

Lecture 13-Repentance**Prayer**

Almighty God, we never cease to cut ourselves off from You by our sins, and yet You gently urge us to repentance, and promise also to hear our prayer with favor. Grant we may not stubbornly keep in our sins and be ungrateful to Your great generosity, but may return to You in such a way as to witness by our lives to the genuineness of our repentance, and may so rest in You alone as to resist being buffeted hither and thither by the perverse lust of our flesh. Rather, grant we may stand firm and fast in a right purpose and so endeavour to obey You throughout our lives, at last receiving the fruit of our obedience in Your heavenly kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

RepentanceI. Calvin's Testimony (Preface to *Psalms Commentary*)

II. "Double Grace" - "repentance and forgiveness of sins" (3, 3, 19)

- A. Repentance - regeneration; conversion; sanctification
- B. Forgiveness of sins - reconciliation, acceptance; justification

III. Calvin's "*Ordo Salutis*"

- A. Theological order: faith - justification - sanctification
- B. Order of teaching: faith - sanctification - justification

- 1. Order stresses (against the Roman Catholics' charge) that "actual holiness of life...is not separated from free imputation of righteousness" (3, 3, 1; cf. 3, 11, 1)

- 2. Order of justification and sanctification in the 1536, 1539, 1543-50, and 1559 *Institutes*

IV. Calvin's Treatment of Sanctification and Repentance: Outline (3, 3-10)

- A. What sanctification is: "the true turning of our life to God" (3, 3)

- B. What sanctification is not:

- 1. Perfectionism [Anabaptists] (3, 3)
- 2. Sacramentalism [Roman Catholics] (3, 3, 4 & 5)

- C. Practical description: "The life of the Christian" (3, 6-10)

V. Relation of Faith and Repentance (3, 3)

- A. Repentance follows faith (3, 3, 1; 3, 3, 5)

- B. Medieval doctrine: repentance necessary for forgiveness

- 1. Penance - contrition, confession, satisfaction
- 2. "Nothing is more miserable or deplorable for us" (3, 4, 2)

VI. Definition of Repentance

The turning of our life to God, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of him, and it consists in the mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivification of the Spirit. (3, 3, 5)

- A. "The true turning of our life to God"

- 1. True turning ("arises from a pure and earnest fear of him")

- a. "Repentance of the law" (3, 3, 4) - fear and dread of God's judgment
- b. "Repentance of the Gospel" - fear of judgment (3, 3, 7) and hatred of sin (3, 3, 7; 3, 3, 4)

- 2. Total turning

- a. "Outward works" (3, 3, 6)
- b. "The soul itself" (3, 3, 6; 3, 3, 16)

- 3. Continual turning

- a. "A race of repentance" (3, 3, 9)
- b. The limited repentance of the Anabaptists and the Jesuits (3, 3, 2)

- B. "Consists in the mortification of our flesh...and in the vivification of the Spirit"

- 1. Mortification (3, 3, 8; 3, 3, 20; *Commentary* on Colossians 3:5)

- a. Inward mortification: self-denial
- b. Outward mortification: cross-bearing
2. Vivification (3, 3, 3; 3, 3, 9)
3. Both happen to us by our participation in Christ

VII. Perfectionism

- A. "The sway of sin is abolished" but there remains "a fountain of evil," "a smoldering cinder of evil" (3, 3, 10)
 1. Concupiscence
 - a. Produces sin (2, 1, 8; 3, 3, 10)
 - b. Is itself sin (3, 3, 12)
 2. Gradual growth (3, 3, 9; 3, 6, 5; *Commentary* on Ephesians 4:13)

VIII. Sacramentalism (3, 4 & 5)

- A. Calvin refutes sacramentalism (penance, indulgences, purgatory, etc.)
 1. Not necessary to attain forgiveness of sins

For Further Study

Wallace, Ronald S. *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life*. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1959.

The best treatment of this topic.

Wincoff, David K. "Calvin's Doctrine of Mortification." *Presbyterion* 13 (Fall 1987): 85-101.

A good short article.