

Perhaps it would have provided a happier basis for limiting the states of Christ to two, if Berkhof had related the states more closely to the mediatorial work of Christ. Then he could have spoken of the Mediator's becoming incarnate to accomplish His work of redemption, both in His state of humiliation and in His state of exaltation. By thus confining the states of Christ to the work of Christ in redemption, Berkhof could (perhaps) more easily have limited the states to two.

However, even with this consideration, it is still possible to come up with three states, by contrasting Christ's incarnate state of humiliation with His previous, preincarnate state of glory, as well as with His subsequent incarnate state of exaltation. Such a configuration would consider the distinction between the preincarnate state and the incarnate state at least as important as the distinction between the incarnate state of humiliation and the incarnate state of exaltation. This configuration, in outline form, would appear as follows:

1. Preincarnate state (of glory)
2. Incarnate state
  - a. Incarnate state of humiliation
  - b. Incarnate state of exaltation

Perhaps, however, since we are speaking of the redemptive work of Christ, and not His work in creation, providence, etc., it would be most accurate to speak of His preincarnate state of glory as a background to His work of redemption, particularly as that work is bound up with the incarnation and its two major directions -- humiliation and exaltation. In this manner, the emphasis upon two states only, in both Lutheran and Reformed theology, could be affirmed without denying the reality of the preincarnate state of glory. This "third state" could simply be viewed as prelude, background, and backdrop to the two states of Christ's work as Mediator. This happy solution is herein proposed and employed.

b. Scriptures relevant to the doctrine

A great many scriptures are relevant to the various stages of the states of Christ, considered individually. However, the scriptures mentioned here speak of the states in general.

John 17:1, 4-5 -- "These things Jesus spoke; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee,' . . . 'I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given me to do. And now, glorify Thou me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I ever had with Thee before the world was.' "

2 Cor. 8:9 -- "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

Gal. 4:4-5 -- "But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."