



Let's Read *The Institutes* of the Christian Religion, Class 8

Book 2: Of the Knowledge of God the Redeemer
Chapters 15-17



-JESUS-



Prophet.



King.



Priest.

Therefore, that faith may find in Christ a solid ground of salvation, and so rest in him, we must set out with this principle, that the office which he received from the Father consists of three parts. For he was appointed both Prophet, King, and Priest; ...

The Three-fold Office of Christ



- Prophet – Proclamation
 - God provided a chain of prophets providing right doctrine for his people,
 - Christ heralded the perfect doctrine of the Father's grace.
 - This brought an end to all further prophecies,
 - Yet not ceasing to this day through the teaching of his ministers.



- King – Protection and Governance
 - It's true nature is not carnal but spiritual: omnipotence and eternity.
 - Christ rules in the present as well -
 - Blessings now (rather than a mere absence of trials), and the goal of reward to come.
 - Judging the wicked now (not totally or completely as due his providential will), but ultimately and comprehensively. (Images of justice now point to the truth of judgment then.)

The Three-fold Office of Christ



- Priest – Reconciliation
 - As Mediator, he may, by his own holiness, procure God's favor for his people.
 - As Priest, he appeases God's wrath upon us.

... the honour of the priesthood was competent to none but Christ, because, by the sacrifice of his death, he wiped away our guilt, and made satisfaction for sin.



The Priestly work of Christ

- How did Christ perform this office?

All that we have hitherto said of Christ leads to this one result, that condemned, dead, and lost in ourselves, we must in him seek righteousness, deliverance, life and salvation, as we are taught by the celebrated words of Peter, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," (Acts 4: 12.)

- But if God be against us in judgment, how is it he gives to us his Son?

For were it not said in clear terms, that Divine wrath, and vengeance, and eternal death, lay upon us, we should be less sensible of our wretchedness without the mercy of God, and less disposed to value the blessing of deliverance.



The Priestly work of Christ

- The accommodation of the gospel

In short, since our mind cannot lay hold of life through the mercy of God with sufficient eagerness, or receive it with becoming gratitude, unless previously impressed with fear of the Divine anger, and dismayed at the thought of eternal death, we are so instructed by divine truth, as to perceive that without Christ God is in a manner hostile to us, and has his arm raised for our destruction. Thus taught, we look to Christ alone for divine favour and paternal love.



The Priestly work of Christ

- The accommodation of the gospel

I will quote a passage of Augustine to the same effect:

"Incomprehensible and immutable is the love of God. For it was not after we were reconciled to him by the blood of his Son that he began to love us, but he loved us before the foundation of the world, that with his only begotten Son we too might be sons of God before we were any thing at all. Our being reconciled by the death of Christ must not be understood as if the Son reconciled us, in order that the Father, then hating, might begin to love us, but that we were reconciled to him already, loving, though at enmity with us because of sin.



The Priestly work of Christ

- The obedience of Christ

In the Confession of Faith, called the Apostles' Creed, the transition is admirably made from the birth of Christ to his death and resurrection, in which the completion of a perfect salvation consists.

- His voluntary subjection to the Father's will (Heb. 10:5) & the authorities
- **"suffered under Pontius Pilate"** –
 - allowing himself, who was innocent, to be declared guilty (twice) by man to bear the character of a sinner (Is. 53:12)
 - and receiving the judgment of the Father's requirement for sin (Is. 53:5)
- **"crucified"** – subjected to its curse (2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13-14), triumphing over its shame (Col. 2:14-15)
- **"dead and buried"** - His substitution of us subjected him to its power (Heb. 2:9) to annihilate death rather than have it annihilate us.



The Priestly work of Christ

- The obedience of Christ
 - **“he descended into hell”** –
 - ... *we must not omit the descent to hell, which was of no little importance to the accomplishment of redemption.*
 - Not originally in the earliest copies of the Creed
 - Church Fathers commonly teach/stress the meaning of this clause
 - Clause becomes established in the Creed by mid 7th c
 - Calvin refutes common misconceptions
 - Unnecessary repetition/summation of previous statements
 - Why describe the experience with clear terms and sum them up with an ambiguous term?
 - Why add to the needless redundancy?



The Priestly work of Christ

- The obedience of Christ
 - **“he descended into hell”** –
 - Calvin refutes common misconceptions (cont.)
 - Unnecessary repetition/summation of previous statements
 - Christ descended to the souls of patriarchs to announce his finished work and release them from their prison (Ps. 107:16; Zech. 9:11)
 - Argument from those passages he refutes
 - Concludes such an argument to be “childish”
 - 1 Pet. 3:19, while not being “perfectly definite”, Christ’s death was made known to both
 - The dead, pious souls obtaining an immediate view of the visitation they waited for
 - And the reprobate becoming more clearly convinced to be excluded from salvation.



The Priestly work of Christ

- The obedience of Christ
 - **“he descended into hell”** –
 - Calvin refutes common misconceptions
 - Calvin seeks a surer exposition
 - More is involved than a corporeal death
 - It accurately describes the satisfaction of God’s anger
 - the satisfaction of his righteous vengeance (rf. Is. 53)
 - and the invisible and incomprehensible judgment to be endured.
 - This is well supported and illustrated in Scripture
 - Lam. 1:12 – “sorrow” – over and above anything mortal man can experience
 - Lk. 22:44 – “agony” – pleading in prayer, sweating profusely
 - Heb. 5:7 – “fear” – not piety/reverence but that Jesus was afraid
 - Ps. 22:1 – “forsaken” – expression of real dejection, “wrung from his inmost soul”
 - Heb. 2:15 – the fruit of Christ’s death frees us from the horrors of hell



The Priestly work of Christ

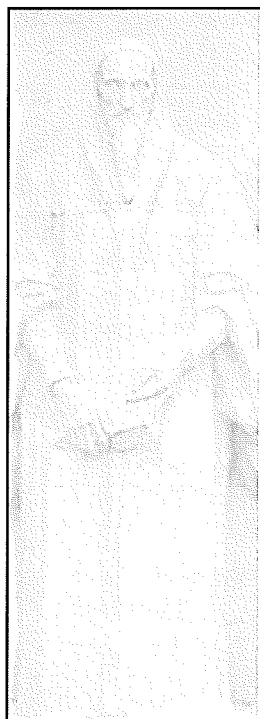
- The obedience of Christ
 - **“he descended into hell”** –
 - Calvin refutes common misconceptions
 - Calvin seeks a surer exposition

And certainly had not his soul shared in the punishment, he would have been a Redeemer of bodies only.



The Kingly work of Christ

- The victory of Christ
 - **“he rose again from the dead”** –
 - Jesus is passive in death
 - Acts 2:24 – “pangs of death” – being loosed/released
 - Heb. 5:7 – “save” – The Father/Spirit delivers Jesus
 - Jesus is victorious over death
 - We are reconciled to God – satisfaction for justice, removal of curse, penalty paid
 - **“ascended into heaven”** – Christ’s reign, hereby, truly commences
 - In body, Christ reigns at the right hand of God, the Father
 - In Spirit, Christ omnipresently reigns in heaven and earth with no interruption
 - **“shall come to judge”**
 - Our entire salvation is comprehended in Christ



New Covenant Presbyterian Church

*Preaching God's Sovereign Grace
to a World of Need*

128 St. Mary's Church Rd. Abingdon,
MD 21009

410-569-0289

www.ncpres.org

www.ephesians515.com

