

# Instruction In The Westminster Standards

## The Historic Standards of Presbyterian Denominations.

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### STUDIES IN THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 40. What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.

**Scripture References:** Rom. 2:14,15. Rom. 10:5.

#### Questions:

1. How many laws has God given to man?

God gave to his people the moral law, which is still in force today, and ceremonial and judicial laws. These last two, as given to the Jews, have ceased to have any binding force under the Christian economy.

2. Is the moral law a rule of obedience to both believer and non-believer?

Yes, the moral law is a rule of obedience to both. Our Confession teaches, "The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof." (Chap. 21, Sec. V)

3. Can a man be saved by keeping the moral law?

No, a man is only saved by grace through faith. In addition, it would be impossible for man to keep the moral law perfectly.

4. If man cannot be saved by it, and yet is still bound by it, of what use is it?

The use of the moral law is that it is a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." (Gal. 3:24). The word "schoolmaster" is the idea of training and discipline in the passage cited. A pertinent passage here is I Tim. 1:8.

5. How does the law bring men to Christ?

The law brings men to Christ by convincing men of sin and of convincing them of its consequences if it is not atoned for and forgiven. It also awakens them to their need of a Saviour for that sin.

6. After a man is saved is the law of any further use?

The law is a perpetual reminder of the will of God for His creatures. For the Believer it is intended as a rule of life and conduct which is absolute and unchanging. See Rom. 7:6,12; Titus 2:11,12.

## "O HOW I LOVE THY LAW!"

The above declaration is one of the richest fruits of grace that a redeemed soul might have for in it there is the most important connection between the love for his Maker and being obedient to the same Maker. There is nothing incompatible between love and obedience and the Law of God is a wonderful motivator towards each of them.

In our Catechism, as we begin a study of the laws of God, it is important that we have the correct perspective between the law of God and the fact that we are sinners saved by grace. It has been said many times that we are sinners saved by grace but we are still sinners! The sinner therefore has shortcomings, so many times goes the road of sin rather than the road of obedience to Him. And if it were not for the law of God the road of sin would be taken many more times than it is. For the law of God has some very important duties, duties for which we should be praying.

There is the duty of instructing the believer. There is a way of life that is well-pleasing to God and the believer is instructing in this way of life by the law of God. Paul states in I Cor. 9:21 that he is "in the law to Christ" and that he delights in that law after the inward man. He delights in it as he reads it, is instructed by it, follows it by grace.

There is the duty of humbling the believer. The law of God causes the believer to recognize his shortcomings for it is a rule against whose measurement the believer so many times comes short. As the believer sees his shortcomings, and grieves over his shortcomings, he begins to be humble under the rule of the Almighty, Sovereign God and thereby gets into right relationship with his Maker, through his enabling grace.

There is the duty of causing the believer to apply to the Lord Jesus Christ for the ever-necessary sanctifying Spirit. The power of the victorious life comes from the Lord Jesus Christ through the indwelling presence and power of His Holy Spirit, enabling the Believer more and more to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness.

Do we love His law? Even better, do we really love Lawgiver? If we do we will recognize that there is no holiness where there is not subjection to the commandments of our Lord. And where there is subjection to the commandments there is delight, (Ps. 119:35).

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