

Westminster Larger Catechism

Question 40

Halifax, 18 May 2008

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, and relied on by us, as the works of the whole person.

Introduction:

Tonight we have before us the last of the questions in the Larger Catechism on the two natures of Christ.

- The Bible teaches that our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, is one person with two natures.
 - This is a great offence to Muslims and Jews because they claim that God is too great to become man.
 - But surely if He is all powerful and if He was able to make us, He could prepare a body for Himself and then come to dwell in that body in person.
 - If the doctrine was that in doing this, He ceased to be God, that *would* be impossible...
 - He cannot stop being God.
 - But the doctrine of the scripture is that He continued to be fully God and became man also so that He is one person with two natures.
 - At the same time that He was feeding at His mother's breast, dependent on her milk, He was upholding the entire universe.
 - The only thing that is unbelievable about this is that God should be *willing* to do this—for sinners!
 - It is marvellously absurd!
 - It makes us laugh with delightful amazement as Abraham and Sarah did when the child of promise was born to them and they named him laughter (Isaac means laughter).
 - Jesus is too good to be true.
 - that God's love should be so great at this and that He should stoop so low for us is absurdly wonderful.
 - Christ is the only being in the entire universe who is both divine and human...

- and in this we have His uniqueness.
 - He is the only one who is qualified to be our Redeemer.
 - We have looked at this in some detail in previous studies.
 - Because He is man, He is able to offer Himself for men;
 - yet, because He is God, His sacrifice is of infinite merit to atone for our sins and to provide eternal redemption.
 - Because He is man, He is able to advance our nature—so that dominion is restored to us when all things are brought under His feet,
 - and, because He is God, He is able to impart new life to all of us.
 - Because He is man and was tempted in all points as we are, He is able to sympathise with us,
 - and, because He is God, He is able to be mindful of all of our needs—the needs of millions of people at the same time—and to pray for us all.
- You see, we get to have all the advantages of each nature, and we get to have these advantages blended together in a wonderfully harmonious way that makes Him the ideal Mediator...
 - Once we understand it, makes it patently obvious that all other redeemers and all other redemptive schemes are wholly inadequate...
 - None can even come to close to being all that He is to us—all that is needed to redeem us.
 - This is why those who truly understand the gospel have always been very insistent that Christ is the only way.
 - Of course, the scripture says that this is so, but they understand why it is so—

The uniqueness of Christ as our Mediator and Redeemer is laid out for us in the epistle to the Hebrews.

- And when we get to chapter 10,
 - Hebrews shows us how the works of this Mediator who is both God and man is accepted of God for us and so to be relied on by us...
 - That is what it talks about in the answer to question 40...
 - So we are going to take Hebrews 10 as our text this evening.

READ> Hebrews 10

I. First, I want you to see here the inadequacy of OT sacrifices. (1-4)

- A. They were repeated because they were only for ceremonial purification—
1. They are called shadows—an outline rather than the substance...
 - a. They sanctified people in order that they might participate in the ceremonies, but they did not remove sins.
 - b. They were repeated because they were but pictures. Once the real sacrifice was offered, it did not have to be repeated.
 2. It should be understood that these shadows were true pictures,
 - but only pictures of what God required.
 - In other words, they taught what they taught in truth—that we are in need of perfect sacrifice in order to approach God...
 - And that without such a sacrifice, we cannot approach Him.
 - That was all true...
 - But they themselves were not able to make anyone fit to come before God and to live in His house.
- B. Their inadequacy points to the inadequacy of anything that man can provide.
1. What I mean is, if these sacrifices that God appointed were inadequate to truly take away sins,
 - what should we think of that presumption that we either need no sacrifice at all...
 - or that there is something we can do—some great work or some great sacrifice—that will be adequate.
 2. You see, these ceremonies showed that there had to be something perfect offered as a substitute...
 - And that perfect thing was something that God had promised to provide.
 - The ceremonial law only kept alive the hope and the anticipation that He would provide it.

TRANS> So you see then that the OT shadows were wholly inadequate to do what they showed us that God Himself would do.

II. Secondly, I want you to see that what Christ did in both natures is accepted of God for us.

- A. He was provided with a human body in order that He might do what God required of us. (5-7)
1. Doing the will of God meant obeying (pleasing God) as a man.

- a. In the beginning, man was created in the image of God to show forth the glory of God.
 - 1) God’s law was written on our heart, and God communicated to us the ordinances of creation: marriage, labour, and the Sabbath.
 - 2) He also taught us that we were to be in subjection to Him, looking to Him and depending on Him for our direction, provision, and strength.
 - This was to be demonstrated by eating the tree of life (showing that God would give life)
 - and by abstaining from the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil (by which man would declare his independence of God.
 - b. Adam, of course, did not continue in the will of God, but plunged us all into rebellion and disobedience.
 - If Adam had continued to do the will of God, he would have obtained life for us...
 - But now Christ tells us that He, the Son of God, has come forth from heaven to do the will of God for us...
 - That is what is quoted of Him verse 5-7:
 - **Heb 10:5-7: Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.’ ”**
2. But now, doing the will of God was much more involved.
 - a. For Adam, it meant basic obedience, but now that we had become sinners, God’s law demanded that the penalty of sin be paid in full.
 - b. Doing the will of God for Christ as our representative meant not only basic obedience, but it meant atoning for our sin.
 - He had to suffer the pains of hell.
- B. Notice how he describes Himself as coming to do God’s will by Himself becoming the sacrifice that God required.
1. Verse 8-9 show that He is coming to do what they only pictured to be done.
 - He is actually coming from heaven to do it—to do what they could not actually do—
 - to meet what God requires of sinful human beings that they might be accepted of Him.
 - He is the replacement of the ceremonies who actually does the job.

- **Heb 10:8-9:** Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law), then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second.
 - And He is able to be this replacement because He comes from heaven—because He is the Son of God.
2. And the good news is that now, having been offered up on the cross, the Lord Jesus has accomplished what was required...
- He has fulfilled the demands of God’s law and we are free.
 - Look at v. 10
 - **Heb 10:10:** By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
 - To be sanctified by His offering means that we are set apart by it to be accepted of God...
 - We can come to God because Christ’s offering makes us holy.
- C. See how His offering actually accomplishes our redemption according to verses 11-18.
- **Heb 10:11-13:** And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.
 - He sat down because the work was complete. Now He waits for all things to be gathered under Him.
 - **Heb 10:14-18:** For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days,” says the LORD: “I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,” then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.
 - You see here that everything is accomplished by this one offering.
 - If the Son of God has offered Himself in our place as our representative, then there is nothing more that God can require of us!
 - He has fully accomplished what no one else could have done because He is both God and man...
 - God has accepted what He has done and we are set free.

III. Thirdly, I want you to see that what Christ did is to be relied on by us—by you! (Faith)

- A. Because what Christ did is accepted of God, you have every reason to draw near to God with boldness and assurance (19-25)
- You have something to rely on that is totally reliable and that cannot fail in its purpose—if you would but rely on it...
 - This is not something to walk away from—
 - It is something to run to, and to rest in forever and ever.
 - Look with me at verses 19-25 where you are urged to rely on what Christ has done...
 - **Heb 10:19-22: “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,”**
 - The Son of God offered Himself in human flesh—this is how He consecrated the way for us...
 - With a priest like this, see what confidence we ought to have...
 - **Heb 10:21-22 and *having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.***
 - Ceremonial language is employed to illustrate the fact that Christ has purified us.
 - This is the offering of the Son of God, and so it has to be effective—it *cannot* fail to accomplish its design.
 - Because of it, we can come with absolute confidence, without any hesitation that it will be accepted for us.
 - It is utterly adequate, utterly reliable, utterly sufficient.
 - Therefore, Hebrews 10:23 says:
 - **Heb 10:23: Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful.**
 - And then 10:24-25 tell us to encourage each other in the light of this sure and certain hope:
 - **Heb 10:24-15: And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**

TRANS> But there is a downside—for those who do not believe...

- for it is a terrible insult to Christ and to the Father for anyone to suppose that either this sacrifice was not necessary or that it is not sufficient...
- B. In verses 26-39 the peril of not trusting when such a sacrifice has been offered is impressed upon us...
1. We are told it will lead to the most severe judgement
 - READ v. 26-27
 2. We are told that rejecting Christ will be much worse than rejecting the OT regulations.
 - READ v. 28-29
 - God will surely avenge when His Son is insulted
 - READ v. 30-31
 3. So the exhortation is given that no matter what is done to you in this world,
 - it is not sufficient cause for you to depreciate or minimise what Christ has done!
 - READ v. 32-34
 - If you rely on Christ, you will never be disappointed...
 - READ v. 35-38
 - Those who truly know Christ will not draw back
 - READ v. 39

Conclusion:

- You have all the benefits of His humanity and His deity in one person
 - Divine power with human compassion
 - Merit of a divine sacrifice made possible in human body
 - Perfectly represents God to us, perfectly represents us to God.