

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTION # 52.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #52. *How was Christ exalted in his resurrection?*

A. Christ was exalted in his resurrection, in that, not having seen corruption in death, (of which it was not possible for him to be held,)¹ and having the very same body in which he suffered, with the essential properties thereof,² (but without mortality, and other common infirmities belonging to this life,) really united to his soul,³ he rose again from the dead the third day by his own power;⁴ whereby he declared himself to be the Son of God,⁵ to have satisfied divine justice,⁶ to have vanquished death, and him that had the power of it,⁷ and to be Lord of quick and dead:⁸ all which he did as a public person,⁹ the head of his church,¹⁰ for their justification,¹¹ quickening in grace,¹² support against enemies,¹³ and to assure them of their resurrection from the dead at the last day.¹⁴

Question 1—*Wherein are the several parts of Christ's exaltation in his resurrection?*

Answer—The *first thing* to be noted is that Christ did not see corruption in his death, *cf.* John 11:39. In death, there is a dissolution of the natural frame, the separation of body and soul, which is a kind of corruption being a dissolving of this earthly tabernacle, 2 Cor. 5:1. Although Christ experienced this corrupting, yet his body was not suffered to putrefy or decay into dust, Acts 2:27, 31. Though it was laid in the grave, it was not made subject to that continued result of death, wherein it already evidenced that Jesus had finished that work which he came to accomplish and death no more could exert a power over the body of our Saviour, Acts 2:24. Yet, in that he was allowed to go into a state of dissolution of soul and body it may be said that he was, in his resurrection, recalled from corruption, Jon. 2:6.

The reality of his resurrection is confirmed, giving support to our faith, both by the creatures bearing witness: 1.) There were two angels sent from heaven as the first witnesses, Luke calling attention to their form, as men, Luke 24:4-6; John calling attention

¹ Acts 2:24, 27.

² Luke 24:39.

³ Rom. 6:9; Rev. 1:18.

⁴ John 10:18.

⁵ Rom. 1:4.

⁶ Rom. 8:34.

⁷ Heb. 2:14.

⁸ Rom. 14:9.

⁹ 1 Cor. 15:21, 22.

¹⁰ Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:18.

¹¹ Rom. 4:25.

¹² Eph. 2:1, 5, 6; Col. 2:12.

¹³ 1 Cor. 15:25-27.

¹⁴ 1 Cor. 15:20.

to the spiritual reality of the personages, John 20:12. 2.) Then, it was attested by a number of men who had been familiar friends throughout his life, Matt. 28:9, 10, 16, 17; and even by five hundred at once, 1 Cor. 15:6.

Second, there is a consideration of the identity of the one who was raised, so that while he was initially unknown to them, John 20:14, 15; and, it is true, there was some difference to be perceived in him, Mark 16:12. Yet, the ground of their inability was that their eyes were held, so that they could not of their own initiative perceive, Luke 24:16; yet, when he was so pleased, Christ had power to open those eyes, Luke 24:31. Nonetheless, the identity was sure in the communication, for they recognized him in and by his words, Luke 24:44.

Furthermore, the body that was raised was the very same one in which he suffered, John 20:20, 25, 27. Thus, the apostle Paul speaks of resurrection as the springing up of seed sown in the ground, much altered in form but materially the same, 1 Cor. 15:37, 38. When we speak of the body of Christ having the same *essential properties* which it had before his death, we are to understand that it was material, and endowed with the same senses it possessed before, Luke 24:39; though exercised now in a greater degree, Acts 1:3. However, it no longer was possessed of the same *accidental properties* which belonged to it before his resurrection, 1 Cor. 15:42-44. Particularly, he is said to be raised immortal, Rom. 6:9. It is this body, stripped of its *accidental* mortality and common infirmities, which is really united once more to his soul, Rev. 1:18.

Third, there is the matter of Christ being raised which requires a remanding of the soul back into union with the body, which is a work proper only to God who quickens everything, 1 Tim. 6:13. Thus, it is said explicitly that the body of Christ was raised by divine power, Acts 2:32. The apostle makes it clear that this power is a power that is unlike any other, Eph. 1:19, 20. That he was raised by the Father no one denies who believes in the resurrection, Rom. 6:4. That the Holy Ghost was coactive in this resurrection should be no surprise to those who understand him to be the Lord and Giver of Life, Job 33:4; 1 Pet. 3:18. Most importantly, he was raised by his own power, John 10:18; wherein he demonstrates his mission and authority to act as Mediator, accomplishing his work, John 2:19.

Question 2—*Wherein consists the effects of Christ's resurrection?*

Answer—The fact that Christ raised himself by his own power declares that this Mediator, who claimed to be the Son of Man, John 9:35-37; is also the Son of God incarnate, Rom. 1:4. It is the taking again to himself the prerogative of the divinity laid down in his humiliation, Phil. 2:6, 7; which is why the resurrection is linked to his eternal generation, Acts 13:33-35; Heb. 5:5, 6. This has effects:

First, as to himself, the resurrection is demonstrative that he had fully satisfied the justice of God, having paid in full the whole price of redemption, which he had undertaken to do, Rom. 8:34. In the character of the Mediator, Jesus destroyed the power of death and brought this work of redemption to perfection, Heb. 2:14; in so doing, he purchased the right, as Mediator, to be acknowledged as Lord of life and *death*, Rom. 14:9. It is by this means, the resurrection, Christ came to procure to himself the keys of hell and death, Rev. 1:18; and, upon this ground, as Mediator, he will preside over their disposal, Rev. 20:14.

It is the totality of the Mediatorial purchase, which he accomplished as a public person, not only for himself, 1 Cor. 15:21, 22; but especially for those whom he represented in this

transaction, his people, the church, Col. 1:18. This now gives him the right to bestow upon his people the blessings which are to accompany their salvation, because he is the head of his church, Eph. 1:20-23. This includes the right to give laws to his church, Matt. 28:20; defend them from their spiritual enemies, Ps. 110:2; 2:9; and bestow all the blessings promised in the covenant of grace, Heb. 9:15.

Second, to his people, wherein the effects are to be located in four things particularly:

- 1.) Although their justification is sometimes tied to his death, Rom. 5:9; that which the death accomplished would not avail had it extinguished the life of the Mediator by whom this work is applied by right, Heb. 9:14, 26. By his death he paid our debt, 1 John 1:7; in his resurrection he received our acquittal, Isa. 53:8. His resurrection guarantees, then, the efficacy and perfection of this atonement, that redemption is fully made, Rom. 8:34. In this sense, his resurrection is the ground upon which *justification* becomes to the people of God *their justification*, Rom. 4:25.
- 2.) Another effect is to be found in our quickening in grace, whereby we are made alive to all inherent grace with Christ, Eph. 2:1, 5, 6. His resurrection is the first step Christ has taken to apply what he purchased and, in it, believers are begun in regeneration and carried on in sanctification, Col. 2:12.
- 3.) Christ's resurrection is the means for our support against our enemies, whose utmost rage can reach no farther than the grave, Luke 12:4. They for whom Christ died and rose again shall obtain a glorious resurrection and eternal life with him, for death itself shall be finally destroyed, 1 Cor. 15:25-27.
- 4.) By the resurrection of Christ, believers are assured of their resurrection from the dead on that last day, 1 Cor. 15:20. Christ's resurrection is the exemplar and pledge of their own because in his rising again he has destroyed death and its power, Hos. 13:14.