

## 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 # 151.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #151. *What are those aggravations that make some sins more heinous than others?*

A. Sins receive their aggravations,

1. From the persons offending;<sup>1</sup> if they be of riper age,<sup>2</sup> greater experience or grace,<sup>3</sup> eminent for profession,<sup>4</sup> gifts,<sup>5</sup> place,<sup>6</sup> office,<sup>7</sup> guides to others,<sup>8</sup> and whose example is likely to be followed by others.<sup>9</sup>

2. From the parties offended:<sup>10</sup> if immediately against God,<sup>11</sup> his attributes,<sup>12</sup> and worship;<sup>13</sup> against Christ, and his grace;<sup>14</sup> the Holy Spirit,<sup>15</sup> his witness,<sup>16</sup> and workings;<sup>17</sup> against superiors, men of eminency,<sup>18</sup> and such as we stand especially related and engaged unto;<sup>19</sup> against any of the saints,<sup>20</sup> particularly weak brethren,<sup>21</sup> the souls of them, or any other,<sup>22</sup> and the common good of all or many.<sup>23</sup>

3. From the nature and quality of the offense:<sup>24</sup> if it be against the express letter of the law,<sup>25</sup> break many commandments, contain in it many sins.<sup>26</sup> if not only conceived in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Jer. 2:8.

<sup>2</sup> Job 32:7, 9; Eccl. 4:13.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings 11:4, 9.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Sam. 12:14; 1 Cor. 5:1.

<sup>5</sup> Jas. 4:17; Luke 12:47, 48.

<sup>6</sup> Jer. 5:4, 5.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Sam. 12:7-9; Ezek. 8:11, 12.

<sup>8</sup> Rom. 2:17-24.

<sup>9</sup> Gal. 2:11-14.

<sup>10</sup> Matt. 21:38, 39.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Sam. 2:25; Acts 5:4; Ps. 51:4.

<sup>12</sup> Rom. 2:4.

<sup>13</sup> Mal. 1:8, 14.

<sup>14</sup> Heb. 2:2, 3; 12:25.

<sup>15</sup> Heb. 10:29; Matt. 12:31, 32.

<sup>16</sup> Eph. 4:30.

<sup>17</sup> Heb. 6:4-6.

<sup>18</sup> Jude 8; Num. 12:8, 9; Isa. 3:5.

<sup>19</sup> Prov. 30:17; 2 Cor. 12:15; Ps. 55:12-15.

<sup>20</sup> Zeph. 2:8, 10, 11; Matt. 18:6; 1 Cor. 6:8; Rev. 17:6.

<sup>21</sup> 1 Cor. 8:11, 12; Rom. 14:13, 15, 21.

<sup>22</sup> Ezek. 13:19; 1 Cor. 8:12; Rev. 18:12, 13; Matt. 23:15.

<sup>23</sup> 1 Thess. 2:15, 16; Josh. 22:20.

<sup>24</sup> Prov. 6:30-33.

<sup>25</sup> Ezra 9:10-12; 1 Kings 11:9, 10.

<sup>26</sup> Col. 3:5; 1 Tim. 6:10; Prov. 5:8-12; 6:32, 33; Josh. 7:21.

heart, but breaks forth in words and actions,<sup>27</sup> scandalize others,<sup>28</sup> and admit of no reparation:<sup>29</sup> if against means,<sup>30</sup> mercies,<sup>31</sup> judgments,<sup>32</sup> light of nature,<sup>33</sup> conviction of conscience,<sup>34</sup> public or private admonition,<sup>35</sup> censures of the church,<sup>36</sup> civil punishments,<sup>37</sup> and our prayers, purposes, promises,<sup>38</sup> vows,<sup>39</sup> covenants,<sup>40</sup> and engagements to God or men:<sup>41</sup> if done deliberately,<sup>42</sup> wilfully,<sup>43</sup> presumptuously,<sup>44</sup> impudently,<sup>45</sup> boastingly,<sup>46</sup> maliciously,<sup>47</sup> frequently,<sup>48</sup> obstinately,<sup>49</sup> with delight,<sup>50</sup> continuance,<sup>51</sup> or relapsing after repentance.<sup>52</sup>

4. From circumstances of time<sup>53</sup> and place:<sup>54</sup> if on the Lord's day,<sup>55</sup> or other times of divine worship,<sup>56</sup> or immediately before<sup>57</sup> or after these,<sup>58</sup> or other helps to prevent or remedy such miscarriages,<sup>59</sup> if in public, or in the presence of others, who are thereby likely to be provoked or defiled.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Jas. 1:14, 15; Matt. 5:22; Micah 2:1.

<sup>28</sup> Matt. 18:7; Rom. 2:23, 24.

<sup>29</sup> Deut. 22:22, 28, 29; Prov. 6:32-35.

<sup>30</sup> Matt. 11:21-24; John 15:22.

<sup>31</sup> Isa. 1:3; Deut. 32:6.

<sup>32</sup> Amos 4:8-11; Jer. 5:3.

<sup>33</sup> Rom. 1:26, 27.

<sup>34</sup> Rom. 1:32; Dan. 5:22; Tit. 3:10, 11.

<sup>35</sup> Prov. 29:1.

<sup>36</sup> Tit. 3:10; Matt. 18:17.

<sup>37</sup> Prov. 27:22; 23:35.

<sup>38</sup> Ps. 78:34-37; Jer. 2:20; 42:5, 6, 20, 21.

<sup>39</sup> Eccl. 5:4-6; Prov. 20:25.

<sup>40</sup> Lev. 26:25.

<sup>41</sup> Prov. 2:17; Ezek. 17:18, 19.

<sup>42</sup> Ps. 36:4.

<sup>43</sup> Jer. 6:16.

<sup>44</sup> Num. 15:30; Ex. 21:14.

<sup>45</sup> Jer. 3:3; Prov. 7:13.

<sup>46</sup> Ps. 52:1.

<sup>47</sup> 3 John 10.

<sup>48</sup> Num. 14:22.

<sup>49</sup> Zech. 7:11, 12.

<sup>50</sup> Prov. 2:14.

<sup>51</sup> Isa. 57:17.

<sup>52</sup> Jer. 34:8-11; 2 Pet. 2:20-22.

<sup>53</sup> 2 Kings 5:26.

<sup>54</sup> Jer. 7:10; Isa. 26:10.

<sup>55</sup> Ezek. 23:37-39.

<sup>56</sup> Isa. 58:3-5; Num. 25:6, 7.

<sup>57</sup> 1 Cor. 11:20, 21.

<sup>58</sup> Jer. 7:8-10; Prov. 7:14, 15; John 13:27, 30.

<sup>59</sup> Ezra 9:13, 14.

<sup>60</sup> 2 Sam. 16:22; 1 Sam. 2:22-24.

Question 1—*What is the first way that sins receive their aggravations?*

*Answer*—The first way that sins are aggravated is when those who sin are those possessed of some eminence amongst the society of men, Jer. 2:8.

There are sins which are greater than otherwise they might be because they are committed by those whom age and experience ought to have taught better, Job 32:7, 9. Such things are more agreeable to the character of children than those of advanced age in whom they are found to be a reproach, Eccl. 4:13.

Again, sins are aggravated when the persons offending are those who have more experience, especially in matters of grace, 1 Kings 11:4, 9. So, too, when they are committed by those who either are eminent for their profession of the faith, 2 Sam. 12:14; or, because they are those in whom there ought to be such an eminence of profession, 1 Cor. 5:1. This includes those who are notable in 1.) Their gifts, especially of knowledge, Jas. 4:17; Luke 12:47, 48. 2.) Their place, by which those greater offend more, Jer. 5:4, 5. 3.) Their office, especially when they are called to oppose themselves to the sins of others, 2 Sam. 12:7-9; Ezek. 8:11, 12.

The sins of such persons are compounded when: 1.) They are in some way guides to other men, because such undermine their responsibility by their example, Rom. 2:17-24. Or, 2.) , They are such as might inspire others to like sin by their example, Gal. 2:11-14.

Question 2—*What is the second way that sins receive their aggravations?*

*Answer*—Those sins are aggravated which are against parties of note or eminence, Matt. 21:38, 39.

*First*, although there is no sin that is committed, that is not said to be committed against God, Ps. 51:4; yet, some sins are aggravated by reason of being committed more immediately against Him, 1 Sam. 2:25; Acts 5:4. This includes all sins against the attributes of God, whenever men make use of His attributes as an occasion to sin or continue in sin, Rom. 2:4. We also sin immediately against God whenever we sin against His commanded and acceptable worship, whereby his name and ordinance are profaned, and the glory which is stamped upon them is esteemed little, Mal. 1:8, 14.

*Second*, those sins are aggravated which reflect dishonor upon our Lord Jesus Christ by acting as if He were no more but a mere creature, thereby refusing his instruction as our Prophet or His work as Priest for our redemption, or fail to submit to Him as our great King, doing despite to His offers of grace, Heb. 2:2, 3; 12:25.

*Third*, those sins are more aggravated which are committed against the Person of the Holy Spirit, when we either deny Him to be a divine Person, or suppose that grace takes its rise from ourselves, Heb. 10:29; Matt. 12:31, 32. This also occurs whenever we resist His divine influence, whether in guidance, holy motions or impressions, whereby we quench the Spirit, Eph. 4:30. They are further aggravated when we act contrary to those convictions He is pleased to grant us, or we in other ways resist Him teaching and instructing, Heb. 6:4-6.

Again, although many sins are committed against men, yet those are more aggravated which are against men, such as: 1.) Superiors, or men of eminency, whether by dominion, dignity or deportment, as containing the highest instance of ingratitude and contrary to the laws and dictates of nature, Jude 8; Num. 12:8, 9; Isa. 3:5. 2.) Those that we stand especially related and engaged unto, whether by familial ties, spiritual ties or other ties of fellowship, Prov. 30:17; 2 Cor. 12:15; Ps. 55:12-15. 3.) Those who are to be accounted and numbered amongst the people of God, Zeph. 2:8, 10, 11; Matt. 18:6; 1 Cor. 6:8. It is

the great sin of the Romish apostasy to have caused the deaths of those who are indeed to be counted as saints, Rev. 17:6.

These sins are further aggravated when: 1.) They are committed against those who are to be accounted weak brethren, 1 Cor. 8:11, 12; Rom. 14:13, 15, 21. 2.) They are sins against the souls of men, Ezek. 13:19; Rev. 18:12, 13; Matt. 23:15. 3.) They are sins against the common good of all or many, such as endeavoring to hinder the success or preaching of the Gospel, 1 Thess. 2:15, 16; or those sins whereby many are made liable to the punishments to be inflicted for the sins committed, Josh. 22:20.

Question 3—*What is the third way that sins receive their aggravations?*

*Answer*—All sins take to themselves aggravations based upon both the nature and quality of the offense, Prov. 6:30-33.

*First*, they become more aggravated if they are by nature committed against the express letter of the law, whereby there is no doubt left whether or not it is a sin or a duty, Ezra 9:10-12; 1 Kings 11:9, 10. Likewise, when one sin carries with the breaking of many commandments, thereby containing many sins, Col. 3:5; 1 Tim. 6:10; Prov. 5:8-12; 6:32, 33; Josh. 7:21. Again, if the sin is not only conceived in the heart, but breaks forth into words and actions, Jas. 1:14, 15; Matt. 5:22; Micah 2:1. These sins are aggravated when they scandalize others, Matt. 18:7; Rom. 2:23, 24; and, especially when they admit of no reparation, Deut. 22:22, 28, 29; Prov. 6:32-35.

*Second*, some sins are aggravated by the quality such as: 1.) Those which are against means, as when we break through the fences set to prevent them, such as the grace of God revealed in the Gospel, Matt. 11:21-24; John 15:22. 2.) Those which are against mercies, when the mercies of God are misimproved, undervalued and trampled upon, Isa. 1:3; Deut. 32:6. 3.) Those which are against judgments, whether threatened or inflicted, that are not regarded, or are unsuccessful in reclaiming us, Amos 4:8-11; Jer. 5:3. 4.) Those which are committed against the very light of nature, such as even the virtuous heathen have found to be offensive, Rom. 1:26, 27. 5.) Those which are committed against the conviction of conscience, which offer violence to ourselves and make advances toward judicial blindness, Rom. 1:32; Dan. 5:22; especially in matters of religion, which tend toward hardness of heart and a total apostasy, Tit. 3:10, 11. 6.) Those contrary to public or private admonitions, which tend to leave us without excuse, Prov. 29:1. Especially those which are against those ordinances which God has appointed to bring men to repentance, whether church censures, Tit. 3:10; Matt. 18:17; or, civil punishments, Prov. 27:22; 23:35.

Sins are farther aggravated whenever they are committed against our prayers, Ps. 78:32-37; our purposes, Jer. 2:20; or, our promises, Jer. 42:5, 6, 20, 21. It reaches a higher degree of aggravation when against lawful vows that have been made, Eccl. 5:4-6; Prov. 20:25; or, if against covenants which bind us, Lev. 26:25; as well as any engagements of God to men, Prov. 2:17; Ezek. 17:18, 19.

Sins are also aggravated from our manner of the committing of them, such as: 1.) If they are done deliberately, with premeditation, Ps. 36:4. 2.) If they are done willfully, making it a matter of choice regardless of the cost, Jer. 6:16. 3.) If they are done presumptuously, either taking encouragement from the grace of God to do it, or when his hand is lifted up against us, or we see his judgments falling, but are not disposed to take warning, but grow hardened and stupid in our sinning, Num. 15:30; Ex. 21:14.

Sins are committed that argue a root hatred against God, when: 1.) They are committed with impudence, or a brazenness, against God, Jer. 3:3; Prov. 7:13. 2.) They are done boastingly, with a total disregard for God's commands, Ps. 52:1. 3.) They are done maliciously, or with an intent to disregard the commandments, 3 John 10. 4.) They are done obstinately, or against any corrections offered, Zech. 7:11, 12.

Furthermore, sins are aggravated when they display that we take pleasure in them rather than in God, whereby we show that we value ourselves for having gotten rid of both the prejudices of education and all former convictions of sin, such as: 1.) Those which are done frequently, though against various warnings or tenders of grace, Num. 14:22. 2.) Those which are committed with delight, whether in entertaining of the thoughts beforehand, or taking pleasure in what we have done, Prov. 2:14. 3.) Those which are engaged with a continuance, demonstrating the wickedness of the heart, Isa. 57:17. 4.) Those which are committed by relapsing into the same sin, after having pretended to repent of it, Jer. 34:8-11; 2 Pet. 2:20-22.

Question 4—*What is the fourth way that sins receive their aggravations?*

*Answer*—The last way in which sins are aggravated is when they take occasion at certain times, 2 Kings 5:26; or, if they are committed in certain places, Jer. 7:10; Isa. 26:10.

*First*, if they are committed on the Lord's day, which is a profaning of the time God has sanctified for his own service, and, therefore, doubly criminal, Ezek. 23:37-39. Likewise, when committed other times of divine worship, such as times of thanksgiving or fasting, or seasons of worship, whether in private or public, Isa. 58:3-5; Num. 25:6, 7. These times must include those periods immediately before times of worship, 1 Cor. 11:20, 21; which ought to be treated as times of preparation, not times to render ourselves unfit for the performance of religious duties, Matt. 27:62. So, too, those times immediately after these times of worship, which ought to be especially improved by their proximity to these times, Jer. 7:8-10; Prov. 7:14, 15; John 13:27, 30. These are heightened when preceded by other helps designed to prevent or remedy our miscarrying of grace, such as times of great deliverance, whether personal or national, Ezra 9:13, 14.

*Second*, if they are committed in those places where God's name is immediately called upon, or in places where providence has cast our lot, whereby we render ourselves a stain and a dishonor to those with whom we must hold our conversation, 2 Sam. 16:22; 1 Sam. 2:22-24.