

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

QUESTIONS # 148 & 81.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #148. *What are the sins forbidden in the tenth commandment?*

A. The sins forbidden in the tenth commandment are, discontentment with our own estate;¹ envying² and grieving at the good of our neighbour,³ together with all inordinate motions and affections to any thing that is his.⁴

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #81. *What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?*

A. The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate,⁵ envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour,⁶ and all inordinate motions and affections to any thing that is his.⁷

Question 1—*What is the first kind of sin forbidden by the tenth commandment?*

Answer—The first kind of sin forbidden by the tenth commandment consists in a discontentedness beginning with our own estate, Est. 5:13; which appears:

First, when the corruption of the heart bursts forth in: 1.) An insubordination to the will of God as the heart struggles against the divine dispensation, Hos. 4:16; which often rises to the level of open rebellion, Zech. 7:11. 2.) An inconsolableness and sorrow of heart which recoils under that divine dispensation, 1 Kings 21:4. This is a worldly sorrow which works death, 2 Cor. 7:10. 3.) Anger and wrath against the dispensations of providence concerning their lot, Jude 16. This is a tearing and fretting anger that moves men to consume themselves, Job 18:4. 4.) A kind of heart blasphemy wherein God's very governance of the world and His holy administration are called into account, Mal. 3:13-15.

Second, when this discontent enters into contest with the Almighty by accusing Him of: 1.) Folly, as if He were not wise enough to govern this world nor knew the cares of the creature, Ps. 73:11. 2.) Injustice, as if the Judge of the whole world was somehow either careless to the details, Zeph. 1:12; or, even worse, has somehow wrought us wrong, Gen. 18:25. 3.) Cruelty, in a fit of distemper and discontent, as if in the hands of a merciless tyrant, Job 30:21.

All of these expressions we are warned to avoid, 1 Cor. 10:10.

Question 2—*From whence comes this discontent?*

Answer—This discontent arise from several different causes: 1.) From a blinded judgment that puts darkness for light and light for darkness, and, because of this, it cannot see the wisdom of God in the conduct of providence, Isa. 5:20. This accounts for the

¹ 1 Kings 21:4; Est. 5:13; 1 Cor. 10:10.

² Gal. 5:26; Jas. 3:14, 16.

³ Ps. 112:9, 10; Neh. 2:10.

⁴ Rom. 7:7, 8; 13:9; Col. 3:5; Deut. 5:21.

⁵ 1 Kings 21:4; Est. 5:13; 1 Cor. 10:10.

⁶ Gal. 5:26; Jas. 3:14, 16.

⁷ Rom. 7:7, 8; Rom. 13:9; Deut. 5:21.

foolish talking of even a godly Jacob, Gen. 42:36. Furthermore, we must confess it is contrary to that holy assurance Paul holds forth to believers, Rom. 8:28. This blinded judgment leads into all kinds of discontent that consume the person so afflicted, 1 Kings 21:4, 6. Through our discontent and its attendant distraction, we are often made to procure our own miseries, Gen. 30:1. 2.) From a proud heart, wherein a man finds affliction where there ought to be none, Est. 5:13. The lifting up of the heart is the source of all kinds of discontent, Dan. 5:20. 3.) From an unmortified affection set upon the creature rather than the Creator, 1 Tim. 6:9, 10. The heart of man is quick to grasp at the comfort of the creature whereby in its ordinate affection it creates the ground of later turmoil, Jon. 4:6, 9. 4.) From a spirit of unbelief, whereby the best of actions are marred in the sight of God, Heb. 11:4. The discontent is often revealed in the aftermath as the lack of faith is made clear, Gen. 4:5.

Question 3—*What other sins stand condemned by this command?*

Answer—This commandment condemns all envying and grieving at the prosperity, or good, of our neighbor, lest we fall into other evil, Jas. 3:14, 16. The greater the good to our neighbor, the more bitter it appears to those possessed of this lust, Ps. 112:9, 10. This envy and grief appears most like the passions of an unbelieving world against the people of God, Neh. 2:10.

The evil of this disposition is made to appear: 1.) In the sorrow and grief for the good of our neighbor, which is so opposite to charity, 1 Cor. 13:4. The prosperity and welfare of others is a burden upon the envious heart, Gen. 31:1. 2.) In the fretting anger at their good, especially when their conduct and carriage toward the truth is clearly perceived, Ps. 37:1. What makes those contented to rejoice very often makes those who are envious uneasy, Num. 11:28, 29.

The effects of envy are: 1.) It strikes against God by quarreling with His government of the world, Matt. 20:15. 2.) It strikes against our neighbor, being a disposition of bitterness, seeking either by word or deed to undermine his welfare, Prov. 27:4. 3.) It strikes at one's self, inflicting wounds and damage that, though it hurt the envied party, exacts a price upon the envier, Job 5:2. It is a kind of inner, spiritual decay that sends its aroma of death into all of life, Prov. 14:30.

Question 4—*What motions and affections toward our neighbor are condemned?*

Answer—The motions and affections which stand condemned are all those which: 1.) Are the byproduct of that inordinate lust, or concupiscence, that exists in the heart by reason of indwelling sin, Rom. 7:7, 8. 2.) Are tending to the tearing down of the whole of the second table of the law, should they get the license, Rom. 13:9. 3.) Are clearly directed toward the estate of our neighbor, Deut. 5:21. 4.) Are toward those things which we cannot have by lawful means, or without wronging of our neighbor, including all inclinations to coveting, Col. 3:5.

The sin herein forbidden is *covetousness*, which is an excessive thirsting of the soul after what it does not have, and what God in his providence has not seen fit to place in its possession, Gal. 5:26; worst of all, this thirst is such that it can never be satisfied, Prov. 1:19. This sin breaks out of ourselves and attaches to the estate of others by envy, grief and grudging, against the command of God, Jas. 5:9.