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PREPARATION

Berridge's and McNeill's headings are:

1. High level analysis:

Sections	Berridge	McNeill
1, 2	Of the Prophetical Office of Christ, its dignity and use	Christ's saving activity threefold: first the prophetic office
3–5	The nature of the Kingly power of Christ, and the advantage we derive from it	The kingly office – its spiritual character
6	Of the Priesthood of Christ, and the efficacy of it	The priestly office: reconciliation and intercession

2. Section headings:

1	Among heretics and false Christians, Christ is found in name only; but by those who are truly and effectually called of God, he is acknowledged as a Prophet, King, and Priest. In regard to the Prophetical Office, the Redeemer of the Church is the same from whom believers under the Law hoped for the full light of understanding.	The need of understanding this doctrine: Scriptural passages applicable to Christ's prophetic office
2	The unction of Christ, though it has respect chiefly to the Kingly Office, refers also to the Prophetical and Priestly Offices. The dignity, necessity, and use of this unction.	The meaning of the prophetic office for us
3	From the spirituality of Christ's kingdom its eternity is inferred. This twofold, referring both to the whole body of the Church, and to its individual members.	The eternity of Christ's dominion
4	Benefits from the spiritual kingdom of Christ. 1. It raises us to eternal life. 2. It enriches us with all things necessary to salvation. 3. It makes us invincible by spiritual foes. 4. It animates us to patient endurance. 5. It inspires confidence and triumph. 6. It supplies fortitude and love.	The blessing of Christ's kingly office for us
5	The unction of our Redeemer heavenly. Symbol of this unction. A passage in the apostle reconciled with others previously quoted, to prove the eternal kingdom of Christ.	The spiritual nature of his kingly office: The sovereignty of Christ and of the Father
6	What necessary to obtain the benefit of Christ's Priesthood. We must set out with the death of Christ. From it follows, 1. His intercession for us. 2. Confidence in prayer. 3. Peace of conscience. 4. Through Christ, Christians themselves become priests. Grievous sin of the Papists in pretending to sacrifice Christ.	The priestly office: reconciliation and intercession

To consider

1. 'Office' is shorthand for – what?

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- a. Role, function and title

EXPLORATORY

1	Among heretics and false Christians, Christ is found in name only; but by those who are truly and effectually called of God, he is acknowledged as a Prophet, King, and Priest. In regard to the Prophetical Office, the Redeemer of the Church is the same from whom believers under the Law hoped for the full light of understanding.	The need of understanding this doctrine: Scriptural passages applicable to Christ's prophetic office
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1. What charges does Calvin level against some who profess to be Christians? (494, 1ff)
 - a. *...although they preach the name of Christ, (they) have herein no common ground with believers*
 - b. *...we will find Christ among the heretics in name only, not in reality.*
 - c. *...they are satisfied with vain pretence of the name*

What example does Calvin give of the heretics that he has in mind? (494, 7)

- a. *...the papists*

What is necessary in order that, *faith may find a firm basis for salvation in Christ, and thus rest in him*, and not simply rest in the name of Christ only? (494, 12ff)

- a. *...this principle must be laid down; the office enjoined upon Christ by the Father consists of three parts.*

What are those three parts? (494, 14)

- a. *...prophet, king and priest*

Is it enough to describe Christ in this three-fold way? (494, 15ff)

- a. *...it would be of little value to know these names without understanding their purpose and use. The papists use these names too, but coldly and rather ineffectually, **since they do not know what each of these titles contains.***

Turning now to those whom Berridge describes as, *believers under the law*, what role was undertaken by prophets in keeping their faith alive? (494, 19ff)

- a. *God, by providing his people with an unbroken line of prophets, never left them without useful doctrine sufficient for salvation,*

Were Godly people in the Old Testament satisfied with their prophets or did they look for more? (495, 2ff) Calvin establishes three things about their prophets. What are those three things? (494, 19ff)

- a. ***...yet the minds of the pious had always been imbued with the conviction that they were to hope for the full light of understanding only at the coming of the Messiah.***
- b. *This expectation penetrated even to the Samaritans, though they never had known the true religion, as appears from the words of the woman: "When the Messiah comes he will teach us all things" [John 4:25p.].*

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- c. *...the Jews did not rashly presume this in their minds; but, being taught by clear oracles, they so believed:*
 - i. *Isaiah's saying is particularly well known: "Behold, I have made him a witness to the peoples, I have given him as a leader and commander for the peoples" [Isa. 55:4].*
 - ii. *Isaiah called him "messenger or interpreter of great counsel" [Isa. 9:6, conflated with Isa. 28:29 and Jer 32:19].*

How did the author of the letter to the Hebrews show that Christ was a continuation of the Old Testament's prophetic ministry? (495, 15ff)

- a. *For this reason, the apostle commends the perfection of the gospel doctrine, first saying: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets" [Heb. 1:1]. Then he adds, "In these last days he has spoken to us through a beloved Son." [Heb. 1:2 p.]*

How does our experience of prophecy differ from the experience of Old Testament saints? (495, 21ff)

- a. *...in their dispersion believers complained that they were deprived of that ordinary benefit: "We do not see our signs; there is no...prophet among us...there is no one...who knows how long" [Ps. 74:9]*

What was Daniel commanded to do, signifying that Old Testament prophecy was coming to a close? (495, 26)

- a. *"...seal both vision and prophet" [Dan. 9:24]*

What two things were signified by this sealing? (495, 27ff)

- a. *...that the prophetic utterance there mentioned might be authoritatively established*
- b. *...the fullness and culmination of all revelations was at hand.*

2. How do we know that teaching was part of Christ's messianic role, along with being a king and a priest? (495, 32f)

- a. *...under the law prophets as well as priests and kings were anointed with holy oil...Christ was called Messiah especially with respect to, and by virtue of his kingship. Yet his anointings as prophet and as priest have their place and must not be overlooked by us.*

Isaiah 61:1-2 (cf. Luke 4:18) shows us the purpose of his prophetic anointing, which was – what? (496, 10f)

- a. *...he was anointed by the Spirit to be herald and witness of the Father's grace.*

What was distinctive about Christ's prophetic ministry? (496, 16ff)

- a. *Its finality...this, however remains certain: the prophetic doctrine he has brought has made an end to all prophecies.*

How is the finality of Christ's prophetic ministry applied by Calvin? (496, 18ff)

- a. *All those, then, who, not content with the gospel, patch it with something extraneous to it, detract from Christ's authority (Martyn Lloyd-Jones used to speak of, 'the damnable plus'. He referred in particular to the teaching of Roman Catholicism, which,*

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traditionally, has added to the gospel the necessity of adherence to itself as a condition for salvation. This phrase is also meant to remind us that adding to the gospel keeps people from Christ in exactly the same way as detracting from it does.)

How do we participate in the prophetic anointing given to him? (496, 13ff)

- a. *...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 anointing was diffused from the Head to the members as Joel had foretold: "Your sons shall prophesy and your daughters...shall see visions," etc. [Joel 2:28 p.].*

...when Paul says that He was given to us as our wisdom [1 Cor 1:30], and in another place, "In him are hid all the treasures of knowledge and understanding" [Col. 2:3 p.] is he making the same point as Joel makes in Joel 2:28? (496, 28)

- a. *...he has a slightly different meaning*

What is Paul's meaning in these passages? (496, 29ff)

- a. *...outside Christ there is nothing worth knowing, and all who by faith perceive what he is like have grasped the whole immensity of heavenly benefits.*

How did this understanding lead Paul to conduct himself? (496, 32f)

- a. *"I decided to know nothing precious...except Jesus Christ and him crucified" [1 Cor. 2:2]*

Why should we emulate the apostle Paul in this matter? (496, 34ff)

- a. *...it is not lawful to go beyond the simplicity of the gospel. And the prophetic dignity in Christ leads us to know that in the sum of doctrine as he has given it to us all parts of perfect wisdom are contained.*

3. What is the fundamental point made by Calvin about Christ's kingship? (496, 39)

- a. *...it is spiritual in nature*

What do we infer from the spiritual nature of Christ's kingship? (496, 40f)

- a. *...its efficacy and benefit for us.*
- b. *...its whole force and eternity.*

According to Calvin, Luke 1:33, *And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end*, is a conscious allusion to Daniel 2:44, *And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.*

What are the two ways in which Christ's eternity should be considered by us? (497, 5ff)

- a. *...the first pertains to the whole body of the Church.*
- b. *...the second belongs to each individual member.*

What promise, derived from the eternity of Christ's kingdom, is made to the Church in Psalm 89:35-37? (497, 11ff)

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- a. *God surely promises here that through the hand of his Son he will be the eternal protector and defender of his church.*

How do we know that Psalm 89:35-37 is fulfilled in Christ alone, and not in David, to whom the promise was made originally? (497, 14ff)

- a. *...immediately after Solomon's death the authority over the greater part of the kingdom was destroyed, and – to the shame of the family of David – was transferred to a private person [1 Kings, ch. 12]. Afterward it diminished more and more until it came to a sad and shameful end [2 Kings, ch. 24].*

The text of Calvin's commentary on Isaiah 53:8 reads:

Who shall relate his generation? *This exclamation has been stretched and (I may say) tortured into various meanings. The ancients abused this passage in reasoning against the Arians, when they wished to prove by it Christ's eternal generation. But they ought to have been satisfied with clearer testimonies of Scripture, that they might not expose themselves to the mockery of heretics, who sometimes take occasion from this to become more obstinate; for it might easily have been objected that the Prophet was not thinking about that subject. Chrysostom views it as relating to the human nature of Christ, that he was miraculously, and not by ordinary generation, conceived in the womb of the virgin; but that is a wide departure from the Prophet's meaning. Others think that Isaiah kindles into rage against the men of that age who crucified Christ. Others refer it to the posterity which should be born; namely, that Christ's posterity will be numerous though he die.*

But, as דור (dor) signifies "age" or "duration," I have no doubt that he speaks of the "age" of Christ, and that his meaning is, that Christ, though almost overwhelmed by sicknesses, shall not only be taken from them, but that even his age shall be permanent and eternal; or, in other words, that he shall be unlike those who are indeed rescued from death, but shall afterwards die; for Christ rose from the dead, to live for ever, and, as Paul says, "cannot now die; death shall no longer have dominion over him." (Romans 6:9) Yet let us remember that the Prophet does not speak of Christ's person alone, but includes the whole body of the Church, which ought never to be separated from him. We have therefore a striking proof of the perpetuity of the Church. As Christ liveth for ever, so he will not permit his kingdom to perish. The same immortality shall at length be bestowed on each of the members.

In the *Institutes* (497, 21f) Calvin sums up what he wrote in his commentary with the words: *...he declares that Christ will so survive death as to bind himself with his members.* This makes his survival of death an aspect of his kingship.

How should we apply to Christ's Church this understanding of Isaiah 53:8? (22ff)

- a. *Therefore, whenever we hear of Christ as armed with eternal power, let us remember that the perpetuity of the church is secure in this protection. 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.*

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David asserts the same thing as Isaiah in Psalms 2 and 110. How does Calvin apply David's words? (497, 31ff)

- a. *...he (David) assures the godly of the everlasting preservation of the church, and encourages them to hope, whenever it happens to be oppressed.*
- b. *Here (Ps. 110:1) he asserts that, no matter how many strong enemies plot to overthrow the church, they do not have sufficient strength to prevail over God's immutable decree by which he appointed his Son eternal King. Hence it follows that the devil, with all the resources of the world, can never destroy the church, founded as it is on the eternal throne of Christ.*

To what subject does Calvin turn in the final paragraph of this section? (498, 8f)

- a. *...the special application of this to each one of us*

What ought, "eternity", inspire us to hope for? (498, 10)

- a. *...blessed immortality*

What other things compete for our hope? (498, 10)

- a. *...whatever is earthly*

Why characteristic(s) of, *whatever is earthly*, should encourage us to favour and seek for, *blessed immortality*, in preference to earthly things such as material possessions and reputation? (498, 10f)

- a. *...whatever is earthly is of the world and of time, and is indeed fleeting.*

What declaration of Christ is designed, *to lift our hope to heaven*? (498, 11ff)

- a. *Christ, to lift our hope to heaven, declares that his "kingship is not of this world" [John 18:36].*

In what two-fold way does Calvin sum up these applications? (498, 13ff)

- a. *In short:*
 - i. *...when any one of us hears that Christ's kingship is spiritual, aroused by this word let him attain to the hope of a better life*
 - ii. *...and since it is now protected by Christ's hand, let him await the full fruit of this grace in the age to come*



4. Why would there be no advantage to us to be gathered under Christ's kingship if his reign was not essentially and primarily spiritual? (498, 21ff)

- a. *...throughout life...our condition is harsh and wretched.*
- b. *What, then, would it profit us to be gathered under the reign of the Heavenly King, unless beyond this earthly life we were certain of enjoying its benefits.*

Because Christ rules ...more for our own sake than his...we are furnished with - what? (499, 2)

- a. *...gifts of the Spirit.*

For what purposes are gifts of the Spirit given to us? (499, 3ff)

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- a. To give us assurance
- b. To give us the confidence to engage in spiritual warfare.

What should our response be to his reign and the gifts that he gives us? (499, 32f)

- a. *...we, in return, bring forth fruit to his glory.*

5. The word 'Christ' means, 'anointed one'. In what way was Christ's anointing different to anointings that had occurred before? (499, 34)

- a. It was *...not with oil or aromatic unguents*, but with the Spirit.

For what purpose was Christ anointed with the Spirit in this way? (500, 1ff)

- a. *...he did not enrich himself for his own sake, but ...that from his fullness we might all receive grace upon grace.* (This is an aside but Martyn Lloyd-Jones asserts this is the key statement for an understanding of John's gospel. This is the point that John wants to get across as forcibly as he can. All the content of the gospel is an illustration of this and should be interpreted in this light.)

How does Christ enrich us? (500, 7ff)

- a. With spiritual gifts and graces.

What does this teach us about the nature of Christ's kingdom and reign? (500, 11)

- a. *...Christ's kingdom lies in the Spirit, not in earthly pleasures or pomp.*

What dichotomy/antipathy does this set up? (500, 11f)

- a. *...we must forsake the world if we are to share in the Kingdom.*

Calvin makes the statement: *...there is no drop of vigour in us save what the Holy Spirit instils* (500, 19f). Can you think of a Bible verse in which Christ teaches exactly the same thing?

- a. John 15:5 *...without me you can do nothing.*

In eternity, how will Christ's kingdom differ from its present state? (500, 29f; 501, 6ff)

- a. *...the administration of the Kingdom will not be as it now is.*
- b. *...God will then of himself become the sole head of the church, since the duties of Christ in defending the church will have been accomplished.*

Calvin calls the judgment, *the last act of his reign*. How can this be true if he is the eternal God? (501, 19f)

- a. It will be his last act as mediatorial ruler.

6. What does Christ's priesthood accomplish for us? (501, 39f; 502, 13)

- a. It obtains God's favour for us and appeases his wrath.
- b. It ensures that both we and our prayers have access to him.

How does Christ do this? (502, 6f & 14)

- a. *...by the sacrifice of his death.*
- b. *...our High Priest, having washed away our sins, sanctifies us and obtains for us that grace from which the uncleanness of our transgressions debars us.*

What conclusion should we draw about the fundamental action of Christ, on which all the other benefits that he bring to us depend? (502, 17f)

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a. *...we must begin from the death of Christ in order that the efficacy and benefit of his priesthood might reach us.*

In what ways does Christ *...also...receive us as his companions in this great office?* (502, 32ff)

a. *...for we...offer ourselves and our all to God, and freely enter the heavenly sanctuary that the sacrifices of prayers and praise that we bring may be acceptable and sweet-smelling before God.*

FOR REFLECTION

1. What are all the constituent parts of *...the true priesthood* (503, 3)?
2. Is Christ my prophet? Do I look to him for utterances on all things that concern me? Do I treat his utterances as utterly trustworthy?
3. Is Christ my King?