 23:29; Zech. 7:12. This hardness of heart is often discovered in taking pleasure in those things which are worthy of death, Rom. 1:32; and, in a lack of desire for communion with God, evidenced by a consistent disregard for secret prayer, Job 15:4.

*Fifth*, there is the infliction of horror of conscience, whereby men are, by the immediate hand of God, awakened to a sense of the dread of his wrath, Job 6:4. In this, horror and despair set upon those who do not like to retain the knowledge of God in their thoughts so that they become convinced they cannot flee from him, Job 27:20-22. Whereas, under the foregoing punishments men were like asleep, in this, men are brought to a dreadful view of the God to whom alone belongs all vengeance, Isa. 33:14; Gen. 4:13; Matt. 27:4.

*Sixth*, the inward punishment of sin often entails giving up of a person to vile affections, whereby men are inclined to commit those sins most contrary to nature, Rom. 1:26. This infliction involves the contracting of a guilt that is repugnant to the natural ideas of virtue and vice even amongst the unregenerate, who have not arrived at such a degree of impiety, Lev. 18:22-28; 1 Cor. 5:1. These are sins such as ought not to be named amongst Christians, or thought of without the utmost regret, and an afflictive sense of the degeneracy of human nature, 1 Cor. 6:9; Eph. 5:12.

**Question 2—What are the outward punishments of sin in this world?**

*Answer*—There is a threefold outward punishment inflicted for sin in this world:

*First*, the creature has been cursed for the sake of fallen man, Gen. 3:17-19. The creation, which ought to have served for the good of man, has become the matter in which he is punished, and must, in some cases, suffer with man, Rom. 8:20-22.

*Second*, men have been made liable to evils in bodies, names, estates, relations and employments, Deut. 28:15-28. Thus, sickness is the consequence of sin, *cf.* Matt. 9:2; all disease is punishment for sin, Ps. 103:3. So, too, slanders against their names whereby men seek to deprive others of what is to be valued with life itself, Lev. 19:16. Our estates are often reduced by adversity, Prov. 24:34; our relations through rebellion, Deut. 27:16.

*Third*, and finally, death itself is a punishment for sin, Rom. 6:21, 23. Death was the promised result of sinning against God, Gen. 2:17; 3:19.