

Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics

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Regarding the Person, State, Office and Reign of Christ

The First Chapter: Regarding the Person of Jesus Christ

It was shown in the preceding section how the Son of God out of inexpressible love from eternity was revealed as our Savior and mediator between God and us. This also actually happened when the time appointed in the counsel of God was fulfilled. Because the work of Christ is outlined in this section, I am starting with the doctrine of the person of Christ. One may first read the second chapter of the preceding section. It is proved unconditionally there how a mediator who wants to reconcile us with God must be in his nature. We consider three chief points regarding the person of Christ: 1. That he is true God and true man; 2. That the divine and human natures are personally united in him; 3. What follows out of such a union of both natures.

The First Chief Point: That Christ is true God and true man.¹

We believe and confess, first: Christ Jesus, our Savior, is true God. Our only Savior is Christ, the Son of God, the living Son of God, Mt 16:16; Jn 6:69; *for God has given his only begotten Son*, Jn 3:16, *he did not spare his only Son*, Rm 8:32, but has sent his Son, born of a woman, Ga 4:4; Lk 1:35, about whom he gave witness with his voice from heaven: *This is my beloved Son, in him I am well-pleased*, Mt 3:17. He speaks to him in the same way in Ps 2:7: *You are my Son. Today I have begotten you*. In verse eight: *I will make the nations of the earth your possession and the ends of the earth your inheritance*. To which he adds in verse twelve: *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry!* Cf. Ac 13:33.

However, that this Savior of ours, the Son of God, is true God (as was sufficiently shown above), I want to refer to and add a passage from the Old Testament. David prophesied concerning the Christ and the promises given him by God: *This is a human manner, O God, O LORD (יהוה)*, 2 Sm 7:19. Paul writes: *Christ comes from the fathers according to the flesh, who is God over all, praised eternally*, Ro 9:5.

Secondly, we also recognize and believe that Christ Jesus, our Savior, is true man. This was first proclaimed in the Old Testament; *for he will be called Seed of the woman*, Ge 3:15; *the distant seed of Abraham*, Ge 22:18; *the Seed of David*, 2 Sm 7:12; *the man who is God the LORD*, Ps 2:19; *the finest among the children of men*, Ps 45:3, (it is clear that this passage speaks of Christ in view of verse eight and He 1:8!); *Son of the virgin*, Is 7:14, as also Mt 1:23 testify that this is about Christ. Christ's humanity is also most clearly revealed in the New Testament. For there it is explicitly told how he was conceived in the Virgin Mary, and was born from her, Mt 1-2; his genealogy is stated in Lk 1-2 and also Mt 1, from where it is to be specifically inferred when Paul says: *Christ comes from the fathers according to the flesh*, Ro 9:5. He is called the Son of Man twenty eight times in Holy Scripture, e.g. Mt 8:20; Mk 2:28; Lk 5:24; Jn 3:13; Ac 7:56,

¹ *Eius vera divina natura, et vera humana natura*

etc. Just as the Son of God has the true divine nature, it also must be said that the Son of Man has the true human nature. He is also called a man, 1 Cor 15:21-22; 1 Ti 2:5, etc.

It had been demonstrated above in Part 1, Chapter 3, that the essential parts of a man are a rational soul and body, which comprise the human nature. The Son of God has assumed both these essential parts, and indeed he himself speaks about what relates to his true, human, rational soul: *My soul is grieved unto death*, Mt 26:38. Likewise: *Father, I commit my spirit into your hands*, Lk 23:46. Also see what Luke writes in 2:52: *Jesus increased in wisdom*. Concerning his true, human body it is said: *Since the children have flesh and blood, he likewise participated in it*, He 2:14. *A spirit doesn't have flesh and bone, as you see that I have*, Lk 24:39. Indeed since he was so prevalent and dwelt among men for such a long time, and finally also died, was buried and was raised again from the dead, who could doubt his true human body?

*The Second Chief Point: That the divine and human natures are personally united in Christ.*²

These two natures, the divine and the human, are united with each other so that only one person is God and man; there is only one Jesus Christ, who is God and man at the same time. Thus it is said: *There is one Mediator* (εἷς, one, single) *between God and men*, 1 Ti 2:5. *We have only one God and one Lord Jesus Christ* (εἷς, one, single), 1 Cor 8:6. *The Word* (that is the Son of God, who is God) *became flesh and lived among us*, Jn 1:14. *God sent his Son, born of a woman*, Ga 4:4. *Since the children have flesh and blood, he likewise participated in it*, He 2:14. *Certainly* (that is "well known") *great is the mystery of godliness: God is revealed in the flesh*, 1 Ti 3:16. *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God, and every spirit which does not confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh is not of God*, 1 Jn 4:15,3. *In Christ all the fullness of the Godhead lives bodily*, Col 2:9. The evidence that is adduced under the following chief point also belongs among the proof of this personal union.

Against this union of the divine and human nature in Christ fight not only all the enemies of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity (which was taught above in the chapter concerning God), but there are also those errorists fighting against this same doctrine who arose in the fifteen hundred years after the birth of Christ. First, Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, wanted to assert that Mary had only given birth to a mere man, that the Jews had only crucified a mere man, and likewise; through this assertion, the personal union of Christ is denied, and at the same time Christ would be rent into two persons. On the other hand, Eutyches, an abbot in Constantinople, while wanting to oppose Nestorius, fell into error with the result that the human nature of Christ was transformed into the divine nature and would have ceased to be a human nature.

Just as the enemies of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity were opposed through the cited proof, that Christ is true God, so also the so-called Nestorian and Eutychian errorists find their opposition out of the quoted testimony of Holy Scripture.

But to identify this more clearly, we must maintain that this union of the two natures in Christ has happened: 1. Without mixing.³ If two or more things were mixed

² *Duarum naturarum personalis unio*

with each other, then they do not remain what they were, but the mixing results in something that is totally different. For example, mix wine into water and you have neither wine nor water, but a mixed work of which you cannot say that it is water or wine. Now the two natures are not mixed in Christ, which would result in him being neither God nor man, but Christ is also true God and true man according to the union, even as it has been proven. It happens: 2. Without transformation.⁴ In Jn 2:7ff. the water was changed into wine, so that was no longer water but pure wine. But in Christ the divine nature is not transformed into the human, nor the human into the divine, but Christ is and remains God and man, as is clear from the aforementioned. It happens: 3. Without separation,⁵ that these two natures cannot be rent, divided, or separated from one another, since the almighty God wants to sever it nevermore, and nothing else can sever it. *The Word became flesh*, Jn 1:14; and *we have only one Christ*, 1 Ti 2:5; 1 Cor 8:6; and *he remains the one Christ in eternity: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and in eternity*, He 13:8.

Let us here hold the quoted passages against one another, because one hand always rules the other in the explanation. John writes: *the Word became flesh*, 1:14 and therefore Paul says that Christ, who is true God and true man, is only one Christ, i.e. only one person, 1 Ti 2:5; 1 Cor 8:6. However, in order that one might not think that the divine nature transforms into the human, or the human into the divine, or that both are mixed with each other, the Holy Scriptures testify that Christ is true God and also true man, and therefore it is said: *The Son of God has become a participant of flesh and blood*, He 2:14. *God is revealed in the flesh*, 1 Ti 3:16. *Christ, who is the Son of God, has come into the flesh*, 1 Jn 4:3,15. However, in order that one might not think that the divine nature had assumed the human nature only for a time and in a fashion of perhaps the angels who appear in a temporarily assumed form, it is said: *The Word became flesh*, Jn 1:14. *Christ comes from the fathers according to the flesh*, Ro 9:5. *He is true man. He has become a participant of flesh and blood as the children*, He 2:14. In order that one might not think that the divine nature of Christ lives in the human nature in the way, that the omnipresent God carries out his working of grace in believers, it is said: *The Word became flesh*, Jn 1:14. *He has become a participant of flesh and blood as the children*, He 2:14. *He is the Son of Man, in whom lives all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*. (σωματικῶς), Col 2:9.

From all of this it becomes evident, that the two natures in Christ are united with each other in no way other than a personal way.⁶ That is: they are so united that only one person is God and man; there is only one Mediator. Now the Son of God, as the other person of the Godhead, has his divine personality⁷ from eternity, in which he, from eternity, is a particular person of the most holy Godhead; therefore it is easy to conclude that the human nature in Christ makes up no particular person or has its own particular personality, but it is assumed⁸ in the personality of the divine nature and in this way only

³ ἀσυγχύτως *inconfuse*

⁴ ἀτρέπτως *inconvertibiliter*

⁵ ἀδιαιρέτως καὶ ἀχωρίτως *inseparabiliter*

⁶ *Est unio personalis*

⁷ *Personalitatem seu hyostasin sive subsistentiam*

⁸ *Natura humana assumpta est in subsistentiam seu personalitatem τοῦ λόγου*

one person is God and man. And this is certainly a great, high, and incomprehensible mystery as Paul speaks: *Certainly great* (that is “well known” or “unquestionably great”) *is the mystery of godliness: God is revealed in the flesh*, 1 Ti 3:6.

Thus there is a two-fold birth of Christ our Savior to be considered: 1. The eternal birth⁹ where he is born from eternity of God the Father as true God, which was handled above; 2. The temporal birth,¹⁰ which we understand to be not only the exit from the mother's body, but the entire incarnation.¹¹ This incarnation consists in this that the human nature was brought forth and at the same time was united with the divine in a personal way. For both of these, the generation of the human nature and its union with the divine nature happened at the same time. The Word became flesh and thus this flesh had not been previously born. Formerly it had been united with the Word, Jn 1:14.

The generation of the human nature of Christ was supernatural and wonderful, but it actually did happen. In the body of the blessed Virgin Mary the conception happened without man playing a part. *A virgin will be pregnant*, Is 7:14; Mt 1:23, *for she was known by no man*, Lk 1:34. The Holy Spirit prepared the human nature of Christ in her body. What was born in her was from the Holy Spirit, Mt 1:18-20. The Holy Spirit came over her, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her, Lk 1:35. However, the human nature of Christ had come from the body of the Virgin Mary, i.e. from that part of her female body from which a child comes at conception--for he is called the Seed of woman, Ge 3:15. *The fruit of your body*, Lk 1:42. Indeed the Holy Spirit sanctified and purified this material in and from the body of the Virgin Mary, from where the body of Christ was formed, so that original sin was not inborn in Christ in the least way; just as he also had no actual sin in him. Thus it is said: *The Holy One which will be born of you*, etc., Lk 1:35. *He knew of no sin*, 2 Cor 5:21; Jn 8:46. *An innocent and unblemished lamb*, 1 Pt 1:19. *There is no sin in him*, 1 Jn 3:5. *Jesus Christ, who is righteous*, 1 Jn 2:1. *The Holy One of God*, Ps 16:10. *Holy, innocent, unblemished, separated from sin*, He 7:26. *He has acted unjustly towards no one, and no deceit was found in his mouth*, Is 53:10; 1 Pt 2:22, and thus he was in no way subjected to the weakness of sin. Consequently, he would have been immortal if he had not wanted to lay down his life for us out of his free will, Jn 10, 12, 18. He was, without doubt, the best in mind as well as in body and was endowed with splendid gifts, as it is said: *You are the best among the children of men, blessed are your lips*, Ps 45:3. Indeed, he willingly submitted to the attributes which are common to man but are not essentially sinful such as hunger, thirst, perspiration, sleep, and the like, and was tempted in every way, just as we are, but still was without sin, He 4:15.

*The Third Chief Point: What followed out of the union of these two natures.*¹²

This mystery of the personal union of the two natures in Christ is drawn out still further: our Evangelical Church in its confession, the *Formula Concordae*,¹³ teaches

⁹ *Generatio aeterna*

¹⁰ *Generatio temporalis*

¹¹ *Incarnatio*

¹² *Consequens unionis personalis*

against the so-called Sacramentarians, i.e. against all the advocates of the Zwinglian error, that out of the personal union follows: 1. The communication or participation of the two natures,¹⁴ and further, 2. The communication or participation of the attributes of the two natures.¹⁵

First, the two natures in Christ, the divine and the human, are so communicated with each other that the human nature is the Son of God, and the divine nature is the man Jesus. This was necessary, so that it could be said: *God has acquired communion through his own blood, Ac 20:28, and the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, purifies us from all sins, 1 Jn 1:7.* It must be the blood of God, the Son of God, and indeed it must be his own blood.

This communication and participation of the two natures in Christ is indicated through the established passages of Holy Scripture concerning the personal union¹⁶ which say that God is man and the man is God. Indeed, the humanity in an abstract meaning¹⁷ is not the deity, and the deity in an abstract meaning¹⁸ is not the humanity. However, this man in a concrete meaning¹⁹ is God, and God in a concrete meaning²⁰ is the man Jesus. This is not based in some way (as the so-called Sacramentarians like to maintain) on mere words which were not to be understood literally, but in fact it is truly this way: that one, who is true God, is the one, who is true man, and this true man is that one who is true God. For it is as shown above: only one person is God and man--that one is Jesus Christ. Therefore Scripture speaks: *The man, who is God, the Lord, 2 Sm 7:29, the branch (that is the Son) of David should have the name, so that one calls him Lord (Jehovah the true God), who is our righteousness, Jr 23:5-6.* Concerning the most beautiful among the children of men it is said: *God, your throne remains forever; God, your God has anointed you, Ps 45:3,7-8. The Son of Man is the Son of the living God, Mt 16:16, and at the same time verse 13. The other man is the Lord from heaven, 1 Cor 15:47. The son of David is the Lord of David, Mt 22:11, 42, 43. The Holy One, who was born to Mary, is called the Son of God, Lk 1:35.* Therefore, Mary can be called of all things the mother of God, in that she bore the man, who is God and who was at the same time true God in conception. Of this it is said also in Jn 1:14: *The Word (this Word is God) became flesh (or man). The Son of God, is born of a woman, Ga 4:4.*

It belongs also here those sayings and expressions of Scripture that name the person of the God-man Christ and say that he is true God and also that he is true man. For example: *Christ comes out from the fathers according to the flesh; Christ is God over all, praised in eternity, Ro 9:5. Jesus Christ who has come into the flesh is the Son of God, 1 Jn 4:15,3. Jesus Christ is the true God, 1 Jn 5:20. The man Christ Jesus, 1 Ti 2:5ff.* Thus the communication of the two natures in Christ is an actual and true

¹³ Artic. VIII

¹⁴ *Communicatio naturarum*

¹⁵ *Communicatio idiomatum*

¹⁶ *Vocantur propositiones personales, quia unionem personalem declarant.*

¹⁷ *Humanitas, i.e. abstractum humanae naturae*

¹⁸ *Deitas, i.e. abstractum divinae naturae*

¹⁹ *Homo, i.e. concretum humanae naturae*

²⁰ *Deus, i.e. concretum divinae naturae*

communication,²¹ so that the Son of God is the true son of Mary and the son of Mary is the true Son of God,

Another point to be considered is the communication or association of the attributes of the two natures.

Under the attributes of the human nature²² we understand that which is particular to the human nature in Christ, such as: to be a creature, to be bodily, to have flesh and blood, to suffer, die, rise, descend, ascend, to be moved from one place to another, to hunger, thirst, feel cold, sweat and the like.

Under the attributes of the divine nature²³ we understand that which is particular to the divine nature in Christ, such as: almighty, omniscient, all wise, omnipresent, infinite, eternal, and the like.

As has been proven, the divine and human nature in Christ are personally united without mixing and without transformation, so that Christ is true God and true man; thus, with such a union neither the divine nor the human nature has lost its attributes, but each has kept them.

In the personal union, each of these two natures communicates its attributes to the other. The two natures in Christ are not so united with each other that absolutely nothing is communicated to each other, (where on lie the Nestorian errorists which were mentioned above, for whom both natures are not able to be united with each other, other than how one glues together two boards--in that there is no communication or union), but because both natures in him are only one person, the attributes of the human nature are consequently communicated and in common with the divine nature, and the attributes of the divine nature are communicated and in common with the human nature. For example, God has shed his own blood for us. Now to have blood and to shed blood is an attribute of the human nature, but the Son of God is man, so this attribute is communicated to the Son of God by the human nature, and so forth.

There are three kinds of this communication of the attributes:²⁴ The first way is that God, namely the other person of the Godhead, comes to the human attributes, and to the man, namely the Son of Man, come the divine attributes.²⁵ We do not speak of the Godhead or the divine nature in an abstract meaning²⁶ in this first way, nor of the humanity or the human nature in an abstract meaning,²⁷ but of God and man in a concrete meaning.²⁸

Here belong the expressions in Scripture: *The Prince of Life* (that is God) *is dead*, Ac 3:15. *The Lord of glory is crucified*, 1 Cor 2:8. *God has acquired communion through his blood*, Ac 20:28. *The one, who is God over everything, comes from the Father*, Ro 9:5. Thus also: *The Son of Man travels back, to where he was previously*, Jn 6:62. Also those sayings which deal with Christ as a person who is God and man and appropriate an attribute of the divine or human nature to him belong here. For example,

²¹ *Est communicatio realis*

²² *Idiomata humanae naturae*

²³ *Idiomata divinae naturae*

²⁴ *Tria genera communicationis idiomatum*

²⁵ *Primum genus, quo Deus sibi vindicat, quae sunt hominis, et homine, quae sunt Dei*

²⁶ *Non de divina natura in abstracto*

²⁷ *Nec de humana natura in abstracto*

²⁸ *Sed in concreto de Deo et homine*

Christ comes from the Father according to the flesh, Ro 9:5. Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, 1 Pt 4:1.

The second kind of communication of attributes is this communication and participation in which the two natures in Christ contribute to the work of our redemption and each nature works in participation with the other.²⁹ The human nature has suffered, died, and the like, so that this was one suffering, death, and shedding of God's blood. The divine nature has made this suffering completely valid, so this complete validity was also of the Son of Man. In addition, all the works of the office of Christ have that same condition.³⁰

Here now belong the expressions and sayings of Holy Scripture which handle the works of the office of Christ, which sometimes name God, sometimes the Son of Man, and sometimes Christ, but each time the meaning is that each nature of Christ contributes to the other nature that which is its own. For example, *God has acquired communion with his blood, Ac 20:28. The blood of the Son of God makes us pure from all sins, 1 Jn 1:7. The seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent, Ge 3:16. The Son of Man has come to save that which is lost, Lk 9:56. Jesus Christ has given himself for our sins, Ga 1:3-4.*

Understand the first and second way of the communication of attributes in this way. I showed earlier that we must have received such a Redeemer, who is at the same time God and man and yet is only one person, so that it is said: God has died for us; God has suffered for us. Accordingly, each nature in the Redeemer must now contribute that which is its own to the work of redemption, so that it all happened in participation with the other nature. The man suffered, for God, as God, cannot suffer. However, because this man is God, God also suffered. God made this suffering sufficient and valid; for the man, as man, could not do this, as was shown. But because this man is God, the man Jesus makes such suffering sufficient and valid.

This will now be understood that when the Son of God appropriates the human attributes and the man Jesus appropriates the divine attributes, it is always according to the nature whose attribute is communicated to the other.³¹ For example, *the one who is God over all comes from the Father according to the flesh, Ro 9:5*, as I then must say: the Son of God has died according to his human nature, the man Jesus has made his sufferings sufficient according to his divine nature, and the like. Indeed this is something totally different, than what Zwingli alleged when he said: If a human attribute would be attributed to God (that is the Son of God), then the man and the human nature would be understood under God; and likewise, if a divine attribute would be ascribed to the Son of Man, then God must be understood under the Son of Man.³² No, that is a shameful teaching which must seize and abolish our entire faith.³³ The Son of God has only suffered according to the human nature, but indeed as the Son of God, God has suffered, because the human nature is of the Son of God, and so on. Therefore it is so clearly

²⁹ *Quo ad opera officii Christi utraque natura suum confert et cum communicatione alterius agit*

³⁰ *Quae opera ideo ἀποτελέσματα vocantur*

³¹ *Intelligitur κατ' ἄλλο*

³² *Fugebat hanc loquend iffiguram, quam alaeosin vocabat, contra quam allaeosin beatus Lutherus in libro "daß die Worte: 'das is mein Leib' noch fest stehen" tum fortiter pugnavit.*

³³ *Vide solidam declarationem in Formula Concordiae (artic. VIII)*

stated: *God has acquired communion through his own blood* (his own blood, ἰδίου αἵματος, the blood, which is God's own), Ac 20:28. *The blood of the Son of God makes us pure from all sins*, 1 Jn 1:8. All this is based on the fact that *the Word became flesh*, Jn 1:4, that the two natures are personally united in Christ and are communicated to each other. From that it is evident that the communication and participation of the attributes is an actual and true communion.³⁴

The third way of communication and participation consists in that all divine sovereignty, power, majesty and glory is able to be communicated in the personal union to the human nature of Christ in an abstract meaning³⁵ (the humanity of Christ), as well as in a concrete meaning³⁶ (the man Jesus), that is the Son of Man. Only in this way of communication and participation of the attributes does the human nature receive the perfection and sovereignty of the divine nature. The divine nature, however, can not receive the same from the human nature, for the divine nature thoroughly penetrates the human nature and fills it with its perfection. The human nature, however, can not penetrate the divine or give it a perfection through which the divine nature could be more excellent than it previously had been.

Concerning this way of communication it is said: *In Christ lives the entire fullness of the Godhead bodily*, (σωματικῶς, i.e. in the human nature) Col 2:9. Concerning the same, Christ speaks: *All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me*, Mt 28:28. *All things are subjected to me by my Father*, Mt 11:27. For here he speaks about his human nature; for what he had received at that time, that was given to him according to his human nature, because the divine nature is one being with the Father and the Holy Ghost from eternity, and has everything from eternity. Consequently, at that time he could not have received anything. Thus it is also said: *His flesh is the living bread which came from heaven*, Jn 6:52. *The Father has given the Son the power to judge, because* (or "much more," "so far") *he is the Son of Man*, Jn 5:27. From which it appears clear, that this communication is a true and actual communication or participation.

Especially now the omnipresence³⁷ is also communicated to the human nature of Christ. Not as if in and of itself it is infinite and immeasurable, and not as if it is extended through a corporeal extension or expansion into all places and corners, but that it is present (in a way which is incomprehensible to us, but still true) where Christ wants and especially where he has promised that very presence.³⁸ Thus writes Matthew: Jesus (who now wanted to go back to heaven, i.e. in regard to his human nature) spoke: *All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. I am with you always until the end of the world*, Mt 28:18,20. *The entire fullness of the Godhead lives bodily in Christ*, Col 2:9. *He who went down is the same one who has gone up above all the heavens, so that he fills everything*, Eph 4:10. The one who has gone down and back up is the Son of Man or Christ according to the human nature. Therefore it is connected that he fills everything. The matter concerning the place at the right hand of God, which will be dealt with in the next chapter, also belongs here.

³⁴ *Est communicatio realis, non tantum verbalis*

³⁵ *Humana natura in abstracto*

³⁶ *Nec non in concreto*

³⁷ *Id quod multi turpiter negant*

³⁸ *Uti declaratur in solid. declarat. Formula Concordae (artic. VIII)*

However, the human nature of Christ did not fully use this communicated sovereignty, majesty, power and glory before his resurrection and ascension, but he parted with most of the use of them--though he did not give up his possession of them. That is why this state of Christ is called his humiliation. Following this state was the state of exaltation. The following chapter will deal with these two states in a fuller manner.

*The Second Chapter: Concerning the Two States of Christ.*³⁹

After the Son of God became man, he entered into the state of deepest humiliation. After this he went to the state of exultation in which he still is and will remain in all eternity. I want to handle these two states in two chief points.

*The First Chief Point: The state of humiliation.*⁴⁰

Let us consider the necessity of this humiliation and also in what this state consists.

As far as this necessity is concerned, it is known: *The Word became flesh*, Jn 1:14, i.e. the Son of God took on a human nature. As soon as this happened, the assumed human nature was thoroughly penetrated by the divine nature, and thus was overshadowed with perfection, sovereignty, divine power and glory, as it is said: *In him lives the entire fullness of the Godhead bodily*, Col 2:9. Now after the assumed nature was filled and surpassed with the divine sovereignty, majesty, perfection and power, then the human nature possessed these communicated attributes. If he had wanted to make use of such sovereignty and glory, then he would have had to be in that same state in which he is now transfigured--full of brightness, glory, sovereignty and majesty. Consequently, Christ could not have been born as a small, infant child or subjected to so much misery, distress and natural weakness or be seen and considered as any other man. At the absolute least, in such glory and divine majesty he would not have been able to suffer and die. Take only one explanation about this from Jn 18:4,6: When the crowd wanted to seize him and he, using a flash of his majesty, said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. Even less would the human nature have been able to die if it would have stood in full use of the divine majesty and sovereignty.

However, because suffering and death was absolutely necessary for our salvation, the all-knowing counsel of God required that Jesus live visibly among the people as the Son of Man and that he should be recognized without doubt as a true man by everyone. For that reason it was necessary that the human nature of Christ part with the use of its communicated divine sovereignty, power, majesty, perfection and glory for a time. Although he kept them, he did not make full use of them.

Secondly, the state of humiliation consists in this: that the human nature of Christ, for the most part, freed itself from the use of the divine sovereignty, majesty, glory, etc.

It is incorrect when a man says that the divine nature has been humiliated; for this nature cannot be humiliated. Also, it had not been humiliated through the incarnation,

³⁹ *De duplici statu Christi*

⁴⁰ *De statu exinanitionis*

but had communicated its sovereignty and majesty to the human nature even more. For only the human nature undergoes this humiliation.

The following passages deal with this humiliation: *You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that although he was very rich* (namely, although his human nature had everything, in that all sovereignty, might, power, majesty, etc. was communicated to it), *he still became poor for your sake* (he parted with the use, but not the possession of such wealth and such glory), 2 Cor 8:9. Further: Jesus Christ, although he was indeed in divine form (i.e. although his human nature was given all divine authority, sovereignty, majesty and the like), he did not consider it to be a robbery to be like God (Man is bent on robbery, to hold fast to the same, and not to give an inch. The Son of Man was not like this; he was not so bent on the divine sovereignty and majesty communicated to him that he had in no way wanted to let go of it.), but he humbled himself and took on the form of a servant. He became like any other man, in the form of a man (σχήματι in all outward appearance and performance) and was found as a man. *He humiliated himself and became obedient to death--even to death on the cross*, Php 2:6-8.

How can one not say that the divine nature became poor and obedient to death on the cross? Therefore it is clear from these testimonies that the humiliation concerned only the human nature.

At times during his humiliation the Son of Man made use of the divine sovereignty and glory to a certain extent and showed a flash of his divine brilliance--mainly in his miracles. *The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth*, Jn 1:14. *For thus he revealed his glory in Cana*, Jn 2:11, and spoke about his miracles to Martha: *If you believed, you would see the glory of God*, Jn 11:40.

The events of Christ's conception and birth belong in the state of humiliation: that he grew as a small child in his mother's womb, and was carried therein for the proper time and was born into the world; especially that he was born of a poor virgin in great poverty and want, Lk 2:7. Also in the state of humiliation belongs his upbringing, when *he ate butter and honey* (the food of children), *until he learned to reject evil and choose good*, i.e. until he came to the discerning use of human understanding, Is 7:15, in which *he gradually increased in wisdom, age, and grace*, Lk 2:52, and during that time he was subject to his mother and Joseph, the foster father, Lk 2:51. As for the rest of his journey among men: He had no place to lay his head, Mt 8:20. So then he subjected himself to all the common natural weaknesses which are not essentially sinful: hunger, Mt 4:2; thirst, Jn 4:7; sleep, Mk 4:38; exhaustion, Jn 4:6 and the like. *For he was tempted in every way, just as we are, yet he was still without sin*, He 4:15. Further, in the state of humiliation belong his sufferings (which he bore for us in soul and body), his death (when the bond or natural union between his human body and his human soul was broken), and finally also his burial (which as a testimony of his true death immediately followed his death) wherein, however, his holy body could in no way decay, Ps 16:10; Ac 2:31, 13:35-37. So *he humiliated himself* according to his human nature *and became obedient to death, even death on the cross*, Php 2:8.

*The Second Chief Point: The state of exaltation.*⁴¹

However, after perfect satisfaction for divine righteousness because of our sins was accomplished through obedience, suffering and death, then the human nature of Christ entered the state of exaltation which consists in this:⁴² that he now makes full use of the divine sovereignty, power, majesty and glory which were communicated to him already at the incarnation and which he still uses without end. Concerning this it is said: *Through the suffering of death Jesus is crowned with praise and honor*, He 2:9. *Mustn't Christ suffer such things and then enter into his glory?* Lk 24:26. *Therefore*, (specifically because he previously humiliated himself to death) *God has honored him and has given him a name which is above all names* (for the name of the shoot of David should be: LORD, Jehovah, who is our righteousness, Jr 23:6), *so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow--in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the honor of God the Father*, Php 2:9-11.

This state of exaltation began at the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, when his human soul and his human body, which were separated until then in death (though both had remained united with the divine nature), were again united for eternal life on the third day after the death of Christ. This raising of Christ was a work of the divine omnipotence which is common to all three persons of the most holy Deity. Therefore we must say that God the Father and the Holy Spirit, as also the Son of God, resurrected his dead body again and united it with his soul for life. Concerning God the Father it is said: *God has raised up his child Jesus*, Ac 3:26. Concerning God the Son: *I lay down my life so that I may take it up again; I have the power to lay it down and to take it up again*, Jn 10:17-18. Concerning God the Holy Spirit: *Christ was made alive according to the Spirit*, 1 Pt 3:18.

As soon as the resurrection of Jesus happened, and before he outwardly revealed himself and was known to men, Jesus Christ also journeyed to hell. Of all things, Christ's journey to hell belongs with the state of his exaltation.

The bitter suffering of Jesus--especially in his soul when he was forsaken by God--is also symbolically called a journey to hell.⁴³ The following words are to be taken in that way: *You will not leave my soul in hell*, Ps 16:10 and Ac 2:31. But according to his death he had nothing further to suffer, for it is said: *It is finished*, Jn 19:30. But Christ's true journey to hell,⁴⁴ as confessed by our evangelical church,⁴⁵ consists in that he presented himself as a victorious conqueror in hell. He showed the Devil how he had broken his power and reign, and he showed the Devil along with the damned that he was the Son whom they would not kiss in faith (Ps 2:12), and now because of their unbelief they must be eternally forsaken. *That Christ is ascended--what does it mean other than that he previously descended in the undermost places of the earth*, Eph 4:10. *He died according to the flesh, but was made alive according to the Spirit through whom he also went and preached to the souls in prison who long ago did not believe at the time of*

⁴¹ *De statu exaltationis*

⁴² *Eius formalis ratio*

⁴³ *Descensus ad inferos metaphoricus*

⁴⁴ *Descensus Christi ad inferos verus*

⁴⁵ *Formula Concordae* Artic. IX

Noah, 1 Pt 3:18-20. This “preaching” is representing oneself as a conqueror.⁴⁶ Finally, the ascension to heaven and the seating of his human nature at the right hand of God followed. Concerning this it is said in the prophecy of David: *The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand!”* Ps 110:1; Mt 20:44; Ac 2:34. The following passages testify that this followed: Ro 8:34; Ep 1:20; Col 3:1; 1 Pt 3:22; He 1:3; He 10:12. However, this sitting at the right hand of God is sovereignty which was communicated to the human nature of Christ. For if his divine nature is of one being and power with the Father from eternity, how could one say that such glory was given to him at that time? Stephen spoke in this way: *Behold, I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God*, Ac 7:56. But we ask what this sitting at the right hand of God is, because it is conceivable that this is a metaphor since God--realistically speaking--does not have a hand. But this is explained clearly in the Holy Scriptures: just as God’s omnipotence and dominion is shown through his hand, so to sit at the right hand of God means to rule and reign with God over everything. Paul explains it in this way: *God raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in heaven over all rule and authority, power and dominion and every title that can be given, not only in this world, but also in the world to come, and has placed everything under his feet*, Eph 1:20-22. Peter said: *He went to the right hand of God in heaven, and the angels and the authorities and the powers are subject to him*, 1 Pt 3:22.

So now in the exaltation, Christ (according to his human nature) has the full use of all the communicated power, omnipotence, majesty and glory given to him in the human nature so that *he rules until he lays all his enemies as a footstool for his feet; for God has placed everything under his feet*, 1 Cor 15:25, 27. Therefore he rules here over the entire earth--especially over his Church and believers. This is explained further in the following chapter in the doctrine of the reign of Jesus Christ.

*The Third Chapter: Regarding the Office of Christ*⁴⁷

We call everything that Christ did and performed for our salvation and well being, as mediator between God and us, the office of Christ. We will handle this office in two chief points: 1. Concerning the office in general, 2. Concerning its division into a three-fold office.

*The First Chief Point: Concerning the office of Christ in general.*⁴⁸

In the previous chapter it was shown why it was necessary that Christ, in his human nature, parted with his human nature’s customary use of the divine, communicated

⁴⁶ *Sunt qui hoc dictum de praedicatione tempore Noae facta exponunt sed 1. contextus a versu 18. ad 21. 22. ubi passionis, resurrectionis Christi et adscensionis in coelum mentio fit, pro sententia nostra omnino facit; 2. verbum χηρύσσειν notat etiam declarare victorem, citare victorem, quod ex Plutarcho, Xenoph., Aeliano etc. probari potest. vid Scap. in hac voce, et Kuhnii comment. ed Aelian. hist. var. in voce χήρυσξ et χήρυσγμα.*

⁴⁷ *De officio Christi*

⁴⁸ *De officio Christi in genere*

sovereignty, power and majesty during his time on earth--especially in his suffering and death.

But now, accordingly, not only the divine, but also the human nature has contributed to the work of the office of Christ, as was shown in the chapter regarding the person of Christ. Therefore the human nature of Christ which, for the most part, should have parted with the use of its communicated sovereignty and majesty--and indeed fully in the suffering and death--must be equipped to the end with the gifts of grace and the power of the Holy Spirit. Without these gifts the human nature of Christ must have been created with the gracious gifts of innate wisdom, righteousness, and holiness; for this indispensably belongs to a pure and God-pleasing man, as was already proven above.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit not only prepared the human nature of Christ in the body of the Virgin Mary from her flesh and blood which was purified and sanctified by him, Lk 1:35; Mt 1:20, but also when the child Jesus grew, he became strong in the Spirit, full of wisdom, and the grace of God was on him, Lk 2:40. When he was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended from heaven as a dove and came upon him, Mt 3:16. The Holy Spirit empowered and strengthened him in his human nature--especially during his suffering. It is said concerning that: *He offered himself unblemished to God through the Holy Spirit*, He 9:14.

Now listen further! In the Old Testament the prophets, high priests and kings of the Jewish people were types of Christ. Through them it was shown in advance that the acts which Christ would perform for our salvation would agree with the prophetic, high priestly and kingly offices.

Now God had ordained in the Jewish church a holy anointing oil in this way: *Take for yourself the best spices, five hundred shekels of the noblest myrrh and half as much of cinnamon, two hundred and fifty shekels, and also two hundred and fifty shekels of cane, five hundred shekels of cassia--according to the sanctuary shekel--and a hin of olive oil and make a holy anointing oil according to the art of the druggist*, Ex 30:23ff. This holy, enriching, and merry-making anointing oil was a means of the Holy Spirit which was to be given and poured out over the prophets, high priests and kings as the following context describes.

With this oil the priests were anointed and ordained as high priests, Ex 30:30, as were the kings and at times the prophets as well. Thus God commanded Elijah: *Anoint Jehu, son of Nimshi, to be king over Israel, and Elisha, son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to be prophet in your place!* 1 Kg 19:16.

Now the Hebrew word "Messiah" and the Greek word "Christ" mean "the Anointed One." The promised Savior of the world was also called the Anointed One in this way in the Old Testament, because the Holy Spirit would equip his human nature with the gifts of grace through which he would be able to be a prophet, high priest and king before God in the union with the divine nature. It is said concerning this: *God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy more than your companions* (that is more than the prophets, high priests and kings), Ps 45:8. This is explained in Isaiah where it is said: *The Spirit of the LORD is over me; therefore, the LORD has anointed me*, Is 61:1. The Lord Jesus also explained this to be about himself, Lk 4:18, and likewise Peter says: *God has anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power*, Ac 10:38.

Therefore, Jesus Christ, the God-man, who in his human nature has been equipped with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, has taken on a three-fold office which he performed according to his divine nature as well as according to his human nature--namely, the prophetic, high priestly and kingly office.

*The Second Chief Point: Concerning the three-fold office of Christ.*⁴⁹

The first office is the prophetic office of Christ.⁵⁰ For “prophet” we understand here one who announces the counsel and will of God to men.

Moses had previously said about Christ: *The LORD, your God, will raise up for you a prophet, like me, from you and your brothers. Listen to him!* Dt 18:15. Peter testifies that this is spoken of Christ in Ac 3:22. Concerning this it is said of him: *A great prophet has risen among us*, Lk 7:16. Similarly: *He is truly the Prophet who was to come into the world*, Jn 6:14.

Therefore, the prophetic office of Christ consisted in this: that when he had come into the flesh for our salvation, he revealed to men the counsel and will of God concerning man’s salvation. He revealed this himself, and through his apostles and ordained men.

The essence of his preaching (as his forerunner John had reported, Mt 3:2) was: *Repent! The kingdom of heaven is drawing near!* Mt 4:17, or as Mark expresses it: *The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near; repent and believe in the Gospel!* Mk 1:15.

It also belongs here that he instituted the holy sacraments of the New Testament along with the office of the Word that preaches reconciliation, concerning which more will be said in the appropriate place. *But he preached with authority, unlike the teachers of the Law*, Mt 7:29, i.e. with great and divine power he confirmed his word and the preaching of his apostles with many signs and wonders with the result that everyone could recognize the divine truth and certainty of his speech.

In the following state of exaltation, when he still applies his Word and sacraments and gives them spirit and power it is ascribed to him as our king, and his prophetic office then concurs with his kingly office in the kingdom of grace.

The second office is the priestly or high priestly office⁵¹ which was the most particular reason why Christ came in the flesh and from where his remaining works stem.

The word “priest” must be understood here in the meaning of the Old Testament. For the priests and high priests in their Old Testament offices were types of Christ. Priests were the ones in the Old Testament who had to make the sacrifices for themselves and for the people. “To offer” (from the Latin word *offere*, the Greek word προσφέρειν) in general means to give or hand over something to someone. Specifically, however, it means that which someone gives or hands over to God. In the most narrow sense it means that which man gives to God for reconciliation.

No mere man can give God something for reconciliation, as was proven in the second chapter of this second section. However, *the Lamb that was slain from the*

⁴⁹ *De triplici officio Christi*

⁵⁰ *Officium propheticum*

⁵¹ *Officium sacerdotale*

beginning, Rv 13:8, our Savior, had given himself over to God on our behalf for our reconciliation.

However, before he came into the flesh, the priests in the Old Testament had to slaughter many sacrifices for reconciliation. They had to give and hand over these sacrifices to God--sacrifices that indeed had no power in and of themselves. But at that time those sacrifices were aimed at the coming Savior and the merit he would earn with his blood. Hence, for the sake of Christ, they were accepted by God in faith.

Accordingly, the priestly office in the Old Testament was not actually the office of the Word, but the sacrificial office where one had to become reconciled with God in faith through the sacrifices which typified Christ.

Christ is now the true priest and the right high priest, for which reason he came in the flesh. So that he might preserve the types, he fulfilled and gave himself as the satisfaction and reconciliation for our sins. Thus the high priestly office of Christ is nothing other than the assumed, most noble duty which he performed when he reconciled us with God through the perfect satisfaction and merit and when he repaid the ransom, the payment for our sins for the righteousness of God.

Therefore it is said about Christ already in the Old Testament: *Offerings and grain offerings do not please you, O God. You want neither burnt offerings nor sin offerings* (i.e. these types had in and of themselves no power for reconciliation; the true sacrifice had to come once for all). *Then I spoke, "See, I am coming. It is written about me in the book. I love to do your will, my God,"* Ps 40:7-9; He 10:5-7. *The LORD has sworn and it and he will not change his mind: you are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek,* Ps 110:4 (cf. He 5:6; He 6:20; He 7:1ff.). *He will give his life as a guilt offering,* Is 53:11.

The work of redemption and reconciliation present everywhere in the New Testament is also placed under this name of the priestly or sacrificial office. *He gave himself over for us as a gift and sacrifice, as a sweet fragrance to God,* Eph 5:2ff. *He offered himself for the sin of the people,* He 7:27. *He was offered for us* (in the sense that a sacrifice is killed), 1 Cor 5:7. Therefore, he is called our high priest. *We should have such a high priest, for whom it is not of daily necessity, as those high priests, first to make a sacrifice for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. For he (Christ) did this once for all when he offered himself. For the Law (the Jewish religious law) makes men high priests who have that weakness, but this word of oath, which was said according to the Law, appointed the Son eternal and perfect,* He 7:27-28. See also chapter 4:14-15; 5:1-3; 5:10-11. The whole Epistle to the Hebrews certainly deals with this.

It is important to note three things from this: 1. That Christ has truly given himself as the sacrifice for the reconciliation and satisfaction for our sins with the result that he made perfect satisfaction for the righteousness of God. This was proven in part here and in part above. 2. That this sacrifice of his (I mean his work of satisfaction and merit) was performed by him for each and every sinner and every man; this was shown above. 3. In what did this sacrifice or satisfaction actually consist? In this: that Christ fulfilled all of the righteousness of God for us and fully obeyed and observed the will of God not only in his life, but also in his suffering and death. He took on himself and endured all of God's

anger which all the sinners of the world had caused and merited. Therefore this belongs partly to the obedience of Christ in life,⁵² and also partly to his obedience in suffering.⁵³

The obedience of Christ in life was that in our place he fulfilled the whole Law of God and all his righteousness with the most perfect inward and outward obedience. It is said about this: *God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under Law, so that he might redeem those who were under the Law*, Ga 4:4-5. *"I did not come," he said, "to remove the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill them,"* Mt 5:17. Further: *My food is that I am doing the will of the one who sent me, and finishing his work*, Jn 4:34.

The obedience in suffering was that he willingly and without complaint or objection took on himself all of God's anger over our sins. To make amends for those sins he endured such things not only with the hardest suffering in his soul when he grieved over feeling all God's anger until death (Mt 26:38) and was forsaken by God (Mt 27:46), but also with the most unspeakable, bitterest bodily suffering and a shameful and painful death: *He was obedient unto death, even death on the cross*, Php 2:8. Consider here the passages quoted above!

Because this sacrifice of reconciliation was not the sacrifice of a mere man, but of a man who is God, it was and is perfectly sufficient for all the sins of the world. For it was an obedience, suffering, death and sacrifice of God. So it must now be said: *God has acquired communion with his own blood*, Ac 20:28. *The blood of the Son of God purifies us from all sins*, 1 Jn 1:7. *God sent his Son to redeem those who were under the Law*, Ga 4:4-5, and therefore the Apostle speaks: *With one sacrifice he has finished making them holy eternally* (i.e. he had done fully enough for them), He 10:14. Further: *When he was made perfect* (i.e. when he endured his suffering and death), *he became a source of eternal salvation for all who are obedient to him* (ἀίτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου: *causa aeternae salutis*), He 5:9.

At the same time with this most perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ is to be considered his prayer and intercession with God on our behalf through which he pointed to his suffering, obedience and merit which he gave over for us. Through that prayer and intercession he also pointed to God's gracious reception of this payment for guilt. These prayers then preserve the grace of God for us for the sake of this payment. *In the days of his flesh he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears*, He 5:7.

Since Christ, our Savior, has now completed his offering and has entered into the state of exaltation, he still remains our high priest eternally, as it is said: *You are a priest forever*, He 5:6. *We have a high priest, Jesus, who ascended to heaven*, He 4:14. Indeed, it is not as if he still must make sacrifices for us time and again: *No, he was made perfect and became a source of eternal salvation for all who are obedient to him*, He 5:9. *He made this sacrifice once for all when he offered himself*, He 7:27. *Once for all, he went into the sanctuary through his own blood and found an eternal redemption*, He 9:12. *Every priest* (in the Old Testament) *was appointed to offer one kind of sacrifice many times, but this priest* (namely Christ), *after he offered one sacrifice for sin for all time, he now sits at the right hand of God*, He 10:11-12. *Christ was raised from the dead, so he cannot die again; death has no mastery over him any longer*, Rm 6:9.

⁵² *Obedientia activa*

⁵³ *Obedientia passiva*

But he is still called our high priest in two senses: First, because this sacrifice of his which was offered for us for all time is eternal (as was proven above). Second, because, as our Redeemer and Mediator by virtue of his sacrifice for guilt, he again and again represents us before his heavenly Father and prays for us in the most powerful way. Concerning this, Scripture says: *He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him. He lives forever and prays for them,* He 7:25-25. *We have one who speaks to the Father on our behalf, Jesus Christ, who is righteous and who is the satisfaction for our sins,* 1 Jn 2:1-2. *Christ, who died and was raised, is at the right hand of God and represents us,* Ro 8:34.

Finally, there is also a kingly office to be considered. However, I already put forth the reason for such consideration above and the remaining explanation follows in the next chapter.

God had promised to hand over the kingdom to his Son as our Savior so that he could reign, draw the believers to himself, save them, condemn and punish the unbelievers, guide and lead his Church on earth and have everything in his power to the end. In that sense the kings of the Jewish people were also types of Christ. In that meaning God proclaimed to King David, from whose seed Christ was to be born according to the flesh, that he would confirm his kingdom to his offspring, 2 Sm 7:12. David understood that this was in regard to Christ, and said: *That is a way of men, O God the LORD,* 2 Sm 7:19. Therefore David also says of Christ: *You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek,* Ps 110:4. The Apostle explained these words in this way: that Christ was at the same time a priest and a king of righteousness, and also a king of peace, He 7:2. Isaiah also says: *To us a child is born, so that his glory will become great and there will be no end of peace, and he will be on David's throne and over his kingdom,* Is 9:6-7. The angel Gabriel himself explained this concerning Christ, saying: *God the LORD will give him the throne of his father David, and he will be a king forever over the house of Jacob, and his kingdom will have no end,* Lk 1:32-33.

Now after Christ sat down at the right hand of God, he entered into the administration of his kingdom (as was shown at the end of the foregoing chapter). It is his kingdom, but it is a three-fold kingdom: the kingdom of eternal glory, the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of power. Concerning this, see the entire following chapter!

The Fourth Chapter: Regarding the Administration of Christ's Kingdom⁵⁴

Since it is necessary to confess how Christ administers his kingdom in accordance with the revelation of the Holy Spirit, I will do that (with the omission of the remaining clear circumstances) in two chief points: 1. Who actually administers this kingdom? 2. How is it administered?

⁵⁴ *De oeconomia regni Christi*

*The First Chief Point: Who rules this kingdom?*⁵⁵

It is important to remember here that before Christ came in the flesh and later sat down at the right hand of God, the triune God administered the three-fold kingdom mentioned in the previous chapter, namely the kingdom of power or nature, the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of eternal glory (which I showed in the doctrine of divine providence). It is said: *The kingdom and the power of our God has become the kingdom of his Christ*, Re 12:10, as was previously mentioned in the doctrine of divine providence.

Before the exaltation of Christ the most holy Trinity had administered these kingdoms according to its own divine omnipotence, omniscience, and wisdom, as was stated in the doctrine of divine providence; certainly such rule and administration is ascribed to God the Father specifically in a certain sense, as was explained in the doctrine of the work of creation.

The Holy Spirit used figures of speech: that the Father handed over the kingdom to Christ, his Son. *My Father has conferred the kingdom to me*, Lk 22:29. *Jesus knew that the Father had given everything into his hand*, Jn 13:3 and 3:35. This is also expressed in the Old Testament in this way: *You are my Son; today I have testified about you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance and the ends of the earth your possession!* Ps 2:7-8. That this certainly speaks of Christ, testify Ac 19:33 and He 1:5.

What especially concerns the kingdom of grace was that the administration of the Father in the Old Testament in a certain part was distinguished from the administration of the Son in the New Testament. I showed in chapter four of the first section of this last part how broadly the Old Testament is distinguished for its subordinate content from the New Testament. This is also the difference of the administration of the kingdom of grace in the Old and New Testaments; therefore I refer to this here.

However, after the New Testament arose and the kingdom was handed over to Christ, then such a difference expressed itself.

Now, then, it is Christ who administers the kingdom of God (this was shown at the end of the previous chapter). Understand it in this way: the human nature of Christ was communicated all divine sovereignty, power, majesty, might and glory. Since it sat down at the right hand of God, it has entered into the full use of such sovereignty. The result is this: that as the divine and human natures in Christ are personally united with each other, in that way Christ, who is one single person, according to his divine nature as well as according to his human nature, reigns in personal union. The divine nature has such glory from eternity; the human nature received it in the personal union with the divine nature and entered into the full use of that glory when it sat down at the right hand of God.

It certainly does not have the meaning that when Christ as God-man entered into his reign, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit no longer ruled or assumed for themselves the providence of the kingdom. No, the triune God reigns in Christ and through Christ as God-man, as it is said: *God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ and not counting their sins against them*, 1 Cor 5:19. *He makes the believers*

⁵⁵ *Quaestio quis? sive de causa efficiente*

received through the Loved One, Eph 1:4. Christ is one who speaks to the Father on our behalf, 1 Jn 3:2; Rm 8:34; He 7:25. The Lord Christ also speaks of himself in this way, especially concerning God the Father: *No one can come to me, unless he is given by my Father*, Jn 6:65; concerning the same: *that the Father who sent me draws him*, Jn 6:44. The entire following chapter deals with the workings of the Holy Spirit in the kingdom of Christ. Consequently, in the reign of the kingdom of Christ the whole holy Trinity is still employed--as can be seen likewise from the words of Christ: *Whoever loves me keeps my word, my Father will love; we will come to him and live in him*, Jn 14:21 (cf. 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16).

According to the exaltation of the human nature of Christ, the entire rule of the kingdom of Christ happens in the New Testament in Christ and through Christ, insofar as he is God and man in one person. *For God has placed all things under his feet*, Eph 1:22. Therefore Christ is our king who rules everything, according to the testimony quoted at the end of the previous chapter.

*The Second Chief Point: How is the kingdom of Christ administered?*⁵⁶

What concerns Christ's kingdom of grace (about which we pray in the second petition of the Lord's Prayer that it may come to us also) is first the subjects or those to whom Christ's reign of grace applies,⁵⁷ the true believers who cling to him in faith and are won through his call to grace. These he calls his sheep who hear his voice, Jn 10:14. But secondly, the way and means that he rules them⁵⁸ concerns the kingdom of grace. This ruling consists in this: that he gives them his holy, powerful Word and the holy sacraments, and through those gifts he pours out on them the Holy Spirit who binds them in a living faith with Christ. In the New Testament he gave the Holy Spirit as a spirit of sonship, Rm 8:15; whoever sits in the true freedom of the children of God is free and absolved from the curse and duress of the natural law as well as from the yoke of the Jewish law; *for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom*, 2 Cor 3:17. Likewise, they were shown to him, for he united himself with them: *He lives in your hearts through faith*, Eph 3:17. *He lives in you*, Ga 2:20. In him the highly praised, holy Trinity is united with you, as it is said: *We will come to him and live in him*, Jn 17:21; Jn 14:33. Thus he preserves the elect for eternal life: he knows them, and they perish nevermore, and no one can snatch them from his hand, Jn 10:27-28.

Concerning the kingdom of power: First, the subjects or those to whom Christ's kingdom of power applies,⁵⁹ i.e. all creatures. God has given everything into his hand, Jn 3:35; Jn 13:3; he has placed all things under his feet, including the wild animals, Ps 8:7ff.; 1 Cor 15:27; He 1:8; all principalities, power, authority and glory, Eph 1:21; he has given him all authority in heaven and on earth, Mt 28:18. Second, the way and means⁶⁰ that he now rules all creatures which consists in this: that he not only preserves and empowers them (*for he made all things with his powerful word*, i.e. with his omnipotent

⁵⁶ *Form oeconomiae*

⁵⁷ *Obiectum*

⁵⁸ *Modus*

⁵⁹ *Obiectum*

⁶⁰ *Modus*

will, He 1:3; and *everything consists in him*, Col 1:17), but also that he leads and guides all creatures as he sees best for the benefit of his believers and the honor of God, so that his enemies are thus laid as a stool for his feet, Ps 110:1; 1 Cor 15:25; He 1:13. The power to raise the dead also belongs to this kingdom, Jn 5:28; 1 Cor 15:22; further, the power to judge, Jn 5:22; Ac 17:31. For this two-fold power is shown in the consideration of the elect, who are to enter into eternal life--to the kingdom of eternal joy and glory, as I have taught you; for this power was given to Christ so that he might not loose any of those whom his Father has given him, Jn 6:39; this in and of itself is concerned with the kingdom of power, when all things were given to Christ and everything had been placed under his feet.

The Lord Jesus administers these two kingdoms, namely the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of power, until the Last Day; then these two kingdoms will cease. Concerning that Paul says: *To the end when Christ hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. But he must rule until he lays all his enemies as a stool for his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. Afterwards the Son also will be subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all*, 1 Cor 15:24-26, 28, i.e. when the believers in the blessed resurrection are torn from the temporary death and when everything which will have been reconciled with God through Christ is restored (which follows the end of the world) and heaven and earth have passed away, then Christ hands over the kingdom of power and the kingdom of grace which at that time will fully cease. Concerning his speaking to God it is said: *See, here I am, and the children which God gave me*, Is 8:18; He 1:13. After Christ has brought all his believers with body and soul to God and to the most perfect enjoyment of this highest good, then it will be fully and correctly known how God, the highest good, is all in all. This will happen after Christ is established (according to his human nature) in the community and gathering of all his believers in soul and body completely within the infinitely great God.

However, there remains for Christ nonetheless the kingdom of eternal joy and glory. This is not to be understood with the handing over of Christ's kingdom which was spoken of previously; for he rules eternally and this kingdom has no end, Lk 1:33. His Father conferred on him this eternal kingdom, Lk 22:29. Who seated him over everything in the world to come, Eph 1:21. *For the Lamb shepherds the elect and leads them to springs of living water* (the most perfect pleasure in God), Rv 7:17.

However, the way in which the triune God will rule in Christ and through Christ in eternal life without end, will be perfectly confessed by us after what Christ spoke is fulfilled in us one day: *Father, I want that those whom you have given to me also may be where I am, so that those whom you have given me may see my glory*, Jn 17:24.