

Instruction In The Westminster Standards

The Historic Standards of Presbyterian Denominations.

STUDIES IN THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 30. How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

Scripture References: Eph. 2:8. John 15:5. I Cor. 6:17. I Cor. 1:9. I Pet. 5:10.

Questions:

1. How does the Spirit apply this redemption to us?

This redemption is laid upon the soul by the Spirit. It unites us to Jesus Christ, it "joins" us to Him, makes us "one" with Him. It is an act of God.

2. How is it possible that we can be united to Christ when he is in heaven and we are here on earth?

It is possible because the person of Christ is everywhere. Matt. 28:20.

3. In the union between Christ and the Christian is it a mutual union?

It is a mutual union but it begins first on the side of Christ. The Bible teaches that "I will put my Spirit within you."

4. What happens when this application takes place in the soul?

When the application takes place in the soul the soul believes, it passes from the dead state to the state of being alive.

5. Is it possible for this union to be dissolved?

No, it is impossible for this union to be dissolved because it contains within it the perseverance of God.

6. Is this faith that takes place that of ourselves or of God?

It can be said that faith is our act but it is God's gift and the work of His Spirit. A good verse in this regard is Col. 2:12 — "Ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God."

7. To what does the Scripture compare this union?

The Scripture compares this union to the union between husband and wife; head and members; root and branches; foundation and superstructure.

IT IS GOD THAT WORKETH IN YOU

Calvin's definition of faith is found in his Institute (III, 2:7): "Now we shall possess a right definition of faith if we call it a firm and certain knowledge of God's benevolence toward us, founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit." The Presbyterian Standards are in complete agreement with the teaching contained in Calvin's statement and our Catechism question and answer lays the foundation for this teaching in this question and other questions to follow.

Our title, "It is God That Worketh In You" is a very necessary teaching in this day and age. There is so much preaching and teaching today that contradict the Scriptural teaching of man's utter and complete dependence on God for conversion. It is true that in the midst of the conversion experience it is sometimes difficult for man to understand the relationship. But the hymn writer put it well when he said:

"I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
He moved my soul to seek him, seeking me;
It was not I that found, O Saviour true;
No, I was found of thee."

Few people in our Presbyterian churches today would doubt that it was God that worked in them when He drew them by the irresistible regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit. But many of them do not live as Christians in such a way to prove to a dying world that the same Almighty, Sovereign God is on the Throne and they recognize His Lordship. The Scripture teaches: "For all people will walk everyone in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." (Micah 4:5). It is our responsibility to walk in true piety. Our faith is not to depend upon the pressures of our fellowmen or what they may think of us, but our faith must have the constancy of the Almighty God. Or, to put it another way, because our faith has the constancy of the Almighty God, we can know that nothing can turn us aside from the course that finds its way to heaven.

Calvin once prayed: ". . . may we learn to raise up our eyes and minds and all our thoughts to thy great power, by which thou quickenest the dead, and raisest from nothing things which are not, so that, though we be daily exposed to ruin, our souls may ever aspire to eternal salvation." Remember, "It is God That Worketh In You!"

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