

LECTURE XLV.

CHRIST'S HUMILIATION AND EXALTATION.

SYLLABUS.

1. Wherein did Christ's Humiliation consist? Did it include a descent into Hell?
Shorter Cat. Qu. 26-28. Turretin, Loc. xiii, Qu. 9, 16. Calvin, Inst. bk. ii, ch. 16, § 8-13. Knapp, § 92, 96.
2. Wherein consisteth Christ's Exaltation? What is meant by His Session at His Father's right-hand?
Turretin, Loc. xiii, Qu. 19. Dick, Lect. 62. Knapp, § 97, 99. Ridgley, Qu. 51 to 54.
3. How is Christ's Resurrection Essential in His mediatorial Work?
Calvin, Inst. bk. ii, ch. 16, § 13. Jno. xvi. Dick, Lect. 61. Ridgley, Qu. 52. Prove the Fact.
Turretin, Loc. xiii, Qu. 17. Bp. Sherlock, "Trial of the Witnesses." West on the Resurrection. Horne's Introduct. ch. 4, Vol. 1, Sect. 2, § 9.
4. What the Grounds, Objects, and Mode of Christ's priestly Intercession?
Turretin, Loc. xiv, Qu. 15. Dick, Lect. 59.
5. How doth Christ execute the office of King? As God, or as *θεανθρωπος*?
What His kingdom? What the extent of His Powers?
Conf. of Faith, ch. xxv, Bk. of Gov. ch. 2. Turretin, Loc. xiv, Qu. 16. Dick, Lect. 64. Ridgley, Qu. 45. Knapp, § 98, 99.
2. What the Duration of Christ's Kingdom?
Turretin, Loc. xiv, Qu. 17. Dick, Lect. 64. Hodge, 1 Cor. xv : 24-28.

I. WHEREIN did Christ's humiliation consist? See Catechism, Qu. 27. That Christ should fulfil the work of a Redeemer in both estates, was necessary for the purchase and the application of salvation. There is seeming Bible authority for the clause of the Creed, (inserted later than the body,) which says that "He went into hell." See Ps. xvi : 10, as quoted by Peter and Paul. Acts ii and xiii. The Hades into which Christ is there said to have gone, receives four explanations. 1. The grave. But it was not the grave into which His "soul" went. 2. The *limbus patrum*, the Popish. They quote, also, 1 Pet. iii : 19, and explain it of the Old Testament saints; and thus explain Matt. xxvii : 53. But we have shown that there is no *limbus patrum*. 3. Some earlier Lutherans understood Ps. xvi : 10; 1 Pet. iii : 19, that Christ went into the hell of the damned, to show them His triumph over death, and seal their fate. Thus it was a part of His exaltation. Both this and the previous notion are contradicted by Luke xxiii : 43. 4. Protestants, by *hades* of Ps. xvi : 10, now understand simply the invisible or spirit world, to which Christ's soul went while disembodied. Calvin understands the creed to mean, by Christ's descent into hell, the torments of spiritual death, which He suffered in dying, not after. His idea is, that the creed meant simply to asseverate, by the words, "descended into hell," the fact that Christ actually tasted the pangs of spiritual

death, in addition to bodily, and in this sense endured hell-torments for sinners, so far as they can be felt without sin. But Calvin expressly says that the whole of that torment was tasted before the Redeemer's soul left the body. For thence it went to rest in the bosom of the Father. He even raises and answers this question: If this is the meaning of the Creed, why is the descent into hell mentioned after the death and burial; if the thing it means really occurred before? The answer is unsatisfactory; but this at least shows that I have not misunderstood Calvin in his peculiar view. And this is all the ground which exists for the charge so often made by persons who professed much more acquaintance with Calvin than they possessed, that he held to Christ's actual descent into the world of damned spirits!

For Christ's exaltation, see Cat., Qu. 28; Phil. ii: 6-11;

2. Exaltation.

Is. liii: 10-12; Ps. xxii, &c. In what sense was the exaltation of a divine Saviour possible? (a) By removing the veil thrown over His glory by incarnation. (b) By economical reward to Mediatorial person, for humiliation. See Phil. ii: 10, &c. (c) By exaltation of His human nature. Matt. xvii: 2; Rev. i: 12-16. This exaltation now, doubtless, takes place, as to Christ's humanity, in a place, called the third heaven, to which He went by literal local motion, from our earth. Sitting at God's right hand means nothing more than the post of honour and power. God has no hand, literally, being immense spirit. The Lutheran argument for ubiquity of Christ's humanity, drawn hence, is foolish; for in the sense in which the humanity sits at the right hand, that hand is not ubiquitous. It is sophism by conversion of terms. Of this exaltation, the Kingship is the more permanent feature.

Christ's resurrection is every where spoken of in Scrip-

3. Resurrection of Christ
Proved. Its Importance.

ture as a hinging point of the believer's salvation and hope. See Rom. iv: 25, and i: 4; Jno. xiv: 19; 1 Cor. xv: 14, 17, 20, &c.; Acts i: 21, 22; 1 Pet. i: 3, &c. The Apostles everywhere put it forth as the prime article of their system, and main point of their testimony. Whence this importance? Before we answer this question, it may be well to advert to the evidences upon which we are assured, that this event, equally cardinal and wonderful, really occurred. If you are required to show that the fact is authentic, you may prove it.

(a) From Old Testament predictions, such as Ps. xvi: 10. This event is one of the *criteria* predicted for the Messiah. Then, if you have proved that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah; you may claim that a resurrection is to be expected for Him.

(b) Christ expressly predicted His own resurrection. Matt. xx: 19, and xxvii: 63; John x: 18. If He is not a monstrous impostor, which His lovely character disproves, we must expect to find it true.

(c) We have the testimony of many witnesses who saw Him after His rising; of the eleven, of above 400 brethren, and last of Paul; witnesses, competent, honest, and credible. They knew Christ by sight; yet they were at first incredulous. They had everything to lose, and nothing to gain, by bearing false testimony here. On this point the convincing arguments of the Christian writers are familiar to your reading.

(d) The miracles wrought in confirmation of the fact prove it. See Heb. ii: 4. The Apostles, we read, in the act of invoking God's miraculous aid, appealed to it as proof that their testimony was true. See Acts iii: 16. Now, to suppose that God sanctioned such an appeal, by putting forth His own power then, would make Him an accomplice to the deception. So the spiritual effusion of Pentecost, especially, and all the subsequent, are proofs; for they are fruits of His ascension. See Acts ii: 33; v: 32.

(e) The change of the Sabbath is a perpetual monumental evidence of the resurrection. For 4,000 years it had been observed on the 7th day of the week. It is now universally observed on the 1st day by Christians. Whence the change? The Church has constantly asserted that it was made to commemorate the rise of its Redeemer from the dead. Now a public, monumental observance cannot be propagated among men to commemorate an imaginary event. The introduction of the observance would inevitably challenge remark, and the imposture would have been instantly exposed. Americans celebrate the 4th of July. They say, it is to commemorate American independence. Had there been no such event as the publishing of the Declaration, July 4th, 1776, the commemoration could not have been successfully introduced to the universal observance of Americans, afterwards. The false reason assigned must have provoked exposure. Multitudes of the best informed would have said: "But, historically, there has been no such event to remember!" This must have arrested the proposal. Rome has, indeed, introduced memorials of legendary, and probably imaginary, Saints. But this could only be done, (a) through the prevalence of great superstition and ignorance: (b) many centuries after the pretended events: (c) and only to a partial extent, among local votaries, who make money by the deception.

Let us now resume and answer the questions. What the importance of this cardinal fact, in the doctrine of our redemption? 1. Because it was necessary to clear His memory of the charge of religious imposture, under which He died, and to vindicate His character as God's well-approved Son. See Rom. i: 4. 2. Because it evinced the adequacy of His satisfaction for man's guilt. When our Surety comes triumphing out of prison, we know our whole debt is settled. 3. It was necessary to demonstrate His power, as the Captain of our salvation,

to conquer our most dreaded enemies. Heb. ii : 14, 15. 4. The resurrection was necessary to enable Christ to be our Sanctifier, Advocate, and King. See Jno. xvi : 7 ; Rom. viii : 11 ; I Cor. vi : 15 ; I Thess. iv : 14. 5. The resurrection of Christ is the earnest and proof of ours. I Cor. xv : 20, 24 ; Phil. iii : 21, &c.

4. The ground of Christ's intercession is His vicarious righteousness, which He pleads before the Father. Is. liii : 12. The mode of His intercession is by petition; e. g., Jno. xvii. Some have supposed that this suppliant attitude implies an inferiority incompatible with the proper divinity of the Son. To mediate does imply a certain economical inferiority of attitude; but no more. Some find, in Jno. xvii : 24, "Father, I will," &c., evidence of a more authoritative intervention. It is overstraining the verb, *ᾠέλω*. But compare Jno. v : 6, *et passim*. Yet it is certain that Christ's petitions have a more authoritative basis than ours, being urged on the ground of His covenant and perfect purchase. I Jno. ii : 1. A more plausible difficulty is this: "If all power is given into Christ's hands, (Matt. xxviii : 18 ; Eph. i : 22 ; Col. ii : 9, 10,) why need He intercede at all? Why not do, of Himself, without interceding, all that His people need?" The answer is, that Christ is a royal Priest, (Zech. vi : 13,) not Aaronic, but Melchisedekian: and His intercession is rather a perpetual holding up of His own righteousness on behalf of His people, by a perpetual pleading, in order that He may, on that ground, have this viceregal power of succouring all their wants. And as a royal Priest, He holds up His righteousness to the Father, as a plea for admitting each one of the elect into that body, His kingdom, to which the Father has authorized Him to dispense His fulness.

The objects of Christ's intercession are the elect particularly. See Jno. xvii : 9. Also, His official intercession is always prevalent; if He prayed for all, all would be saved: but all are not saved. Hence, His prayer for the pardon of His murderers, Luke xxiii : 34, must be explained, as being limited by its terms to those of His persecutors who sinned in ignorance. And we conclude that every one of these was among the "great company of the priests, Acts vi : 7, who became "obedient to the faith." There is an alternative solution, which is less satisfactory: That this prayer was not Messianic and officially Mediatorial; but only the expression of Christian meekness by our pattern, the man Jesus. This attempt to discriminate between the agency of the divine and human wills in Christ, where the act is ethical and spiritual, is perilous.

He must have also interceded officially for the Old Testament saints, for three reasons. The theophanies are believed to have been interventions of the Son. This implies that He

had already sought and obtained leave to bless His people. 2d. If they had no intercessor, how could a holy and righteous God give His favour to sinners? 3d. We have a case: Zech. iii: 1-6. But while Christ's mediation is limited to the elect, there is a sense in which He intervenes for the whole race. Doubtless, it is His work for man, which prevented the doom from following the fall, as promptly as Satan's, and which procures for the world all the instances of God's long-suffering.

The duration of Christ's intercession seems different to different minds. Some suppose that He will plead forever; and that His pleading will secure an everlasting suspension of wrath, and bestowal of ever-renewed graces and gifts. They quote Heb. vii: 25. Others suppose that this is only relatively endless, compared with the brief ministry of an Aaronic priest; and that having thoroughly reconciled the whole Church to God, and re-instated them in holiness as well as favour, no farther need of His intercession will exist; but God can dispense His blessings unasked by an advocate, as on the holy angels. I lean to the former part. Add: that His priesthood is spoken of as everlasting, Ps. cx; Heb. vii: 3, 24. His sacrifice is ended, "once for all." If His intercession is not eternal, in what sense does His priesthood continue? Further: He seems still to be the Medium, after the full glorification of the church, through which they receive the blessings of redemption. Rev. vii: 17, &c. And this is much the most consistent and pleasing view of the relation of the glorified Church to God.

See Cat. question 26. As eternal Son, the 2d person doubtless shares forever, the natural and infinite dominion of the Godhead. But this Mediatorial kingdom is conferred and economical, exercised not merely in His divine nature, but by Him as *θεοδιδρακτος*. The Person receives this exaltation. The extent of His kingdom is universal. See texts above, and Phil. ii: 10, 11. The Church is His immediate domain: its members are His citizens; and for their benefit His powers are all wielded. But His power extends over all the human race, the angelic ranks, good and bad, and the powers of nature. This exaltation, therefore, shows our Saviour as clearly divine, for no finite wisdom or powers are at all adequate to its task. The nature of this benign kingdom is very clearly set forth in Ps. ii, xlv, cx, and lxxii; in Is. ix, &c., &c., and in the passages above quoted. The phrase, "Kingdom of God," of "Heaven," &c., is used in the New Testament in somewhat varying senses; but they all signify the different aspects of that one spiritual reign, called "the kingdom of Christ." (a) True religion, or the reign of Christ in the heart. Luke xii: 31; xvii: 21; Mark x: 15; iv: 26. (b) The visible Church under the new dispensation. Mat. xiii: 40, 41; iv: 17; Mark i: 15. (c) The perfected

Church in glory. Luke xiii : 29 ; 2 Pet. i : 11. It is a purely spiritual kingdom, as is proved by our Saviour's words, (Jno. xviii : 36), by the nature of its objects ; the redemption of souls ; by the nature of its agencies, viz., truth and mercy and holiness, (see Ps. xlv : 3, 4), by the conduct of Christ and His Apostles while on earth, in paying tribute, living subordinate to magistrates, &c. This respects its terrestrial modes of administration : for as to its secret and superhuman modes, they are properly almighty, and both physical and spiritual.

Orthodox divines are not agreed as to the duration of this kingdom. If we would fix the date of its beginning, we must make it, in some respects, co-eval with Christ's intercession—i. e., with the protevangelium proclaimed to man. For it is plain, that saints before the incarnation had all the same necessities for a divine King to conquer, protect, and rule them, which we experience now ; and lay under the same obstacles as to receiving these blessings from a holy God directly, who was bound by His justice and truth to punish and destroy sinners. Again ; we have seen instances, the various theophanies, in which the Son, under the person of the Angel of the Covenant, busied Himself for the protection of His people. Again, Ps. ii speaks of Christ's kingdom, not only as promised, but as having an institution co-eval with the declaration to man of His Sonship. See best interpretation of v. 7. But yet the God-man was only inducted into His peculiar and delegated viceroyalty, after, and as a reward of, His sufferings. See Phil. ii. And the "kingdom of God" is often spoken of at the time of Christ's coming, as being then at hand, or as a thing then coming. We must, therefore, conclude, that while the Son was permitted to intercede and rule before His incarnation, on the ground of His work to be rendered to the Father, His kingdom received a still more explicit establishment after His resurrection.

When we come to consider the other terminus, we are met by a still more serious difference of opinion. Some, with Turretin, suppose that the delegated mediatorial kingdom over the Church will undergo a change in the mode of its administration at the final consummation, its relation to its enemies, as well as the nature of its own wants, being greatly modified ; but that in other respects it will continue : in that the *θεάνθρωπος* will be the direct medium for the saints' guidance and government still ; and this forever and ever. The arguments are, that perpetual and everlasting duration are promised to it ; e. g., Ps. lxxii : 17 ; Is. ix : 7 ; Dan. vii : 14 ; Dan. ii : 44. Second. His people will need protection and guidance, just as they will need teaching and intercession, forever. For their glorification will not render them naturally impeccable or infallible. Yea, as we have seen, when speaking of Socinianism, they must have this ruling and teach-

ing, or some day in futurity they will go astray again. But it seems far more natural to suppose that these blessings will still be given through Christ their Head, to whom they were spiritually united at their conversion. The personal union of the divine and human will continue. But for what purpose, if the mediatorial connection is terminated? Moreover, the Revelation seems to decide the question, showing us the Lamb, (ch. v : 6), receiving the homage of the glorified Church, (ch. vii : 17), leading and feeding it still, and (ch. xxi : 22, 23), acting, after the final consummation, as the light of heaven. Third. In Rev. xix : 7, 8, the marriage of the Church to the Lamb is spoken of as then consummated, amidst the glories of the final consummation. All that was previous was but the wooing, as it were; and it seems very unnatural to conceive of the peculiar connexion as terminating with the marriage. Then it only begins properly.

Others, as Dick, seem to attach so much importance and force to I Cor. xv : 24-28, as to suppose that it necessitates another supposition; that Christ having reinstated the Church in holiness and the favour of God, and subdued all its enemies, there will no longer be any necessity for the peculiar mediatorial plan; but God will rule directly over saints as over the rest of His holy universe before man fell; and Christ will have no other kingdom than that which He naturally holds as of the Godhead. In answer to Turretin's first argument, they would say that the everlasting duration promised to Christ's kingdom, is only relative to the evanescent generations of men: and means no more than that it shall outlast all generations of earth. This, they say, is even indicated in the Ps. lxxii : 17, where the "forever" is defined to mean as long as the Sun. But "the sun shall be turned into darkness before the great and terrible day of the Lord." As to the second argument, it is admitted that the saints in heaven will always need teaching and ruling; but it is supposed that they being thoroughly justified and sanctified, God may bestow these graces on them directly, as the elect angels, without a mediatorial intervention. These views appear plausible; but they come short of a full clearing up of the subject. They leave unbroken the force of the passages cited from Revelation. The whole tenour of the Scripture seems to imply that the peculiar relationship, not only of gratitude and affection, but also of spiritual union, formed between Christ and His people, is to be everlasting. He is their "*alpha* and their *omega*." His life is the spring and warrant of their life. It is their union to Him which ensures the resurrection of their bodies, and the eternal life of both body and spirit. See Jno. xiv : 19. The change made in the method of God's governing the universe, by means of the incarnation, will continue, in some respects to all eternity, as a standing monument of

I Cor. xv: 24 Explained.

Jesus Christ's victory and grace. Nor does the passage from 1 Cor. xv : 24, seem insuperable. That a striking change will then take place in the method of the mediatorial kingdom, cannot be doubted. Perhaps it will consist largely in this, that Christ's power over the universe (external to His body, the Church), will be returned to the Godhead. But the restoration of the Church to the Father, as an accomplished enterprise, is to be received, not as implying a severance of Christ's headship, but as a surrendering of Himself along with it, body and head, as an aggregate. Let 1 Cor. iii : 23, be compared. It need not follow, that, because the dominion of the God-man over wicked men and angels and inanimate nature, is restored to the Godhead, so that it may again be "all in all," Christ's redeeming headship to His people must be severed. The Viceroy may bring back the province once in insurrection, under His Father's authority, so that it shall be paramount and universal; and yet, the Son's most appropriate reward may be, that He shall continue the immediate Ruler and Benefactor of the restored subjects. This, on the whole, seems to be the Bible teaching. It is at once most consoling to believers and most honorable to Christ.