

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 # 137 & 70.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #137. Which is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is, *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*¹

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #70. Which is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is, *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*²

Question 1—*Why is this the seventh commandment?*

Answer—This command, a command to study all chastity, Ps. 119:96; besides being grounded in all commands of the first table, 2 Cor. 11:2; directly follows upon those commands respecting authority, Ex. 20:12; and the preservation of the body, Ex. 20:13. This command contains within itself issues relating to:

First, Authority, because none lives to himself, Rom. 14:7. Therefore, the keeping of this command—keeping chaste—has reference to others, 1 Cor. 15:33; particularly as ordered in society, Tit. 2:5. For this reason, children must seek parental consent for contracting of marriage, Gen. 29:18, 19; for lawful authority, which is a shield to the earth, Ps. 47:9; erects a shield of chastity over the contracting parties, 1 Cor. 7:37, 38. Our concern for chastity, or purity, should flow naturally from our concern to be sanctified, or show that we are under Divine authority, 1 John 3:3. Marital chastity is itself subject to this order, Rom. 7:2, 3.

Second, Preservation of the body, because chastity requires possessing the body with a due regard for ourselves, as the image and temple of God, 1 Cor. 6:18, 19. When a man and woman are joined in marriage, their respective concerns and exercise of power is over the bodies of each other, 1 Cor. 7:4. This is the source of the prohibition in this commandment, Ex. 20:14.

Question 2—*To whom is this commandment addressed?*

Answer—This command is addressed to all in authority: 1.) Magistrates, who ought to punish violations according to their severity, Ex. 22:16, 17; Deut. 22:22. 2.) Ministers, who ought to exercise a spiritual discipline over such as transgress, 1 Cor. 5:1, 4, 5. 3.) Parents, who ought to restrain men in their youth that they be not allowed to run wild with lust, Gen. 38:24.

Though this command studies the purity and sanctity of society, it addresses members of society personally, *thou*, Deut. 5:18. It is the duty of all men to learn to possess their bodies in the honor of purity, 1 Thess. 4:3, 4. This entails learning to yield, or covenant, yourself, not only in soul, but in body, to the service of God, Rom. 6:19.

This chastity is twofold: 1.) In a state of single life, which when led in purity is angelical, 1 Cor. 6:13; and its proper gift is celibacy, 1 Cor. 7:7; whereas, its opposite is devilish, 1

¹ Ex. 20:14.

² Ex. 20:14.

Cor. 6:16. Men who live as whore-hunters become effete and effeminate, Prov. 31:3. 2.) In a state of conjugal chastity, when married persons keep themselves within the bounds of that estate, Matt. 19:6. Violations are both self-destructive, Prov. 6:32; and destroy the marital bond, Matt. 5:31, 32; leaving the innocent party free of the bond, Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:15. Sins against this command carry with them the curse of God, 1 Cor. 10:8.

Though the duties of the conjugal estate are a matter of due benevolence, 1 Cor. 7:3; yet, men may violate herein:

First, by way of denial, by which Satan is given occasion to move men to sin, 1 Cor. 7:5. In part, Onan was punished for his disregard of this due, Gen. 38:9, 10.

Second, by way of excess, either: 1.) *In measure*, when the marital estate, rather than quenching lust becomes a banquet of insatiable appetite, Heb. 13:4; contrary to the apostolic admonition, Col. 3:5; 1 Cor. 7:29. 2.) *Or in time*, when men seek due benevolence—A.) *Against piety*, Joel 2:16; 1 Cor. 7:5; Isa. 58:13. B.) *Against mercy*, such as when the other party is not able, due to sickness or some other incapacity, to perform this duty, Matt. 9:13. C.) *Against modesty*, when demanded during those times of separation called for, Lev. 15:19. This is expressly condemned in the law, Lev. 18:19; and is given as a reason for God's judgments against the heathen, Lev. 18:28; as well as the people of God, Ezek. 22:10. To this is added that time of separation after childbirth, Lev. 12:2-5; as well as that time during which a woman suckles the child, Hos. 1:8; Gen. 21:8; 1 Sam. 1:22-24; that being an immediate duty of the mother, Isa. 49:15.

Marriage, being given for the mutual help of husband and wife, Gen. 2:18; was also given for the propagation of a holy seed unto the Lord, Mal. 2:15. Since the Fall, it also functions as a shield for uncleanness, 1 Cor. 7:2, 9. Failure to have regard to any of these three things subjects both parties to the temptations and stratagems of the devil, 1 Pet. 5:8.

Question 3—*Why is there a concern for chastity or purity amongst men?*

Answer—It is in purity of relation that the personal distinctions revealed in the human nature achieve a unity that reflects the divine unity of the Godhead, Gen. 2:21-24. This personal relation is to reflect that communion which exists between the Persons of the Trinity, John 17:21-23. It is a relation that is only achieved through eschewing the lusts of this present life for the promise of the life that is to come, 2 Pet. 1:4. It is also a relation which, when held in chastity, best reflects the love that Christ has for His Church, Eph. 5:28-32. Finally, it is the disposition of that soul which alone is fit to commune with God, Tit. 1:15, 16.