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PREPARATION

Please read footnote 1 on page 340 and re-read I.ii.1 notes 3&4. These notes are a valuable reminder of the order in which Calvin arranges his material and the newness of the arrangement in the 1559 edition. Note particularly what McNeill has to say about where Calvin places his treatment of the doctrine of sin.

EXPLORATORY

1. This is a typically (for Calvin) well-crafted summary of the human condition, how it has come to be what it is and how God has stepped in to give the only hope that there is of restoration to the salvation that from all eternity was intended to be ours.

Had man not fallen into sin, what would have happened? (341, 7ff)

- a. *The natural order was that the frame of the universe should be the school in which we were to learn piety, and from it pass over to eternal life and perfect felicity.*

What, in fact, has been the outcome? (341, 10ff)

- a. *...our eyes – wherever they turn – encounter God's curse. This curse...must overwhelm our souls with despair.*
- b. *...we cannot by contemplating the universe infer that he is father.*
- c. *...conscience...shows...just cause for his disowning us and not recognizing us as his sons.*
- d. *Dullness and ingratitude follow...our minds...do not perceive what is true.*
- e. *...all our senses have become perverted, we wickedly defraud God of his glory.*

What is the principle consequence of our current, fallen state? (341, 4ff)

- a. *...since we have fallen from life into death, **the whole knowledge of God the Creator that we have discussed would be useless** unless faith also followed, setting forth for us God our Father in Christ.*

Given that none of the above was part of God's original intention for humanity, how has it come upon us? (341, 3)

- a. *We are now ...defiled and corrupted by sin.*

In this situation how has God given us hope? (341, 2ff)

- a. *...God...appeared as redeemer in the person of his only-begotten Son.*

How does faith come to our aid? (341, 7)

- a. *It sets forth for us ...God our Father in Christ.*

Calvin regards the first part of 1 Corinthians 1:21 as a summary of what he has written so far in this section about the human condition. As well as describing the problem, this verse also states the remedy, which is – what? (341, 28)

- a. *...the faith of Christ.*

In the light of this verse, what does Calvin describe as *...all the more vile*? (341, 39ff)

- a. *...the stupidity of those persons who open heaven to all the impious and unbelieving without the grace of him whom scripture teaches to be the only door...*

On p342, from line 4 to line 29, Calvin quotes from and alludes to 12 scripture passages, all to support one contention only. What is that contention? (342, 3f)

- a. Christ is *...the only door whereby we enter into salvation.*
2. Opening with the word, *Accordingly*, Calvin takes up this same point – the exclusivity of the Christian gospel as the way of salvation – showing it to have been always what the Bible taught, from the book of Genesis onwards (reminiscent of Christ's approach on the road to Emmaus *And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself*).

On what two bases does Calvin agree with Paul's reasoning in Galatians 3, that Christ as the seed of Abraham, promised in Genesis 22? (343, 7ff & 16f)

- a. *...not all who sprang from Abraham according to his flesh were reckoned among his offspring...It is therefore clear that Abraham's seed is to be accounted chiefly in one Head.*
- b. *...the promised salvation was not realized until Christ appeared.*

What was ...not yet expressed in clear words by Moses, but ...was commonly known to all the Godly? (343, 18ff)

- a. *...the original adoption of the chosen people depended upon the Mediator's grace.*

What evidence does Calvin cite in support of this view? (343, 19ff)

- a. *...before a king had been established over the people, Hannah, the mother of Samuel, describing the happiness of the godly, already says in her song: "God will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his Messiah" [1 Sam 2:10].*
- b. *To this corresponds the prophecy that is added a little later: "The priest whom I shall raise up...will walk in the presence of my Christ" [1 Sam 2:35]*
- c. *...there is no doubt that our Heavenly Father willed that we perceive in David and his descendants the living image of Christ.*

How do we know that David and those of his descendants who occupied the throne of Israel were *...the living image of Christ*? (343, 31ff)

- a. *David, wishing to urge the pious to fear God, commands them to "kiss the Son" [Ps 2:12. To this corresponds the saying of the Gospel: "He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father" [John 5:23].*
- b. *...although the kingdom collapsed because of the revolt of the ten tribes, yet the covenant that God made with David and his successors had to stand, just as he spoke through the prophets: "I will not tear away all the Kingdom...for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen...but to your son one tribe will remain" [1 Kings 11:13, 32].*
- c. *This same promise is repeated a second and a third time. It is expressly stated: "I will...afflict David's descendants, but not eternally" [1 Kings 11:39].*

- d. *Some time later it is said: "For the sake of David his servant, God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, to raise himself up a son and to protect Jerusalem" [1 Kings 15:4]*
- e. *Then, although affairs verged on ruin, it was again said: "The Lord was unwilling to destroy Judah, for the sake of David his servant, since he promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever"*

What is the meaning of Psalm 28:8? (344, 13f)

- a. *God thus willed to preserve his church that its soundness and safety might depend upon that Head.*

What is the meaning of Psalm 28:9? (344, 19f)

- a. *...the condition of the church is joined by an indissoluble bond to Christ's authority.*

What is the meaning of Psalm 29:9? (344, 22ff)

- a. *...believers have sought refuge in God's help with no other assurance than that they were sheltered under the King's protection.*

What is the meaning of Psalm 118:25-26? (344, 26ff)

- a. *...believers are being called back to Christ, that they may hope to be saved by God's hand.*

What is the meaning of Psalm 80:17? (344, 28ff)

- a. *...the whole church implores God's mercy ...although the author of the psalm bewails the scattering of the whole people, yet he begs for their restoration in the Head alone.*

What is the meaning of Lamentations 4:20? (344, 33ff)

- a. *...when, after the people have been carried off into exile, the land laid waste, and everything seemingly destroyed, Jeremiah sorrows for the calamity of the church, he especially bewails the fact that in the ruin of the Kingdom hope has been cut off from believers.*

What is the meaning of all the scriptures that Calvin has cited, taken together? (344, 41f)

- a. *God cannot without the Mediator be propitious toward the human race*

What do these passages teach us about Christ in the Old Testament? (344, 41ff)

- a. *...since God cannot without the Mediator be propitious toward the human race, under the law Christ was always set before the holy fathers as the end to which they should direct their faith.*

3. Habakkuk 3:13 is an example of – what? (345, 3ff)

- a. *...where solace is promised in affliction, especially where the deliverance of the church is described, the banner of trust and hope in Christ himself is prefigured.*

...as often as the prophets mention the restoration of the church, they recall the people to the promise made to David that his kingdom would be everlasting [cf 2 Kings 8:19]. What quality does Christ's mediatorial role give to the covenant? (345, 10)

- a. *...stability*

What did Isaiah do when confronted with King Ahaz's rejection of God's covenant? (345, 14)

- a. *...he rather abruptly passes on to the Messiah*

Calvin cites a number of Old Testament passages in support of his view that *...all the prophets were constantly at pains to proclaim that kingdom of David upon which both redemption and eternal salvation depended*. What is his objective? (345, 38ff)

- a. *I merely want to remind my readers that the hope of all the godly has ever reposed in Christ alone.*

4. How do we know that the Jews, even in their *shamefully degenerated* state, retained the awareness that their hope of deliverance lay in the fulfillment of God's promise to David? (346, 28ff)

- a. *From this it came about that when Christ entered Jerusalem a little before his death this song was on the children's lips: "Hosanna to the son of David" [Matt 21:9]*

Was it ever possible to believe in God, savingly, without believing in the mediator? (346, 34ff)

- a. *No. For this reason Christ himself bade his disciples believe in him, that they might clearly and perfectly believe in God: "You believe in God; believe also in me" [John 14:1]. For even if, properly speaking, faith mounts up from Christ to the Father, yet he means this: although faith rests in God, it will gradually disappear unless he who retains it in perfect firmness intercedes as Mediator.*

Why does our faith need Christ as our mediator? (346, 40f)

- a. *God's majesty is too lofty to be attained by mortal men, who are like grubs crawling upon the earth.*

What is it about God that means that we can only know we are saved if he *confronts us in Christ*? (347, 2)

- a. *God is ...invisible*

By the time of Christ was the mediator's essential role appreciated by the Scribes? (347, 4ff)

- a. *...the scribes obscured with false glosses what the prophets had taught concerning the redeemer*

How widespread was this ignorance? (347, 6ff)

- a. *Christ took to be commonly known, as if received by general agreement, that there is no other remedy for a hopeless condition, no other way of freeing the church, than the appearance of the Mediator.*
- b. *Paul's teaching was not commonly known – as it ought to have been – that "Christ is the end of the law" [Rom 10:4]*

...apart from Christ the saving knowledge of God does not stand. Why is this? (347, 15ff)

- a. *...let the readers agree on this point: let the first step towards godliness be to recognise that God is our Father to watch over us, govern and nourish us, until he gather us unto the eternal inheritance of his Kingdom.*

If we try to set up and affirm a relationship with God that does not involve a mediator, what is the outcome? (347, 32ff)

- a. *...even if many men once boasted that they worshipped the Supreme Majesty, the Maker of heaven and earth, yet because they had no Mediator it was not possible for them truly to taste God's mercy, and thus be persuaded that he was their Father.*

- b. *...because they did not hold Christ as their Head, they possessed only a fleeting knowledge of God.*

What example does Calvin bring forth of where failing to recognise Christ as the Mediator leads? (348, 4)

- a. *...the Turks (ie Islam)*

How do Moslems exemplify this mistake? (348, 5ff)

- a. *...they proclaim at the top of their lungs that the Creator of heaven and earth is God, still, while repudiating Christ, (they) substitute an idol in place of the true God.*

FOR REFLECTION

1. Why do human beings need to acknowledge their need of a mediator and need to acknowledge Christ as the mediator they need?