

THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF
FAITH
VIII. OF CHRIST THE MEDIATOR

Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC

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I. GOD'S APPOINTMENT OF HIS SON

It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man, the Prophet, Priest, and King, the Head and Savior of his church, the Heir of all things, and Judge of the world: unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

I. GOD'S APPOINTMENT OF HIS SON

- A mediator is one who comes between two parties at variance in order to reconcile them.
- Biblical evidence for an eternal covenant (the Covenant of Redemption) whereby God the Son was appointed as Mediator:
 - “Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant” (Heb. 13:20).
 - “[K]nowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who believe” (1 Pet. 1:18-20).
 - “Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations” (Isa. 42:1).
- The Covenant of Redemption:
 - God the Father appointed the Son as Mediator, promising him a people upon fulfillment of our redemption.
 - “Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring” (Isa. 53:10).
 - Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. . . . I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do” (Jn. 17:2-4).

I. GOD'S APPOINTMENT OF HIS SON

- God's appointment of Christ as Mediator presupposes the Fall
 - “God was dishonoured, and highly offended; man was alienated from God, and subjected to his judicial displeasure; and as man was unable to satisfy the claims of the divine law which he had violated, if he was to be restored to the favour of his offended sovereign, the interposition of another person was requisite, to atone for his guilt, and lay the foundation of peace.” (R. Shaw).
 - The fact of Christ's appointment grants authority to his mediation.
 - “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, “You are a priest forever.” This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant” (Heb. 7:22).

I. GOD'S APPOINTMENT OF HIS SON

- As Mediator, Christ was appointed by the Father as
 - Prophet: to reveal God and his will
 - Priest: to make atonement for our sins
 - King: to reign over and in us forever.
 - Head and Savior of his Church
 - The Heir of all things
 - Judge of the world

I. GOD'S APPOINTMENT OF HIS SON

- God's gift of a people to his Son:
 - "from all eternity gave a people to be his seed" (Isa. 53:10).
 - To be "by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified."
- The Elect are a definite people, chosen in eternity, for the possession of God's Son
 - "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out" (Jn. 6:27).
 - "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd (Jn. 10:14-16).
- The *certainty* of the elect/believers being saved (not just a possibility).
 - "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day" (Jn. 6:39-40).

II. THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So the two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

II. THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

I. The Deity of Christ

- Son of God, second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God.
 - The Nicene Formula: “God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father.”
 - Whatever the Father possesses that makes Him *God*, the Son also possesses.
 - Eternal sonship of the Second Person
- Heretical objections to Christ’s deity
 - Socinianism (Unitarian): Christ merely a man with no pre-existence
 - Arianism: first of all creatures, with a super-angelic pre-existence, by not eternal or fully divine

II. THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

- Of One Substance and Equal with the Father
 - Nicaea: not *like* the Father but *one with* and *equal to* the Father
 - *Homoousios*, not *Homoiousios*.
 - Rules out eternal *subordinationism*.
- Biblical Proofs for the Deity of the Son
 - Direct biblical teaching (Jn. 1:1-3, Rom. 9:5), Phil. 2:6, Tit. 2:13, Jn. 5:20; 20:28).
 - *Divine names* ascribed to him (Ps. 45:6; Isa. 9:6; Isa. 7:14 etc.).
 - *Divine properties* attributed to the Son (Eternity, Mic. 5:2, Jn. 8:58; omnipresence, Mt. 18:21; omnipotence, Rev. 1:8; omniscience, Jn. 1:49; 2:24-25; fullness of deity, Col. 2:9).
 - *Divine works* attributed to the Son (creation, Jn. 1:3, Col. 1:16-17; providence, Heb. 1:3, Col. 1:17; miracles, redemption, Jn. 13:18, Acts 20:28).
 - *Divine honor* granted to the Son (faith directed to Christ; worshiped as God, Jn. 20:28, Phil. 2:9-10; grace invoked from Him, 2 Cor. 13:13, Rev. 1:6).

II. THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

2. The Incarnation of God's Son

- When the fullness of time was come (Gal. 4:4)
 - The appointed and history defining moment in which God's redemptive purposes had ripened.
- Took upon him man's nature... in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance
 - Jesus' true humanity
 - vs. Docetism: denial that the Christ was truly man.
 - He who was eternally God became also human. He who is the Son of God became man.
 - The true humanity of Christ is as essential to His mediating work as is His deity.
 - Christ retains his true humanity after the resurrection and ascension.
- With all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof
 - Jesus hungered, thirsted, grew tired, suffered pain, and died.

II. THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

- Yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost
 - By virtue of his eternal deity and the incarnation of the Spirit, Christ (the “Second Man”) does not participate in original sin.
 - “Tempted “in every respect. . . as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15).
 - Does *not* mean that Jesus had sinful desires or inclinations.
 - “Because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted” (Heb. 2:18).
 - Lamb without defect or stain (1 Pet. 1:19); “Holy, harmless, undefiled” (Heb. 7:26).
 - Is he truly human without sin?

II. THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

3. The Dual Natures of Christ

- Jesus Christ is *one person*
 - Vs. Nestorianism, which taught two persons / two natures
 - It is the one personhood of Christ that confers eternal value & significance to the actions of his human nature.
- Christ Possesses *two distinct natures*
 - Vs. Eutychianism (human nature absorbed into the divine)
- Each nature retains its respective properties (divine / human).

II. THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

- Hypostatic Union: one person, with two natures
 - Council of Chalcedon, 451 A.D.
 - The human nature of Christ “from its first formation, was united to, and subsisted in, the person of the Son of God” (R. Shaw).
 - The acts or qualities of each nature are referred to the one person, to whom they are “inseparably joined together.”
 - “To represent our Savior as having a human person distinct from his Godhead, is to divest his obedience and sufferings of their inherent value, and consequently, to subvert the grand doctrine of the redemption of the Church by His blood” (R. Shaw).

II. THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

- Without Conversion, Composition, or Confusion
 - No *conversion*: each nature retained its quality (divine and human)
 - No *composition*: not a new composite nature
 - No *confusion* between the divine and human natures at all.
- Jesus Christ, the God-Man Mediator
 - “in Christ all the fullness of Deity dwells bodily” (Col. 2:9)
 - “Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

III. CHRIST FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Lord Jesus, in his human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified, and anointed with the Holy Spirit, above measure, having in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in who it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell; to the end that, being holy, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a mediator; and surety. Which office he took not unto himself, but was thereunto called by his Father, who put all power and judgment into his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same.

III. CHRIST FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Jesus was unique not only in his divine nature, but also in the full anointing of the Holy Spirit which he enjoyed.
 - “You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions” (Ps. 45:7).
 - Christ fulfilled his work not only by his divine power, but in his humanity by the working of the Holy Spirit: his work was a *Trinitarian* accomplishment.
- By the Spirit, the man Jesus possessed “all wisdom & knowledge” (Col. 2:3), was holy and undefiled (Heb. 7:26), and full of grace & truth (Jn. 1:14), and as such was fitted to perform the work as our Mediator and Surety.
- Having so provided for his Son, God therefore placed “all power and judgment in his hand,” making Christ our covenant head, and commanding him to do the work of our redemption (Acts 10:38).
- A “Surety” is one “who makes himself liable for the default or miscarriage of another” (van Dixhoorn). Christ knew that our liability was to the curse of the broken covenant. He bore our curse so that the covenant blessing of eternal life might be ours.

IV. CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL WORK

This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake; which that he might discharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfill it; endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified, and died, was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption. On the third day he arose from the dead, with the same body in which he suffered, with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession, and shall return to judge men and angels, at the end of the world.

IV. CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL WORK

- Christ fully satisfied divine justice by his death
 - Was born under the law and perfectly fulfilled it all his life.
 - Placed himself under all the requirements of the law *as our mediator*.
 - As such, Jesus was qualified to die on behalf of others, and did so willingly.
 - Bore “most grievous torments” in his body and soul.
 - Included the anxiety & fear of the Gethsemane, and the spiritual torment of God’s wrath upon his soul.
 - Christ’s suffering was *vicarious* and *substitutionary* – he suffered for and on behalf of others, and as our *surety*, our sins were imputed to his account in order for him to pay their debt (Isa. 53:6). Jesus became our *scapegoat* (Lev. 16:20-22).
 - This was *particular* rather than *general* redemption.

IV. CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL WORK

- Christ fully satisfied divine justice by his death, cont.
 - Suffered death on our behalf: crucified, dead, buried, remained under the power of death for a time.
 - Death was the penalty under the law for sin (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23).
 - Penal, substitutionary atonement: “Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3).
 - “Bearing shame and scoffing rude / in my place condemned he stood. / Sealed my pardon with his blood / Hallelujah! What a Savior!” (Philip Bliss).
 - Jesus’ death was proved by his burial and “remaining under the power of death for a time.”
 - By sanctifying the grave for his people, he has made it a place of rest while the body waits for the resurrection.

IV. CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL WORK

- Christ's victorious resurrection
 - The resurrection a well-attested fact
 - Christ's body did not suffer decay, but rose from the dead (Ps. 16:10)
 - Christ's resurrection proves that the Father accepted his sacrifice for us (Rom. 4:25, he was "raised for our justification.")
 - Christ's claims to deity were vindicated.
 - Christ conquered sin on the cross and death by his resurrection on our behalf.
 - "Believers now have a certain pledge and infallible assurance of their joyful resurrection to eternal life" (R. Shaw).

IV. CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL WORK

- Christ's glorious ascension and present intercession
 - Ascended in the same body that died and was raised from death.
 - Ascended to enter into his glory and prepare a place for us (Jn. 14:3).
 - Sits on the throne of authority of power as "head over all things for the church" (Eph. 1:22).
 - Sends forth the Holy Spirit to strengthen his people with all needed gifts and graces.
 - Intercedes with the Father on our behalf: "Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died – more than that, who was raised – who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us" (Rom. 8:34).
 - Jesus prays for the conversion of those elect not yet brought to faith.
 - Jesus prays for the support and strengthen of struggling Christians.
 - Jesus prays so that "the blessings which he has purchased for them may be enjoyed by them" (Shaw).
 - Jesus prays that our persons and service may be acceptable before the Father by means of his mediation.
 - Jesus' intercession is ever-successful and never failing (Ps. 21:2; Jn. 11:42).

IV. CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL WORK

- Jesus' final return and final judgment
 - Jesus will return bodily and visibly to all the world (Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 1:7).
 - At a time unknown by us but fixed in the counsels of heaven (Mt. 25:13; Ja. 5:8-9), suddenly, like "a thief in the night."
 - Christ returns to end this age of the world in the final judgment.
 - Sinners apart from Christ to be judged with eternal death and torment (Mt. 25:46)
 - Christ's people to be rewarded for their service (Mt. 25:34).
 - The final judgment is followed by the eternal age of glory in which believers are "heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17).
 - "This is an event in which we are deeply interested, since "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ"... We should occupy our talents till our Lord come, that we may receive from him that best of plaudits: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Mt. 25:21).