

## 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

QUESTIONS # 154 & 88.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #154. *What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of his mediation?*

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to his church the benefits of his mediation, are all his ordinances; especially the word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for their salvation.<sup>1</sup>

*(Shorter Catechism)*

Q #88. *What are the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?*

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances, especially the Word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.<sup>2</sup>

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Question 1—*What is meant by outward and ordinary means of salvation?*

*Answer*—Herein the catechism distinguishes between *inward* and *outward* means of salvation. The inward means include such things as faith, John 1:12; repentance, Acts 11:18; and, especially the inward and powerful working of the Holy Ghost, John 14:26.

By *outward* means are meant those ordinances or institutions of divine appointment, by which Christ communicates to sinners the benefits of redemption, with full understanding that the *inward* means must accompany outward means in order to salvation, and are wrought by their instrumentality, Heb. 4:12; Rom. 10:17. That which makes these ordinances *means* of salvation, is simply the *divine warrant*, or appointment, of such by Christ who is the King and Head of the church, Matt. 28:19, 20.

These ordinances are also called *ordinary* means, to distinguish them from anything extraordinary which may be in the salvation of any, John 3:8; Acts 9:4, 5; because these are the stated means, or method, whereby we have the promise and expectation of obtaining those benefits which Christ has obtained being communicated to sinners of mankind, Rom. 10:14.

Finally, we may designate these *means* of grace as *Christ's ordinances*, because they are instituted by him as Head of the church and King of Zion, Col. 1:18; Ps. 2:6; therefore, they are to be continued to be observed in the church until the end of the world, Matt. 28:20.

Question 2—*What are those outward and ordinary means especially whereby Christ communicates his benefits to the church?*

*Answer*—The outward and ordinary means are generally in all the ordinances of God, whether: 1.) Singing of the Psalms, Eph. 5:19. 2.) Religious fasting, 1 Cor. 7:5. 3.)

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:42, 46, 47.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:42, 46, 47.

Vowing, or swearing, by the name of God, when called unto, Deut. 6:13. 4.) Church government, discipline and censures, Matt. 18:17. But especially these three things:

*First*, the Word of God, both read and preached, is the principle means of grace whereby men come to hear of the salvation which must be embraced by faith, John 20:31; Acts 10:33. Whether in the reading, or in the preaching, the same blessings of salvation in Christ are held forth, the same God addresses us, and the same commands beseech us to receive Christ in order to come into eternal life, 1 Pet. 1:23; John 5:39. It is to this end that the reading of the Word has been appointed that men might obtain the blessings of God, Acts 15:21.

*Second*, the sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper, are special means of grace communicating the blessings of salvation, Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 10:16. These are not converting, or conferring faith, but confirming and sealing ordinances, whereby faith is confirmed and strengthened, Gal. 3:17; 1 Cor. 11:25, 26. Sacraments represent to our senses what the Word of God represents to our faith, Tit. 3:5; Matt. 26:27, 28.

*Third*, prayer is a very peculiar means, or mode, of communion between Christ and the soul, Acts 9:11. Prayer is that which brings to one's self all the good exhibited in the Word, and represented by the sacraments, John 14:13, 14.

*Question 3—Are these outward and ordinary means of grace made effectual to the salvation of all?*

*Answer*—These outward and ordinary means of grace are not made effectual to all as appears in the complaint of the prophet, Isa. 53:1. This same condition remained in the days of the Son of God incarnate, John 12:38. Likewise, the apostle Paul makes this complaint of the general disregard manifested to the means of salvation, Rom. 10:16, 17.

It is to be remembered that these means of grace have no efficacy in themselves, but from the Spirit of God working in and by them, 1 Cor. 3:7. Now, although their efficacy is to be discovered in the Spirit working in and through them, yet the end of the ordinances is to accomplish the will of God in procuring the salvation of men, not their damnation, Isa. 55:10, 11. It is the misimprovement and contempt of these ordinances, or means, not the means themselves, that results in damnation of men, 2 Cor. 2:15, 16.

Instead, in the use of these special means of grace, we see that the difference is wholly of the Lord, who maketh one to differ from another, 1 Cor. 4:7. Therefore, they are made effectual only unto the elect, unto whom they come, Acts 13:48. To them alone, they are effectual unto salvation, because to them alone they are ordained so to be, John 10:26.

*Question 4—What is communicated to the church, particularly to the elect, in these ordinances of Christ's appointing?*

*Answer*—These ordinances, especially the Word, sacraments and prayer, communicate to the elect the benefits of Christ's mediation, his redemption, Acts 2:42, 46, 47. By *benefits*, we ought to understand all the blessings of Christ's purchase, which is contained in grace here and glory hereafter, Ps. 84:11. This communication of the benefits of redemption, through his mediation, is wholly at the disposal of Christ, Luke 22:29; Matt. 28:18. Neither is this a usurped power, but it belongs to Christ by right and consequence of the gift of the Father, John 3:36; as well as in consequence of his own purchase, whereof Paul speaks elsewhere, Eph. 1:14.