

Instruction In The Westminster Standards

The Historic Standards of Presbyterian Denominations.

STUDIES IN THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 66. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory, and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.

Scripture References: Eph. 6:2, 3. I Pet. 3:10.

Questions:

1. What type of "good" is this commandment speaking of, temporal or spiritual?

This commandment is speaking of temporal good, with a stipulation.

2. What is this stipulation?

The stipulation is that it must be to the glory of God. For the believer in Christ, whatever is good must be used for His glory.

3. What kind of temporal good is promised here?

The good promised here is long life and prosperity.

4. What is this "long life"?

It is not simply a matter of living long upon this earth but it is a long life of living for a reason—the glory of God. It is real living, living with a purpose and a blessing.

5. What kind of prosperity is promised?

The prosperity promised is a prosperity that must be seen within the framework of the glory of God. Sometimes it will be hard for the believer to understand how his lot might be called prosperity, but if through it God is glorified, it is for the believer's own good and some day he will understand why God took him through what the world would never label "prosperity."

6. Does this mean that all believers in Christ will have long life and prosperity?

No, only those believers who do not break this fifth commandment. They might find themselves in the position of the superior, or the inferior, or the equal. But whatever their position they must fulfill it as they should if they would receive the rewards spoken of here.

7. Why is the fifth commandment the first commandment with promise?

It is called this because it is the first commandment of the second table, and the only commandment in it that has a promise attached to it.

PEACE AND CONCORD

We are living in the midst of an age where trouble seems to be the order of the day. We hear of wars, arguments, riots, evils being practiced on fellow men and we should be asking ourselves the question: What can I do as a Christian? The answer to what we can do must be based on principles. We must act but we must act according to the teaching of The Blessed Book. In the midst of this age, what does The Word say?

Our Question from the Catechism has a lot to say regarding this age in which we live. Yet we are forgetting this important teaching, we are forgetting that there are such things as superiors and inferiors and both have responsibilities. We are forgetting that we can not, dare not, bypass the teaching of Scripture in any realm. In I Peter 2 and 3 we find many instructions regarding this matter of honoring our father and mother—or, as has been expressed in the foregoing, our relationships to others whether we are superiors or inferiors or equals—and it would do well for us to take heed to what Peter says. We should remember that Peter is God's spokesman and such that should end the matter. We should remember that the instructions given by Peter are pertinent for today in spite of our likes and dislikes.

Peter concludes his counsel by stating: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another. . . ." He tells us that we should show love, we should be pitiful and courteous. He tells us we should not fight back. He tells us that we should be careful that our tongues do not speak evil. He tells us that we should seek and pursue after peace. Why does he tell us these things? Why is it necessary for us to know them? It comes to us in The Word because Peter, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, was being consistent with the rest of Scripture. The Holy Spirit is always trying to teach us that we have responsibilities in this world, some of us as superiors and some of us as inferiors. But our responsibilities toward one another are ever present and we can never bypass them. This is true of those who are not saved but it is even more true of those who have called upon Christ as Saviour and Lord of their lives.

In the midst of these days of trouble, we are called by God to peace and concord. We must, by His grace, be willing to follow the teaching of The Word in all areas—that is if we would love life and see good days (I Pet. 3:10).

Published By: **The SHIELD and SWORD, INC.**

Dedicated to instruction in the Westminster Standards for use as a bulletin insert or other methods of distribution in Presbyterian churches

For information write to: The Shield and Sword, Inc., Box 17580, Memphis, Tennessee 38117. A non-profit religious organization.

Vol. 4

No. 60

December, 1965

Price

Rev. Leonard T. Van Horn
Editor

To Churches — \$2.00 per 100
Individuals — \$1.35 per year



Back Copies

To Churches — \$2.25 per 100
Individuals — 15c each