

# THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

## WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

### QUESTION # 38.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #38. *Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God?*

A. It was requisite that the Mediator should be God, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death,<sup>1</sup> give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience, and intercession;<sup>2</sup> and to satisfy God's justice,<sup>3</sup> procure his favour,<sup>4</sup> purchase a peculiar people,<sup>5</sup> give his Spirit to them,<sup>6</sup> conquer all their enemies,<sup>7</sup> and bring them to everlasting salvation.<sup>8</sup>

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Question 1—*What must be considered when we contemplate the divinity of the Mediator?*

*Answer*—The divine nature, not existing in mere abstraction, subsists concretely in the three Persons of the Trinity, Matt. 28:19. The divine nature came into the world, in the Person of the Son, Isa. 48:16; who is the one who consented to be sent and have the guilt of our sins laid upon him, Isa. 61:1; 60:16. Had he not consented to be charged with the guilt of our sin, he could not have been punished for it, Heb. 10:7. The human nature could not consent to its own formation nor could it consent to bear our iniquities, Gen. 1:27; Rom. 3:10. To consent, supposes a person to be existent, which Christ, had he been only man, would not have been before his incarnation, Prov. 8:31. Thus, had he not been God he could not have come into the world as a Surety for us, giving his consent to be engaged as our Mediator, John 4:34. It is the divinity of the second Person that makes possible the incarnation, Phil. 2:5-8.

Question 2—*What are some of the necessities requiring the divinity of the Mediator?*

*Answer*—There are several consequences that demonstrate both the suitableness and necessity that the Mediator be divine:

*First*, the divinity of the Mediator is that which sustained and kept the humanity, or human nature, from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and power of death, Rom. 1:4. It must be allowed that the weight of the wrath of God, due to our sin, was so great that no mere creature could, by his own strength, subsist under it, but would be plunged into everlasting death, but this was not true of Christ, Acts 2:24, 25. When we consider the human nature, united to the divine, we see an additional security that he who is divine would not miscarry in an important work which he had to perform in his human nature, sinking under this wrath, Rom. 4:25. The divinity itself forming the altar made of rock uncut by human hands upon which the humanity could be offered, Ex. 20:25; Dan. 2:45; Heb. 9:14.

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 2:24, 25; Rom. 1:4; 4:25; Heb. 9:14.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:14; Heb. 7:25-28.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 3:24-26.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. 1:6; Matt. 3:17.

<sup>5</sup> Tit. 2:13, 14.

<sup>6</sup> Gal. 4:6.

<sup>7</sup> Luke 1:68, 69, 71, 74.

<sup>8</sup> Heb. 5:8-9; 9:11-15.

*Second*, the divinity of the person of Christ is that which gives worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience and intercession, Heb. 9:14. Had he been only man, what he did and suffered might have been sinless, and even perfect in its kind, but it could not have been of infinite value, as that which pertains to the Son of God, Acts 20:28. In him, the obedience offered was not only sinless but of infinite worth and value, that hereby, when in a way of intercession it is pleaded before God, it might be effectual to answer the ends for which it was designed, Heb. 7:25-28. It was this which satisfied the justice of God, for no finite creature could pay an infinite price, yet nothing is more clear than that Christ did make a full propitiation for sin through his shed blood, Rom. 3:24-26.

*Third*, the divinity is the basis upon which Christ, the natural Son of God, procures the favor of God, Matt. 3:17. This natural relation is, therefore, foundational to the procuring of this same favor for those who believe in him, Eph. 1:6. For by his death, the shedding of his blood, he redeemed a people to himself, a peculiar people, Tit. 2:13, 14. Thus, it is in him, in the divinity of the divine Person, that the elect people of God are established by him, Isa. 45:25.

*Fourth*, the divinity of Christ is the reason he is able to give his Spirit to his people, Gal. 4:6. It is necessary that the redemption should be applied as well as purchased, Rom. 6:11. Furthermore, it is the peculiar glory of this same Person to perform one and the other, 1 Cor. 15:45. It is also necessary that, in the application of redemption, the Spirit should be glorified, that hereby he might appear to be a divine Person, John 16:14. Herein he acts in subserviency to the glory of the Mediator, whereby the Spirit is sent by him, which he could not do if he did not have the divine nature, John 16:7.

*Fifth*, it is necessary that Christ should be God, that he might conquer all our enemies, and so remove all things out of the way which tend to oppose his name, interest, and glory, Luke 1:68, 69, 71, 74. Sin, which is opposite to the holiness of God, must be subdued by Christ, so that it no longer have dominion over his people, Rom. 6:14. Having obtained victory over sin, he must also conquer Satan, who has kept us prisoners but now we are brought under the power of the Mediator and his glory, Col. 1:13. Moreover, the world, which is reckoned among the number of the enemies of God, must be conquered, so that his people might not be kept in an intimacy, through the corrupt nature, of contracting friendship with that which opposes God, Jas. 4:4. Now Christ must be God, that he might discover its snares and enable his people to improve the good things of providence to his glory, and overrule the evil things of it for their good, John 16:33. As to death, which is reckoned amongst the enemies of both Christ and his people, it is suffered to detain the bodies of believers as its prisoners, until Christ's second coming, at which time it shall be destroyed, 1 Cor. 15:26.

*Sixth*, it is necessary that the Mediator should be God, so that he might bring his people to everlasting salvation, fitting them for heaven and receiving them to it at last, Heb. 5:8, 9; 9:11-15. Thus, Jesus is the one who begins and brings to completion the salvation of his elect, Heb. 12:2; for he who begins the work is also he who carries it through to perfection, Phil. 1:6. After he has laid the foundation stone of this temple, he works all our works for us and in us, bringing them to perfection through grace, Zech. 4:7. This work, being divine, must be performed by one who is himself divine, Eph. 5:27.

*Seventh*, it is necessary that Christ be God, because the everlasting happiness of his people consists in the enjoyment of him as the fountain of blessedness, John 17:24. Therefore, in heaven, he both the author of their blessedness and its matter, 1 John 3:2.