

# **The Principles of Christian Religion**

**A Study through the Baptist  
Catechism using Benjamin  
Beddome's *Scriptural Exposition***

# Outline of the BC

- I. Introductory Questions: 1-6
- II. What We are to Believe: 7-43
- III. What Duty God Requires: 44-114
  - A. The Law and our Inability: 44-89
  - B. The Gospel and the Means of Grace: 90-114

# Introduction to the Decalogue

- Interpretation

- J. Douma (cf. WLC 99)

1. “The Decalogue must be interpreted spiritually.”
2. “The negative commandments (‘You shall not . . .’) include positive commands, and vice versa.”
3. “. . . [W]here one sin is mentioned, the commandment intends to cover the entire range of related sins.”
4. “Those commandments concerned specifically with love toward God weigh more heavily than those commandments concerned specifically with love toward neighbor.”
5. “The starting point and goal of all the commandments is love.”

# Introduction to the Decalogue

- Uses
  - The “Three Uses of the Moral Law”
    - 1) The Pedagogical Use
      - Leading sinners to Christ
    - 2) The Civil Use
      - Curbing evil in society
    - 3) The Didactic (or Normative) Use
      - Guiding believers in grateful obedience

# Question and Answer 62

Q. 62: Which is the fourth commandment?

A. Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy: six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Exodus 20:8-11

# Question and Answer 62

- Intro to the Fourth Commandment
  - Objections to the Ongoing Validity of the Fourth Commandment:
    - The Fourth Commandment is nowhere explicitly reiterated in the New Testament.
    - The Fourth Commandment has been explicitly repealed in the New Testament (Col. 2:16).
    - The typology of the Fourth Commandment has been fulfilled in Christ.
    - The Fourth Commandment is not “written on the heart” of every person (Rom. 2:15) and is therefore not part of the Moral Law.

# Question and Answer 62

## 1. Six Days of Labor

- Labour is necessary as well as rest (Deut. 5:13).
- Labour tends to plenty (Prov. 13:4).
- And it adds sweetness to our gettings (Eccl. 5:12).
- Idleness tends to poverty (Prov. 23:21).
- And exposes to many temptations (1 Tim. 5:13).
- It is therefore forbidden under the severest penalties (2 Thess. 3:10).
- And it hence appears that a multiplicity of unnecessary holy days, is both a nuisance and a sin (Gal. 4:10,11).

# Question and Answer 62

## 2. One Day of Worship

- Every returning seventh day should be set apart to the services of religion (Isa. 66:23).
- But our religion should not be confined to that day (Psa. 145:2).
- Children must keep the Sabbath (Exod. 20:10).
- And servants (Deut. 5:14).
- And our cattle (Neh. 13:15).

# Question and Answer 62

## 2. One Day of Worship

- The Sabbath has a reference to God's resting from the works of creation (Gen. 2:2).
  - Man in the Image of God
    - Work as God worked – bring life, order, name, etc.
    - Rest as God rested
- We should therefore on this day remember him in his works (Rev. 14:7).
- It points out an eternal rest (Heb. 4:9).
- We should therefore keep that rest in view, and labor to attain it (Heb. 4:11).

# Question and Answer 63

Q. 63: What is required in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God one whole day in seven to be a Sabbath to Himself.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Exod. 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-14

# Question and Answer 63

## 1. Remembering the Sabbath Day

- It is the will of God that we should take special notice of the Sabbath (Exod. 20:8).
- We should remember it before it comes (Mark 15:42).
  - George Swinnock: *“The oven of thine heart thus baked in, as it were overnight, would be easily heated the next morning . . . . If thou wouldst thus leave thy heart with God on the Saturday night, thou shouldst find it with him in the Lord’s Day morning.”* (cf. 2LCF 22.8)
- And when it comes (Exod. 16:25).
- And after it is over (Psa. 42:4).

# Question and Answer 63

## 2. Keeping the Sabbath Day Holy

- We must keep holy the Sabbath-day (Ezek. 20:20).
- We must keep it by holy rest (Exod. 31:13).
- And by holy services (Ezek. 46:3).
- And with holy affections (Psa. 118:24).

# Question and Answer 63

## 3. Defining the Sabbath Day

- The Sabbath that we keep must be a common day, consisting of twenty-four hours (Gen. 1:5).
- The Sabbath should not then be begun and ended in the evening (Matt. 28:1).
  - What do you think of this statement?

# Question and Answer 64

Q. 64: Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?

A. Before the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath;<sup>1</sup> and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-14

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 118:24; Matthew 28:1; Mark 2:27,28; 16:2; Luke 24:1,30-36; John 20:1,19-21,26; Acts 1:3; 2:1,2; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2; Revelation 1:10

# Question and Answer 64

## 1. The Sabbath before Christ

- The Sabbath was appointed from the beginning of the world (Gen. 2:2).
- And it was observed before the giving of the law (Exod. 16:23).
- It was particularly enforced upon the Israelites (Ezek. 20:12).
- And that in commemoration of their delivery out of Egypt (Deut. 5:15).
  - What's the connection?
  - The Exodus a kind of New Creation and a delivery from slavery/a rest from work (see below)
- But it is obligatory on Christians (Matt. 24:20).

# Question and Answer 64

## 2. The Change from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> Day

- The Jewish Sabbath was kept on the seventh day of the week (Heb. 4:4).
- But Christ had a power to alter it (Matt. 12:8).
  - Cf. 2LCF 22.7: “positive-moral”
- Such an alteration is hinted at in the Old Testament (Ezek. 43:27).
  - Cf. OT 8<sup>th</sup>-Day Sabbaths (Feast of Weeks, Jubilee)
- And it actually took place after Christ’s resurrection (Acts 20:7).
- And their example carries in it the force of a command (1 Cor. 4:16).

# Question and Answer 64

## 3. Christ's Resurrection and Presence

- Christ rose upon the first day (Mark 16:9).
- And he then rested from his labors (Heb. 4:10).
- He honored this day with his presence (John 20:19).
- And he renewed his visit the next first day (John 20:26).
- And this was a mark of his approbation (Isa. 64:5).

# Question and Answer 64

4. Indications that the 1<sup>st</sup> Day is Special
- This day was dignified by a new title (Rev. 1:10).
    - Greek *kyriakos* = “belonging to the Lord”
    - Only other use in NT = 1 Cor. 11:20
  - The Spirit bestowed his extraordinary gifts on this day (Acts 2:1; cf. Lev. 23:6).
  - On it he confers his special grace (Rev. 1:10).

# Question and Answer 64

## 5. The Early Church and the 1<sup>st</sup> Day

- The primitive Christians assembled on this day (1 Cor. 16:1,2).
- And this was a public and not a private collection (ibid.).
- Their practice is then a rule (1 Thess. 2:14).

# Question and Answer 64

## 6. The Church's Celebration of the Sabbath

- Upon this day we commemorate a more glorious creation than the first (Isa. 65:17).
- And celebrate a more eminent deliverance than that of the children of Israel out of Egypt (Jer. 23:7).
- We should therefore join with our fellow Christians in keeping this day (1 Cor. 11:16).
- But this is not a direct breach of the fourth commandment (Exod. 20:10).
- If the matter was more disputable than it is, the superior advantage of keeping the first day in the present circumstances of things should have some weight (Mark 2:27).

# Question and Answer 64

- Excursus: Significance of the Change from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> Day
  - The Resurrection from Christ was a New Creation and a New Exodus
  - Difference between Covenant of Works and Covenant of Grace, between the Law and the Gospel
    - CoW = Work(s) before Rest
    - CoG = Rest before Work(s)
      - Already – Heb. 4:10 (context)
      - Not Yet – Heb. 4:11 (cf. Rev. 14:13)
        - » Cf. the New Creation (2 Cor. 5:17 vs. Rev. 21:1)
        - » Cf. the Resurrection (Col. 3:1 vs. 1 Thess. 4:16)