

The Mode of Christ's Intercession

Scripture

John 17:24: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

I John 2:1-2: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Hebrews 9:24: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

Confessions

Heidelberg Catechism

Q. 49. Of what advantage to us is Christ's ascension into heaven?

A. First, that He is our advocate in the presence of His Father in heaven; secondly, that we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that He, as the Head, will also take up to Himself, us, His members; thirdly, that He sends us His Spirit as an earnest, by whose power we seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, and not things on earth.

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 55. How doeth Christ make intercession?

A. Christ maketh intercession, by his appearing in our nature continually before the Father in heaven, in the merit of his obedience and sacrifice on earth, declaring his will to have it applied to all believers; answering all accusations against them, and procuring for them quiet of conscience, notwithstanding daily failings, access with boldness to the throne of grace, and acceptance of their persons and services.

Theologians

John Calvin: "But we do not imagine that he, kneeling before God, pleads as a suppliant for us; rather, with the apostle we understand he so appears before God's presence that the power of his death avails as an everlasting intercession in our behalf [cf. Rom. 8:34], yet in such a way that, having entered the heavenly sanctuary, even to the consummation of the ages [cf. Heb. 9:24ff.], he alone bears to God the petitions of the people, who stay far off in the outer court" (*Institutes* 3.20.20).

Francis Turretin: "As to the mode of his intercession: (1) the circumstances of prayer are not to be considered as belonging to it, as if he knelt after the manner of suppliants, raised his hands or eyes to heaven and prostrated himself before God (which would be inconsistent with the glory he obtained by his sitting down at the right hand of God); but only the substance of prayer, by which he declares and asks for the blessings necessary to us. (2) This intercession is made either in express words or interpretatively; more in things than in words by a representation of his death in heaven, in which the blood of Christ is said to speak (Heb. 12:24). (3) In whatever manner it is made, we must not suppose that it is made to obtain anything by way of new merit because Christ finished all things in his death (as he himself testifies, Jn. 17:4; 19:30, as does Paul, Heb. 7:28; 10:14). Rather we must hold that what he acquired for us by the merit of his death may be actually and efficaciously applied to us for salvation" (*Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 2, p. 485).

Herman Bavinck: "Christ's intercession is no longer the pleading of a suppliant as in the days of his flesh but the steadfast gracious will of Christ (John 17:24) to lead all his people to the blessedness of heaven on the basis of his sacrifice" (*Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, p. 479).