

## 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 # 180.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #180. *What is it to pray in the name of Christ?*

A. To pray in the name of Christ is, in obedience to his command, and in confidence on his promises, to ask mercy for his sake;<sup>1</sup> not by bare mentioning of his name,<sup>2</sup> but by drawing our encouragement to pray, and our boldness, strength, and hope of acceptance in prayer, from Christ and his mediation.<sup>3</sup>

---

Question 1—*What is it to pray in the name of Christ?*

*Answer—Negatively,* we should note that it does not consist in the bare faithless mentioning of his name in our prayers, nor the mere concluding of our prayers therewith, Matt. 7:21. It is not enough for us to produce a flourish of words using the words of the saints, 1 Cor. 15:57; for without faith in exercise, the words rehearsed are without profit, Heb. 11:6. This many do when they seek the favor for his sake, without due regard to the method God has ordained, Matt. 25:11, 12; Hos. 8:2, 3. According to that method, we are to draw nigh to God through Christ our Mediator, who is to be glorified as the person by whom we are to have access to God the Father, 1 Pet. 3:18.

*Positively,* it is to be noted that to pray in the name of Christ is to pray:

*First,* at his command, making our approach according to his order, John 16:24. Christ, as God, commands all men to pray, to offer that part of their natural duty to God, Ps. 65:2; but that is not what is meant by this command. Rather, Christ, as Mediator, sends his own to his Father to ask supply of their wants, and allows them to tell that he sent them, as one recommends a poor man to a friend, John 14:13, 14. Thus, to pray in the name of Christ is to go to God as sent by the poor man's friend, Ps. 102:17.

Therefore, it imports: 1.) The soul's being come to Christ in the first place, John 15:7. Whoever would pray aright, must do as those who made the king's chamberlain their friend first, and then made suit to the king for peace, Acts 12:20. 2.) The soul's taking its encouragement to pray from Jesus Christ, Heb. 4:14-16. The access to heaven is blocked by our sins, Deut. 31:17, 18. And sinners have no confidence to seek the Lord, Eph. 3:12. Jesus Christ came down from heaven, John 6:38; died for the sinners, Rom. 5:8; and gathers them to himself by effectual calling, Isa. 56:8. He, as having all interest with his Father, bids them go to his Father in his name, and ask what they need, assuring them of acceptance, Matt. 6:9. And from thence, they take their encouragement, from his promises in the word, Matt. 7:7, 8. Furthermore, he gives them his token with them, which the Father will own and that is his own Spirit, Rom. 8:26, 27.

*Second,* it more especially consists in our making right use of what Christ has done and suffered for us, as the foundation of our hope, that God will be pleased to grant us

---

<sup>1</sup> John 14:13, 14; 16:24; Dan. 9:17.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 7:21.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. 4:14-16; 1 John 5:13-15.

what he has purchased thereby, Dan. 9:17; which contains the sum of all that we can desire, when drawing nigh to him in prayer, 2 Cor. 1:20. Thus, our prayers are directed to God through Jesus Christ, Heb. 7:25.

It is to depend wholly upon Christ's merits and intercession for access, acceptance, and a gracious return, Heb. 13:15. 1.) Depending on Christ for access to God, Eph. 2:18. There is no access to God but through him, John 14:6. They that attempt otherwise to come unto God, will get the door thrown in their face, John 10:9. Therefore, we must take hold of the Mediator, and come in behind him, who is the one who alone can make this entrance possible, Acts 4:12. 2.) Depending on Christ for acceptance of our prayers, Eph. 1:6. Our Lord Christ is the only altar upon which our gifts can be sanctified, Heb. 13:10-12. If stress of the acceptance of prayer is laid upon any merit or disposition of oneself, the prayer will not be accepted, Rom. 8:7, 8. A crucified Christ only can bear the weight of the acceptance of either our persons or performances, Rom. 8:1. 3.) Depending upon Christ for a gracious return of prayer, 1 John 5:14. No prayers are heard or answered but for the Mediator's sake, Matt. 21:22; and whatever petitions agreeable to God's will are put up to God, in this dependence, are heard, John 11:42.

Mediation was a fundamental principle of the Mosaic economy, and as soon as that economy decayed and waxed old, Heb. 8:13; and the one Mediator between God and man appeared, 1 Tim. 2:5; that divine principle began to display itself in him, Heb. 9:15. Even before he entered the Holiest of all with his own blood, he declared to his disciples plainly his unique position between God and man, John 17:3. And, in our case, prayer in his name, when offered with the enlightened understanding and the believing heart, is just the believer's recognition and acceptance of Christ as his alone sacrifice and intercessor before God, 2 Cor. 5:19. The "name of Christ" in a true believer's prayer is the richest conception of and utterance of all that Scripture teaches of the divinity, incarnation, sacrifice, and intercession of him we call Christ, Prov. 30:4. He alone is the Redeemer of God's elect, John 1:14.

*Question 2—What should be the result of contemplating having to do with an absolute God?*

*Answer*—The thoughts of having to do with an absolute God cannot but fill us with utmost distress and confusion, when we consider ourselves as guilty sinners, and God, out of Christ, as a sin revenging Judge and a consuming fire, Heb. 12:29. Thinking thus of God, we may as well recoil in fear, as our first parent did immediately after his fall, Gen. 3:10. Again, God is obliged in honor, as a God of infinite holiness, to separate and banish sinners from his comfortable presence, they being liable to the curse and condemning sentence of the law, Matt. 7:23. By reason of this, the Divine terror makes us afraid, and his dread falls upon all such who are out of Christ, Heb. 2:15. There is, however, in the gospel, not only an invitation to come, but a discovery of the great Mediator whom God has ordained to conduct his people into his presence, and who has procured liberty of access to him, Heb. 10:19, 20. God has, for this end, erected a throne of grace, and encouraged us to come to it, and given many great and precious promises, whereby we may hope for acceptance in his sight, Heb. 4:16. Now, these promises being all established in Christ, and the blessings contained in them having been procured by his blood, and we having liberty, in coming, to plead what he has done and suffered, as what was designed to be the foundation of our hope of obtaining mercy, we are said to come and make, our supplications to God in the name of Christ, Phil. 4:6, 7.