

# THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

## WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

### QUESTION # 40.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #40. *Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God and man in one person?*

A. It was requisite that the Mediator, who was to reconcile God and man, should himself be both God and man, and this in one person, that the proper works of each nature might be accepted of God for us,<sup>1</sup> and relied on by us, as the works of the whole person.<sup>2</sup>

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Question 1—*Why was it requisite that the Mediator, who was to reconcile God and man, should himself be both God and man?*

*Answer*—Fallen man is in a state of enmity, or war, with his Creator, Rom. 8:7; likewise, God is angry with the wicked continually, Ps. 7:11. The role of mediator is one which stands between two or more parties in opposition, *cf.* Gal. 3:20. The division being insurmountable by fallen men, God began the reconciliation in and through his Son, Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 5:18; who brought about this reconciliation through his death and the blood of his cross, Col. 1:20-22. Which atonement could not be rendered in and through his divinity but his humanity, whereby it behooved him also to be a man, 1 Tim. 2:5. It is through the incarnate Son of God that believers receive the atonement and are reconciled to God, Rom. 5:11. It is important to recognize that men are not only enemies to God, but there is an enmity on the part of God toward them, a law enmity, which is discharged making God reconciled to them through this same death, Rom. 5:8-10.

In order for a mediator to bring about reconciliation, it requires the presence of one who is in a mediating place with respect to the alienation to be addressed, *cf.* Acts 12:20. The alienation between God and man is very deep, reaching to the nature of man, Eph. 2:3. Thus, it requires a Mediator capable of reconciling the two natures which are at enmity, the divine and the human, Job 9:33. In Jesus, the love of God is set forth to sinners, the divine nature descends into humanity itself, 1 John 4:10; conversely, in Jesus, the human nature is made to live again to God, 1 Cor. 15:45-47.

Question 2—*How can it be that both natures should be found in one Person?*

*Answer*—Had his human nature been a distinct human person, the work of our redemption would have been brought about by two persons, which would each have had the character of Mediator; but unless they could be so united as to constitute but one person, there would have been more than one Mediator, *cf.* 1 Cor. 8:6. Yet, the human person would have been unable to perform the work of intercession unaided, *cf.* 1 Sam. 2:25. However, in Christ, the humanity is so united to the divine Person that this mediation is made possible, 1 John 2:1.

This union of the humanity with the divinity, in the Person of the Mediator, is not merely a *parastatic*, or mimicking, union, such as that of the angels when they appear with bodies, *cf.* Gen. 19:1 *with* Luke 24:39. Neither is it an *efficient* union by which a general efficacy and sustentation is given all things by God, in whom we live, move and have our very being,

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 1:21, 23; 3:17; Heb. 9:14.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. 2:6.

Acts 17:28. Nor is it a *mystical* union, such as exists between Christ and believers, *cf.* Eph. 5:30. Much less is it that *substantial* or essential union which exists amongst the Persons of the Trinity who are one in substance, 1 John 5:7.

The union is one that is *hypostatic*, or subsisting, union, wherein the human nature is assumed into the subsisting reality of the divine Person of the *Logos*, or Son of God, John 1:14. Thus, the union is personal, though not of persons, Matt. 1:21; as a union of natures, but not natural, Isa. 7:14. For had the union been natural, it would have been an incarnation of the Trinity itself, whereas Scripture is clear, the incarnation was only of the Second Person, the Son, Matt. 3:17.

By this union, what is designated is the intimate and perpetual conjunction of the two natures—the divine and the human—in the unity of the single Person of the Son, 1 Cor. 15:47. By this *hypostatic* union, the human nature (which possessed no distinct, or proper, personality, 1 Tim. 3:16; and was without independent subsistence [*anypostatos*] otherwise it would have been a distinct person, *cf.* Ps. 139:13-16) was assumed into the Person of the Son, the *Logos*, Rom. 1:3, 4. In this manner, being conjoined with or adjoined to the Son, in the unity of his Person, the human nature now has a substantial subsistence, or *hypostasis*, in the Person (*enypostatos Logō*), being sustained in his Person, though not independent or distinct from his Person, Matt. 1:23; 2 John 7. So intimate is this union that the Son calls this his flesh and blood, John 6:56.

Question 3—*Why was it requisite that both natures should be found in one Person?*

*Answer*—It was requisite so that the works proper to each nature might be accepted of God for us, 1 Cor. 15:40. Therefore, in the human nature, he was to perform everything which implied subjection, obedience, or suffering, *cf.* Heb. 2:9. And, though none of these could be performed by him, in his divine nature, for they required changeability, Mal. 3:6; yet, an infinite worth, value and dignity was added to them, which was not so much the result of anything done by him in that nature, as of the union of the human nature with it, Heb. 9:14. Thus, the divine nature being unable to suffer, sin is condemned in the flesh, or human nature, Rom. 8:3; nonetheless, the human nature, being unable to merit with God, the divine Person alone is able to merit, 1 Cor. 2:8. The reason for this is to be found in the worth of the Person, who is the eternal Son of God, Gal. 4:4; because, in a relative sense, the obedience and suffering he performed had the same value as if it had been performed in his divine nature, Jas. 2:1. This is why it may be said that God purchased the church with his own blood, Acts 20:28.

Finally, there are two things to be noted regarding this; 1.) The works of each nature must be accepted of God for us, as the works of the whole Person, or of the same Person, 2 Pet. 1:17. If the nature that obeyed and suffered had subsisted in a human person, his obedience and suffering could not have been of infinite value, or accepted of God as a sufficient price of redemption, Rev. 5:9; Col. 1:14. The value must be ascribed to the divine Person, whose working shone forth his divine glory in his human nature, Ps. 24:8-10; Matt. 17:2. 2.) Those works which were performed by him in each nature, are to be relied on by us as the works of the whole Person, 1 Pet. 2:6. This reliance contains an instance of adoration, and supposes the Person who performs the works to be God, which he was not in his human nature, Matt. 14:33. Though we rely upon works performed by him in his humanity, the Mediator is the object of divine worship, Acts 8:37; we depend upon him, as a divine Person, for salvation, and our worship does not terminate upon his human nature, but on his divine, John 9:35-38.