

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 # 127.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #127. *What is the honour that inferiors owe to their superiors?*

A. The honour which inferiors owe to their superiors is, all due reverence in heart,¹ word,² and behaviour;³ prayer and thanksgiving for them;⁴ imitation of their virtues and graces;⁵ willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels;⁶ due submission to their corrections;⁷ fidelity to,⁸ defence,⁹ and maintenance of their persons and authority, according to their several ranks, and the nature of their places;¹⁰ bearing with their infirmities, and covering them in love,¹¹ that so they may be an honour to them and to their government.¹²

Question 1—*Wherein consists the degree of honour which inferiors owe to their superiors?*

Answer—The degree of honour consists in a reverence which is: 1.) A matter of deportment of heart which expresses a proper fear, or estimate, of the superior, Mal. 1:6. Additionally, it ought to embrace within itself those hedges needed to prevent a breaking out, or through, of any insubordination, Lev. 19:3. 2.) A matter of the words, or verbal signs, whereby this inward reverence is manifest outwardly in address, Prov. 31:28. This includes an adoption of appropriate titles and designations towards those superiors, 1 Pet. 3:6. 3.) A matter of behavior which reflects and confirms the integrity and sincerity of the words spoken, Lev. 19:32. Such behavior, when proceeding from correct principles, does not restrict but rather is careful to observe all such relations wherein a person finds himself as inferior, 1 Kings 2:19.

Question 2—*Wherein does this honour reflect itself when men are out of the immediate presence of these relations?*

Answer—This honour, if activated by those principles of right morality, must consist in a spiritual dimension wrought in each man by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, Gal.

¹ Mal. 1:6; Lev. 19:3.

² Prov. 31:28; 1 Pet. 3:6.

³ Lev. 19:32; 1 Kings 2:19.

⁴ 1 Tim. 2:1, 2.

⁵ Heb. 13:7; Phil. 3:17.

⁶ Eph. 6:1, 2, 6, 7; 1 Pet. 2:13, 14; Rom. 13:1-5; Heb. 13:17; Prov. 4:3, 4; Prov. 23:22; Exod. 18:19, 24.

⁷ Heb. 12:9; 1 Pet. 2:18-20.

⁸ Tit. 2:9, 10.

⁹ 1 Sam. 26:15, 16; 2 Sam. 18:3; Esther 6:2.

¹⁰ Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:6, 7; 1 Tim. 5:17, 18; Gal. 6:6; Gen. 45:11; Gen. 47:12.

¹¹ 1 Pet. 2:18; Prov. 23:22; Gen. 9:23.

¹² Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 31:23.

5:25, 26. Otherwise, no matter how careful the outward act is to conform to the law of God, it remains sin, Prov. 21:4. The spiritual rectitude is made known in private when men, by prayer and thanksgiving to God, seek the divine favour and blessing upon their superiors, 1 Tim. 2:1, 2. It is made known publicly when men are moved from this principle of spiritual rectitude to imitate the virtues and graces of those set over them, Heb. 13:7; Phil. 3:17.

Question 3—*Wherein do inferiors demonstrate the honour due to their superiors?*

Answer—It is the duty of inferiors to demonstrate the honour as a matter of due by: 1.) Yielding a willing obedience to their lawful commands, Eph. 6:1, 2; Rom. 13:1-5; Prov. 4:3, 4. This should be done not merely as a matter of outward carriage but inward deportment, knowing that God who sees all things stands in judgment of the sincerity of your obedience, Eph. 6:6, 7. This due is made easier by a recognition that the superiors have been placed in those positions for the good of their inferiors and shall render an account of the same, 1 Pet. 2:13, 14; Heb. 13:17. 2.) Yielding a willing obedience to their counsels, Prov. 23:22. Very often God speaks to inferiors through the lawful counsels of their superiors, Ex. 18:19, 24. For example, children ought not to dispose of themselves in marriage without parental consent because: *first*, Scripture gives the power of making marriages for children to parents, Deut. 7:3; Jer. 29:6; 1 Cor. 7:37, 38. In fact, this power is not diminished even if a daughter be abused by submitting solely of her own consent without the parental approval, Ex. 22:16, 17. *Second*, the most approved examples of marriage go this way in Scripture, Gen. 24:3, 4; 28:1, 2; 29:19. *Third*, the child is the property of the parents, a part of their self-moving substance, which is why when the devil was permitted to fall upon Job's property he fell upon his children, Job 1:12, 18, 19. Yet, the child as well as parent ought to be satisfied, Gen. 24:57. 3.) Yield due submission to their corrections, Heb. 12:9; knowing that God has so appointed them for your patience and growth, 1 Pet. 2:18-20. 4.) Showing fidelity, or loyalty, to them, without which they rob their superiors, Tit. 2:9, 10. 5.) Defending of the superiors in their rank and station as is fitting, whether passively or actively, 1 Sam. 26:15, 16; 2 Sam. 18:3; Est. 6:2. 6.) All should be joined with a maintenance of their persons and authority, Matt. 22:21; and this should be afforded according to their several ranks, Rom. 13:6, 7; 1 Tim. 5:17, 18; Gal. 6:6. Additionally, this maintenance should reflect the nature of the place and rank of the one rendering due maintenance, wherein each is called to allot according to that provision granted by God, Gen. 45:11; 47:12.

Question 4—*Wherein do inferiors increase the honour of their superiors?*

Answer—They increase the honour of their superiors when they take care to bear with their infirmities, whether they are infirmities due to sin or infirmities due to the nature of man's existence, 1 Pet. 2:18; Prov. 23:22. Noah's sons walked backward to cover their father's infirmity, Gen. 9:23. It is the lot of all inferiors to seek to be an honour to their superiors and, thereby, to increase the honour of their government, Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 31:23.