

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTION # 11.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #11. *How doth it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father?*

A. The scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father, ascribing unto them such names,¹ attributes,² works,³ and worship,⁴ as are proper to God only.

Question 1—*Do the Scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God and are they equally God with the Father?*

Answer—Yes. This Scriptural truth was affirmed at the Council of Nicæa, in 325 A.D., using the word *homousian* (ὁμοούσιον; “being of one substance with the Father”), meaning *one* (i.e., being) and the *same* (i.e., equal) substance, when speaking of the Son (and, by implication, the Spirit). They are one and the same God, or Divinity, with the Father, Tit. 2:13; Acts 5:3, 4. Each divine person is understood to share a complete, or perfect, possession of the whole of the substance of divinity and nature, 1 John 5:7. Moreover, it is *specifically* the same Divinity, 1 John 2:23.

That the three divine persons are distinct is also clear, John 14:16 (ἄλλον παράκλητον). Yet, these are not three Gods but one, 1 Tim. 2:5. Thus, they have one name, whereby their substantial unity is named “Jehovah,” or “Yahweh,” (יהוה), Ex. 6:3; although there exist three distinguishable persons of this same Divinity, Matt. 28:19. Thus, the Son is named “Jehovah,” *cf.* Ps. 23:1 *with* John 10:11, 14; Joel 2:32 *with* Acts 2:21; being the same God as the Father, John 10:30. Likewise, the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, is named “Jehovah” (רוח יהוה), and called the “God of Israel” (אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל), 2 Sam. 23:2, 3. So, too, the Son is not only called “Jehovah” (יהוה) but “our God” (אֱלֹהֵינוּ), Isa. 40:3. In this, we see that the Son and the Spirit not only share the name “Jehovah” but also are equally God with the Father, Tit. 3:4; Heb. 1:8; 2 Chron. 15:1 (רוח אֱלֹהִים). Each is clearly substantially God, or Divine, and each is clearly the same God, named Jehovah, Deut. 6:4. This equality of Divinity is why each of the three persons are each called by the same name, “Lord” (κύριος) in the New Testament, Mark 12:29, 36 *with* Matt. 11:25; Phil. 2:11; 2 Cor. 3:17.

This sameness and equality is also expressed when taking up the question of the essence (οὐσία) and nature (φύσις) of the Son relative to the Father, John 5:19; 1 John 2:23; therefore, though the Son is not *autouios* (αὐτουιός), Son in himself; yet, he is *autotheos* (αὐτοθεός), God in himself, having the very life of the Divinity in himself by the personal communication of the Father, John 5:26. The superior greatness of the Father

¹ Isa. 6:3, 5, 8; John 12:41; *and with* Acts 28:25; 1 John 5:20; Acts 5:3, 4.

² John 1:1; Isa. 9:6; John 2:24, 25; 1 Cor. 2:10, 11.

³ Col. 1:16; Gen. 1:2.

⁴ Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14.

belongs to cause of person (i.e., the *mode* of each *hypostasis* of person, or the *communication* of divine essence to each person) not to the nature of the essence of each *hypostasis*, John 14:28.

Question 2—*In what ways do the Scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father?*

Answer—First, that the Son and the Spirit are both God equal with the Father is manifested in the Scriptures use of such names as are proper to God alone.

Although it is said of the Father that he alone is the one God, 1 Cor. 8:6; and the prophet restricts the proper use of the term “God” to one who is both just and Saviour, Isa. 45:21; yet, the Son is expressly called by that denomination of “God,” 1 John 5:20. Likewise, the Spirit is called by this same denomination, Acts 5:3, 4; and, elsewhere, in several places “the Spirit of God,” 1 Sam. 10:10 (רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים); 1 Cor. 3:16.

Again, the Son is named according to that peculiar name, which alone distinguishes the specific Divinity from every other essence or substance of being, “Jehovah,” Isa. 42:8. The prophet Isaiah, in his vision of the heavenly throne, applies this name to the eternal Son, Isa. 6:3, 5, 8; as appears in the apostolic interpretation presented in the New Testament, John 12:41 *together with* Acts 28:25. This name is the name by which Moses claimed divine authority, Ex. 3:14; and Jesus, the Son of God incarnate, identifies himself with this name, John 8:58. In this assertion, the Jews understood him to be asserting equality with God, *cf. v. 59 with* John 5:18; 19:7; which truth is assumed by the apostle Paul, Phil. 2:6. So, too, the Holy Ghost is named by this sacred name “Jehovah,” *cf. Heb. 3:7-11 with* Ps. 95:6-11; *cf. Heb. 10:15-17 with* Jer. 31:33, 34.

Second, that the Son and the Spirit are both God equal with the Father is manifested in the Scriptures ascribing of such attributes as are proper to God alone. One proper attribute is eternity whereby the true God is distinguished from all that is created, Isa. 40:28; Ps. 90:2. Thus, the Son is described as possessing the attribute of eternity, or being from everlasting, John 1:1; Isa. 9:6. Hence, he is that eternal life from the beginning with the Father, 1 John 1:2. Likewise, the Spirit of God is denominated by this attribute of eternity, Heb. 9:14.

Another attribute of Divinity is that of omniscience, Ps. 147:5. It is the nature of the true God to know all things, 1 John 3:20. Yet, this very attribute is said to be shared by the Son, John 2:24, 25. Omniscience is also ascribed to the Holy Ghost because that which is able to comprehend all that is God and man must be omniscient, or all knowing, but so is the Spirit, 1 Cor. 2:10, 11.

Third, that the Son and the Spirit are both God equal with the Father is manifested in the Scriptures ascribing of such works as are proper to God alone. Particularly, the creation of all things is described as the work of Jehovah alone, Neh. 9:6. God alone is the one who created everything, seen and unseen, Gen. 1:1. This great work of God is clearly ascribed to the Son, Col. 1:16. Moreover, this work of creation is ascribed to the Spirit as well, Gen. 1:2.

Fourth, and finally, that the Son and the Spirit are both God equal with the Father is manifested in the Scriptures ascribing of such worship as is proper to God alone. Divine worship is something to be offered only unto the true God, Luke 4:8. However, this very divine worship is said to be shared by both the Son and Spirit, Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14.