

## Week Twelve, January 12, 2022: Of Christ the Mediator, Chapter 8: The heart of the Gospel<sup>172</sup>

WCF 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; (a) the Prophet, (b) Priest, (c) and King, (d) the Head and Saviour of His Church, (e) the Heir of all things, (f) and Judge of the world: (g) unto whom He did from all eternity give a people, to be His seed, (h) and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified. (i)*

(a)Isa. 42:1; 1 Pet. 1:19-20; John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:5. (b)Acts 3:22. (c)Heb. 5:5-6. (d)Ps. 2:6; Luke 1:33. (e)Eph. 5:23. (f)Heb. 1:2. (g)Acts 17:31. (h)John 17:6; Ps. 22:30; Isa. 53:10. (i)1 Tim. 2:6; Isa. 55:4-5; 1 Cor. 1:30.

Jesus was *eternally* ordained to be the saving Mediator of His elect. It was never *not* going to be this way. A mediator is a representative bringing peace and reconciliation between two parties. In this case, Christ reconciles estranged men to the immutable God.<sup>173</sup> Christ is the only begotten Son of God, thus He alone is the only one who can truly, spiritually, officially, and effectually represent men before God (there is no place for OT priests or Catholic priests – Hebrews 7). Notice, Jesus is not Mediator as the eternal Son of God, but as the incarnate God-*man*. Christ operates as our Mediator in three offices: Prophet (we are ignorant, He provides knowledge), Priest (we are guilty, He supplies righteousness), and King (we are weak and under bondage, He supplies power and protection)<sup>174</sup>, both in His humiliation and exaltation (WLC 42)<sup>175</sup>. These three offices are all pointed to in 1 Cor. 1:30. Notice the doctrine of eternal unconditional election: “He did from all eternity give a people to be His seed”. Christ died for specific people He came to save, thus they are saved, the “U” and “L” in TULIP. Also, notice they are justified “in time”. While we are created immortal, we are not eternal (we had a beginning). This teaches against “eternal justification”. Christ loved us from all eternity, but we did not exist from all eternity, so we are not justified until we believe on Him in our time and lives (see WCF 11:4). An important verse to memorize is 1 Tim. 2:5, which motivates evangelism.<sup>176</sup>

WCF 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 fulness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, (k) with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin: (l) being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. (m) 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. (n) Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man. (o)*

(k)John 1:1,14; 1 John 5:20; Phil. 2:6; Gal. 4:4. (l)Heb. 2:14,16-17; Heb. 4:15. (m)Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Gal. 4:4. (n)Luke 1:35; Col. 2:9; Rom. 9:5; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 Tim. 3:16. (o)Rom. 1:3-4; 1 Tim. 2:5.

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<sup>172</sup> “This chapter is perhaps the most important in the Confession ...” Green, 68. See Romans 3:25-26.

<sup>173</sup> “Mediation presupposes an estrangement, a falling out between two or more parties ...” Sproul, 232.

<sup>174</sup> Ward, 71; Green, 65-66. VanDixhoorn, 108: “As prophet, he is our teacher. As priest, he is our mediator and only hope. As king, he is our defender and ruler.” Calvin is credited for crystalizing the three-office explanation.

<sup>175</sup> “By thus instituting each office, distinct from the others, God could reveal the dismal imperfection of man's nature, and also show the perfection required of his Son.” Williamson, 69-70.

<sup>176</sup> On WCF 8:1, 5, 7; LC 43, 60; WSC 24: “This is the Confessional basis for world-wide missions.” Green, 65.

Jesus is God.<sup>177</sup> To say He is God's Son is to say He is equally and eternally God (John 5:18). He is the same substance eternally with God as the second Person of the Trinity. Why does this matter? "Because unless Christ-God-man were but one person, the merit of his death would not be of so great value as to redeem the elect from infinite and eternal punishment ... Because otherwise Christ had been swallowed up and devoured by the wrath of God ..."<sup>178</sup> He became the God-man, the Mediator, when He took on a human body and soul in our time, yet without sin because He was born of the Spirit, not by ordinary generation (traducianism) from Adam: "conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary". Jesus is not part God and part man, but "two whole, perfect and distinct natures". Otherwise, He would be neither God nor man. These natures are not mixed together but are inseparably joined (He will never *not* be the God-man now). We refer to this as *hypostatic-union*. This important paragraph stands on the first several ecumenical councils as they stated the true doctrine of the Trinity against heresies that began to teach otherwise (formally decided at the Councils of Nicea in 325AD and Constantinople in 381 AD (Nicene Creed)). It is important to make the distinction that the Westminster's reflection of the Nicene language, "begotten of the Father" and "very God of very God" communicates that Christ's eternal generation is one not of his essence, but of His person (He has His Own *aseity*).<sup>179</sup> The next few councils in the fifth to seventh centuries further worked out the implications of how to talk about Jesus Christ as both fully God and fully man (see the Council of Chalcedon in 451AD per previously supplied list of early councils and creeds above, and for the full Chalcedonian statement, which is embodied in the Confession here; see footnote below)<sup>180</sup>. This paragraph is to be highlighted. Every cult will reveal it is one by its doctrine of Jesus Christ: most will deny His full deity (Arianism, Socinianism); some will deny His full humanity (Apollinarianism, Eutychianism or Monophysitism, Docetism). Some will affirm both but deny the distinction and separation (Nestorianism). If you are struggling to get at the bottom of what is not right about a cult in a discussion with one of their representatives, cut to the chase and ask about who Jesus is to them to get at His full deity and full humanity not confused and yet maintained in His one person. They will eventually reveal they are unbiblical heretics. This doctrine, like the Trinity, is not contradictory but is certainly a mystery (1 Tim. 3:16) we cannot fully fathom. It

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<sup>177</sup> "Within the immediate context of seventeenth-century England, one of the most immediate threats to the doctrine of Christ was Socinianism and its denial of the divinity of Christ." Fesko, 170-171.

<sup>178</sup> Dickson, 51.

<sup>179</sup> For an important, illuminating discussion on this topic that interacts with Calvin, Robert Reymond, B.B. Warfield, and the debates and resolve of the Westminster Divines on this subject and necessary distinctions, see Fesko, 173-184. He nicely points out this intended distinction in WLC Q&A 8-11; important to notice in particular is question 10 of the "Personal" properties related to the answer of the Father begetting and the Son being begotten.

<sup>180</sup> **Creed of Chalcedon:** We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to 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 reasonable soul and body; consubstantial 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, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the unity, 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; as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

should cause us to worship, not rationalize. See the chart at the end to be familiar with a number of heretical teachings about Christ's nature. Green helpfully summarizes these two sections:<sup>181</sup>

The factors of correct Christology are in these compact statements:

1. The reality of the two natures.
2. The integrity of the two natures.
3. The distinctness of the two natures after the union.
4. The oneness of the personality.

These ... erroneous views [see chart below] together with the true view teach:

1. That Jesus Christ is only man; or
2. That Jesus Christ is only God; or
3. That Jesus Christ is neither God nor man; or
4. That Jesus Christ is both God and man [not with some mixture].

WCF 8:3: *The Lord Jesus, in His human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit, above measure, (p) having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; (q) in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell; (r) to the end that, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, (s) He might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a mediator and surety. (t) Which office He took not unto Himself, but was thereunto called by His Father; (u) who put all power and judgment into His hand, and gave Him commandment to execute the same. (w)*

(p)Ps. 45:7; John 3:34. (q)Col. 2:3. (r)Col. 1:19. (s)Heb. 7:26; John 1:14. (t)Acts 10:38; Heb. 12:24; Heb. 7:22. (u)Heb. 5:4-5. (w)John 5:22, 27; Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:36.

“Christianity alone has a God-man ...”<sup>182</sup> Jesus is uniquely qualified as the God-man to be the only true mediator between God and men: “thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a mediator and surety.” “A surety is a ‘person who undertakes specific responsibility on behalf of’ someone else.”<sup>183</sup> He is thoroughly equipped and thus would and did not fail. No one else is qualified to execute this office, as no one else has been commissioned from all eternity by the Father to do so (Heb. 5:1-5 of Ps. 2:7). No one has been anointed (set apart) to do so by God. No other man can be any surety to mediate for us, as no one else is pure God and perfect man. Because Jesus is the appointed God-man, we are wise to put all our trust in Him alone as our faithful and only High Priest, Prophet, and King. Thus, it ought to give us great hope, peace, and assurance in our salvation to trust in Jesus. And it ought to make us outraged when anyone tries to usurp His sole position between us and the Father (namely, although not only, the Papacy). Only Jesus is called the Christ (Messiah, “Anointed One”) and called as the Messiah. Only He can and *does* fulfill that office.<sup>184</sup> See WLC Q&A 42.

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<sup>181</sup> Green, 64.

<sup>182</sup> Sproul, 236 (vol 1).

<sup>183</sup> VanDixhoorn, quoting the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 114.

<sup>184</sup> His qualifications: 1. That He should have divine appointment, affirmed in section 1 and reaffirmed in section 3. 2. That He should be God. 3. That He should be man. 4. That He should be one person (L.C. 40). 5. That He should be sinless. 6. That He should be anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure. This anointing equipped Him with fullness of grace and wisdom and power. 7. That He should be willing to undertake the office.” Green, 64-65.

Thomas Watson writes, “... how needful a call is to any business of weight and importance: to act without a call, is to act without a blessing.”<sup>185</sup>

WCF 8:4: *This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake; (x) which that He might discharge, He was made under the law, (y) and did perfectly fulfil it, (z) endured most grievous torments immediately in His soul, (a) and most painful sufferings in His body; (b) was crucified, and died; (c) was buried, and remained under the power of death; yet saw no corruption. (d) On the third day He arose from the dead, (e) with the same body in which He suffered, (f) with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of His Father; (g) making intercession, (h) and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world. (i)*

(x)Ps. 40:7-8 with Heb. 10:5-10; John 10:18; Phil. 2:8. (y)Gal. 4:4. (z)Matt. 3:15; Matt. 5:17. (a)Matt. 26:37-38; Luke 22:44; Matt. 27:46. (b)Matt. 26-27. (c)Phil. 2:8. (d)Acts 2:23-24,27; Acts 13:37; Rom. 6:9. (e)1 Cor. 15:3-4. (f)John 20:25,27. (g)Mark 16:19. (h)Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24; Heb. 7:25. (i)Rom. 14:9-10; Acts 1:11; Acts 10:42; Matt. 13:40-42; Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4.

R.C. Sproul points out that “In this segment, there is a mini-version of the Apostle’s Creed.”<sup>186</sup> Jesus voluntarily did all of His humiliating works of mediation for us on earth as He had eternally covenanted with the Father to do so as part of their eternal decree and plan to be acted out in time. He continues to willingly represent (intercede for) you in His exalted state. The WLC details these works. It is important to note that Jesus was not baptized by John for sin, but to identify with His sinful people, as well as to be anointed to His mediatorial role as Prophet, Priest, and King.<sup>187</sup>

WCF 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; (k) and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him. (l)*

(k)Rom. 5:19; Heb. 9:14, 16; Heb. 10:14; Eph. 5:2; Rom. 3:25-26. (l)Dan. 9:24, 26; Col. 1:19-20; Eph. 1:11, 14; John 17:2; Heb. 9:12,15.

The two aspects of Christ saving us in His mediatorial work are highlighted here. First, the satisfaction of divine justice<sup>188</sup> by the sacrifice of Himself (substitutionary or vicarious atonement); that is, He paid for our sins (“passive obedience”). But also, and vital to be saved, is His perfect

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<sup>185</sup> Watson, 192. “God would not be incarante, and take upon him the work of a mediator till he had a call. ‘God sent forth his Son ...’”

<sup>186</sup> Sproul, vol. 1, 254.

<sup>187</sup> “John’s baptism was a radical innovation. Previously, only Gentiles converting to Judaism had been required to undergo a symbolic washing. Now, however, God through John was commanding all Jews to signify their repentance by being publicly washed ... The meaning of the dove descending and abiding was not that Jesus had not previously been Spirit-filled but that he was now being marked out as the Spirit-bearer who would become the Spirit-baptizer (John 1:32-33) and so bring in the age of the Spirit that was to fulfill Israel’s hopes (Luke 4:1, 14, 18-21), 121-122.

<sup>188</sup> “The central point of the Christian message ... the first point that a Christian should understand about salvation, is that Christ’s death satisfies divine justice.” Clark, *WPB*, 37. Fesko points out that “atonement” is an English word, and so the Standards don’t use it but only use “satisfaction”, reflecting its contemporary Latin scholarship at the time; Fesko, 189.

obedience of the Law (Gal. 4:4) which “purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven” for us (“active obedience”). He not only spared us hell, but earned us heaven (He paid our eternal punishment and purchased our eternal life).<sup>189</sup> Thomas Watson writes, “In justification there are two things. Guilt is remitted and righteousness is imputed.”<sup>190</sup> We are justified by works: *Christ’s* works as the Second Adam (see last chapter). This is important against modern heresies in reformed circles of the New Perspective on Paul and Federal Vision (e.g., NT Wright and EP Sanders) who teach essentially Roman Catholicism. Again, for “those whom the Father hath given unto Him”: He did this all efficaciously for His elect. This is the “L” in TULIP, sometimes referred to as definite/particular or effective<sup>191</sup> atonement. If all are not saved (only Universalists deny this), then we must explain *why* some are not: the answer, God only chose His elect to save, and so He only saves His elect.<sup>192</sup> Jesus doesn’t make salvation possible, He saves.<sup>193</sup> He did not open the way for all, He is the way for the elect. See WLC 59. See also paragraph 8 below. Thomas Watson writes, “Beloved, Christ came not to redeem all, for that would overthrow the decrees of God ... I grant there is sufficiency of merit in Christ’s blood to save all; but there is a difference between sufficiency and efficiency.”<sup>194</sup> Also important to remember from chapters 6 and 7 is Christ’s Federal Headship: “The character in which Christ acted: as a public person, the head of the church.”<sup>195</sup> See Eph. 1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18.

WCF 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 for ever: (m)* Gal. 4:4-5; Gen. 3:15; Rev. 13:8; Heb. 13:8.

Here again the Confession teaches that the OT Church is saved the same way as the NT Church, by Jesus. The OT saints looked ahead to Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection: “... the work of Christ

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<sup>189</sup> “... some, otherwise orthodox, err who deny Christ’s active obedience to be part of his satisfaction, performed in our place ... the active disobedience of the first Adam made us all sinners; therefore we must be made righteous by the active obedience of the second Adam (*Rom. 5:19*) ... Christ is not only called our ransom, but the end and perfection of the Law to every one that believeth (*Rom. 10:4*) ... if only his passive obedience were imputed to us, it would follow that half Christ only were given: to wit, Christ suffering, but not Christ doing those things which pleased the Father; taking away our sin, and saving from death only, but not bringing righteousness.” Dickson, 53-54.

<sup>190</sup> Watson, 181.

<sup>191</sup> Packer, 137.

<sup>192</sup> “The precise difference between the Reformed Confessions and that of the Arminians and others is not the ultimate effect of the atonement, but rather the original design of it.” Williamson, 79.

<sup>193</sup> “If the work of Christ is the same for all men, then it cannot actually do for any what it does not do for all.” Ibid. For an interesting historical discussion of the presence of debates within the Assembly regarding “hypothetical universalism” with a sufficiency-efficiency distinction and its relations to Amyraldianism, see Fesko, 187-205. Perhaps R. C. Sproul alludes to and concludes on this debate: “It is sufficient because it is efficient.” Sproul, 275.

<sup>194</sup> Watson, 212.

<sup>195</sup> Green, 67.

was retroactive”<sup>196</sup>; and we look back to it. But Christ's work of salvation is the same one work and way of redemption for all mankind of all time, and we are all saved by it through faith, for Jesus is “yesterday and today the same, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). Horatius Bonar explains: “Old Testament believers did not occupy a lower level than we do ; nor did they walk in legal bondage because they had not yet seen the cross. They were ‘saints’ as truly as we.” Adding in a footnote, “The words of the apostle are very explicit. The ‘far off’ Gentiles were not only to be brought nigh, but to be made ‘fellow-citizens *with the saints*, and of the household of God’ (Eph. ii. 19) ; i. e. fellow-citizens of the heavenly city, *along with all the saints of old*.<sup>197</sup> This emphasis further demonstrates saved by faith and not by works. Again, dispensationalism is false; the temple is gone.

WCF 8:7: *Christ, in the work of mediation, acteth according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself:(n) 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.(o)* (n)Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet 3:18. (o)Acts 20:28; John 3:13; 1 John 3:16.

This paragraph helps us understand why Jesus is said to not know something, such as when the Last Day will happen (Matthew 13:32, this is related to His human nature) yet at other times obviously knows things only God could know (John 1:47-51). Or how it can be said that God bled (Acts 20:28), and how Jesus told Phillip He was looking at the Father looking at Him (John 14:9). This also helps us understand how Christ is truly with us in the Lord’s Supper by His divine nature, not His human nature (which cannot be ubiquitous). This distinction also helps explain our denial of

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<sup>196</sup> Green, 69.

<sup>197</sup> Bonar, 228.

Common Grace and the Well-Meant-Offer (see next week's reading), that God loves the reprobate in any way, and remain consistent with Mark 10:21 saying that Christ "loved" the rich young ruler.<sup>198</sup>

WCF 8:8: To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same,(p) making intercession for them,(q) and revealing unto them, in and by the Word, the mysteries of salvation,(r) effectually persuading them by His Spirit to believe and obey, and governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit,(s) 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.(t)

(p)John 6:37, 39; John 10:15-16. (q)1 John 2:1-2; Rom. 8:34. (r)John 15:13, 15; Eph 1:7-9; John 17:6. (s)John 14:26; Heb. 12:2; 2 Cor. 4:13; Rom. 8:9, 14; Rom. 15:18-19; John 17:17. (t)Ps. 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:25-26; Mal. 4:2-3; Col. 2:15.

Christ's mediatorial work of redemption is perfectly efficacious to His elect, for which it was eternally purposed and executed in time. Much of this paragraph demonstrates God's sovereignty in accomplishing and applying salvation to His elect: "Christ did not come to make the salvation of all men possible, but to make the salvation of some men certain. For the mere possibility of salvation of

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<sup>198</sup> Some who hold our view try and explain that this man must have ended up becoming saved (and thus Christ knew he was elect); but this is speculative. Rather, we can explain that Christ in His humanity must obey the second table of the Law and love His neighbor as Himself; as well, He had to love His enemy, just as He commanded all human beings. Christ admitting ignorance on some things (per above) demonstrates that His human nature would not know if one is elect or reprobate, so He in His humanity must love every fellow human; it would seem appropriate in this human and "ignorant" sense to say that Christ sincerely wanted the salvation of all his hearers and all men, just as we truly desire the salvation of all (not humanly able to discern the elect from the reprobate) and thus to operate as if all are potentially the elect. Still, even we have the understanding to pray and preach with "thy will be done" in view, knowing that the Scriptures teach election and reprobation to God's glory. And perhaps we can still understand even in Christ's limited human knowledge, He did not will anything toward anyone but that would be in full compliance with the divine will (eternal decree in election and effectual calling), so that this perfect human will toward divine will in election would govern His human will toward all men in the general call (and thus the way He preached the Gospel in the qualification of "whosoever"). For instance, in John 6:37, Christ says, "... and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"; but this verse begins with, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." We can explain Christ Jesus having love or compassion on all men related to His human nature, while His divine nature hates the reprobate and knows who they are (Esau have I hated, Rom. 9:13, Mal. 1:2). R.C. Sproul, while not speaking to this specific application of WCF 8:7, explains this paragraph in a way that helps us understand how we apply it to such Scriptures often leveled against our denial of "common grace": "There are times in the New Testament when the actions of Jesus are clearly the actions of one nature rather than the other ... we have to distinguish at times between the two natures ... Since there is a perfect unity between the human nature and the divine nature, anything that can be attributed to either nature can be attributed to the person ... As a matter of convenient theological shorthand, the Bible frequently speaks of the person when only one nature is involved ... It would be a mistake to think that anything known by Christ's divine nature would also have been known by his human nature. Each nature retained its own attributes, and the incarnation was not a mixture or confusion of the two natures ... Jesus' human knowledge was limited, just like anyone else's knowledge ... the divine nature could communicate information to the human nature without violating his humanity ... It is one thing to communicate information and it is another thing to communicate divine attributes." (Sproul, vol. 1, 269-271). VanDixhoorn: "... we must not think that what can be said of one nature is true of the other nature ... something may be true only of one nature ...", 126-127. Packer: "The Gospels show Jesus experiencing human limitations ... Incarnation means ... that the Son of God lived his divine-human life in and through his human mind and body at every point, maximizing his identification and empathy with those he had come to save, and drawing on divine resources to transcend human limits of knowledge and energy only when particular requirements of the Father's will so dictated", 108-109.

all means of course the possibility of the damnation of all. Certainty is a characteristic note of Calvinism, while contingency or uncertainty is a characteristic note of other systems of theology.”<sup>199</sup> R.C. Sproul illustrates the practicality of the difference: “If the flower of the Calvinist is the tulip, the flower of the Arminian is the daisy. The Arminian pulls out the daisy petals, saying ‘He loves me; he loves me not; he loves me ...,’ because the Arminian never really knows whether he will be saved in the end.”<sup>200</sup> This section also exalts Christ’s Kingship in conquering us and ruling us as willing and thankful subjects which He protects and preserves. Also, He is King over all things (Eph 1:22, 4:15; Col. 1:18, 2:19; 1 Cor. 15:25-28), He must be recognized by all peoples, all nations, all governments as King of Kings. A man’s religion and faith and obedience to Jesus Christ is not irrelevant in holding public office or voting for instance. As a side note, WLC 45 and WSC 26 demonstrate that “common grace” is not necessary to explain why the world isn’t worse than it is, for Christ as King is “restraining and overcoming all their enemies.” Notice also that while we can describe these things as revealed in the Scriptures, we cannot meticulously identify and predict how it all plays out, for this all happens “in such manner, and ways, as are most consonant to His wonderful and unsearchable dispensation.” Deut. 29:29. Simply be in awe of and worship Jesus Christ the Lord! For assurance, “... the essence of Christ’s intercession is intervention in our interest (from his throne) rather than supplication on our behalf (as if his position were one of sympathy without status or authority).”<sup>201</sup>

#### THE NATURES IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST<sup>202</sup>

*False views which deny that Jesus Christ is both God and man, but affirm he is only man, only God, or neither God nor man, may be summarized as follows:*

Docetism	Jesus only seemed to be man but was in fact a kind of angel. Many Gnostics <sup>203</sup> held this. The NT seems to know of its presences (eg. 1 John 4:2; 5:6).
Ebionitism	denies reality of divine nature along the line of those Jews who opposed the gospel in NT.
Arianism	Jesus halfway between God and man – condemned [at] Nicea AD 325.
Apollinarianism	denied integrity of human nature saying that it had been taken up into the divine nature, so that the two natures were mingled – condemned AD 377-381.
Nestorianism	endangered the unity of the person and in effect held two persons, a divine and human, existing in the incarnate Christ. – condemned AD 431.
Eutychianism	fused the natures, sacrificing human, hence also called <i>monophysitism</i> (single nature). It was reaction to Nestorianism. Condemned AD 449-451. Still held by Coptic, Ethiopian and Syrian Jacobite churches.
Monothelitism	Monophysites were divided over whether or not the will belonged to the person of the nature; the Monothelites held the former hence denied Christ had a human will.

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<sup>199</sup> Green, 69.

<sup>200</sup> Sproul, vol. 1, 277.

<sup>201</sup> Packer, 128.

<sup>202</sup> Ward, 72.

<sup>203</sup> Gnosticism believes the spirit or soul is pure and the body or flesh is inherently bad, so freedom is release from the body and material things. This is anti-Scriptural. Christianity contrasts flesh and spirit figuratively, while recognizing that the body of a Christian still needs to be resurrected uncorrupt. Packer writes, “The Christian hope is not redemption *from* the body but redemption *of* the body”, 75.



Closing meditations by Thomas Watson (from his *Body of Divinity*):

“Christ may be fitly compared to Jacob’s ladder, which reacheth from earth to heaven. Gen xxviii 12. Christ’s human nature was the foot of the ladder, which stood upon earth; his divine nature the top of the ladder, which reaches to heaven.” (163). “... for believers ... In his human nature he prays for them, in his divine nature he merits for them.” (166). CHRIST’S PROPHETIC OFFICE: “Luke xxiv 45. He not only opened the Scriptures, but opened their understanding ... *How does Christ teach?* (I.) Externally, by his Word ... Such as pretend to have a light or revelation above the Word, or contrary to it, never had their teaching from Christ. (Isa viii 20.” (2.) ... inwardly, by the Spirit.” (166). “He who is taught of Christ sees ... the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.” (167). “*How does Christ’s teaching differ from other teaching?* Several ways. (I.) Christ teaches the heart ... Acts xvi 14. All that the dispensers of the word can do is but to work knowledge, Christ works grace: they can but give the light of the truth; Christ gives the love of the truth; they can only teach what to believe, Christ teaches how to believe. (2.) Christ gives us a taste of the word ... It is one thing to hear a truth preached, another thing to taste it ...” (167). “The light of knowledge is one thing, the savor another. Christ makes us taste a savouriness in the word. (3.) When Christ teaches, he makes us obey ... He does not only come with the light of his word, but the rod of his strength, and makes the stubborn sinner yield to him. His grace is irresistible. (4.) Christ teaches easily ... (5.) When Christ teaches he makes men willing to learn ... Psa cx 3 ... (6.) When Christ teaches, he not only illuminates but animates. He so teaches, that he quickens.” (168). “Augustine. ‘He has his pulpit in heaven who converts souls.’” (170). “Wait upon the means of grace which Christ has appointed. Though Christ teaches by his Spirit, yet he teaches in the use of ordinances ... Such as wean themselves from the breast of ordinances seldom thrive; either they grow light in their head, or lame in their feet ... If you would have the teachings of Christ, walk according to the knowledge which you have already. Use your little knowledge well, and Christ will teach you more.” (171). CHRIST’S PRIESTLY OFFICE: “Christ died for our preferment; he suffered that we might reign; he hung upon the cross that we might sit upon the throne ... His crucifixion is our coronation ... In the bloody sacrifice of Christ, see the horrid nature of sin.” (174). “If God was thus severe to his own Son, how dreadful will he be one day to his enemies! Such as die in wilful impenitence, must feel the same wrath as Christ did; and because they cannot bear it at once, therefore they must endure it for ever. ... ‘The cross’, says Augustine, ‘was a pulpit, in which Christ preached his love to the world.’” (175). “Did he bear God’s wrath for us? We should bear man’s wrath for him.” (175). “John xvii 9. The efficacy of Christ’s prayer reaches no further than the efficacy of his blood ...” (178). “To be afraid to come to God in prayer is a dishonour to Christ’s intercession.” (182). “Christ shall judge the world ... John v 22. Those for whom Christ has so prayed he will absolve when he sits upon the bench of judicature. Will Christ condemn those for whom he prays? Believers are his spouse, and will he condemn his own spouse? ... A word from Christ’s mouth is more than if all the angels in heaven were pleading for thee.” (183). “When the devil shows the blackness of their sins, Christ shows the redness of his wounds.” (184). “If Christ appears for us in heaven, then we must appear for him upon earth ... Does he plead our cause, and shall we not stand up in his cause? ... Does he present our names in heaven, and shall not we profess his name on earth? ... Let your heart study for Christ, your hands work for him, your tongue speak for him (185). “Did Christ open his sides for thee, and will he not open his mouth to plead for thee?” (186). CHRIST’S KINGLY OFFICE: “*In what sense is Christ king?* Two ways. I. *In reference to his people.* And, II. *In reference to his enemies.* [As governor and deliverer.]” (187). “Many would admit Christ to be their advocate to plead for them, but not their king to rule over them ... His regal rod has honey at the end of it ... This makes all his subjects become volunteers.” (188). “When the hearts of his people are most humble, when their prayers are most fervent, when their faith is strongest, when their forces are weakest, when their enemies are highest; then is the usual time that Christ puts forth his kingly power

for their deliverance.” (189). “He has a golden sceptre to rule his people, but an iron rod to break his enemies ... it is no dishonour to be employed in a king's service. Some are apt to reproach the saints for their piety; but they serve the Lord Christ, he who has this inscription upon his vesture, KING of Kings ... Serving Christ ennobles us with dignity; it is a greater honour to serve Christ than to have kings serve us ... When we are foiled by corruption we must go to Christ, for he is king; desire him by his kingly power to subdue our corruptions, to bind these kings with chains.” (190). CHRIST’S HUMILIATION IN HIS INCARNATION: “... the Holy Ghost having framed Christ in the virgin’s womb, did, in a wonderful manner, unite Christ’s human nature to his divine ...” (193) “Christ taking our flesh, makes this human nature appear lovely to God ... so he makes the divine nature appear lovely to man.” (194). “Through the lantern of Christ’s humanity we may behold the light of the Diety ... Surely the angels would have disdained to have taken our flesh; it would have been a disparagement to them. What king would be willing to wear sackcloth over his cloth of gold? but Christ did not disdain to take our flesh ... had he not been incarnate, we had been incarcerated ...” (195). “He was born in an inn, and a manger was his cradle, the cobwebs his curtains, the beasts his companions ...” (196). “Dost thou see Christ humbling himself, and art thou proud? It is the humble saint that is Christ’s picture ... It is an unseemly sight to see God humbling himself and man exalting himself; to see a humble Saviour and a proud sinner.” (197-98). “That the Ancient of Days should be born ... that the mother should be younger than the child she bare ...” (198). “That God who brought Isaac out of a dead womb, and the Messiah out of a virgin’s womb, what cannot he do? Oh let us rest upon the arm of God's power, and believe in him, in the midst of seeming impossibilities! Remember, ‘there are no impossibilities with God.’ He can subdue a proud heart. He can raise a dying church. Christ born of a virgin! The wonder-working God that wrought this can bring to pass the greatest seeming impossibility ... What will it profit us, that Christ was born into the world, unless he be born in our hearts, that he was united to our persons?” (199). “What is it the better that Christ was made flesh, unless he has given them a heart of flesh? ... If Christ be born in thy heart, then it is with thee as in a birth. There is life.” (200). CHRIST’S EXALTATION: “When Christ ascended ... Luke xxiv 50, 51. He did not leave them houses and lands, but he left them his blessing. ... He ascended as a conqueror, in a way of triumph (Psa lxxviii 18; Eph. iv 8; i 20).” (205). “... all judgement to the Son.’ John v 22. ... On earth his crucifixion; now his coronation.” (206). “Christ, being so highly exalted, has ennobled our nature, crowned it with glory, and lifted it above angels and archangels. ... Christ being exalted at God’s right hand, the key of government is laid upon his shoulders; he governs all the affairs of the world for his own. ... we may be assured he has now finished the work of man's redemption.” (207). “Not all the doxologies and prayers in the world so exalt Christ as a holy life. It makes Christ renowned, and lifts him up indeed, when his followers walk worthy of him.” (208). CHRIST THE REDEEMER: “Great was the work of creation, but greater the work of redemption; it cost more to redeem us than to make us; in the one there was but the speaking of a word, in the other the shedding of blood.” (209). “Christ says to God's justice, as Paul to Philemon, ‘If he hath wronged thee anything, or owes thee ought, put that on my account.’ Verse 18 ... A justified person is redeemed ... from the power and regency of sin, though not from the presence ... Rom vi 14. Sin lives in a child of God, but is deposed from the throne; it lives not as a king, but a captive.” (210). “Death shall carry thee to thy Redeemer: fear not dying since you cannot be perfectly happy but by dying.” (213).

### **Reading Assignment for January 19, 2022: “Of Free Will and Effectual Calling”**

#### **Assigned Readings:**

- WCF 9-10 and Scripture references
- WLC 67-68 and Scripture references
- WSC 31 and Scripture references

- “The Myth of Common Grace”, by Garret P. Johnson, in *Trinity Review* (March/April 1987) at [trinityfoundation.org](http://trinityfoundation.org) or on our website via the Resources Tab, sub page on doctrine.

**Suggested Readings:**

- *History of Christian Doctrine*, G.T. Shedd
- *The Virgin Birth of Christ and Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, J. Gresham Machen