

BELGIC CONFESSION - ARTICLE 25

The Abolishing of the Ceremonial Law

We believe that the ceremonies and figures of the law ceased at the coming of Christ and that all the shadows are accomplished, so that the use of them must be abolished among Christians; yet the truth and substance of them remain for us in Jesus Christ, in whom they have their completion.¹ In the meantime we still use the testimonies taken out of the law and the prophets, to confirm us in the doctrine of the gospel, and to regulate our life with full integrity to the glory of God, according to His will.

ARTICLE 26

Christ's Intercession

We believe that we have no access unto God except through the one and only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous,² who therefore became man, having united in one person the divine and human natures, that we men might have access to the divine Majesty, which access would otherwise be barred against us. But this Mediator, whom the Father has appointed between Him and us, ought not terrify us by His majesty, or cause us to seek another according to our fancy. For there is no creature, either in heaven or on earth, who loves us more than Jesus Christ; *who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, and took upon Him the form of a man and of a servant for us,*³ and was *made like his brothers in every respect.*⁴ If, then, we should seek for another mediator who who had affections towards us, whom could we find who loved us more than He who laid down His life for us, even when we were His enemies?⁵ And if we seek for one who has power and majesty, who is there that has so much of both as *He who sits at the right hand of His Father?*⁶ And who has *all authority in heaven and on earth?*⁷ And who will be heard more readily than God's own dearly beloved Son?

Therefore the practice of honoring the saints as intercessors in fact dishonors them because of its misplaced faith, doing that which they never have done nor required, but have, on the contrary, steadfastly rejected, in keeping with their duty, as appears by their writings. Neither must we plead our unworthiness; it is not a question of offering our prayers to God on account of our own worthiness, but only on account of the excellency and worthiness of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose righteousness has become ours by faith.

Therefore the apostle, in order to remove this foolish fear or rather distrust, from us, rightly says that *Jesus Christ was made like his brothers in every respect, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is also able to help them that are tempted.*⁸ And further to encourage us, he adds: *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*⁹ The same apostle says: *Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,... let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,...*¹⁰ Likewise, *Christ holds his priesthood permanently,... Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.*¹¹

What more can be required? since Christ Himself says: *I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*¹² Why should we then seek another advocate, since it has pleased God to give us His own Son as our Advocate? Let us not forsake Him to take another, or rather to seek after another, without ever being able to find Him; for God well knew, when He gave Him to us, that we were sinners.

Therefore, according to the command of Christ, we call upon the heavenly Father through Jesus Christ our only Mediator, as we are taught in the Lord's Prayer; being assured that whatever we ask of the Father in His Name will be granted us.

Verses for Consideration

1. Colossians 2:16-17
2. 1 John 2:1
3. Philippians 2:6-7
4. Hebrews 2:17
5. Romans 5:10
6. Romans 8:34; Hebrews 1:3
7. Matthew 28:18
8. Hebrews 2:17-18
9. Hebrews 4:14-16
10. Hebrews 10:19, 22
11. Hebrews 7:24-25
12. John 14:6

Questions for Consideration

1. How is the ceremonial law different from the moral law? Have we done away with both?
2. Why do we not go to a priest to intercede on our behalf?
3. How can we be confident that Jesus understands our weaknesses?