

Workshop 9

Impact: Reformation Theology and Worship

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Introduction

- 1509: John Calvin is born
- 1517: Luther nails the 95 Theses to the Wittenberg Cathedral door
- 1519: Charles V becomes Holy Roman Emperor
- 1521: The Diet of Worms
- 1541: Calvin returns to Geneva
- 1544: The Diet of Speyer

John Calvin, “The Necessity of Reforming the Church,”
https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/calvin_necessityreform.html

To the Glory of God Alone

Let us now see what is meant by the due worship of God. Its chief foundation is to acknowledge Him to be, as He is, the only source of all virtue, justice, holiness, wisdom, truth, power, goodness, mercy, life, and salvation; in accordance with this, to ascribe and render to Him the glory of all that is good, to seek all things in Him alone, and in every want have recourse to Him alone.

Through the Mediation of Christ Alone

I say nothing of the fact that no man prayed, and that indeed no man could pray, to God with firm faith, i.e., in good earnest. For Christ being, in a manner, buried, the necessary consequence was, that men were always in doubt whether God had a Father’s kindness toward them—whether he was disposed to assist them—and whether he took any interest in their salvation. What! was it an error either trivial or tolerable, when the eternal priesthood of Christ, as if it had been set up to be preyed upon, was bestowed, without distinction, on any individual among the saints? Let us remember that Christ, by his death, purchased for himself the honor of being the eternal advocate and peace-maker to present our prayers and our persons to the Father; to obtain supplies of grace for us, and

enable us to hope we shall obtain what we ask. As he alone died for us, and redeemed us by his death, so he admits of no partnership in this honor. Therefore, what fouler blasphemy than that which is ever and anon in the mouths of our opponents, viz., that Christ is indeed the only mediator of redemption, but that all the saints are mediators of intercession? Is not Christ in this way left inglorious?

Regulated by Scripture Alone

Moreover, the rule which distinguishes between pure and vitiated worship is of universal application, in order that we may not adopt any device which seems fit to ourselves, but look to the injunction of Him who alone is entitled to prescribe. Therefore, if we would have Him to approve our worship, this rule, which he everywhere enforces with the utmost strictness, must be carefully observed.

Conclusion

At the time when divine truth lay buried under this vast and dense cloud of darkness—when religion was sullied by so many impious superstitions—when by horrid blasphemies the worship of God was corrupted, and His glory laid prostrate—when by a multitude of perverse opinions, the benefit of redemption was frustrated, and men, intoxicated with a fatal confidence in works, sought salvation anywhere rather than in Christ—when the administration of the Sacraments was partly maimed and torn asunder, partly adulterated by the admixture of numerous fictions, and partly profaned by traffickings for gain—when the government of the Church had degenerated into mere confusion and devastation—when those who sat in the seat of pastors first did most vital injury to the Church by the dissoluteness of their lives, and, secondly, exercised a cruel and most noxious tyranny over souls, by every kind of error, leading men like sheep to the slaughter;—then Luther arose, and after him others, who with united counsels sought out means and methods by which religion might be purged from all these defilements, the doctrine of godliness restored to its integrity, and the Church raised out of its calamitous into somewhat of a tolerable condition. The same course we are still pursuing in the present day.