

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

QUESTIONS # 1 & 1.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #1. *What is the chief and highest end of man?*

A. Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God,¹ and fully to enjoy him forever.²

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #1. *What is the chief end of man?*

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God,³ and to enjoy him for ever.⁴

Question 1—*What should we understand by this notion of glorifying God?*

Answer—To glorify connotes, in both the Hebrew (כָּבוֹד) and the Greek (δόξα), the idea of substantialness, or weightiness, as Paul also describes it, 2 Cor. 4:17. When we consider what it is to glorify God, it must be observed that there are two ways to glorify:

First, to make glorious, by creating, adding or in some manner augmenting something, Gen. 1:27 *with* 1 Cor. 11:7. However, man cannot, in this way, make God glorious, for he cannot add anything to the glory of the One who is infinitely glorious in Himself, Job 35:7. Hence, it comes to pass that God gets no advantage to Himself, no glory by the best works of men, Acts 17:25; Ps. 16:2.

Second, to declare to be glorious, which is the only way that God can be glorified by the creation, Ps. 29:1. The irrational and inanimate creation does this objectively, simply by existing at God's command, Ps. 19:1. The brute creation does so subjectively, by submitting its daily care and very existence to God's will, Ps. 104:21; 2 Pet. 2:12. But man, like the rational creatures, must do so actively, Ps. 86:9, 10. This he ought to do: 1.) By the heart, or spirit, and not only externally, 1 Cor. 6:20. God is to be glorified by our understanding, whereby we excel the brute creation reasoning, thinking high thoughts and esteeming Him far above all other things, Ps. 73:25. 2.) By the tongue, through acts of praise, Ps. 50:23. It is the tongue which, giving man the capacity for speech, serves to exalt him over the brute creation, in giving expression to words of praise, whereby the tongue is called his glory, Ps. 16:9. 3.) By the very life, Matt. 5:16. For the conversation of a man is that whereby his rational and active praise is put on display, thereby giving it that luminous quality associated with the glory of God in creation and redemption, Isa. 58:8; 1 Thess. 2:12.

Men glorify God in their lives by a very comprehensive duty: 1.) Confessing all of the sins we have committed, Josh. 7:19. In so doing, there is an acknowledging of the holiness of the divine nature and the law, Rom. 7:12. Thus, the penitent thief, crucified with the Saviour, confesses he suffered justly, Luke 23:40, 41. So, too, did the Levites, in their prayer to God, Neh. 9:33. 2.) By believing and trusting in him, committing all our

¹ Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 10:31.

² Ps. 73:24-28; John 17:21-23.

³ 1 Cor. 10:31; Rom. 11:36.

⁴ Ps. 73:25-28.

concerns to him, Rom. 4:20. 3.) By improving our talents, and bringing forth fruit in proportion to the means we enjoy, John 15:8.

Question 2—*Why is glorifying God the chief end of man?*

Answer—First, it is the end of man because it was the end for which the Lord made man in the day when He created him, Prov. 16:4. Every rational agent proposes to himself an end in working, and God, being the most perfect Being, whose own glory is the noblest end, proposed that as the highest end of man, Rom. 11:36.

Second, it is the end of man as God's work, making him a fit instrument for glorifying Himself, Eccl. 7:29. Though God made man for other ends, Gen. 1:26; yet, this remains the highest, or chief, end for which man was created, Rev. 4:11.

Third, it is that which man should aim at, being the mark and end of his own being, and should direct all of his actions, 1 Cor. 10:31. This is what should be continually before our eye, the grand design that we ought to carry in this world, Ps. 16:8.

The extent of this duty pertains to all things, for it is the end of our first creation and our second creation, Isa. 43:7, 21. Thus, it must be the end: 1.) Of our natural actions, whether eating, sleeping, or whatsoever, 1 Cor. 10:31. We are not permitted to eat, drink, or engage in our natural actions without reference to the glory of God, Zech. 7:6. 2.) Of our civil actions, whether working, buying, selling, or whatsoever encompasses the civil and social aspects of life, Eph. 6:7. Apart from having respect to the glory of God these things are all sinful, Prov. 21:4. 3.) Of our moral and religious actions, whereby we render up to God that which He has required, Zech. 7:5. Without reference to His commands, these things all disregard His appointed means of rendering glory, Deut. 4:2.

Question 3—*What is the meaning of enjoying God?*

Answer—Enjoying God supposes a propriety in Him, a claim to Him, as our God, for there is no enjoyment in an estate which belongs to another, Ps. 128:2;. Therefore, by covenant in Christ, we come to have leave to regard Him as our God, Ps. 48:14; and possess all with His blessing, Ps. 67:6.

Enjoying God also supposes a special gracious communion with Him, allowing us to converse or walk with Him, and to delight in Him, 1 John 1:3. This enjoyment is such as we are blessed to have in this world, though it is imperfect, 1 Cor. 13:12. Nonetheless, it is for the full enjoyment of God that our Saviour prays for his people during this sojourn in this world, John 17:21-23. Yet, in heaven, believers shall enjoy God perfectly and immediately, without the imperfections of this present life, 1 John 3:2. This is the portion of the heavenly life, John 17:24.

Question 4—*What is the connection between glorifying and enjoying God?*

Answer—God hath joined these two things together, so that the one shall not be attained without the other, Ps. 73:24-28. Those who experience the one shall assuredly experience the other, for the Lord has connected them, Ps. 84:11. Thus, we are told that the beginning of the work that leads men to glorify God declaratively will also bring those men to glory, Phil. 1:6. Thereby men come, by faith, to possess the fullness of salvation in the enjoyment of God, 1 Pet. 1:9. Therefore, the exercise of Christian graces is commended from the motive of enjoying God, Heb. 11:16. The eye of faith to the recompense of reward is a means to provoke us to glorify God in the flesh, Heb. 11:26.