

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTION # 55.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #55. *How does Christ make intercession?*

A. Christ maketh intercession, by his appearing in our nature continually before the Father in heaven,¹ in the merit of his obedience and sacrifice on earth,² declaring his will to have it applied to all believers;³ answering all accusations against them,⁴ and procuring for them quiet of conscience, notwithstanding daily failings,⁵ access with boldness to the throne of grace,⁶ and acceptance of their persons⁷ and services.⁸

Question 1—*Wherein does the necessity of Christ's intercession appear?*

Answer—The necessity of the intercession appears in that it was both foretold and typified:

First, it was predicted of him that he would make intercession, Isa. 53:12; and, it is said that God the Father commands him to make such an intercession for the success of his glorious work, Ps. 2:8. His character as intercessor seems to be foretold by Elihu when he speaks of an advocate, one who pleads for the poor afflicted person, Job 33:23, 24, 26. The design of his intercession is represented by the Psalmist when he is said not to intercede for any except his own people, Ps. 16:4.

Second, as Christ's intercession was expressly foretold by the prophets, so it was typified by the high priest's entering every year into the holy of holies with blood and incense, to appear before God on behalf of his people, Heb. 9:7, 9. This the antitype Christ now does, appearing in our nature, as he enters heaven for us and makes intercession continually before the Father, Heb. 9:11, 12, 24.

Additionally, Christ's intercession was necessary on account of the condition of fallen men requiring it, for the guilty are unworthy of coming into the presence of God, Ps. 5:4, 5.

Finally, Christ is the only competent intercessor who alone can plead our cause because: 1.) He alone does so by appearing in our nature, bringing about a perfection of atonement through this very nature, Heb. 9:24. 2.) He alone has merited, by his obedience and sacrifice, that atonement which no other creature could do, Heb. 1:3. In this, he has also declared his will that this same obedience and sacrifice be applied to all believers, John 3:16; 17:9, 20, 24. 3.) He intercedes for his people, by answering all the accusations which may be brought in against them, whether by the world, Satan or their own consciences, whereby they obtain remission of sins and a right to eternal life, Rom. 8:33, 34.

¹ Heb. 9:12, 24.

² Heb. 1:3.

³ John 3:16; 17:9, 20, 24.

⁴ Rom. 8:33, 34.

⁵ Rom. 5:1, 2; 1 John 2:1, 2.

⁶ Heb. 4:16.

⁷ Eph. 1:6.

⁸ 1 Pet. 2:5.

Question 2—*What is the reality of Christ's intercession?*

Answer—Christ is the advocate of his people, making intercession for them, for which he is said ever to live, Heb. 7:25.

First, he is even represented as making intercession for his people before his incarnation, though pray being inconsistent with the divine nature, it was offered by virtue of his coming in the flesh, Zech. 3:2.

Second, after his incarnation, he interceded for his people in his human nature, Luke 22:32; though the efficacy of his intercession depended upon his completing the work of our redemption, John 17:4.

Third, the price of redemption was not fully paid until his state of humiliation was at an end, at which time he became a complete advocate and intercessor, Heb. 2:10.

Question 3—*What are the results of Christ's intercession?*

Answer—Christ, by his intercession, procures many privileges for his people, of which several are mentioned here:

First, he has purchased quiet of conscience, notwithstanding many daily faults and failings, Rom. 5:1, 2. This supposes that the best amongst believers on earth, by reason of indwelling corruption, are liable to many sinful infirmities, Eccl. 7:20; whereby none ought to think more highly of himself than is declared by the Scriptures, 1 John 1:8. The sins of believers, too, have a proportional degree of guilt attending them and this guilt has a tendency to make the conscience uneasy, Ps. 51:3. In Christ, there is a sufficient plea to make in our defense and his intercession procures this privilege, 1 John 2:1, 2.

Second, he procures an access, with boldness, to the throne of grace which has been closed to sinners by reason of their great guilt whereby men fear and dread coming before this throne because of God's infinite holiness and justice, 1 Pet. 3:12. God is represented as sitting on a throne of grace, as the consequence of Christ's death and intercession, whereby our servile fear is removed, and we are encouraged, to come boldly before him, Heb. 4:16.

Third, there is the acceptance of our persons, which is a branch of our justification, which is founded upon Christ's sacrifice and intercession, Eph. 1:6. In him, we are made righteous, being justified by his atoning work on our behalf, Isa. 45:24, 25. Thus, Christ the Mediator is said to be our righteousness, for he stands in the place of our own unrighteousness which has separated our persons from God, Jer. 23:6.

Fourth, Christ, by his intercession, has wrought the acceptance of all of our services which, apart from him, are of no value before God, Isa. 64:6. Thus, our services, performed by faith, are made acceptable to God by reason of the removal of that guilt which attends our sinful infirmities, 1 Pet. 2:5. Our services are rendered acceptable because Christ has first made our persons acceptable, Gen. 4:4.

The intercession of Christ ought, then, to be a great remedy against the desponding and despairing thoughts unto which we are liable by reason of the guilt of sin, when charged on our consciences, for he intercedes to bring forgiveness of sin, Ps. 42:11. This intercession ought to be an encouragement to prayer, for it gives hope that we will be answered for the sake of him who pleads our cause, John 16:24.