



**The Westminster
Confession of
Faith
Of Christ the
Mediator**

Setting the Context of Chapter 8

1. Chapter 7 – Describes a Covenant of Works which Adam and Eve violated (the Fall)
2. WCF 7.3 also Describes a Covenant of Grace: *Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by [the covenant of works], the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein he freely offers unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life his Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.*
3. *Of Christ the Mediator* – Chapter 8 – provides a more thorough consideration of the Person of Christ and of His Work.

Brief Overview of Chapter 8

- A. 8.1: The Eternal Covenant of Redemption – The Father and Son purpose together to send the Son to save a people who will be the inheritance of the Son.
- B. 8.2 & 8.7: The Mediator (Christ) Has Two Natures
- C. 8.3: God the Holy Spirit Also Enables the Son to fulfill His Role as Mediator.
- D. 8.4 & 8.5: The Work of the Mediator is further explained.
- E. 8.6: Exclusivity of the Christ - only the Work of the Mediator Saves all of God's People.
- F. 8.8: Christ Applies His Work to His People by the Holy Spirit.

The Covenant of Redemption – 8.1

8.1. It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man, the Prophet, Priest, and King, the Head and Savior of his church, the Heir of all things, and Judge of the world: unto whom he did from all eternity give a people, to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

The Covenant of Redemption – 8.1

The Logic of the Paragraph:

1. The Father and Son determine in eternity that the Father would send the Son to claim lost sinners. The Son would do that by humbling Himself, joining His divine nature to a human nature, being born of a woman. By His obedience he would establish himself as the mediator between God and man. And He would be the surety (the guarantor) for every claimed, lost sinner.
2. In executing His Role as Mediator, He will be a Prophet, Priest, and King. He will be the Head of the Church, the Heir of all things, and the Judge of the World.
3. In executing His office of Mediator
 - a. He will win the people (His seed) that He was promised in eternity.
 - b. In due time, He will redeem, call, justify, sanctify, and glorify that people.

The Two Nature-One Person Mediator

8.2 - *The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.*

The Two Nature-One Person Mediator

This is a **repetition** of catholic doctrine of the Person of Christ that was hammered out in the ecumenical Councils of the Church. The Confession does **NOT** add anything to that Doctrine.

1. Council of Nicea, 325 AD.

. . . And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; . . .

The Two Nature-One Person Mediator

2. Council of Chalcedon, 451 AD

We. . . confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and body; coessential with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the mother of God, according to the manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one person and one subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; . .

The Two Nature-One Person Mediator

WCF, Following the Ecumenical Creeds, Rejects the Common Heresies.

1. Denying Christ's Divinity – Arianism (4th Century); Adoptionism (3-4th) – a man with a substance *similar* to God (Arius) or a man that God adopted as His son at His baptism.
2. Denying Christ's Humanity – Docetism/Gnosticism (3rd) – Appearing as a man, but not a man.
3. Dividing the Two Natures Into Two Persons – Nestorianism (5th)
4. Combining the Two Natures into One Nature – Eutychiansim (5th)

The Two Nature-One Person Mediator

The Communication of Attributes – WCF 8.7

8.7 Christ, in the work of mediation, acts according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself; yet, by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.

1. Essential Points

- a. It is not the human nature of Christ nor the divine nature of Christ that saves us; it's the person of Christ, acting according to both natures, that saves us.
- b. What is true of either nature is true of the person of Christ. What can be said of the humanity of Christ can be said of the person of Christ, and what can be said of the deity of Christ can be said of His person.
- c. Examples: Jesus Sleeping in a boat, Jesus sweating drops of blood.

The Two Nature-One Person Mediator

How Biblical Language is Sometimes used (8.7).

- a. Because of the unity of person, sometimes Scripture uses language that ascribes actions to one nature that could be more precisely ascribed to the other nature.
- b. Example. Acts 20:28 – the elders at Ephesus are told to “feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood.”

The Holy Spirit's Anointing in the Work of Christ

8.3 The Lord Jesus, in his human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified, and anointed with the Holy Spirit, above measure, having in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell; to the end that, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a mediator, and surety. Which office he took not unto himself, but was thereunto called by his Father, who put all power and judgment into his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same.

The Holy Spirit's Anointing in the Work of Christ

The Holy Spirit's Ministry to Christ.

1. The Scriptures speak directly of the Spirit's work in/through Jesus (Luke 4:18, Jn 3:34), but also display the Lord Jesus as the One who has the fruit of the Spirit in abundance (Heb. 7:26, Jn. 1:14). See, S. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, Chapter 2
2. The Deity of Christ does not make unnecessary the presence and work of the Spirit, "it amplifies it." C. VanDixhorn, p. 114. Christ had to be full of the Spirit because "God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him." (Col. 1:19).
3. Purpose: To equip Christ to execute fully the work of Mediator and Surety.

The Holy Spirit's Anointing

How is Christ a “Surety?”

1. Oxford English Dictionary: “One who makes himself liable for the miscarriage or default of another.”
2. Why would God’s people need a surety? -
 - a. Three Reasons: The Sin of humanity, the love of God and the perfections of His nature.
 - b. John Murray Explains: “. . . While it was not inherently necessary for God to save, yet, since salvation had been purposed, it was necessary to secure this salvation through a satisfaction that could be rendered only through the substitutionary sacrifice and blood-bought redemption.” J. Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*.

The Mediator is also the Eschatological King – 8.4

8.4 This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake; which that he might discharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfill it; endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified, and died, was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption. On the third day he arose from the dead, with the same body in which he suffered, with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession, and shall return, to judge men and angels, at the end of the world.

The Mediator is also the Eschatological King

The Key Points

1. Jesus willingly undertook the office of Mediator. There is a mutual delight of the Father and the Son in the work of Redemption (J. Owen). There is no cosmic child abuse here.
2. To execute that redemptive work, the Son “actively obeyed” (“was made under the law and did perfectly fulfill it” and “passively obeyed” the Father’s will (endured grievous torments, most painful sufferings, was crucified, and died).
3. The Lord Jesus was raised on the third day - the same body in which he suffered.
4. He ascended to the right hand of the Father.
5. He makes intercession now.
6. He will return as Judge/King.

Christ - the Priest and the Sacrifice – 8.5

8.5. The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience, and sacrifice of himself, which he, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.

The Key Points

1. Here again, there is a repetition of Christ's active (general) obedience and passive (special) obedience from paragraph 4. The believer is not only pardoned by the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the World, but covered with His perfect Righteousness.

Christ - the Priest and the Sacrifice – 8.5

The Key Points

2. Jesus is the faithful high priest, not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek, who offered Himself, by the Holy Spirit, “once for all.”
3. This Sacrifice satisfied the Justice of Father. “God, the just Judge, cannot pronounce anyone just and give him a right to life except on the ground of some perfect righteousness. . . ; but that righteousness is not of one kind [but two]. For as there are two covenants which God willed to make with men – the one legal {works} and the other of grace – so also there is a twofold righteousness – legal and evangelical. . . The former consists in one’s own obedience or a perfect conformity with the law. . . ; the latter is another’s obedience or perfect observance of the law that is rendered by a surety in the place of him who is to be justified. – Francis Turretin,

Justification

Christ – the Priest and the Sacrifice – 8.5

The Key Points

4. For all of God's elect that Sacrifice accomplishes reconciliation with God (Rom. 5:1) and secures for them an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven.

ALL of God's Elect are Saved in Christ – 8.6

8.6 Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ till after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits thereof were communicated unto the elect, in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices, wherein he was revealed, and signified to be the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head; and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world; being yesterday and today the same, and forever.

* This paragraph reminds us of what we read in 7.6. There is one Covenant of Grace, with varied administrations, the substance of which is the Lord Jesus Christ as the mediator and surety for ALL chosen sinners.

Christ Secures the Reality of Redemption for His Own.

8.8. *To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; making intercession for them, and revealing unto them, in and by the Word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey, and governing their hearts by his Word and Spirit; overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom, in such manner, and ways, as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation.*

* Christ's mediatorial work does *not secure the possibility* of redemption. It secures the *personal reality of salvation* for each and every one of those given to Him, by the Father, as His inheritance.