

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTIONS # 44 & 25.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #44. *How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?*

A. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice without spot to God,¹ to be reconciliation for the sins of his people;² and in making continual intercession for them.³

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #25. *How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?*

A. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice,⁴ and reconcile us to God;⁵ and in making continual intercession for us.⁶

Question 1—*What does it mean that Christ is executing the office of a priest?*

Answer—As our Redeemer, Christ executes the office of a priest, Heb. 3:1; 4:14. This Priesthood is the form into which the Sonship necessarily passes, for His Sonship is a call to sacrifice and restore what He has to the Source, John 16:16. His Sonship implies His consecration, Heb. 7:16. This priesthood is not to be traced to the Son as to its source, Heb. 5:5. Though the light of nature teaches even the heathen, as they perceive themselves to be sons of God, that they must worship and sacrifice, Acts 17:23; this relation is enshrined in the Aaronic priesthood and its transmission, Ex. 28:1. However, the eternal origin of this Priesthood is hinted in the relation of the Son to the Father in the economy of redemption, John 16:28; wherein the Son is from (ἐκ) the Father, in a relation of Sonship, John 13:3; and He is also toward (πρὸς) the Father, a relation of Priesthood, John 1:1. To make the Source of the Priesthood the Son apart from the Father would constitute a kind of ditheism, *cf.* John 10:30; the Father is, in a certain sense, the original Priest, as He is the original Source of life, John 1:18; 5:26; for His generation of the Son is an act of sacrifice, or living for another, Heb. 1:5. Thus, the Priesthood of Christ is not original, but after the order of Him who is the King of Righteousness and Peace, who is without generation, Heb. 7:1-3.

A priest was a public minister, who was to serve the altar, offering both gifts and sacrifices for sins, Heb. 5:1. Since the Fall, in all the ages of the church, these offerings were required to be accompanied with sacrifices for sins so that they might be acceptable before God, Heb. 11:4. It appears to have been the duty of the heads of families to do this from the first, Gen. 4:26; 8:20; Job 1:5; afterward, this fell to the first born to perform this task, until the time of Moses when the Levites were chosen instead, Num. 3:12, 13. This priesthood, or charge of offering gifts and sacrifices, was committed more especially to the

¹ Heb. 9:14, 28.

² Heb. 2:17.

³ Heb. 7:25.

⁴ Heb. 9:14, 28.

⁵ Heb. 2:17.

⁶ Heb. 7:24, 25.

family and line of Aaron, looking for the coming of that ante-type which they pre-figured, Christ, Heb. 7:11-23.

Question 2—*How does Christ execute this office of a priest?*

Answer—It pertains to this office of a priest to once offer himself a sacrifice without spot to God, Heb. 9:28. Wherein we may consider:

First, there was a voluntariness in Christ's sufferings, Eph. 5:2. He laid down his life of himself, Isa. 53:7. Though he knew well his sufferings beforehand, yet he did not withdraw from submitting to a violent death when the time was come, John 19:11; which it is evident he might have escaped by the mere power of his word, John 18:6. The strong cry he uttered before yielding up his soul, was evidence of a greater than natural power attending him, Luke 23:46. He was no criminal in the eyes of God or Scripture, and could not have been put to death unless he had pleased, John 10:18.

Second, what he offered was an expiatory sacrifice for sins, Heb. 5:3. However, this required the person offering to be a priest, Heb. 5:4-6, 10. The substance of his offering was his own soul and body, suffering as our Surety, Isa. 53:10; Heb. 10:5, 10; 1 Pet. 2:24. He took upon him our nature, that he might offer a proper sacrifice for sin, even himself in his humanity, Acts 20:28; which he accomplished upon the altar of his divinity, Heb. 9:14.

Third, this sacrifice was offered but once, Rom. 6:10; whereby Christ did perfect forever, this offering answering fully the end for which it was to be made, Heb. 10:14.

Fourth, Christ did offer this sacrifice not for his own sins, for he had none, but for the sins of others, Dan. 9:26. Yet the efficacy and virtue of his sacrifice does not extend to all, John 10:15. This sacrifice was made to prove that Christ made full satisfaction to God for the sins of the elect, Col. 2:14; Eph. 1:7.

Therefore, it also pertains to the office of priest to be for a reconciliation for the sins of his people, Heb. 2:17; which respects reconciliation of the elect to God through this sacrifice, Rom. 5:6, 7. From which we observe:

First, there is a receiving again into favor of rebels who had been bound over to eternal wrath, cancelling all their bands of guilt, 2 Cor. 5:19. The foundation of this reconciliation is laid in the death of Christ, whereby God lays aside his anger toward sinners, Col. 1:20. This message is to be proclaimed through God's ambassadors, 2 Cor. 5:20.

Second, this reconciliation is only to be obtained by sinners through Christ, Acts 4:12. He is the one Mediator between God and man, 1 Tim. 2:5; consequently, this is brought about his Person designated in this office, exclusive of all others, John 8:24.

Third, this reconciliation, being the primary article of the covenant of grace, Isa. 53:10; it was wrought by the death of Christ alone, Rom. 5:10. The shedding of his blood was that which satisfied divine justice, bringing this peace and reconciliation, Eph. 2:13; Col. 1:20, 21. With the pouring out of his blood, he died for this purpose, John 19:30.

Finally, it pertains to Christ executing this office of priest to make continual intercession for those who are his people, Heb. 7:24, 25. This intercession is that which belongs to his exaltation, Rom. 8:34. In which is to be noted:

First, it is made in heaven, where Christ appears now on our behalf, that he might answer the charges brought against us, Heb. 9:24.

Second, there, bearing the marks of his suffering, Rev. 5:6; he offers his own meritorious shed blood as a prevailing argument, which itself intercedes for us, Heb. 12:24.

Third, this pleading is a claim of justice for the full possession to be given to his people, Isa. 53:10, 11; which claim he asserts immediately prior to his passion, John 17:24.