

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTIONS # 25 & 18.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #25. *Wherein consisteth the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?*

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin,¹ the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually;² which is commonly called Original Sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.³

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #18. *Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?*

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.⁴

Question 1—*What should we understand by the guilt of Adam's first transgression?*

Answer—The disobedience of the first man, Adam, being imputed to his posterity, the result is that all the world becomes guilty before God, Rom. 5:12. Guilt is an obligation or liability to suffer punishment for an offense committed, in proportion to its aggravations, Rom. 5:19. We are not speaking of the corruption of nature inherent in us, Rom. 5:14-18; rather, we are only considering Adam's sin as imputed and antecedent to the corruption of nature from which all actual transgressions flow, Rom. 5:13, 20. In other words, this guilt of Adam's first sin, being immediately imputed to all men descending from him by an ordinary generation, forms the ground of that liability, or the origin of the responsibility, by which the whole nature, as existing undivided in the first man, stands condemned to its penalty, 1 Cor. 15:22.

Question 2—*What is meant by the want of righteousness?*

Answer—The want of righteousness is that privative part of the liability which the guilt of Adam's sin has procured, which has resulted in the loss of original righteousness, Gen. 3:7, 8. This want of original righteousness is an immediate consequence of Adam's first sin, Eph. 2:1-3; thus, by original righteousness, we understand that freedom from guilt which man had before he sinned, Gen. 1:27. This loss of original righteousness consists in several things: 1.) There is now a want of that knowledge in the mind wherewith man was created, Eph. 4:18. The light that was set up in the soul of man is now gone, John 1:5; though the candlestick is not removed, the candle now is, Job 11:12. The mind is now like the ostrich, which God has deprived of understanding, Job 39:13-17. Thus, it is that the natural man, the man as he stands fallen in Adam, is without that necessary

¹ Rom. 5:12, 19.

² Rom. 3:10-19; Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 5:6; 8:7, 8; Gen. 6:5.

³ Jas. 1:14, 15; Matt. 15:19.

⁴ Rom. 5:10-20; Eph. 2:1-3; Jas. 1:14, 15; Matt. 15:19.

knowledge needed to all spiritual understanding, 1 Cor. 2:14. 2.) The righteousness which was in the will of man, the bent and inclination to good, together with its subsistence in holiness, is now removed, Eccl. 7:29. This deficiency is felt by all men, for none can now yield an acceptable obedience to God, much less a perfect obedience, Rom. 7:18. 3.) The holiness of all affections, wherein the strength of obedience is to be found, is gone, Rom. 5:6. Spiritual affections have departed with the denuding of the original righteousness, Rom. 7:18.

Question 3—*Wherein consists the sinfulness of fallen man?*

Answer—Besides the *privative* consequences imputed to man by the first sin, there are *positive* consequences, whereby the natural man is not only void of good qualities but filled with all that is contrary, Rom. 7:23; Gal. 5:17; Eph. 4:22, 23; Rom. 3:10-19.

This corruption of the whole nature extends to all men, Gen. 6:5; from which mankind is unable and unwilling to deliver itself, Job 14:4. This has overspread the soul and all its faculties, Tit. 1:15. Therefore, the understanding is: 1.) Become a realm of darkness, Eph. 5:8; consigning man into a fearful stupidity in relation to all spiritual things, 1 Cor. 2:14. 2.) Is the natural soil in which the root of unbelief grows and flourishes, overspreading the whole of life, Eph. 2:2. Additionally, the will, being corrupted: 1.) Has been reduced to a pitiful weakness, Rom. 5:6; and possessed of an insufficiency regarding any spiritual good, 2 Cor. 3:5. 2.) Has an aversion to good, not wanting to come out of its sinful state, John 5:40. 3.) Has a proneness to all evil, even a bent and inclination to wickedness, Hos. 11:7. Natural men are set upon idolatry, Jer. 50:38. 4.) Has a crossness and contrariety to all that is good and which is the will of God, Rom. 8:7, 8.

The natural will of man is cross to God in two ways: 1.) It is cross to his nature, rejecting the holiness of God, Job 21:14. The fallen will of man is an enemy to the God of Scripture and does what it can to attempt to refashion the divine nature, Ps. 50:21. Fallen man is proud and wishes none above him or in control of him, he wants to give no account, Ps. 14:1. 2.) It is cross to the will of God, both his Law, Rom. 8:7; as well as his Gospel, Luke 19:14. Like Judas, the natural man would rather hang himself than have recourse to Christ, Acts 1:18, 19, 25.

Question 4—*What is this fallen estate commonly called and why?*

Answer—This estate into which man has fallen, by reason of Adam's first sin, is called Original Sin, the reality of which is proved: *First*, from the testimony of the Scriptures which declare that even a man such as David, a man after God's own heart, is constrained to acknowledge, Ps. 51:5. Adam begets Seth and, in so doing, places the corrupt imprint of his personal sin upon his posterity, Gen. 5:1. To this, Job refers, Job 14:4; and, upon this ground, God places his verdict upon all mankind, Gen. 6:5; Ps. 53:2.

Second, this is made plain in the case of infants, the birth of which brings forth all kinds of uncleanness as testified by Scripture ordinances: 1.) Circumcision, which spoke of the corruption of the human nature, Col. 2:13. 2.) Baptism, which speaks to the same, Col. 2:11, 12. 3.) Purification after childbirth, Lev. 12. They also suffer the many sad effects of sin as soon as they come into the world, Eph. 2:3. Likewise, they early mirror the sin and pride of Adam, Prov. 22:15.

Third, the universal necessity of regeneration plainly proves the corruption of our nature, John 3:3.

It is from this Original Sin that all actual sins proceed, Jas. 1:14, 15; Matt. 15:19.