

Lecture 11-The Work of Christ

Prayer

Thou art our Shepherd; we're Thy flock. Thou art our Redeemer; we're the people Thou hast bought back. Thou art our God; we are Thine inheritance. Therefore, be not angry against us to correct us in Thy wrath. Recall not our iniquity to punish it, but chastise us gently in Thy kindness. Because of our demerits, Thine anger is enflamed, but be mindful that Thy name is called upon among us, and that we bear Thy mark and badge. Undertake, rather, the work that Thou hast already begun in us by Thy grace in order that the whole earth may recognize that Thou art our God and Saviour. Amen.

The Work of Christ

I. Outline (See Appendix F)

A. Person (2, 12-14)

B. Work (2, 15-17)

1. Prophet, King, and Priest (2, 15)

2. Redeemer (2, 16 & 17)

II. The Threefold Office: Prophet, King and Priest (2, 15)

A. Threefold office

1. Clear statement in the *Institutes* (1545); separate chapter in *Institutes* (1559)

2. Important location and function

3. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 8

B. Prophet (Proclamation) - 2, 15, 3

1. Christ was anointed by the Spirit to be the herald and witness of the Father's grace

a. Christ taught "the perfect doctrine" (2, 15, 2)

b. He continues to teach through his servants (2, 15, 2; *Commentary* on Matthew 17:5 and 28:20)

C. King (Protection) - 2, 15, 3

1. Christ rules now (2, 15, 4)

2. The "full proof" of his rule will appear at the last judgment (2, 15, 5)

D. Priest (Reconciliation)

1. Reconciliation (2, 15, 6)

2. Intercession (2, 15, 6; *Commentary* on Matthew 27:12; *Commentary* on 1 John 2:1)

III. Christ as Our Redeemer (2, 16)

A. "The whole course of his obedience" (2, 16, 5)

B. Apostles' Creed (2, 16, 5)

1. "Suffered under Pontius Pilate" (2, 16, 5)

2. "Crucified" (2, 16, 6)

3. "Dead and buried" (2, 16, 7)

4. "Descended into hell" (2, 16, 8)

a. Traditional view: literal descent of Christ to the underworld of the dead between his death and resurrection (harrowing of hell)

b. Calvin's view: Christ's spiritual torment on the cross (2, 16, 10; 2, 16, 12; Catechism [Geneva] for 10th Sunday)

5. "On the third day he rose again from the dead" (2, 16, 13)

6. "Ascended into heaven" (2, 16, 14)

7. "Seated at the right hand of the Father" (2, 16, 15)

8. "From whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead" (2, 16, 17)

9. "Our whole salvation is comprehended in Christ" (2, 16, 19)

IV. How Christ Merited Salvation for Us (2, 17)

- A. Merit vs. grace?
- B. Calvin: "it is absurd to set Christ's merit against God's mercy" (2, 17, 1)
 - 1. God's "good pleasure" (2, 17, 1)
 - 2. Christ's obedience (2, 17, 3)

V. Evaluation

- A. Comprehensive treatment of the doctrine of the work of Christ (2, 16, 19)
- B. Threefold office
- C. Anselmian view, with distinctive emphases: justice and love; Christ's "atoning" life
- D. Extent of the atonement

For Further Study

Peterson, Robert A. *Calvin and the Atonement*. Christian Focus Publications, 1999.
An excellent treatment of this subject.