

# **The Principles of Christian Religion**

**A Study through the Baptist  
Catechism using Benjamin  
Beddome's *Scriptural Exposition***

# Outline of the BC

- I. Introductory Questions: 1-6
- II. What We are to Believe: 7-43
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# Question and Answer 25

Q. 25: How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A. Christ the Son of God became man by taking to Himself a true body,<sup>1</sup> and a reasonable soul;<sup>2</sup> being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her,<sup>3</sup> yet without sin.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 2:14,16; 10:5

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 26:38

<sup>3</sup> Luke 1:27,31,34,35,42; Galatians 4:4

<sup>4</sup> Hebrews 4:15; 7:26

# Question and Answer 25

- The Incarnation

- Christ's Incarnation did not involve the setting aside or limitation of any of His Divine attributes.

- Murray: "The proposition 'God became man' could convey the thought of kenosis, subtraction, or divestiture; that the Son of God ceased to be what he was and exchanged divine identity for human; that divine attributes, prerogatives, and activities were surrendered, or at least suspended, in order that the human might be real and active. The various statements of Scripture are eloquent to the exclusion of such a conception."

- John 1:1, 14, 18; Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:1-3

- Such a thing would be impossible anyway.



# Question and Answer 25

- The Incarnation

- Christ's Incarnation did not involve the setting aside or limitation of any of His Divine attributes.

- What of Philippians 2:7?

- Kenotic Christology, from the Greek word translated “made himself nothing” (ESV), “Made himself of no reputation” (NKJ), “emptied himself” (NAS)

- Better translation?

- » Some argue that Isa. 53:12 is the background here and so take this verb as a reference to Christ's death, not to His incarnation.

- » “but poured himself out . . . .”

# Question and Answer 25

- The Incarnation

- Christ's Incarnation did not involve the setting aside or limitation of any of His Divine attributes.

- What of Philippians 2:7?

- Even if this verb is a reference to His incarnation, it still doesn't necessarily imply kenosis.

- In what way could the incarnation be considered an "emptying"? In taking upon Himself a human nature, Christ ...

- » veiled His divine glory.

- » became subject to the "common infirmities" of human nature.

- » became subject to the demands and curse of the law.



# Question and Answer 25

- The Incarnation
  - Christ's Incarnation did not involve the setting aside or limitation of any of His Divine attributes.
    - Murray: "[T]he Incarnation means addition and conjunction, not subtraction."
    - BC Q&A 25: "Christ the Son of God became man by taking to himself . . . ."

# Question and Answer 25

- The Incarnation

- Augustine (A.D. 369): “Because if they were possessed of the true wisdom . . . they would understand that it was possible for flesh to be taken on by God without his being changed into flesh; they would understand that he took to himself what he was not, while remaining what he was; and that he came to us in a man without ever departing from the Father; and that he continued to be what he is, while appearing to us as what we are; and that his divine power was confined in the body of an infant without being withdrawn from the whole mass of the universe.”



# Question and Answer 25

- The Incarnation

- Augustine, continued: “The one who holds the world in being was lying in a manger; he was simultaneously speechless infant and Word. The heavens cannot contain him, a woman carried him in her bosom. She was ruling our ruler, carrying the one in whom we are, suckling our bread. O manifest infirmity and wondrous humility in which was thus concealed total divinity! Omnipotence was ruling the mother on whom infancy was depending . . . .”

# Question and Answer 25

- The Incarnation
  - This is the real wonder of the Incarnation of Christ: it is, ultimately, a mystery beyond human comprehension, that the same person could be simultaneously . . .
    - Omnipresent and Bound by Space
    - Eternal and Bound by Time
    - Omnipotent and Weak or Tired
    - Omniscient and Ignorant or Learning
    - Self-Sufficient and Hungry or Thirsty
    - Impassible and Passible
    - Immortal and Mortal



# Question and Answer 25

## 1. Christ's True Body

- Christ assumed a body (Heb. 10:5).
- This was a true human body (Phil. 2:7).
- It had all the properties of a body like ours (Luke 14:39).
- It was liable to sinless infirmities (Matt. 4:2; John 4:6).
- It was capable of suffering (Col. 1:21).
- And it was requisite that he should assume such a body (Heb. 2:17).

# Question and Answer 25

## 2. Christ's Reasonable Soul

- Christ had a real human soul (Isa. 53:10).
- It was a rational soul (Luke 2:52).
- And endowed with natural passions (Matt. 26:28).
- And capable of separation from the body (Isa. 53:12).
- Christ's human nature was greatly abased (Psa. 22:6).
- And greatly exalted (Col. 2:9).



# Question and Answer 25

## 3. Christ's Virgin Birth

- Christ did not come into the world in an ordinary way (Jer. 31:22).
- He was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost (Luke 1:35).
- And born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14).
- Christ had a reputed father (Luke 4:22).
- But he was no more than a reputed father (Matt. 1:18).

# Question and Answer 25

- Why the Virgin Birth?
  - Many assume that it was the Virgin Birth that somehow secured Christ's sinlessness.
    - But the orthodox teaching is that Christ took His human nature from Mary, a sinful person (no "Immaculate Conception").
    - Lack of male seed in His conception wouldn't necessarily make Him sinless.
    - His sinlessness was secured simply by the power of God (Luke 1:35).



# Question and Answer 25

- Why the Virgin Birth?
  - Some Suggestions:
    - To fulfill the prophecy of Isa. 7:14
    - To mark Christ out as unique
    - To mark Christ out as a Savior-figure
      - Cf. Isaac, Jacob, Sampson, Samuel, etc.
    - To mark Christ out as the “Seed of the Woman” (Gen. 3:15)
    - To emphasize the truth that our salvation is entirely of God and not of man

# Question and Answer 25

## 4. Christ's Appointed Appearance

- Christ was born at the appointed time (Gal. 4:4).
- And at the appointed place (Luke 2:11).
- And of the appointed stock (Heb. 2:16).
- The prophets foretold his birth (Luke 1:70).
- And the angels celebrated it (Luke 2:13).



# Question and Answer 25

## 5. Christ's Perfect Sinlessness

- Christ was perfectly holy (Heb. 7:26).
- He was free from the original corruption (John 14:30).
- And from an act of sin (1 Pet. 2:22).
- It was necessary that he should be so (Heb. 7:26).
- Otherwise his sufferings would have been ineffectual (Heb. 9:14).