

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTIONS # 59 & 30.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #59. *Who are made partakers of redemption through Christ?*

A. Redemption is certainly applied, and effectually communicated, to all those for whom Christ hath purchased it;¹ who are in time by the Holy Ghost enabled to believe in Christ according to the gospel.²

(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,³ and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.⁴

Question 1—*Who are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?*

Answer—It is notable that the benefits of redemption are first purchased; then, applied—we are first redeemed by a price, 1 Cor. 7:23; and, then, we are delivered, through their application, by the almighty power of God, Col. 1:13. The application of these benefits is particularly the work of the Holy Ghost, Eph. 2:22; whereas the purchase of the benefits is a work peculiar to Christ alone, Acts 20:28. This application is a divine work, not to be ascribed to ourselves, but wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, John 3:5; Tit. 3:5.

This redemption is applied to those for whom Christ purchased it and for no others, John 17:9. These are those elected from eternity, Eph. 1:4, 5; and called in time to believe in Christ, Acts 13:48. This account of its application supposes that it is not to be applied to all mankind, Mark 10:45. In other words, the application of benefits is not universal but only for whom Christ actually died, John 10:11, 15, 16.

Question 2—*How is this redemption applied?*

Answer—This redemption is said to be *certainly* applied to those for whom Christ actually died, John 6:37, 39. The application does not depend upon the will of man, or on some uncertain conditions which God expects we shall perform, so that the death of Christ might be rendered tenuous, Eph. 2:8. Instead, the purchased benefits are *effectually* applied and communicated by the working of the Holy Spirit of promise, Eph. 1:13, 14.

Should we consider how Christ's redemption is applied, it is done so by way of uniting the sinner to Christ, whereby the sinner becomes interested in and put in possession of those benefits purchased, 1 Cor. 1:30. It is with Christ himself that all saving benefits are given, and without him none could be received, Rom. 8:32. Just as Adam's sin could never have brought men to spiritual condemnation had they not been in him, Rom. 5:12; so Christ's redemption can never savingly profit men unless they be in him, Eph. 1:7.

That there is real (though mystical) union between Christ and believers appears in several considerations: 1.) Christ is said to be in believers, Col. 1:27; Rom. 8:10; and

¹ Eph. 1:13, 14; John 6:37, 39; John 10:15, 16.

² Eph. 2:8; 2 Cor. 4:13.

³ Eph. 1:13, 14; John 6:37, 39; Eph. 2:8.

⁴ Eph. 3:17; 1 Cor. 1:9.

believers are said to be in him, 1 Cor. 1:30. He is said to dwell in them and they are also said to dwell in him, John 6:56. There is a mutual abiding the one in the other, John 15:4. Thus, believers are said to have put on Christ, Gal. 3:27; and they are so joined together as to be said to be of one Spirit, 1 Cor. 6:17. 2.) This union is likened unto several real and proper unions such as that between the vine and the branches, John 15:5; the head and the body, Eph. 1:22, 23; the meat that is eaten and the eater, John 6:56; and, significantly, to that union between the Father and Christ, John 17:21. 3.) Should this union not be real and true, but merely relative, the sacrament of the Supper would be a bare sign, and not also a seal, exhibiting and applying Christ to believers, contrary to the institution, Matt. 26:26-28.

Question 3—*Wherein does this union consist and how does it come to pass?*

Answer—This union, which takes place between Christ and believers is a mystical union, wherein Christ and believers are so joined that they are one Spirit and one mystical body, 1 Cor. 6:17; 12:13. It is a union in which the whole man is united to Christ—the believing soul is united to him, Eph. 3:17; as well as the body of the believer being also united to him, 1 Cor. 6:19; 1 Thess. 4:14. Furthermore, they are united to Christ according to his divine nature, Col. 1:27; and with his human nature, Eph. 5:30. And, altogether this is effected through the Mediator unto God, 2 Cor. 6:16.

Now, the bonds of this union are effected, not through any corporal union, because Christ is in heaven, and we are upon the earth, though no corporal union could profit our situation, *cf.* John 6:63. This union is, in contrast, at once spiritual and mystical, 1 Cor. 6:17; along with the bonds of it, which are two:

First, the Spirit on Christ's part, whereby he apprehends, takes and keeps hold of us, 1 John 3:24. The same infinite Spirit, that dwells in Christ, communicates to his elect their effectual calling, Ezek. 36:27. Thus, there is one Spirit living and acting in both, in Christ as the head, Col. 1:18; 2:9; and in believers as the members, whereby they truly become one by that means, 1 Cor. 12:27; Rom. 8:11. The distance between Christ and believers, as great as between heaven and earth, cannot hinder the joining of our souls and bodies to his, since the Spirit is an infinite Spirit, everywhere present, Ps. 139:7-10. Where one and the same Spirit is in two, there is a real union, though the two do not touch, Ezek. 1:21.

Second, there is faith on the part of believers, Eph. 3:17. It is by faith that the believer apprehends, takes and keeps hold of Christ, Gal. 2:20. It is by faith that we receive Christ, John 1:12; it is by faith that we come unto him, John 6:35; it is by faith that we are made to feed upon him, John 6:56. The fitness of faith for this work appears: 1.) In that it is a self-emptying and creature-emptying grace, which casts off all that would keep the soul at a distance from God, Phil. 3:8. 2.) It is fitted to receive both an unseen Christ and salvation, which appears only to us in the word, Heb. 11:1-3.

Question 4—*Who is the author and efficient cause of this union?*

Answer—As our Lord Jesus Christ took his own human nature into personal union with himself, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, by the agency of the Holy Ghost, Luke 1:35; so, too, by this same Spirit, we are taken into mystical union with him, Rom. 8:9. Consider: 1.) The Word is the great vehicle of divine appointment, wherein the Spirit of God is given, Gal. 3:2. In that he comes and makes room for himself, 1 Thess. 1:5. By him, we are effectually called into this union, 1 Cor. 1:9. 2.) This quickening Spirit enters into the elect soul working faith, not by natural powers, Col. 2:12; but by an enlivening which actuates that faith by which the elect are, in time, enabled to believe the Gospel, 2 Cor. 4:13.