

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTIONS # 43 & 24.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #43. *How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?*

A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in his revealing to the church,¹ in all ages, by his Spirit and word,² in divers ways of administration,³ the whole will of God,⁴ in all things concerning their edification and salvation.⁵

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #24. *How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?*

A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.⁶

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

Answer—As our Redeemer, Christ executes the office of a prophet, as prophesied by Moses, Deut. 18:15. We are told that as a prophet he is said to be like unto Moses, John 1:45; Matt. 17:3-5. This likeness is displayed in the following considerations: 1.) Moses had a great intimacy and familiarity with God, Ex. 33:11; likewise, Christ shared this intimacy from all eternity, Prov. 8:30. He was with God from the beginning, John 1:1. 2.) Christ was like to Moses in the excellency of his ministration and his faithfulness in discharging it, Heb. 3:2; indeed, in this he excelled Moses, Heb. 3:3, 4. 3.) Moses was a prophet who mediated between God and the people, Deut. 18:16, 17; so, too, Christ is the Mediator between God and man, 1 Tim. 2:5. 4.) As Moses confirmed his doctrine by many miracles, Christ wrought many miracles confirming his doctrine, John 14:11; Luke 24:19.

Again, Stephen the martyr tells us that this prophet has now come, and exhorts all to submit to him with a strict injunction, Acts 7:37. By hearing is meant an obedience to be given to this prophet: 1.) *Only*, for though we are to hear his messengers and ministers as from him, Luke 10:16; yet, this only rendered “in the Lord” knowing that they must give an account to him alone, Heb. 13:17; Eph. 6:1. 2.) *In all things*, for whatever he commands must be obeyed and not disputed, Acts 3:22; although we must exercise a judgment of discretion to determine whether it is the will of God or not, Rom. 12:2. 3.) *Under threat of a severe penalty*, which is no less than being cut off from amongst the people of God, Deut. 18:18, 19.

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

Answer—*First*, it belongs to him alone to reveal in and to the church that will of God which is most closely kept by him, John 1:18. This intimate acquaintance does not require that we be carried into heaven to hear and learn, for Christ has come, descending,

¹ John 1:18.

² 1 Pet. 1:10-12.

³ Heb. 1:1, 2.

⁴ John 15:15.

⁵ Acts 20:32; Eph. 4:11-13; John 20:31.

⁶ John 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; John 15:15; 20:31.

manifesting that will of God in the flesh, 1 Tim. 3:16. Being privy to the eternal counsels of God, being himself the Son of God, it has been given him of the Father to reveal to whom he will this information, Matt. 11:27. Although there is a sense in which this revelation is broader than the church, John 1:9; in its most specific function, it pertains to the church, which consists of the elect of God, John 17:6, 26.

Second, this will of God, which he reveals, concerns the whole will of God regarding all things necessary to his people, John 15:15. By this revelation, his church is led into a knowledge of the deep things of God, spiritual truths that are not received by the world, 1 Cor. 2:9-12. Although by this whole will of God is made known that commandment of God for the obedience of the nations, Rom. 16:25, 26; yet, only to his church is this will revealed to be that of a personal God, Ps. 25:14.

Third, this will that is revealed specifically concerns the edification and salvation of the church, Acts 20:32. He is the fountain of all that light which points out the way to salvation, Isa. 55:4. There are no beams of saving light that shine on the world but from him, John 3:13; they shine in the face of Jesus, 2 Cor. 4:6. This includes both what is necessary to be known and believed by us in order to salvation, John 20:31; as well as all those things which are appointed to bring about that salvation, Eph. 4:11-13.

Question 3—*How does Christ reveal the whole will of God to the church?*

Answer—This will of God for the salvation of his church is made known by his word and Spirit, jointly or together, for both are necessary for attaining that end, 1 Pet. 1:10-12.

First, Christ, the Word incarnate, reveals by his word, in three ways: 1.) In an extraordinary manner, and more immediately, as was in times past, Heb. 1:1; Gen. 3:15. 2.) By the word preached either *by himself*, in the days of his flesh, Heb. 1:2; when he went about preaching the gospel to the Jews, Rom. 15:8; or, *by his ambassadors*, through whom he exercised this prophetic office, 2 Cor. 5:20. This word was administered in diverse ways: (a.) Before the incarnation, under the Old Testament, 1 Pet. 3:19; he instructed the church sometimes by way of extraordinary teachers, 1 Sam. 9:9; sometimes by ordinary teachers, Neh. 8:1, 2. For although before the completion of the Scriptures the church was supplied by extraordinary revelation, yet all were not so taught, 2 Kings 3:11; instead, many were trained up by the external teaching of the patriarchs, Gen. 18:17, 19. (b.) After the incarnation, by the apostles, who were infallibly guided, and to this day by ordinary ministers, by whom Christ stills exercises prophetic office, Eph. 4:11; and so he has promised to be with them, Matt. 28:20. In this respect, they are to be received and heard with care, John 13:20; 1 Thess. 4:8. Therefore, the people of God are obliged to repair to them for clearing, from the word, the matters of salvation, sin and duty as required of them, Mal. 2:7. 3.) By the word written, John 20:31; whereby his people might attain more than a notional conception of the truth of salvation but may find certainty, Luke 1:4. To this, men might have recourse to know the mind and will of God in all things, Isa. 8:20.

Second, because this word is not of itself sufficient to teach us the will of God for our salvation, John 12:37, 38; because the natural man stands in opposition to receiving the things in this word, 1 Cor. 2:14; he must open their understanding by his Spirit so that the elect might be taught of God, Luke 24:45. The word is that by which the Spirit teaches and brings the elect to a certain knowledge of salvation, Isa. 59:21. Christ, by his Spirit, makes that word effectual and fruitful, John 16:13, 14.