Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter 8.4-8.6 and 8.8
The Work of Christ

- Last week: The Person of Christ
- This week: The Work of Christ

8.4. This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake; which that he might discharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfill it; endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified, and died, was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption. On the third day he arose from the dead, with the same body in which he suffered, with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession, and shall return, to judge men and angels, at the end of the world.

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; and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.

Given the words of 8.4 and 8.5, what is the Work of Christ?

- Suffered death and the wrath of God (Passive Obedience)
  - Matthew 27:46—My God, my, God, why have you forsaken me?
  - Romans 5:9—saved from the wrath of God by Christ's sacrifice
  - Why mention "most painful sufferings?"
    - Correction of a "Papist" error saying that Jesus was always peaceful and suffered no sadness[i] (see Matthew 26:37)
- Made under the Law to fulfill it (Active Obedience)
  - Galatians 4:4 –Born under the law
  - Matthew 3:15 –to fulfill all righteousness
  - Matthew 5:17—not to abolish the law but to fulfill it
  - Romans 5:18-19—the one man's obedience made many righteous
  - Why make this point before that of Passive Obedience?
    - Some "otherwise orthodox" denied this as part of Christ's work[ii]
    - Necessary because we get the "whole Christ" with all his benefits. He removed death, but also brought righteousness[iii].
- Rose from the dead and purchased our redemption and inheritance
  - We can be more sure of this because of the fulfilled prophecy
    - Acts 2:27
    - Psalm 16:10
  - Why "purchased" in the past tense?
    - Direct confrontation with the Roman "Papists[iv]"
    - Confusion in Protestantism saying Christ continually atones for continual sin[v]
- Rules at the right hand of the Father (more fully addressed in 8.8)
- Will come again to judge the world (more fully addressed in 8.8)

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 forever.

When was the redemption accomplished?

- At the incarnation
- As a definite moment in history
    - Needs to be in the past because of what Christ is doing now[vi]. He's not atoning, he rules at the Father's right hand (Hebrews 1:3).

How was the redemption applied to the saints?

- Received by God's grace through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- What about Old Testament Saints? Christ was revealed in:
    - Promises
    - Types
    - Shadows
- Consider God's words after the fall
    - Genesis 3:14-15; The promised seed of the woman will make right
- Consider the example of Abraham:
    - Believed God—credited to him as righteousness (Romans 4:3)
    - Saw the sacrifice of Issac replaced by the ram
        - Genesis 22:13-14
        - Shadow of Christ as a substitute
- Consider the example of Moses:
    - Left Egypt in faith
        - Hebrews 11:26—reproach of Christ better than Egypt's pleasure
    - He interceded for the people in Exodus
        - Exodus 32:9-15
        - God hears the prayer and acts on it
        - Moses shown as a Type of Christ
- Jesus said that Abraham, Issac, and Jacob were alive
    - Luke 20:37-38
- Moses and Elijah were alive and with Christ at Transfiguration
    - Luke 9:28-36
- Since the following is true[vii]:
    - Old Testament saints received salvation by faith in the promised Christ
    - Slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8)
    - Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8)
- Therefore, redemption is applied to the Old Testament saints by faith
    - This seems mysterious…more on that in 8.8…

8.8. To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; making intercession for them, and revealing unto them, in and by the Word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey, and governing their hearts by his Word and Spirit; 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.

This is the believer's living hope from 1 Peter 1—the present rule of Christ

- Redemption is certain and it will be applied to the believer
    - 8.8 uses the word "effectually" of the concept of "Effectual Call."
    - See WLC Q 67 which cites Ephesians 2:4-5
- Christ intercedes for us
    - Moses' intercession brought relief rather than ultimate salvation
    - 1 John 2:1—Christ is our advocate with the Father
    - Romans 8:34—Who can condemn us with Christ as our advocate?
- Christ reveals mysteries of salvation through His Word
    - Remember the salvation of the Old Testament Saints? We know that via the revelation from the New Testament
    - Ephesians 3:4-6—Mystery of gentile heirs with Christ
- Christ effectually persuades
    - toward belief via the Spirit
        - John 14:26—The Comforter will teach you all things
    - toward obedience via his Word (governing the heart)
        - Romans 8:9, 12-14
    - The sense is one of sanctification and care for the elect believer
- Christ overcomes the enemies of the believer
    - 1 Corinthians 15:25-26—put all enemies under His feet
    - Colossians 2:15—Puts the enemies to open shame
- Christ does all this is the perfect way

What do we do with this practically?

- Believer: know that Christ accomplished His Work and applied it to you!
    - Relief from sin **AND** the inheritance
    - Real temporal and eternal benefits!
- Know that even when you do not feel like this is true, it **IS** true
    - Remember the "most consonant?" It may mean getting good from suffering (Romans 8:18)
- Where does the world put its trust?
    - False religion
    - New age spirituality
    - Increasing momentum to use Psychedelic drugs to induce physical healing and spiritual/phycological healing[viii]

- Believer: you are acted upon by a Holy God by Grace through Faith. Remember that and tell the world Jesus offers better and eternal benefits.

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[i] Dickson, David; *Truth's Victory Over Error,* 1684; p 43,
[ii] Dickson, p 44.
[iii] Dickson, p 45.
[iv] Murry, John. Redemption Accomplished and Applied. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1955. p 51.
[v] Ibid.
[vi] Murry, p 52.
[vii] Argument derived from Murry: Part 1, Chapter 3 "The Perfection of the Atonement."
[viii] See studies from Duke University and Johns Hopkins University:
https://medschool.duke.edu/stories/duke-researchers-probe-magic-psychedelics-medicine;
https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/newsroom/news-releases/2020/11/psychedelic-treatment-with-psilocybin-relieves-major-depression-study-shows