

Summary of Christian Doctrine

Part V

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Editor's Note: For a more in-depth look into theology, we suggest purchasing Louis Berkhof's, "Manual of Christian Doctrine" (Eermans, Grand Rapids, 2001) and of course Berkhof's, "Systematic Theology" (Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 2000). These volumes are indispensable in any Christian's library.

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Part V: The Doctrine of the Application of the Work of Redemption

Chapter XVIII: The Common Operation of the Holy Spirit: Common Grace

The study of the work of redemption wrought by Christ is naturally followed by a discussion of the application of this redemption to the hearts and lives of sinners by the special operation of thy Holy Spirit. Before taking this up a brief chapter will be devoted to the general operations of the Holy Spirit, as these are seen in common grace.

1. Nature of Common Grace. When we speak of common grace, we have in mind either (a) those general operations of the Holy Spirit whereby He, without renewing the heart, exercises such a moral influence on man that sin is restrained, order is maintained in social life, and civil righteousness is promoted; or (b) those general blessings which God imparts to all men without any distinction as He sees fit. In distinction from the Arminians we maintain that common grace does not enable the sinner to perform any spiritual good, nor to turn to God in faith and repentance. It can be resisted by man, and is always more or less resisted, and at best affects only the externals of social, civil, moral, and religious life. While Christ died for the purpose of saving only the elect, nevertheless the whole human race, including the impenitent and the reprobate, derive great benefits from His death. The blessings of common grace may be regarded as indirect results of the atoning work of Christ.

2. Means of Common Grace. Several means may be distinguished: (a) The most important of these is the light of God's general revelation. Without this all other means would be impossible and ineffective. It lightens every man, and serves to guide the conscience of the natural man. (b) Human governments also serve this purpose. According to our Confession they are instituted to curb evil tendencies, and to promote good order and decency. (c) Public opinion is another important means wherever it is in harmony with the law of God. It has a tremendous influence on the conduct of men who are very sensitive to the judgment of public opinion. (d) Finally, divine punishments and rewards also serve to encourage moral goodness in the world. The punishments often check the sinful deeds of men, and the rewards spur them on to do what is good and right.

3. The Effects of Common Grace. The following effects may be ascribed to the operation of common grace: (a) The execution of the sentence of death on man is deferred. God did not at once fully execute the sentence of death on the sinner, and does not do so now, but gives him time for repentance, Rom. 2:4; II Pet. 8:9. (b) Sin is restrained in the lives of individuals and nations. The corruption that entered human life through sin is retarded and not yet permitted to complete its destructive work, Gen. 20:6; 31:7; Job 1:12; 2:6. (c) Man still has some sense of the true, the good, and the beautiful, appreciates this in a measure, and reveals a desire for truth, morality, and certain forms of religion, Rom. 2:14, 15; Acts 17:22. (d) The natural man is still able to perform natural good or civil righteousness, works that are outwardly in harmony with the law, though without spiritual value, II Kings 10:29, 30; 12:2; 14:3; Luke 6:33. (e) All men receive numerous undeserved blessings from God, Ps. 145:9, 15, 16; Matt. 5:44, 45; Luke 6:35, 36; Acts 14:16, 17; I Tim. 4:10.

To memorize. Passages proving:

a. A general striving of the Spirit with men:

Gen. 6:3. "And Jehovah said, My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh."

Isa. 68:10. "But they rebelled, and grieved His Holy Spirit: therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and Himself fought against them."

Rom. 1:28, "And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting."

b. Restraint of sin:

Gen. 20:6. "And God said unto him (Abimelech) in the dream, Yea, I know that in the integrity of thy heart thou hast done this, and I also withheld thee from sinning against me."

Gen. 31:7. "And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me."

Ps. 105:14. "He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, He reproveth kings for their sakes."

c. Good works on the part of unregenerate:

II Kings 10:30. "And Jehovah said unto Jehu, because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, thy sons of the fourth generation shall sit upon the throne of Israel." Cf. vs. 31.

Luke 6:33. "And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same."

Rom. 2:14, 15. "For when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts."

d. Unmerited blessings on all men:

Ps. 145:9. "Jehovah is good to all; and His tender mercies are over all His works."

Matt. 5:44, 45. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for He

maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust."

I Tim. 4:10. "For to this end we labor and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe."

For Further Study:

- a. Which are the three points emphasized by our Church as to common grace?
- b. How do Matt. 21:26, 46; Mark 14:2 show the restraining influence of public opinion?
- c. How do Rom. 1:24, 26, 28, and Heb. 6:4-6 prove common grace?

Questions for Review

1. What is common grace?
2. What is our view in distinction from the Arminian?
3. Does common grace have any spiritual and saving effect?
4. Is it in any way connected with the redemptive work of Christ?
5. By what means does common grace work?
6. What are the effects of common grace?

Part V: The Doctrine of the Application of the Work of Redemption

Chapter XIX: Calling and Regeneration

1. Calling. Calling in general may be defined as that gracious act of God whereby He invites sinners to accept the salvation that is offered in Christ Jesus.

It may be either external or internal.

a. External calling. The Bible speaks of this or refers to it in several passages, Matt. 28:19; 22:14; Luke 14:16-24; Acts 13:46; II Thess. 1:8; I John 5:10. It consists in the presentation and offering of salvation in Christ to sinners, together with an earnest exhortation to accept Christ by faith in order to obtain the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. From the definition it already appears that it contains three elements, namely, (1) A presentation of the gospel facts and ideas; (2) an invitation to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, and (3) a promise of forgiveness and salvation. The promise is always conditional; its fulfillment can be expected only in the way of true faith and repentance. The external call is universal in the sense that it comes to all men to whom the gospel is preached. It is not limited to any age or nation or class of men, and comes to the reprobate as well as to the elect, Isa. 45:22; 55:1; Ezek. 3:19; Joel 2:32; Matt. 22:2-8, 14; Rev.

22:17. Naturally this call, as coming from God, is seriously meant. He calls sinners in good faith, earnestly desires that they accept the invitation, and in all sincerity promises eternal life to those who repent and believe. Num. 23:19; Ps. 81:13-16; Prov. 1:24; Isa. 1:18-20; Ezek. 18:23, 32; 33:11; Matt. 23:37; II Tim. 2:18. In the external call God maintains His claim on the sinner. If man does not accept the call, he slights the claim of God and thus increases his guilt. It is also the appointed means by which God gathers the elect out of all the nations of the world, Rom. 10:14-17, and should be regarded as a blessing for sinners, though they may turn it into a curse, Isa. 1:18-20; Ezek. 3:18, 19; Amos 8:11; Matt. 11:20-24; 23:37. Finally, it also serves to justify God in the condemnation of sinners. If they despise the offer of salvation, their guilt stands out in the clearest light, John 5:39, 40; Rom. 3:5, 6, 19.

b. Internal calling. While we distinguish two aspects of the calling of God, this calling is really one. The internal call is really the external call made effective by the operation of the Holy Spirit. It always comes to the sinner through the Word of God, savingly applied by the operation of the Holy Spirit, I Cor. 1:23, 24. In distinction from the external call, it is a powerful calling that is effectual unto salvation, Acts 13:48; I Cor. 1:23, 24. Moreover, it is a calling without repentance, one that is not subject to change, and is never withdrawn, Rom. 11:29. The person called will surely be saved. The Spirit operates through the preaching of the Word by making its persuasions effective, so that man listens to the voice of His God. It addresses itself to the understanding enlightened by the Holy Spirit, so that man is conscious of it. And it is always directed to a certain end. It is a calling to the fellowship of Jesus Christ, I Cor. 1:9, to inherit blessing, I Pet. 8:9, to liberty, Gal. 6:18, to peace, I Cor. 7:15; to holiness, I Thess. 4:7; to one hope, Eph. 4:4, to eternal life, I Tim. 6:12, and to God's kingdom and glory, I Thess. 2:12.

2. Regeneration. Divine calling and regeneration stand in the closest possible relation to each other. With respect to regeneration several points deserve consideration:

a. Its nature. The word 'regeneration' is not always used in the same sense. Our Confession uses it in a broad sense, as including even conversion. At present it has a more restricted meaning. In the most restricted sense it denotes that act of God by which the principle of the new life is implanted in man, and the governing disposition of the soul is made holy. In a slightly more comprehensive sense it designates, in addition to the preceding, the new birth or the first manifestation of the new life. It is a fundamental change in the principle of life and the governing disposition of the soul, and therefore affects the whole man, I Cor. 2:14; II Cor. 4:6; Phil. 2:13; I Pet. 1:8. It is completed in a moment of time, and is not a gradual process like sanctification. Through it we pass from death into life, I John 3:14. It is a secret and inscrutable work of God that is never directly perceived by man, but can be known only by its effects.

b. Its author. God is the author of regeneration. Scripture represents it as the work of the Holy Spirit, John 1:13; Acts 16:14; John 3:5, 8. Over against the Arminians we maintain that it is exclusively the work of the Spirit of God, and not in part the work of man. There is no co-operation of God and man in the work of regeneration, as there is in the work of conversion. Moreover, it should be said that regeneration in the most restricted sense of the word, that is, as the implanting of the new life, is a direct and immediate work of the Holy Spirit. It is a creative work in which for that very reason the word of the gospel cannot very well be used as an instrument. It may be said that Jas. 1:18 and I Pet. 1:23 prove that the word of preaching is used as an instrument in regeneration, but these passages refer to regeneration in a broader sense, as including the new birth. In that more inclusive sense regeneration is undoubtedly wrought through the instrumentality of the Word.

c. Its necessity and place in the order of salvation. Scripture leaves no doubt as to the absolute necessity of regeneration, but asserts this in the clearest terms, John 3:3, 5, 7; I Cor. 2:14; Gal. 6:15. This follows from the fact that we are by nature dead in trespasses and sin, and must be endowed with new spiritual life, in order to enjoy the divine favor and communion with God. The question is often raised which of the two is first, calling or regeneration. In answer to this it may be said that in the case of adults external calling usually precedes or coincides with regeneration in the restricted sense. Regeneration, as the implanting of the new life, precedes internal calling, and internal calling precedes regeneration in the broader sense, or the new birth. We find the greater part of this order indicated in the record of the conversion of Lydia, Acts 16:14, "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us (external call): whose heart the Lord opened (regeneration in the restricted sense) to give heed to the things which were spoken by Paul (internal call)."

To memorize. Passages proving:

a. External calling:

Mark 16:15, 16. "And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation ("every creature," Auth. Ver.). He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."

Matt. 22:14. "For many are called, but few are chosen."

Acts 13:46. "And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

b. Calling of the reprobate:

Prov. 1:24-26. "Because I have called, and ye have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man hath regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh in the day of your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."

I Pet. 3:19, 20a. "In which also He (Christ) went and preached unto the spirits in prison, that aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah."

Confer also the parables in Matt. 22:1-8, 14; Luke 14:16-24.

c. Seriousness of this calling:

Prov. 1:24-26, cf. above under b.

Ezek. 18:23, 32. "Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked? said the Lord Jehovah; and not rather that he should return from his way and, live?... For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord Jehovah: wherefore turn yourselves, and live." Cf. also 33:11.

Matt. 23:37. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, .that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

d. The necessity of regeneration:

Jer. 13:23, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."

John 3:3, 7. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.... Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

e. Regeneration and the Word.

Jas. 1:18. "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures."

I Pet. 1:23. "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth."

For Further Study:

a. Is calling a work of one Person of the Trinity or of all three? I Cor. 1:9; I Thess. 2:12; Matt. 11:28; Luke 5:32; Matt. 10:20; Acts 5:31, 32.

b. Is the word 'regeneration' used in the Bible? Tit. 3:5. What other terms does it use to express this idea? John 3:3, 5, 7, 8; II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13; Jas. 1:18; I Pet. 1:23.

c. Does Tit. 3:5 prove that we are regenerated by baptism? If not, how would you explain it?

Questions for Review

1. What do we mean by calling?
2. How do external and internal calling differ?
3. What elements are included in external calling?
4. In what sense is it universal?
5. What purpose does it serve?
6. How is the internal related to the external calling?
7. Are we conscious of it?
8. To what end is it directed?
9. What different meanings has the word 'regeneration'?
10. What is it in the most restricted sense?
11. What is the nature of the change wrought in regeneration?
12. Is regeneration a work of God alone or of God and man?
13. Is the Word used as an instrument in regeneration?
14. Is regeneration absolutely necessary? Proof.
15. What is the order of calling and regeneration?

Part V: The Doctrine of the Application of the Work of Redemption

Chapter XX: Conversion: Repentance and Faith

When the change wrought in regeneration begins to manifest itself in the conscious life, we speak of conversion.

1. Conversion in General. The Bible does not always speak of conversion in the same sense. The conversion we have in mind here may be defined as that act of God whereby He causes the regenerated, in their conscious life, to turn to Him in faith and repentance. From this definition it already appears that God is the author of conversion. This is clearly taught in Scripture, Acts 11:18; II Tim. 2:25. The new life of regeneration does not of itself issue in a conscious change of life, but only through a special operation of the Holy Spirit, John 6:44; Phil. 2:13. But while in regeneration God only works and man is passive, in conversion man is called upon to co-operate, Isa. 55:7; Jer. 18:11; Acts 2:38; 17:30. But even so man can only work with the power which God imparts to him. Like regeneration conversion too consists in a momentary change, and is not a process like sanctification; but in distinction from regeneration it is a change in the conscious rather than in the unconscious life of man. While conversion is necessary in the

case of all adults, Ezek. 33:11; Matt. 18:3, it need not appear in the life of each one of them as a sharply marked crisis. The Bible mentions instances of conversion, such as Naaman, II Kings 5:15; Manasseh, II Chron. 33:12, 13; Zacchaeus, Luke 19:8, 9; the eunuch, Acts 8:26-39; Cornelius, Acts 10:2-44; Paul, Acts 9:1-19; Lydia, Acts 16:14, and so on. Besides this it also speaks of a national conversion, as in Jonah 3:10, a temporary conversion, which includes no change of heart, Matt. 13:20, 21; I Tim. 1:19, 20; II Tim. 4:10; Heb. 6:4-6, and a repeated conversion, Luke 22:32; Rev. 2:5, 16, 21, 22; 3:8, 19. This is not a repetition of conversion in the strict sense of the word, which does not admit of repetition, but a revived activity of the new life after it has suffered eclipse. Conversion comprises two elements, the one negative and the other positive, namely repentance and faith, which call for separate discussion.

2. Repentance, the Negative Element of Conversion. Repentance looks to the past, and may be defined as that change wrought in the conscious life of the sinner by which he turns away from sin. It includes three elements, namely, (a) an intellectual element, in which the past life is viewed as a life of sin, involving personal guilt, defilement, and helplessness; (b) an emotional element, a sense of sorrow for sin as committed against a holy and just God; and (c) an element of the will, consisting in a change of purpose, an inward turning from sin and a disposition to seek pardon and cleansing. Rom. 3:20; II Cor. 7:9, 10; Rom. 2:4. It is wrought in man primarily by the law of God. Roman Catholics have an external conception of repentance. According to them it comprises a sorrow, not for inborn sin, but for personal transgressions, which may merely result from the fear of eternal punishment; a confession made to the priest, who can forgive sin; and a measure of satisfaction by external deeds of penance, such as fastings, scourgings, pilgrimages, and so on. The Bible, on the other hand, views repentance wholly as an inward act, an act of real sorrow on account of sin, and does not confuse this with the change of life in which it results.

3. Faith, the Positive Element of Conversion. In distinction from repentance, faith has a forward look.

a. Different kinds of faith. The Bible does not always speak of faith in the same sense. It refers to a historical faith, consisting in an intellectual acceptance of the truth of Scripture without any real moral or spiritual response. Such a faith does not take the truth seriously and shows no real interest in it. Acts 26:27, 28; Jas. 2:19. It also speaks of a temporal faith, which embraces the truths of religion with some promptings of conscience and a stirring of the affections, but is not rooted in a regenerated heart. It is called temporal faith, Matt. 13:20, 21, because it has no abiding character and fails to maintain itself in days of trial and persecution. Cf. also Heb. 6:4-6; 1 Tim. 1:19, 20; I John 2:19. Moreover, it makes mention of a miraculous faith, that is a person's conviction that a miracle will be performed by him or in his behalf. Matt. 8:11-13; 17:20; Mark 16:17, 18; John 11:22, 40; Acts 14:9. This faith may or may not be accompanied with saving faith. Finally, it not only names, but stresses the necessity of, saving faith. This has its seat in the

heart and is rooted in the regenerated life. Its seed is implanted in regeneration and gradually blossoms into an active faith. It may be defined as a positive conviction, wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, as to the truth of the gospel, and a hearty reliance on the promises of God in Christ.

b. The elements of faith. We distinguish three elements in true saving faith. (1) An intellectual element. There is a positive recognition of the truth revealed in the Word of God, a spiritual insight which finds response in the heart of the sinner. It is an absolutely certain knowledge, based on the promises of God. While it need not be comprehensive, it should be sufficient to give the believer some idea of the fundamental truths of the gospel. (2) An emotional element (assent). This is not mentioned separately by the Heidelberg Catechism, because it is virtually included in the knowledge of saving faith. It is characteristic of this knowledge that it carries with it a strong conviction of the importance of its object, and this is assent. The truth grips the soul. (3) An element of the will (trust). This is the crowning element of saving faith. It is a personal trust in Christ as Saviour and Lord, which includes a surrender of the soul as guilty and defiled to Christ, and a reliance on Him as the source of pardon and spiritual life. In the last analysis the object of saving faith is Jesus Christ and the promise of salvation in Him. John 3:16, 18, 36; 6:40; Acts 10:43; Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:16. This faith is not of human origin, but is a gift of God, I Cor. 12:8, 9; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 2:8. But its exercise is a human activity, to which the children of God are repeatedly exhorted, Rom. 10:9; I Cor. 2:5; Col. 1:23; I Tim. 1:5; 6:11.

c. The assurance of faith. Methodists maintain that he who believes is at once sure that he is a child of God, but that this does not mean that he is also certain of ultimate salvation, since he may fall from grace. The correct view is that true faith including, as it does, trust in God, naturally carries with it a sense of safety and security, though this may vary in degree. This assurance is not the permanent conscious possession of the believer, He does not ever live the full-orbed life of faith, and as a result is not always conscious of his spiritual riches. He may be swayed by doubts and uncertainties, and is therefore urged to cultivate assurance, II Cor. 13:5; Heb. 6:11; II Pet. 1:10; I John 3:19. It can be cultivated by prayer, by meditating on the promises of God, and by the development of a truly Christian life.

To memorize. Passages showing:

a. That God is the author of conversion:

Acts 11:18. "And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."

II Tim. 2:25. "In meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth."

b. That man co-operates in conversion:

Isa. 55:7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, and He will abundantly pardon."

Acts 17:30. "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent."

c. The necessity of conversion:

Ezek. 33:11. "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

Matt. 18:3. "Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

d. Historical faith:

Acts 26:27, 28. "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. And Agrippa said unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian."

Jas. 2:19. "Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well; the demons also believe, and shudder."

e. Temporal faith:

Matt. 13:20, 21. "And he that was sown upon the rocky places, this is he that heareth the word, and straightway with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; and when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth."

I John 2:19. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us."

f. Miraculous faith:

Matt. 17:20b. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place: and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

Acts 14:9, 10. "The same heard Paul speaking: who fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked."

g. Christ as the object of saving faith:

John 3:16. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."

John 6:40. "For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

h. The necessity of cultivating assurance:

Heb. 6:11. "And we desire that each one of you may show the same diligence unto the fullness of hope even to the end."

II Pet. 1:10. "Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure."

For Further Study:

a. What kind of repentance is mentioned in Matt. 27:3; II Cor. 7:10b.

b. Can you name biblical persons in whose lives conversion in the sense of an outstanding crisis could hardly be expected? Cf. Jer. 1:4; Luke 1:5; II Tim. 3:16.

c. Can you name some of the great words of assurance found in the Bible? Cf. Heb. 3:17, 18; II Cor. 4:16 -- 5:1; II Tim. 1:12.

Questions for Review

1. In how many different senses does the Bible speak of conversion?
2. How do temporary and repeated conversion differ?
3. What is true conversions? What elements does it include?
4. What elements are included in repentance?
5. How do the Roman Catholics conceive of repentance?
6. How does conversion differ from regeneration?
7. Who is the author of conversion? Does man co-operate in it?
8. Is conversion as a sharp crisis always necessary?
9. Of how many different kinds of faith does the Bible speak?
10. What is characteristic of historical, temporal, and miraculous faith?
11. How does temporal faith differ from saving faith?
12. What elements are included in faith? How much knowledge is needed?
13. What is the crowning element of saving faith?

14. Who is the object of saving faith?
15. Does the Christian always have the assurance of salvation?
16. How can he cultivate this assurance?

Part V: The Doctrine of the Application of the Work of Redemption

Chapter XXI: Justification

1. The Nature and Elements of Justification, Justification may be defined as that legal act of God by which He declares the sinner righteous on the basis of the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is not an act or process of renewal, such as regeneration, conversion, or sanctification, and does not affect the condition but the-state of the sinner. It differs from sanctification in several particulars. Justification takes place outside of the sinner in the tribunal of God, removes the guilt of sin, and is an act which is complete at once and for all time; while sanctification takes place in man, removes the pollution of sin, and is a continuous and lifelong process. We distinguish two elements in justification, namely: (a) The forgiveness of sins on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The pardon granted applies to all sins, past, present, and future, and therefore does not admit of repetition, Ps. 103: 12; Isa. 44:22; Rom. 5:21; 8:1, 32-34; Heb. 10:14. This does not mean that we need no more pray for forgiveness, for the consciousness of guilt remains, creates a feeling of separation, and makes it necessary to seek repeatedly the comforting assurance of forgiveness, Ps. 25:7; 32:5; 51:1; Matt. 6:12; Jas. 5:15; I John 1:9. (b) The adoption as children of God. In justification God adopts believers as His children, that is, places them in the position of children and gives them all the rights of children, including the right to an eternal inheritance, Rom. 8:17; I Pet. 1:4. This legal sonship of believers should be distinguished from their moral sonship through regeneration and sanctification. Both are indicated in the following passages: John 1:12, 13; Rom. 8:15, 16; Gal. 4:5, 6.

2. The Time of Justification. The word 'justification' is not always used in the same sense. Some even speak of a fourfold justification: a justification from eternity, a justification in the resurrection of Christ, a justification by faith, and a public justification in the final judgment. In explanation of this it may be said that in an ideal sense the righteousness of Christ is already accounted to believers in the counsel of redemption, and therefore from eternity, but this is not what the Bible means when it speaks of the justification of the sinner. We must distinguish between what was decreed in the eternal counsel of God and what is realized in the course of history. Again, there is some reason for speaking of a justification in the resurrection of Christ. In a sense it may be said that the resurrection was the justification of Christ, and that in Him the whole body of believers was justified. But this was a general and purely objective transaction, which should not be confused with the personal justification of the sinner. When the Bible speaks of the justification of the sinner, it usually refers to the subjective and personal

application and appropriation of the justifying grace of God. The usual representation is that we are justified by faith. This implies that it takes place at the time when we accept Christ by faith. Faith is called the instrument or the appropriating organ of justification. By faith man appropriates, that is, takes unto himself, the righteousness of Christ, on the basis of which he is justified before God. Faith justifies in so far as it takes possession of Christ. Rom. 4:5; Gal. 2:16. We should guard against the error of the Roman Catholics and the Arminians, that man is justified on the basis of his own inherent righteousness, or of his faith. Man's own righteousness or faith can never be the ground of his justification. This can be found only in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, Rom. 3:24; 10:4; II Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9.

3. Objections to the Doctrine of Justification. Various objections are raised to this doctrine. It is said that, if man is justified on the basis of the merits of Christ, he is not saved by grace. But justification, with all that it includes, is a gracious work of God. The gift of Christ, God's reckoning of His righteousness to us, and His dealing with sinners as righteous,-- it is all grace from start to finish. Again, it is said to be unworthy of God to declare sinners righteous. But God does not declare that they are righteous in themselves, but that they are clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And, finally, it is said that this doctrine is apt to make people indifferent as to their moral life. If they are justified apart from any consideration of works, why should they care for personal piety? But justification lays the foundation for a living relationship with Christ, and this is the surest guarantee for a truly godly life. The man who is really in living union with Christ cannot be morally indifferent. Rom. 3:5-8.

To memorize. Passages speaking of:

a. Justification in general:

Rom. 3:24. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

II Cor. 5:21. "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

b. Justification by faith, not by works:

Rom. 3:28. "We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law."

Rom. 4:5. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness."

Gal. 2:16. "Yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be

justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

c. Justification and the forgiveness of sins:

Ps. 32:1, 2. "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

Acts 13:38, 39. "Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins; and by Him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

d. Adoption of children, heirs of eternal life:

John 1:12. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name."

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, that He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

Rom. 8:17. "And if children, their heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him."

e. Justification based on the righteousness of Christ:

Rom. 3:21, 22. "But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe."

Rom. 5:18. "So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so though one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life."

For Further Study:

a. What fruits of justification are mentioned in Rom. 5:1-5?

b. Does not James teach that man is justified by works? Jas. 2:21-25.

c. With what objection to the doctrine of justification does Paul deal in Rom. 3:5-8?

Questions for Review

1. What is justification?
2. How does it differ from sanctification?
3. What elements does it comprise?
4. In how far are sins forgiven in justification?
5. Why must believers still pray for forgiveness?
6. What is included in the adoption of children?
7. Can we speak of justification from eternity and in the resurrection of Christ?
8. How is faith related to justification?
9. What is the ground of justification? What is the Arminian view?
10. What objections are raised to this doctrine? Can you answer them?

Part V: The Doctrine of the Application of the Work of Redemption

Chapter XXII: Sanctification and Perseverance

The doctrine of justification naturally leads on to that of sanctification. The state of justification calls for a life of sanctification, consecrated to the service of God.

1. Nature and Characteristics of Sanctification. Sanctification may be defined as that gracious and continuous operation of the Holy Spirit by which, He purifies the sinner, renews his whole nature in the image of God, and enables him to perform good works. It differs from justification in that it takes place in the inner life of man, is not a legal but a recreative act, is usually a lengthy process, and never reaches perfection in this life. While it is very decidedly a supernatural work of God, the believer can and should co-operate in it by a diligent use of the means which God has placed at his disposal, II Cor. 7:1; Col. 3:5-14; I Pet. 1:22. Sanctification does not consist in a mere drawing out of what is already given in regeneration, but serves to strengthen, to increase, and to fortify the new life. It consists of two parts: the gradual removal of the pollution and corruption of human nature, Rom. 6:6; Gal. 5:24, and the gradual development of the new life in consecration to God, Rom. 6:4, 5; Col. 2:12; 3:1, 2; Gal. 2:19. While it takes place in the heart of man, it naturally affects the whole life, Rom. 6:12; I Cor. 6:15 20; I Thess. 6:23. The change in the inner man is bound to carry with it a change in the outer life. That man must co-operate in the work of sanctification follows from the repeated warnings against evils and temptations, Rom. 12:9, 16, 17; I Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:16-23, and from the constant exhortations to holy living, Micah 6:8; John 15:4- 7; Rom. 8:12, 13; 12:1, 2; Gal. 6:7, 8, 15.

2. The Imperfect Character of Sanctification in This Life. While sanctification affects every part of man, yet the spiritual development of believers remains imperfect in this life. They must contend with sin as long as they live, I Kings 8:46; Prov. 20:9; Jas. 3:2; I John 1:8. Their lives are characterized by a constant warfare between the flesh and the spirit, and even the best of them are still confessing sin, Job 9:3, 20; Ps. 32:5; 130:3; Prov. 20:9; Isa. 64:6; Dan. 9:7; Rom. 7:14; I John 1:9, praying for forgiveness, Ps. 51:1, 2; Dan. 9:16; Matt. 6:12, 13;

Jas. 5:15, and striving for greater perfection, Rom. 7:7-26; Gal. 5:17; Phil. 3:12-14. This truth is denied by the so-called Perfectionists, who maintain that man can reach perfection in this life. They appeal to the fact that the Bible commands believers to be perfect, Matt. 5:48; I Pet. 1:16; Jas. 1:4, speaks of some as perfect, Gen. 6:9; Job 1:8; I Kings 15:14; Phil. 3:15, and declares that they who are born of God sin not, I John 3:6, 8, 9; 5:18. But the fact that we must strive for perfection does not prove that some are already perfect. Moreover, the word 'perfect' does not always mean free from sin. Noah, Job, and Asa are called perfect, but history clearly proves that they were not without sin. And John evidently means either that the new man does not sin, or that believers do not live in sin. He himself says that, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. I John 1:8.

3. Sanctification and Good Works. Sanctification naturally leads to a life of good works. These may be called the fruits of sanctification. Good works are not perfect works, but works that spring from the principle of love to God or faith in Him, Matt. 7:17, 18; 12:33, 35; Heb. 11:6, that are done in conscious conformity to the revealed will of God, Deut. 6:2; I Sam. 15:22; Jas. 2:8, and have as their final aim the glory of God, I Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17, 23. Only they who are regenerated by the Spirit of God can perform such good works. This does not mean, however, that the unregenerate cannot do good in any sense of the word. Cf. II Kings 10:29, 30; 12:2; 14:3; Luke 6:33; Rom. 2:14. In virtue of the common grace of God they can perform works that are in external conformity to the law and serve a laudable purpose; but their works are always radically defective, because they are divorced from the spiritual root of love to God, represent no real inner obedience to the law of God, and do not aim at the glory of God. In opposition to the Roman Catholics it should be maintained that the good works of believers are not meritorious, Luke 17:9, 10; Eph. 2:8-10; Tit. 3:5, though God promises to reward them with a reward of free grace, I Cor. 3:14; Heb. 11:26; and in opposition to the Antinomians the necessity of good works must be asserted, Col. 1:10; II Tim. 2:21; Tit. 2:14; Heb. 10:24.

4. Perseverance of the Saints. The expression 'perseverance of the saints' naturally suggests a continuous activity of believers whereby they persevere in the way of salvation. As a matter of fact, however, the perseverance referred to is less an activity of believers than a work of God, in which believers must participate. Strictly speaking, the assurance of man's salvation lies in the fact that God perseveres. Perseverance may be defined as that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer, by which the work of divine grace that is begun in the heart, is continued and brought to completion. This doctrine is clearly taught in Scripture, John 10:28, 29; Rom. 11:29; Phil. 1:6; II Thess. 3:3; II Tim. 1:12; 4:18. And it is only when we believe in this perseverance of God that we can in this life attain to the assurance of salvation, Heb. 3:14; 6:11; 10:22; II Pet. 1:10. Outside of Reformed circles this doctrine finds no favor. It is said to be contradicted by Scripture, which warns against apostasy, Heb. 2:1; 10:26, exhorts believers to continue in the way of salvation, Matt. 24:13; Col. 1:23; Heb.

3:14, and even records cases of apostasy, I Tim. 1:19, 20; II Tim. 2:17, 18; 4:10. Such warnings and exhortations would seem to assume the possibility of falling away, and such cases would seem to prove it completely. But as a matter of fact the warnings and exhortations prove only that God works mediately and wants man to co-operate in the work of perseverance: and there is no proof that the apostates mentioned were real believers. Cf. Rom. 9:6; I John 2:19; Rev. 3:1.

To memorize: Passages to prove:

a. Sanctification as a work of God:

I Thess. 5:23. "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Heb. 2:11. "For both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

b. Man's co-operation in sanctification:

II Cor. 7:1. "Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Heb. 12:14. "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord."

c. The mortification of the old man:

Rom. 6:6. "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, so that we should no longer be in bondage to sin."

Gal. 6:24. "And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof."

d. The quickening of the new man:

Eph. 4:24. "And put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth."

Col. 3:10. "And have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him."

e. Sanctification incomplete in this life:

Rom. 7:18. "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not."

Phil. 3:12. "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus."

f. The nature of good works:

I Sam. 15:22. "And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

I Cor. 10:31. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Heb. 11:6. "And without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him."

g. Perseverance of the saints:

John 10:28, 29. "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who hath given them unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand."

II Tim. 1:12. "For which cause I suffer also these things: yet am I not ashamed; for I know Him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

II Tim. 4:18. "The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be the glory for ever and ever."

For Further Study:

a. Can you infer anything from the following passages as to the time of complete sanctification? Phil. 3:21; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 14:5; 21:27?

b. What parts of man does sanctification affect according to Jer. 31:34; Phil, 2:13; Gal. 5:24; Heb. 9:14?

c. What does the word 'perfect' (cf. Auth. Ver.) mean in the following passages: I Cor. 2:6; 3:1, 2; Heb. 5:14; II Tim. 3:16?

Questions for Review

1. What is sanctification, and how does it differ from justification?
2. Is it a work of God or of man?

3. Of what two parts does sanctification consists?
4. What proof is there that it is incomplete in this life?
5. Who deny this and on what ground? How can you answer them?
6. What are good works in the strict sense of the word?
7. In how far can the unregenerate perform good works?
8. Are good works meritorious or not? Are we not taught that they are rewarded?
9. In what sense are good works necessary?
10. What is meant by the perseverance of the saints?
11. How can this doctrine be proved?

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