

Instruction In The Westminster Standards

The Historic Standards of Presbyterian Denominations.

STUDIES IN THE WESTMINSTER 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, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

Scripture References: Heb. 9:14, 28. Rom. 3:25. Rom. 10:4. Heb. 2:17. Heb. 7:25.

Questions:

1. What did Christ do for us as the first part of his office as a priest?
The first part of Christ's priestly office was the offering up a sacrifice to God for us. The sacrifice was Himself, the shedding of blood unto death.
2. What is a sacrifice?
A sacrifice is a holy offering rendered to God by a priest of God's appointment.
3. Did Christ offer a sacrifice of Himself more than once?
No, he offered Himself a sacrifice only one time, and this was sufficient for the sins of His people. (Heb. 9:38).
4. Why did Christ offer Himself as a sacrifice for us?
Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice for us that he might satisfy God's justice for us and that he might reconcile us to God.
5. When the word "us" is used in the above question, of whom is it speaking?
It is speaking of the elect, not all of mankind. (John 10:15)
6. How did Christ's sacrifice satisfy God's justice?
It is so for this sacrifice was accepted by God and was worthy of acceptance.
7. What does Christ do for us as the second part of his office as a priest?
The second part of Christ's priestly office is his making intercession for us. (Isa. 43:12)
8. Where is the intercession made and what does He do for us in this intercession?
The intercession is made at the right hand of God. By it He prays to and pleads to God for us; because of it our sins are pardoned, our prayers are answered and we are actually reconciled. It should be remembered that He is the **only** intercessor in heaven for us.

OUR INTERCESSOR

The Belgic Confession makes the matter of Christ's intercession very plain when it states: "We believe that we have no access unto God, save alone through the only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous." Further on, less there be those who would seek another intercessor, it states: "And if we seek for one who hath power and majesty, who is there that has so much of both as he who sits at the right hand of his Father, and who hath all power in heaven and on earth?" (Article 26).

There always have been present in the world those who look for "another intercessor" thinking that they might somehow find some extra power without going through the straight and narrow way, the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. The church is ever called on to take offense against such false beliefs as "another intercessor" and must always be ready to give an answer to such false beliefs. The Christian believer is convinced that Christ is the intercessor and is thankful for Him. However, there is ever the danger of the Christian taking Him for granted, not having the recognition that Christ's intercession is true and powerful and therefore being properly grateful for it. Isaac Watts had the true approach to the matter when he wrote:

"Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?"

But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe;
Here, Lord, I give myself away—
'Tis all that I can do."

The case can be put very simply to the born again Christian: Have you even experienced the drops of grief, to say nothing of the giving of yourself? Possibly the difficulty in regard to our realizing what we have in the intercession of Christ is that we never cared enough about it to grieve over what He did for us. A Christian acquaintance of mine can never start talking about his Saviour's sacrifice for him without shedding tears. You say, "Emotionalism!" Sincere tears about Christ's sacrifice and His subsequent intercession will never harm anyone. The question is: Do we care that much? (Eph. 3:14-21)

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