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Teaching Notes

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## **John Calvin on the Knowledge of God the Redeemer**



## I. Christ Had to Become Man to Be Our Mediator (Chapter 12)

### A. Reasons Why it was Necessary the our Mediator to be both God and Man

1. Only he who was true God and true man could bridge the gulf between God and ourselves

Since our iniquities, like a cloud cast between us and him, had completely estranged us from the Kingdom of Heaven [cf. Isaiah 59:2], no man, unless he belonged to God, could serve as the intermediary to restore peace. But who might reach to him? Any one of Adam's children? No, like their father, all of them were terrified at the sight of God [Genesis 3:8]. One of the angels? They also had need of a head, f361 through whose bond they might cleave firmly and undividedly to their God [cf. Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 2:10]. What then? The situation would surely have been hopeless had the very majesty of God not descended to us, since it was not in our power to ascend to him. Hence, it was necessary for the Son of God to become for us "Immanuel, that is, God with us" [Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23], and in such a way that his divinity and our human nature might by mutual connection grow together. Otherwise the nearness would not have been near enough, nor the affinity sufficiently firm, for us to hope that God might dwell with us. So great was the disagreement between our uncleanness and God's perfect purity! (*Institutes* 2.12.1)

*Key verse:*

*1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*

... lest anyone be troubled about where to seek the Mediator, or by what path we must come to him, the Spirit calls him "man," thus teaching us that he is near us, indeed touches us, since he is our flesh. (*Institutes* 2.12.1)

2. The Mediator must be true God and true man

This will become even clearer if we call to mind that what the Mediator was to accomplish was no common thing. His task was so to restore us to God's grace as to make of the children of men, children of God; of the heirs of Gehenna, heirs of the Heavenly Kingdom. Who could have done this had not the selfsame Son of God become the Son of man, and had not so taken what was ours as to impart what was his to us, and to make what was his by nature ours by grace? (*Institutes* 2.12.2)

For the same reason it was also imperative that he who was, to become our Redeemer be true God and true man. It was his task to swallow up death. Who but the Life could do this? It was his task to conquer sin. Who but very Righteousness could do this? bit was his task to rout the powers of world and

**air. Who but a power higher than world and air could do this? Now where does life or righteousness, or lordship and authority of heaven lie but with God alone? Therefore our most merciful God, when he willed that we be redeemed, made himself our Redeemer in the person of his only-begotten Son. (*Institutes 2.12.2*)**

3. Only he who was true God and true man could be obedient in our place

**The second requirement of our reconciliation with God was this: that man, who by his disobedience had become lost, should by way of remedy counter it with obedience, satisfy God's judgment, and pay the penalties for sin. Accordingly, our Lord came forth as true man and took the person and the name of Adam in order to take Adam's place in obeying the Father, to present our flesh as the price of satisfaction to God's righteous judgment, and, in the same flesh, to pay the penalty that we had deserved. In short, since neither as God alone could he feel death, nor as man alone could he overcome it, he coupled human nature with divine that to atone for sin he might submit the weakness of the one to death; and that, wrestling with death by the power of the other nature, he might win victory for us. (*Institutes 2.12.3*)**

#### B. Objections to this Doctrine Answered

1. The sole purpose of Christ's incarnation was our redemption

- a. Calvin rejects wild speculations that Christ would have become man even if there'd been no need for a Mediator
- b. Calvin makes it plain that Christ's role as our Mediator through his blood was established from the very beginning of Scripture, and upheld throughout the Old Testament by the prophets... there was never any other reason for Him to become human

**We well know why Christ was promised from the beginning: to restore the fallen world and to succor lost men. Therefore, under the law, Christ's image was set forth in sacrifices to give believers the hope that God would be gracious toward them, after having been reconciled to them through atonement made for their sins. Surely, since in every age, even when the law had not yet been published, the Mediator never was promised without blood, we infer that he was appointed by God's eternal plan to purge the uncleanness of men; for shedding of blood is a sign of expiation [cf. Hebrews 9:22 "*In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness*"]. Thus, the prophets in preaching about him promised that he would be the reconciler of God and man. (*Institutes 2.12.4*)**

- c. Calvin lists many passages to show this very plainly

*Isaiah 53:5-6 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. <sup>6</sup> We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

*Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.*

*Matthew 9:12 Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.*

**In short, the only reason given in Scripture that the Son of God willed to take our flesh, and accepted this commandment from the Father, is that he would be a sacrifice to appease the Father on our behalf. "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer...and that repentance ...should be preached in his name." [Luke 24:46-47.] "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life for my sheep.... This commandment he gave me." [John 10:17,15, 18] (*Institutes* 2.12.4)**

2. Would Christ have also become man if Adam had not sinned?
  - a. Calvin here addresses those who say Christ might have taken on human flesh even if Adam had not sinned in order to show his love for us
  - b. Calvin rebukes the restless yearning to answer speculative questions

**My answer is brief: Since the Spirit declares that these two were joined together by God's eternal decree, it is not lawful to inquire further how Christ became our Redeemer and the partaker of our nature. For he who is tickled with desire to know something more, not content with God's unchangeable ordinance, also shows that he is not even content with this very Christ who was given to us as the price of our redemption. (*Institutes* 2.12.5)**

- c. He then turns again to scripture to lay this matter to rest

**Paul, indeed, not only recounts for what purpose he was sent, but soars to the lofty mystery of predestination and fitly restrains all the wantonness and itching curiosity of human nature. "The Father has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world" [Ephesians 1:4] to adopt us as sons "according to the purpose of his will" [Ephesians 1:5]; ...and "he has made us accepted in his beloved Son" [Ephesians 1:6], "in whom we have redemption through his blood" [Ephesians 1:7] (*Institutes* 2.12.5)**

3. Refuting false ideas of the incarnation
  - a. Osiander asserts that since God created man in his image, he was doing so in light of future conformity to Christ; so therefore, Christ would still have become man even if Adam had never sinned

- b. Calvin carefully describes Osiander's speculations and refutes them point by point with Scripture

## II. Christ Assumed the True Substance of Human Flesh (Chapter 13)

### A. Answering Ancient and Recent Heresies (esp. Menno Simons)

#### 1. Proof of Christ's true manhood

- a. Calvin is dealing with the ancient heresies of the Marcionites, who rejected the Old Testament and were Gnostic dualists, denying the materiality of Christ's body; they also taught extreme asceticism
- b. Menno Simons, an Anabaptist leader for whom the Mennonites are named, taught some similar things; Simons had an odd doctrine called the "celestial flesh" of Christ, teaching that Jesus did not derive any of his human flesh from Mary but it was made directly in heaven
- c. Calvin takes up this debate and deals with it forcefully

**Indeed, the genuineness of his human nature was impugned long ago by both the Manichees and the Marcionites. The Marcionites fancied Christ's body a mere appearance, while the Manichees dreamed that he was endowed with heavenly flesh. But many strong testimonies of Scripture stand against both. For the blessing is promised neither in heavenly seed nor in a phantom of a man, but in the seed of Abraham and Jacob [Genesis 12:3;17:2,7; 18:18; 22:18;26:4]. Nor is an eternal throne promised to a man of air, but to the Son of David and the fruit of his loins [Psalm 45:6;132:11]. Hence, when he was manifested in the flesh, he was called "the Son of David and of Abraham" [Matthew 1:1]. This is not only because he was born of the virgin's womb, although created in the air, but because, according to Paul's interpretation, he "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" [Romans 1:3] (*Institutes* 2.13.1)**

- d. Calvin also cites the fact that Jesus constantly called Himself "Son of man," as if to underscore that he was not only human but of human descent
- e. Clearest refutation is Galatians 4:4-5

***Galatians 4:4-5 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those under law***

- f. Calvin then gives a series of Scripture passages that speak most plainly of the genuineness of his humanity:

***Hebrews 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death-- that is, the devil***

2. Against the opponents of Christ's true manhood

a. Calvin talks about how they misuse scripture

***Philippians 2:7-8 taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!***

These folks twist this scripture to say it proves Christ only SEEMED to be human, since he was given merely the "likeness" and was in "appearance" human

Calvin refutes their approach to scripture by a more careful exegesis of Philippians 2

b. Calvin also addresses their use of 1 Corinthians 15:47, "the second Adam is of heaven, heavenly..."; Calvin says how could we be made like the second Adam (Christ) if He hadn't been made completely like us in His incarnation; the example of Christ would not have been any encouragement to us at all, which clearly Paul meant it to be

**"If Christ arose, we also shall arise from the dead; if we do not arise, neither did Christ arise" [1 Corinthians 15:12-20 p., substance] (*Institutes* 2.13.2)**

**Since we must acquire victory through Christ, God declares in general terms that the woman's offspring is to prevail over the devil. Hence it follows that Christ was begotten of mankind, for in addressing Eve it was God's intention to raise her hope that she should not be overwhelmed with despair. (*Institutes* 2.13.2)**

B. The Human Descent and True Humanity of Christ

1. Christ's descent through the Virgin Mary: an absurdity refuted

**It is readily inferred from Matthew's words that because Christ was begotten of Mary, he was engendered from her seed, just as when Boaz is said to have been begotten of Rahab [Matthew 1:5] a similar generation is meant. And Matthew does not here describe the virgin as a channel through which Christ flowed. Rather, he differentiates this wonderful manner of generation from the common sort in stating that through her Christ was begotten of the seed of David. In the same way that Isaac was begotten of Abraham, Solomon of David, Joseph of Jacob, Christ is said to have been begotten of his mother. For the Evangelist so arranges the order of his words. Meaning to prove that Christ took his origin from David, he was satisfied with this one thing: Christ was begotten of Mary. (*Institutes* 2.13.3)**

2. True man—and yet, sinless! True man—and yet, eternal God!

**The absurdities with which they wish to weigh us down are stuffed with childish calumnies. They consider it shameful and dishonorable to Christ if he**

were to derive his origin from men, for he could not be exempted from the common rule, which includes under sin all of Adam's offspring without exception. But the comparison that we read in Paul readily disposes of this difficulty: "As sin came in ...through one man, and death through sin ...so through the righteousness of one man grace abounded" [Romans 5:12,18,15]. Another comparison of Paul's agrees with this: "The first Adam was of the earth, an earthly and natural man, the Second of the heaven, heavenly" [1 Corinthians 15:47]. The apostle teaches the same thing in another passage, that Christ was sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh" to satisfy the law [Romans 8:3-4]. Thus, so skillfully does he distinguish Christ from the common lot that he is true man but without fault and corruption. (*Institutes* 2.13.4)

Here is something marvelous: the Son of God descended from heaven in such a way that, without leaving heaven, he willed to be borne in the virgin's womb, to go about the earth, and to hang upon the cross; yet he continuously filled the world even as he had done from the beginning! (*Institutes* 2.13.4)

### III. How the Two Natures of the Mediator Make One Person (Chapter 14)

#### A. Explanation of the Human and Divine Natures in Christ

##### 1. Duality and Unity

We ought not to understand the statement that "the Word was made flesh" [John 1:14] in the sense that the Word was turned into flesh or confusedly mingled with flesh. Rather, it means that, because he chose for himself the virgin's womb as a temple in which to dwell, he who was the Son of God became the Son of man — not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For we affirm his divinity so joined and united with his humanity that each retains its distinctive nature unimpaired, and yet these two natures constitute one Christ. (*Institutes* 2.14.1)

##### 2. Divinity and humanity in their relation to each other

- a. Christ's deity is established by many statements that cannot be made of mere human beings

*John 8:58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"*

Paul declares him to be "the first-born of all creation ...who was before all things and in whom all things hold together" [Colossians 1:15,17]. Also, he says that he was "glorious in his Father's presence before the world was made" [John 17:5]; and that he is working together with his Father [John 5:17]. These qualities are utterly alien to man. Therefore they and their like apply exclusively to his divinity. (*Institutes* 2.14.2)

- b. On the other hand, there are many other statements that apply to him only in his humanity

... he is called "the servant of the Father" [Isaiah 42:1, and other passages]; he is said to have "increased in age and wisdom... God and men" [Luke 2:52], and not to "seek his own glory" [John 8:50]; "not to know the Last Day" [Mark 13:32; cf. Matthew 24:36]; not to "speak by himself" [John 14:10], and not to "do his own will" [John 6:38]; he is said to have been "seen and handled" [Luke 24:39]. All these refer solely to Christ's humanity. In so far as he is God, he cannot increase in anything, and does all things for his own sake; nothing is hidden from him; he does all things according to the decision of his will, and can be neither seen nor handled. Yet he does not ascribe these qualities solely to his human nature, but takes them upon himself as being in harmony with the person of the Mediator. (*Institutes 2.14.2*)

- c. Similarly there are passages in which the divine and human aspects of Christ as commingled

But the communicating of characteristics or properties consists in what Paul says: "God purchased the church with his blood" [Acts 20:28], and "the Lord of glory was crucified" [1 Corinthians 2:8 p.]. John says the same: "The Word of life was handled" [1 John 1:1]. Surely God does not have blood, does not suffer, cannot be touched with hands. But since Christ, who was true God and also true man, was crucified and shed his blood for us, the things that he carried out in his human nature are transferred improperly, although not without reason, to his divinity, Here is a similar example: John teaches "that God laid down his life for us" [1 John 3:16 p.]. Accordingly, there also a property of humanity is shared with the other nature. Again, when Christ, still living on earth, said: "No one has ascended into heaven but the Son of man who was in heaven" [John 3:13 p.], surely then, as man, in the flesh that he had taken upon himself, he was not in heaven. But because the selfsame one was both God and man, for the sake of the union of both natures he gave to the one what belonged to the other. (*Institutes 2.14.2*)

### 3. The unity of the person of the Mediator

But the passages that comprehend both natures at once, very many of which are to be found in John's Gospel, set forth his true substance most clearly of all. For one reads there neither of deity nor of humanity alone, but of both at once: he received from the Father the power of remitting sins [John 1:29], of raising to life whom he will, of bestowing righteousness, holiness, salvation; he was appointed judge of the living and the dead in order that he might be honored, even as the Father [John 5:21-23]. Lastly, he is called the "light of the world" [John 9:5; 8:12], the "good shepherd," the "only door" [John 10:11,9], the "true vine" [John 15:1]. For the Son of God had been endowed with such prerogatives when he was manifested in the flesh. Even though along with the



Father he held them before the creation of the world, it had not been in the same manner or respect, and they could not have been given to a man who was nothing but a man (*Institutes 2.14.3*)

Until he comes forth as judge of the world Christ will therefore reign, joining us to the Father as the measure of our weakness permits. But when as partakers in heavenly glory we shall see God as he is, Christ, having then discharged the office of Mediator, will cease to be the ambassador of his Father, and will be satisfied with that glory which he enjoyed before the creation of the world. (*Institutes 2.14.3*)

#### B. Refuting the Significant Errors of Nestorius, Eutyches, and Servetus

1. The two natures may not be thought of as either fused or separated

(*Institutes 2.14.4*)

2. Christ is the Son of God from everlasting

(*Institutes 2.14.5*)

3. Christ as Son of God and Son of man

(*Institutes 2.14.6*)

4. Servetus' flimsy counterevidence

(*Institutes 2.14.7*)

5. Comprehensive presentation and rebuttal of Servetus' doctrine

(*Institutes 2.14.8*)

#### IV. Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King (Chapter 15)

##### A. Christ as Prophet

1. Scriptural passages applicable to Christ's prophetic office

...although God, by providing his people with an unbroken line of prophets, never left them without useful doctrine sufficient for salvation, yet the minds of the pious had always been imbued with the conviction that they were to hope for the full light of understanding only at the coming of the Messiah. This expectation penetrated even to the Samaritans, though they never had known the true religion, as appears from the words of the woman: "When the Messiah comes, he will teach us all things" [John 4:25] (*Institutes 2.15.1*)

**For this reason, the apostle commends the perfection of the gospel doctrine, first saying: “In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets” [Hebrews 1:1]. Then he adds, “In these last days he has spoken to us through a beloved Son.” [Hebrews 1:2] (*Institutes* 2.15.1)**

2. The meaning of the prophetic office for us

- a. All three offices—prophet, priest, king—were anointed with oil in the Old Covenant to set them apart as sacred in that society
- b. So Christ—Messiah—means “Anointed One”, as the Isaiah passage makes plain

**I recognize that Christ was called Messiah especially with respect to, and by virtue of, his kingship. Yet his anointings as prophet and as priest have their place and must not be overlooked by us. Isaiah specifically mentions the former in these words: “The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me, because Jehovah has anointed me to preach to the humble ...to bring healing to the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberation to the captives ..., to proclaim the year of the Lord’s good pleasure,” etc. [Isaiah 61:1-2; cf. Luke 4:18]. We see that he was anointed by the Spirit to be herald and witness of the Father’s grace. (*Institutes* 2.15.2)**

- c. And the anointing of Christ flows off onto His people as well

**... he received anointing, not only for himself that he might carry out the office of teaching, but for his whole body that the power of the Spirit might be present in the continuing preaching of the gospel.... Then this anointing was diffused from the Head to the members, as Joel had foretold: “Your sons shall prophesy and your daughters ...shall see visions,” etc. [Joel 2:28]. (*Institutes* 2.15.2)**

- d. The message Christ brought is the perfection of the prophetic message, God’s final word and ultimate wisdom for the human race

**... outside Christ there is nothing worth knowing, and all who by faith perceive what he is like have grasped the whole immensity of heavenly benefits. For this reason, Paul writes in another passage: “I decided to know nothing precious ...except Jesus Christ and him crucified” [1 Corinthians 2:2 p.]. This is very true, because it is not lawful to go beyond the simplicity of the gospel. And the prophetic dignity in Christ leads us to know that in the sum of doctrine as he has given it to us all parts of perfect wisdom are contained. (*Institutes* 2.15.2)**

B. Christ as King

1. The eternity of Christ’s dominion

- a. First and foremost, Christ's kingdom is spiritual
- b. From this is the benefit and efficacy of the kingdom for all eternity
- c. The eternity of Christ's Kingdom is asserted plainly in Daniel 2:44

***Daniel 2:44 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.***

- d. This is clearly a spiritual kingdom in the angel's message to Mary in Luke  
1

***Luke 1:32-33 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."***

- e. Key distinction: Christ's kingdom is eternal both in its own existence and its reign over individual believers

**But this eternity is also of two sorts or must be considered in two ways: the first pertains to the whole body of the church; the second belongs to each individual member. (*Institutes 2.15.3*)**

**Therefore, whenever we hear of Christ as armed with eternal power, let us remember that the perpetuity of the church is secure in this protection. Hence, amid the violent agitation with which it is continually troubled, amid the grievous and frightful storms that threaten it with unnumbered calamities, it still remains safe. David laughs at the boldness of his enemies who try to throw off the yoke of God and his Anointed, and says: "The kings and people rage in vain ...for he who dwells in heaven is strong enough to break their assaults" [Psalm 2:2,4]. Thus he assures the godly of the everlasting preservation of the church, and encourages them to hope, whenever it happens to be oppressed. (*Institutes 2.15.3*)**

**Now with regard to the special application of this to each one of us – the same "eternity" ought to inspire us to hope for blessed immortality. For we see that whatever is earthly is of the world and of time, and is indeed fleeting. Therefore Christ, to lift our hope to heaven, declares that his "kingship is not of this world" [John 18:36]. In short, when any one of us hears that Christ's kingship is spiritual, aroused by this word let him attain to the hope of a better life; and since it is now protected by Christ's hand, let him await the full fruit of this grace in the age to come (*Institutes 2.15.3*)**

- 2. The blessing of Christ's kingly office for us

We have said that we can perceive the force and usefulness of Christ's kingship only when we recognize it to be spiritual. This is clear enough from the fact that, while we must fight throughout life under the cross, our condition is harsh and wretched. What, then, would it profit us to be gathered under the reign of the Heavenly King, unless beyond this earthly life we were certain of enjoying its benefits? For this reason we ought to know that the happiness promised us in Christ does not consist in outward advantages – such as leading a joyous and peaceful life, having rich possessions, being safe from all harm, and abounding with delights such as the flesh commonly longs after. No, our happiness belongs to the heavenly life! In the world the prosperity and well-being of a people depend partly on an abundance of all good things and domestic peace, partly on strong defenses that protect them from outside attacks. In like manner, Christ enriches his people with all things necessary for the eternal salvation of souls and fortifies them with courage to stand unconquerable against all the assaults of spiritual enemies. From this we infer that he rules – inwardly and outwardly – more for our own sake than his. Hence we are furnished, as far as God knows to be expedient for us, with the gifts of the Spirit, which we lack by nature. By these first fruits we may perceive that we are truly joined to God in perfect blessedness. Then, relying upon the power of the same Spirit, let us not doubt that we shall always be victorious over the devil, the world, and every kind of harmful thing. (*Institutes* 2.15.4)

Thus it is that we may patiently pass through this life with its misery, hunger, cold, contempt, reproaches, and other troubles – content with this one thing: that our King will never leave us destitute, but will provide for our needs until, our warfare ended, we are called to triumph. Such is the nature of his rule, that he shares with us all that he has received from the Father. Now he arms and equips us with his power, adorns us with his beauty and magnificence, enriches us with his wealth. These benefits, then, give us the most fruitful occasion to glory, and also provide us with confidence to struggle fearlessly against the devil, sin, and death. Finally, clothed with his righteousness, we can valiantly rise above all the world's reproaches; and just as he himself freely lavishes his gifts upon us, so may we, in return, bring forth fruit to his glory. (*Institutes* 2.15.4)

3. The spiritual nature of his kingly office: the sovereignty of Christ and of the Father
  - a. Christ is anointed not with oil or aromatic resins, but with the fullness of the Spirit of God (Isaiah 11:2)

**Christ's Kingdom lies in the Spirit, not in earthly pleasures or pomp. Hence we must forsake the world if we are to share in the Kingdom. (*Institutes* 2.15.5)**

- b. Christ's sovereignty over human history is for the benefit and final glory of the church

*Ephesians 1:22-23 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

The Father has given all power to the Son that he may by the Son's hand govern, nourish, and sustain us, keep us in his care, and help us. Thus, while for the short time we wander away from God, Christ stands in our midst, to lead us little by little to a firm union with God. And surely, to say that he sits at the right hand of the Father is equivalent to calling him the Father's deputy, who has in his possession the whole power of God's dominion. For God mediately, so to speak, wills to rule and protect the church in Christ's person. (*Institutes 2.15.5*)

- c. Christ rules with gentle benevolence over His church, and with a rod of iron over His enemies

Why did he take the person of the Mediator? He descended from the bosom of the Father and from incomprehensible glory that he might draw near to us. All the more reason, then, is there that we should one and all resolve to obey, and to direct our obedience with the greatest eagerness to the divine will! Now Christ fulfills the combined duties of king and pastor for the godly who submit willingly and obediently; on the other hand, we hear that he carries a "rod of iron to break them and dash them all in pieces like a potter's vessel" [Psalm 2:9 p.]. We also hear that "he will execute judgment among the Gentiles, so that he fills the earth with corpses, and strikes down every height that opposes him" [Psalm 110:6 p.]. We see today several examples of this fact, but the full proof will appear at the Last Judgment, which may also be properly considered the last act of his reign. (*Institutes 2.15.5*)

### C. Christ as Priest

#### 1. Purpose #1: reconciliation

Now we must speak briefly concerning the purpose and use of Christ's priestly office: as a pure and stainless Mediator he is by his holiness to reconcile us to God. But God's righteous curse bars our access to him, and God in his capacity as judge is angry toward us. Hence, an expiation must intervene in order that Christ as priest may obtain God's favor for us and appease his wrath. Thus Christ to perform this office had to come forward with a sacrifice. For under the law, also, the priest was forbidden to enter the sanctuary without blood [Hebrews 9:7], that believers might know, even though the priest as their advocate stood between them and God, that they could not

**propitiate God unless their sins were expiated [Leviticus 16:2-3] (*Institutes* 2.15.6)**

- a. The fact of Christ's priestly office is most plainly established in Hebrews 7; the whole chapter lays out this one premise: Christ is the consummation of the priesthood, in the order of Melchizedek

2. Purpose #2: intercession

**It follows that he is an everlasting intercessor: through his pleading we obtain favor. Hence arises not only trust in prayer, but also peace for godly consciences, while they safely lean upon God's fatherly mercy and are surely persuaded that whatever has been consecrated through the Mediator is pleasing to God. (*Institutes* 2.15.6)**

## V. The Saving Works of Christ: Death, Resurrection, Ascension (Chapter 16)

### A. How Alienated Sinners are Reconciled to God by Christ

1. The Redeemer
2. The awareness of God's wrath makes us thankful for His loving act in Christ
3. God's wrath against unrighteousness; His love precedes our reconciliation in Christ
4. The work of atonement derives from God's love; therefore it has not established God's love

### B. The Effects of the Obedience and Death of Christ

1. Christ has redeemed us through his obedience, which he practiced throughout his life
2. "Crucified"
3. "Dead and buried"

### C. The Explanation of the Descent to Hell

1. "Descended into hell"
2. Christ in the nether world?
3. The "descent into hell" as an expression of the spiritual torment Christ underwent for us
4. Defense of this explanation from Scripture passages
5. Defense of this doctrine from misunderstandings and errors

### D. Christ's Resurrection, Ascension, and Heavenly Session

1. "On the third day, he rose again from the dead"
2. "Ascended into heaven"
3. "Seated at the right hand of the Father"
4. Benefits imparted to our faith by Christ's ascension

### E. Christ's Return in Judgment

1. “From whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead”

F. Concluding Remarks on the Apostle’s Creed and the Sufficiency of Christ

1. The Judge is also the Redeemer!

2. Christ alone in all the clauses of the Creed

VI. How Christ Merited God’s Grace and Salvation for Us (Chapter 17)

A. Christ’s Merit Does Not Exclude God’s Free Grace, But Precedes It

B. Scripture Couples God’s Grace and Christ’s Merit

C. The Merit of Christ in the Witness of Scripture

D. The Substitution of Christ

E. Christ’s Death the Price of our Redemption

F. Christ Acquired no Merit for Himself

G.