

# A SPRINT THROUGH CALVIN'S INSTITUTES

## The Knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ

### I. Review of *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

- A. Book I – “Knowledge of God the Creator” - what we would have known about God had Adam not sinned
- B. Book II – “Knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ, First Disclosed to the Fathers Under the Law, and Then to Us in the Gospel”
  - 1. Chapters 1-5: The effects of sin upon us
  - 2. **Chapters 6-17 (the “nerve center” or heartbeat) on Christ**
    - a) Ch. 12-14: The Person of Christ (fully God and fully Man)
    - b) Ch. 15-17: The Work of Christ (as Prophet, King, Priest)
- C. Book III – “The Way in Which we Receive the Grace of Christ: What Benefits Come to Us From it, and What Effects Follow”
- D. Book IV – “The External Means or Aids by Which God Invites Us into the Society of Christ and Holds us Therein”



### II. The Person of Christ: The God-Man

*Now it was of the greatest importance for us that he who was to be our Mediator be both true God and true man. If someone asks why this is necessary, there has been no simple (to us the common expression) or absolute necessity. Rather, it has stemmed from a heavenly decree, on which men's salvation depended. Our most merciful Father decreed what was best for us... Even if man had remained free from all stain, his condition would have been too lowly for him to reach God without a Mediator. What, then, of man: plunged by his moral ruin into death and hell... [A]t the right moment [God] used the most appropriate remedy to meet it: he set the Son of God familiarly among us as one of ourselves... 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 hell, heirs of the Heavenly Kingdom... [S]ince 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. Those who despoil Christ of either his divinity or his humanity diminish his majesty and glory, or obscure his goodness... 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! (2.12.1-2)*

1. Did Christ have to become man, according to Calvin? What was the reason Christ became man?

*“...share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,<sup>9</sup> who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.” (2 Tim 1:8-9)*

*“Jesus dies on the cross, but not of the cross.” -B.B. Warfield*

2. Would we need a Mediator if Adam had never sinned? How then did OT saints approach God?

*“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.<sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - all things were created through him and for him.<sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” (Col 1:15-17)*

3. What does it mean that Christ “became man”? What are the three ways Scripture describes the two natures of Christ?

*“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,<sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,<sup>7</sup> but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.<sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Phil 2:5-8)*

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1)*

*“Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.” And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him...” (Heb 5:8-9)*

*“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” (Acts 20:28)*

*“The heart and mind and will of our Lord had been moulded—shall we not say forged?—in the furnace of temptation and suffering. And it was in virtue of what he had learned in that experience of temptation and suffering that he was able...to be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. It was only as having learned obedience in the path of inerrant and sinless discharge of the Father’s will that his heart and mind and will were framed to the point of being able freely and voluntarily to yield up his life in death upon the accursed tree.”*

– John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, 23.

4. Did the Son of God then leave heaven while He was on earth?

### III. The Work of Christ: The Glorious Redeemer

**Christ the Prophet:** *“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. This, however, remains certain: the perfect doctrine he has brought has made an end to all prophecies... [O]utside of Christ there is nothing worth knowing, and all who by faith perceive what he is like have grasped the whole immensity of heavenly benefits.” (2.15.2)*

1. How should the prophetic office of Christ influence the way we worship? Where does Christ speak now? Where does He not speak now?

*“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,<sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.” (Heb 1:1-2)*

**Christ the King:** *“God surely promises that through the hand of his Son he will be the eternal protector and defender of his church...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.” (2.15.3)*

2. What crucial declaration did Jesus make to Pilate regarding His Kingship? How should this affect us?

**Christ the Priest:** *“The priestly office belongs to Christ alone because by the sacrifice of his own death he blotted out our own guilt and made satisfaction for our sins...To take away our condemnation, it was not enough for him to suffer any kind of death...[But] he was arraigned before the judgment seat as a criminal, accused and pressed by testimony, and condemned by the mouth of a judge to die—we know by these proofs that he took the role of a guilty man and evildoer...On the other hand...we hear that he was acquitted by the same lips that condemned him...[so that] from his shining innocence it will at the same time be obvious that he was burdened with another’s sin rather than his own...[I]n taking the curse upon himself—he crushed, broke, and scattered its whole force...Paul with good reason, therefore, magnificently proclaims the triumph That Christ obtained for himself on the cross, as if the cross, which was full of shame, had been changed into a triumphal chariot.” (2.15.6, 2.16.5-6)*

3. What were the “two verdicts” heard by Christ at the point of death? How do they clearly testify to our vindication? Who is able to truly view the cross as a “triumphal chariot”?