

## THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

### QUESTION # 4.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #4. *How doth it appear that the scriptures are the word of God?*

A. The scriptures manifest themselves to be the word of God, by their majesty<sup>1</sup> and purity;<sup>2</sup> by the consent of all the parts,<sup>3</sup> and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God;<sup>4</sup> by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation:<sup>5</sup> but the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very word of God.<sup>6</sup>

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Question 1—*Wherein does it appear that the Scriptures are the alone infallible inspired Word of God?*

*Answer*—There are many external evidences offered by which it appears that the Scriptures are the alone infallible and inspired Word of God, such as: 1.) The miracles, whereby the mission of the prophets, and consequently what they were sent to deliver, was confirmed, Heb. 2:3, 4. 2.) The witness and testimony of the church to the truths revealed by the prophets therein contained, 1 Tim. 3:15. 3.) The blood of the martyrs, which was shed to confirm the message of the prophets, Rev. 6:9. 4.) The character of the inspired writers who, being holy men, would not impose upon the world such an imposture or pretend themselves to be inspired, if they were not, 2 Pet. 1:21. 5.) The antiquity of the Scriptures, together with their preservation, notwithstanding the endeavors of enemies to root it out of the world, Ps. 119:98, 152; Matt. 24:35.

Additionally, there are many internal evidences whereby the Scriptures manifest themselves to be the very Word of God:

*First*, there is the majesty of the style in which the Scriptures are written, 1 Cor. 2:6, 7, 13. Although this argument does not hold equally good with respect to all the parts of Scripture, yet the fault does not lie with the Scriptures but with the perception of those who consult them, Ps. 119:18, 129. Thus, it comes to pass that those things which are majestic and wonderful, according to God, come to be lightly esteemed by sinful men, Hos. 8:12. The truth is, we everywhere observe in these Scriptures the unfolding of the sovereignty and greatness of God, whereby they come to be possessed of that majesty, because: 1.) He therein summons all of the creation to give ear to his Word, Isa. 1:2. 2.) It is to them that God has sworn by himself, Isa. 45:23.

*Second*, there is the purity of its doctrines, excelling all other compositions, whereby it comes to be called “holy Scripture,” Rom. 1:2. The words of these Scriptures are most pure and precious, Ps. 12:6; and, therefore, they are much to be loved by those accounted servants of the Lord, Ps. 119:140. Their matter is filled with that which is right

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<sup>1</sup> Hos. 8:12; 1 Cor. 2:6–7, 13; Ps. 119:18, 129.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 12:6; 119:140.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 10:43; 26:22.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 3:19, 27.

<sup>5</sup> Acts 18:28; Heb. 4:12; Jas. 1:18; Ps. 19:7-9; Rom. 15:4; Acts 20:32.

<sup>6</sup> John 16:13, 14; 1 John 2:20, 27; John 20:31.

and good and nothing that is perverse, Prov. 8:6-8. This appears: 1.) It lays open the vile and detestable nature of sin, Rom. 7:7. 2.) It reveals the just judgment of the divine vengeance against sin, Jude 6. 3.) It gives an account of the distress and terror of conscience, which willful and presumptuous sins bring, Job 27:20-22. 4.) It warns of the eternal ruin to which sinners expose themselves, 2 Thess. 1:9. 5.) It tells of the peculiar instances of divine favor and love to man, urging to holiness, Rom. 2:4.

*Third*, there is the consent, or harmony, of all the parts, whereby they all tend to the same end, Acts 26:22. Thus, for example, what is in one part foretold is, in another part, related as accomplished, Isa. 44:28; 45:1-4 *compared with* Ezra 1:2, 3. Likewise, there are various predictions in the Old Testament concerning Christ and the New Testament, Acts 10:43. Such as, his coming in the flesh, Mal. 3:1; Isa. 9:6 *compared with* John 1:14; Gal. 4:4.

*Fourth*, there is the design and scope of the whole of these Scriptures, which is to give glory to God, Rom. 3:19, 27. Therein the God of all glory is described as highly exalted, Ps. 47:2; as holy and fearful, Ex. 15:11; as true and living, Jer. 10:10; as merciful and covenant-keeping, Dan. 9:4; and to whom belongs all greatness, power and glory, 1 Chron. 29:11.

*Fifth*, by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, Acts 18:28; and to comfort and build up believers unto salvation, Rom. 15:4. The work of conviction and conversion is, and has been at all times, experienced by those who have had any right or claim to salvation, Ps. 19:7-9. So, these Scriptures have been the principal means whereby men are brought to be convicted of their great spiritual need, Heb. 4:12; and the direct means God uses to make men partakers of spiritual privileges, Jas. 1:18. Hence, it appears that these Scriptures are that which God uses to propagate and advance his interest in the world, therein giving the church ground to expect his presence with it, in all his ordinances, Acts 20:32.

Question 2—*What is the only proof that the Scriptures are the alone infallible inspired Word of God?*

*Answer*—Though there are many and several arguments whereby the Scriptures appear to be the Word of God, yet these are not the means whereby Christians come to a full persuasion that these Scriptures are the very Word of God inspired and alone infallible, 1 Thess. 2:13. The only proof sufficient to instruct and confirm men of this truth is the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in the heart of man, whereby men are made to receive the witness of God, 1 John 5:9. It is when men receive the testimony of God, that they receive the seal of the Spirit to the truth of the very Word of God, John 3:33, 34.

The Spirit has been given for this very purpose, to lead men into the truth of the very Word of God, John 16:13, 14. Apart from the Spirit of God, no man can know the things of God and, therefore, will remain blind to the Word of God, 1 Cor. 2:10-12. Scripture has been given in order that men be brought to a full persuasion of those things necessary for salvation, John 20:31; yet, without the Spirit, men remain under the darkening power of the god of this world, 2 Cor. 4:4. It is by the Spirit that men are made to overcome that darkness in them by reason of fallen nature, and brought to a full persuasion of the true character of the Scriptures as the Word of God, 1 John 2:20, 27. This is the fruit of that covenant which the Lord has made with his people, to bring them to a knowledge of salvation by the Spirit working with the Word in their hearts, Isa. 59:21.