

**A Reformed  
Semi-Monthly  
Magazine**

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# **THE STANDARD BEARER**

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**Special Issue**

**The Fifth Step In The  
Order Of Salvation  
Sanctification**

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March 15, 1988

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## Editorial About This Issue

This is the second of our special issues for the current volume-year, and also the fifth of our series on the Order of Salvation. It is devoted in its entirety to the subject of Sanctification.

Sanctification, as a step in the Order of Salvation, may be defined as "that act of God whereby He delivers the justified and regenerated sinner from the defilement and dominion of sin as a spiritual, ethical power, renews

him according to the image of Christ, and enables him to walk in all good works, which God has prepared for him." (Herman Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics*, p. 520)

Several distinctions may be made with respect to sanctification, and there is a multitude of interesting subjects related to it. In this issue we have tried to present a variety of some of the aspects of this truth.

A word of thanks is due three guest writers in this issue: the Revs. D. Engelsma and C. Haak, and Prof. R. Decker. □ HCH

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## Meditation\*

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# Lamentation And Jubilation

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*O wretched man that I am!  
who shall deliver me from the  
body of this death? I thank God  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*  
—Romans 7:24, 25a

Lamenting and rejoicing!  
Singing through our tears!  
Wrestling in fearful battle, and  
in the heat of the fight shouting  
for joy about the sure victory!  
Wondrous paradox!  
Strange, almost irreconcilable  
contrast!

Nevertheless a contrast which is *the* characteristic which immediately strikes one in these words of the apostle. O wretched man that I am! Such is the lamentation. Thus the apostle cries out. Thus we hear his almost despairing outcry above the noise of the fearful struggle. Who shall deliver me? Thus sounds desperation cry of him who is in grave danger, who is surrounded by mighty enemies, and who, exhausted, is at the point of giving up the struggle; who looks round about him for a way out but nowhere sees any deliverance! I thank God! That is the triumph-song of the delivered soul, the joy of the enlarged heart, the outcry of hope of the soldier who, surrounded by dense troops of enemies, grips anew his weapons, full of courage, certain of victory! Through Jesus Christ out Lord! It is the triumph-shout of the weary battler who, well-nigh exhausted, takes courage anew in the heat of the battle at the sight of a mighty Helper Who will carry him to sure victory . . .

Thus understood, the contrast is also reconciled. For then we can recast the meaning of these mysterious words as follows: O wretched man that I am, wretched in myself, without strength for the battle and without hope of victory when I look at myself; I thank God, Who has in principle delivered me and Who shall make me partake of the full salvation and shall bestow the final and complete victory through Jesus Christ, the mighty Help, my Goel and my Lord!

Who would there be, except the delivered child of God, with the grace of salvation in his heart, who would take upon his lips this lamenting song of jubilee, this weeping triumph-song?

Who is there in the world who cries: O wretched man that I am?

Who is there among the children of this world, who have their portion in this world, whose belly the Lord fills with His hid treasure, who complains: who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

No one! This complaining jubilation is never heard in the world.

Indeed, also the world knows misery. There is much world-woe. Also in the world there is weeping and crying and tears because of the suffering of this

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\*This is a translation of a Dutch-language meditation from the pen of the late Rev. Herman Hoeksema. It is taken from Vol. 4, p. 49, Nov. 1, 1927. HCH



present time. Inexpressibly great and deep is the suffering which also causes the world to cringe in pain; beyond description is the pain of soul, the excruciating heart-pain which is suffered also in the world. Also there you find grief and sadness, also there you find anxiety and gnawing fear. Just visit the hospitals and let your eye fall upon the sufferers, the bedridden; enter the institutions for the mentally ill, for those whose mental powers are disturbed, and observe here the dull eyes of those deprived of the light of understanding and there the twisted features of the otherwise beautiful human face, or there the senseless grin of the insane which bedevils the countenance of the sufferer. Or stand at the deathbed of the ungodly, the deathbed which puts an end to all his hope; or at the open grave of the world, when the remains of its children are lowered into it. Or bring up before your imagination the hellish scene of an earthly battlefield with its blood-drenched soil, its roar of a cannonade and its death-dealing projectiles, with its atmosphere of poison gas, its devilish rage and bloodthirstiness, its raging emotions, its cries and its moans, its raging and cursing. Or visit the prison-houses of the world and their cell-blocks, where man, created to be image-bearers of the Most High and to dwell with Him in everlasting blessedness, must be guarded as wild beasts behind strongly sealed iron doors and bars . . .

And then say for yourself whether there is not a fathomless depth of worldly woe!

And yet . . . ?

Who says, who is there who laments in the world: *I am* a miserable man? Who is there who seeks the cause of all his wretchedness in "the body of this death"? Who cries out: who shall deliver me? And who is there in the world who concludes his lamentation with the triumph-song of thankfulness: I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord?

No one!

The world does not seek the cause of all misery in itself; and it does not understand that man's sin and guilt lies at the basis of all questions. The misery is ascribed by the world to the situation of things, to wrong conditions, to lack of education, to a bad environment, to bad examples, to external things. And salvation the world seeks with itself, in an arm of flesh, in more thorough education, in its own righteousness and in better examples, in man's ability to conquer suffering and death. And in the midst of that fearful struggle of the world to suppress or to ban world-woe through human ingenuity, it raises its clenched fist in the face of the Righteous One!

O miserable man that I am!

Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

I thank God!

Who is there who so lamentingly exults?

Who, that so supplicatingly gives thanks?

Who, besides God's saved child?

No one!

\* \* \* \* \*

Lamenting in jubilation!

Singing though crying!

Entreating and giving thanks for that which was desired in the entreaty.

Rejoicing in the salvation obtained, and yet crying for deliverance!

Surely, such is the apparently irreconcilable contrast in the life of every child of God as long as he is in this world and still carries about with him the body of this death.

No, it is not doubt, much less is it despair, which is expressed in that nevertheless painful question: who shall deliver me? He knows very well that he is delivered in principle. The fearful power of guilt and of sin no longer testifies against him. Condemnation no longer leers with grinning face against him. He has once learned to exult and he may daily confess, as he stands in the consciousness of faith: I am justified by faith, and I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And he rejoices with the apostle that there is no condemnation for him, because he is in Christ Jesus. In free grace and out of His eternal good pleasure God was merciful to him. Electing love predestinated him unto the highest conceivable glory. Unfathomably deep Father-love gave the life of the Son for the salvation of the children. On Golgotha the blood was shed which paid completely also for *his* sins. And by the law of the Spirit of life he was also set free from the law of sin and death. Almighty grace gripped his heart and made him alive. Divine power dispelled the darkness and gave light, cut the root of enmity out of his heart and filled it with new life.

No, this outcry, "Who shall deliver me?" is not born of anxious doubt concerning the reality of salvation.

Much rather is it thus, that in the measure that he lives more out of that salvation, he also more earnestly prays: Deliver me, Lord, from the body of this death. According as he stands higher in the consciousness of salvation, he also cries out more emphatically and mournfully: O wretched man that I am!



After all, it was when he was first delivered that he felt the depth of his misery. Formerly he was darkness and did not even notice the fearfulness of the darkness in which he walked. Then he was of the flesh, and he did the desires of the flesh. And his entire mind was enmity against God. It was death. Therefore he did not even feel the terror of the power of death that held him prisoner. His inmost mind was in harmony with the service of sin. There was no knowledge of misery, because he loved his own misery. There was no awareness of struggle because he was himself enmity against God. There was no feeling of the awful burden of the body of his death, because his entire inner existence was in agreement with the power of unrighteousness.

But the love of God was shed abroad in his heart . . . .

Life and light came . . . .

And with that life and light there came a new life's desire, and different life-drive . . . .

It was the drive of the love of God, to be well-pleasing to Him, to be the friend of God and always to dwell in His tent. It was the drive of the principle of the liberated life. According to that drive of his heart he went out toward the things of God and he sang in principle:

Thy Word is as a lamp unto my feet,  
A light upon my pathway unto heaven;  
I've sworn an oath, which gladly I repeat,  
That I shall keep, as always I have striven,  
Thy righteous judgments, holy and complete,  
When unto me Thy helping grace is given.

(Psalter, 428:8)

But then came also the struggle!

Then it seemed that in him the entire wicked power of sin and death was unchained, in order to oppose that new principle of life, to fight it and, if possible, to annihilate it. And he began to feel the power of the body of this death. The entire old, sinful nature, as it minds the things of the flesh, as it is ruled by the power and principle of death, and as it manifests itself through the body in the desires of the flesh, in the vainglory of life, the lust of the eyes, was awakened in him and turned against the new life-principle. There seemed to be in him a twofold law, the law of sin in his members and the law of the new life in his mind. Battle came, and trouble. When he willed to do good by grace, then evil was present with him. And so he frequently became a riddle to himself. He willed the good, but did not do it. He hated the evil, but did it. And yet it was always thus, that he himself no more did the evil. His inmost heart was no more in it, as formerly. The depth of his desires always went out toward God and His commandments. With his inmost being he had an aversion of iniquity and an inner longing to make his members servants to righteousness . . . .

When through God's grace he may do the good, then his soul enjoys it. When the law of sin which is in his members takes him captive and prevents him from being well-pleasing to God, then a deep pain and sorrow grip his soul. Then there is grief and sorrow toward God.

And now there comes out of that fearful contrast in his own life the irresistible urge toward complete salvation. O, as long as he still carries about with him that body of this death, and he views that body of this death with the enlightened eye of his understanding, he feels the greatness of the misery in which he is

by nature, and he cries out: O wretched man that I am! And when the urge of the new life becomes powerful, and the longing for perfection begins to cry out in him, then he calls out: who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Thus it is that the contrast comes about. No doubt, no despair, no fearful terror, but the love of God shed abroad in the heart, sorrowing over the old power of sin which is still in his members, is the deep root from which the lamentation is born, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Wondrous and yet understandable contrast!

Delivered and longing for deliverance!

Lamenting triumph-song!

\* \* \* \* \*

Who shall deliver?

I thank God! The deliverance is in view!

God Triune is the Author of and the Surety for my final deliverance.

Sure is that salvation, because it rests in the unchangeable good pleasure of the Father, Who never forsakes the work of His own hands. For He whom He did foreknow and in eternal love predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, these He also glorified!

Sure is that deliverance, because it is in Christ Jesus.

God Triune sent Him in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, to condemn sin in the flesh. And He came. And He joined battle for me against the powers of sin and death and hell. And He was victorious. And He deprived sin of the might and the right to rule in my life. And He arose out of the depth of death and was glorified. And He ascended into heaven full of



honor, with captivity as His captive and with gifts of comfort for all His brethren. He merited not only the beginning but also the end; not only the principle but also the completion of the full salvation . . . .

Through Christ Jesus God shall also deliver me from the body of this death.

He shall sanctify and purify through the Spirit of our Lord;

He shall preserve and guard against the powers of darkness which assault me from within and from without; presently He shall glorify me, and when the earthly house of this tabernacle is broken down, shall provide me a building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. . . .

Then the body of this death shall remain behind forever!

He shall have dominion also over my body in the dust of death, and shall one day clothe me, according to body and soul, with glory.

Who shall deliver me? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

To Him be the glory!  
Now and forever! □

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## “... Go, and Sin No More”

David J. Engelsma

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*“And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.” (John 8:11, King James Version)*

In Jesus' Word to the woman taken in adultery are perfectly set forth the salvation-realities of justification and sanctification; their relationship; and their difference. “Neither do I condemn thee” — this is justification; “go, and sin no more” — this is sanctification. The former is the Lord's Word that frees from the deserved punishment of sin; the latter is His Word that liberates from the enslaving power of sin. The Word of pardon is first; the Word of purifying follows. But never has the Savior spoken the Word of forgiveness to a sinner without adding, immediately, the Word of holiness. Declared to be uncondemned, the woman goes from Jesus in peace; commanded no more to sin, she goes in the power of a holy life.

Together, justification and sanctification make up the one, great work of the salvation of the elect sinner from his sin. Justification rescues from sin as guilt;

sanctification delivers from sin as power. Both are mighty acts of Jesus by His Holy Spirit. Both are accomplished through the preaching of the gospel (Rom. 1:16, 17; John 17:17). Both are bestowed upon the sinner, and enjoyed by him, through faith alone (Rom. 3:28; Acts 15:9). Both are gifts of pure grace for which the sinner is indebted to God (Rom. 3:24; Rom. 6:17). Both are grounded in the cross of Jesus Christ and come to the sinner as the out-working of Christ's atoning death (Rom. 3:24, 25; Rom. 6:1ff.).

Still, the distinction between them is fundamental. Whereas justification cancels the sinner's debt of punishment owed to God, sanctification dethrones sin's power in his life. Whereas by justification, the sinner is reckoned to be righteous before God, i.e., his legal status before

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God the Judge is that of innocence; by sanctification, he actually becomes a good and holy man, loving God and his neighbor. Whereas justification is a Word of Jesus that *declares* a man to be righteous, with the righteousness of Another, even Jesus Christ, sanctification is a Word that *makes* the man righteous, with a righteousness that is so much his own that he vigorously wages war with sin and actively performs all manner of good works. Justification is a perfect work already in this life — as justified, the woman taken in adultery stood before her Judge as one who had never committed the sin of adultery, or any other sin; and of this she was fully and perfectly conscious at the moment He said, “Neither do I condemn thee.” Sanctification is a progressive work throughout the life of the saint — as sanctified, the woman taken in adultery would struggle the rest of her life against her depraved nature, including adulterous thoughts and desires, in order to yield herself, more and more, to the Holy Spirit, until sin was abolished for her at her death. Although holiness is victorious in the saint already in this life (“sin shall not have dominion over you” — Rom. 6:14), holiness is not, and cannot be, perfected in him, for he retains his corrupt nature until death (cf. the Belgic Confession, Article XV).

To confuse justification and sanctification, as Rome does by its teaching that justification is Christ's work of *infusing* righteousness into the sinner, i.e., making him holy, so that he produces good works, in order then to forgive him on the basis of the good works that he himself performs and in order then to pronounce him worthy of an eternal life which he himself has merited,

is fatally to flaw the gospel of grace. In this case, the sinner's right to eternal life is, in part, his own work, and not the work of Jesus alone. Depending for forgiveness and eternal life upon his own work, the sinner cannot find peace with God. Only a Word of justification that excludes all the sinner's own work from consideration magnifies the grace of God, and sends the sinner away in peace. Only such a Word can then be followed by a Word of sanctification that causes the forgiven sinner to walk, if not to run, in the way of holiness, willingly and joyfully.

Just as these two great saving works of Christ must be carefully distinguished, so must their relationship be noted with exactness. Sanctification invariably accompanies justification. The woman taken in adultery is not an exception, but the rule to which there is no exception. Whom the Savior forgives, He also makes holy. Whenever He says, “I do not condemn thee,” He always adds, “go, and sin no more”; and He does so at once. The unholy church member is only deceiving himself, if he supposes that the Word of justification has come to him. The sinner who goes out from the preaching of the gospel of the forgiveness of sins by the sheer mercy of the Great King only to seize his brother by the throat on the church parking lot, demanding, “Pay me that thou owest,” shows by that unholiness that he never was forgiven (Matthew 18:21ff.). The man professing to have faith who does not clothe the naked, and feed the hungry brother or sister, not only exposes himself as unholy, but also as lacking justification, his faith being a dead faith (James 2:14ff.). Salvation from sin for every sinner is one complete washing; concerning all living members of the congregation, therefore, the apostle is confident

that “ye are sanctified, . . . ye are justified” (1 Cor. 6:11).

The teaching that one can have pardon without purification, or, as some put it, that one can have Jesus as Savior without having Him as Lord, is false doctrine. It puts asunder what God has joined together: divides Christ; cheapens salvation; and sends sinners down the broad way that leads to destruction, assuring them all the while that they are bound for heaven. Nevertheless, this teaching is one of the most pervasive and pernicious errors in Protestantism today. It appears wherever churches offer the grace of forgiveness, while denying the necessity of the forgiven sinner's walking henceforth on the narrow way of obedience to God's Law. The heresy is boldly and shamelessly defended when, in response to the objection of some who still have some concern for holiness, that the church is tolerating public transgression of God's law among her membership, the church exclaims, “But we proclaim the Word of grace here.” What is the church really saying? “It is possible, indeed by this time it is the rule, to enjoy forgiveness without holiness; you can have Jesus as Savior without having Him as Lord.” To many adulteresses and adulterers, the churches are saying, in our time, “Neither do we condemn you: go.” Nothing more. Indeed, by virtue of the fact that they say nothing more, they are saying, “. . . go, and keep right on sinning your sin of adultery.”

The Reformed faith abhors and denounces this blasphemy of the Savior, as The Scotch Confession of Faith (A.D. 1560) expresses:

*For this wee maist boldelie affirme, that blasphemy it is to say, that Christ abydes in the heartes of sik, as in whome there is no spirite of sanctification. And therefore we feir not to affirme, that murderers, oppressers, cruell persecuters, adulterers, huremongers, filthy persons, Idolaters, drunkards, thieves, and al workers of iniquity, have nether trew*



*faith, nether any portion of the Spirit of the Lord JESUS, so long as obstinatie they continew in their wickednes. For how soone that ever the Spirit of the Lord JESUS, quhilk (which) Gods elect children receive be trew faith, taks possession in the heart of any man, so soone dois he regenerate and renew the same man. (Art. XIII)*

Concerning "justifying faith," the Belgic Confession states that "it is impossible that this holy faith can be unfruitful in man," i.e., that it should not "excite man to the practice of those works, which God has commanded in His Word" (Art. XXIV). Francis Turretin is typical of all Reformed theologians, regarding the relationship of justification and sanctification, when he says, "Although we may be of opinion that these two benefits must be distinguished and never confused, yet they are connected by the ordinance of God and the nature of the thing, so that they are never

to be torn asunder" (cf. H. Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1950, p. 566).

Sanctification follows justification (I refer to Christ's work as the believer experiences it). "Go, and sin no more" is based squarely upon the preceding "neither do I condemn thee." There is no fear, therefore, in the woman's heart, as she obeys the command to resist sin, that her pardon is conditioned by her obedience. Nor is her motive in not sinning a slave's dread of punishment, which would spoil all her apparent good works. But she goes from Jesus as one freely, graciously, and unconditionally forgiven and, therefore, as one who out of thankfulness will obey His lordly command to sin no more. She cannot but practice good works in the love that she has for the Judge Who has not condemned her.

This practice of good works is the goal of justification. Sanctification does not merely follow justification, as "b" follows "a"; but it is the end, or goal, at which justification aims. Sanctification, therefore, may not be disparaged in comparison with justification, whether in the church's preaching or in the thinking of believers. Ultimately, this is because the purpose of the Savior with His saving work is not simply the peace of the elect sinner, but the glory of God in him. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8). □

## A Realistic View Of The Sanctified Life

James D. Slopsema

Sanctification is a work the Holy Spirit accomplishes in the heart and life of every true child of God. The apostle Peter in his first epistle addressed the members of the churches in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, *through sanctification of the Holy Spirit*". (Cf I Peter 1:2.)

Sanctification means to make holy. In sanctification the Holy Spirit delivers His people from the power of sin which took hold

of them at the fall, and so transforms them so that they devote their lives to the service of the living God. As a result of this work of grace, the elect of God are also called saints, that is, holy ones.

But we ask, what does this sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit mean practically for the life of the child of God in the midst of the world? Just what can and should we expect of ourselves as

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a result of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit? What really is the sanctified life? These are very important questions to which we must have realistic (Biblical) answers. For if we are unrealistic in our expectations in this regard, we will inevitably run into deep spiritual problems.

In this connection there are two extremes we must avoid.

The one extreme is to imagine that through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit we can live a nearly perfect life.

There are those who have this extreme opinion. They are called perfectionists. They can be found in almost every church. In some cases their perfectionism takes on a very definite doctrinal form. This is true, for example, of the Pentecostals who teach that through the baptism of the Spirit some in the church are brought to a state of perfection in which they are able to live a life virtually free of sin, always abounding in the joy of the Lord. In most cases, however, the perfectionist has no clear cut doctrinal basis for his perfectionism. He simply expects that as a result of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, he ought to be living a life virtually free from sin.

The life which the perfectionist envisions is neither realistic nor Biblical.

Consider, for example, the Old Testament saints who also were the recipients of the gift of sanctification. In Hebrews 11 we find a list of the Old Testament heroes of faith. What great feats they were able to accomplish through faith and the Spirit! But also turn back to the Old Testament and see how sinful and spiritually weak these same heroes of faith could also be. How shocking some of their sins were! And what misery these sins brought upon them.

Consider, too, the example of the apostle Paul in Romans 7, who writes not as an unbeliever but as a Spirit-filled Christian, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." (Cf vss 18, 19.) In response to this, Paul cries out in verse 24, "O wretched man that I am. . ."

Certainly it is neither realistic nor Biblical to imagine that the Christian as a result of the work of sanctification can live a perfect or even a near-perfect life.

And those who have that expectation inevitably run into problems. They may, for example, begin to doubt their own salvation. They find it impossible to live up to the high ideals they have for themselves. And the only thing they can conclude is that they have not been sanctified by the Spirit of God. Or it may be that to attain their ideal of perfection they take a very superficial view of sin and godliness. Many a perfectionist of necessity views sin and godliness to be merely matters of external behavior, and not of the heart.

By all means we must avoid the error of perfectionism.

There is also another extreme we must avoid, the error of antinomianism.

The word "antinomian" means "against the law," and describes a person who considers the keeping of God's law unimportant and really impossible, even for the child of God.

Antinomianism is found in one form or another in many churches. In some cases antinomianism is rooted in a mistaken notion that to be zealous for good works is to fall into the error of work righteousness and to detract from the justification which we have in the cross.

Rather than striving for godliness, we ought to sin that grace may abound. Still others tend to antinomianism because of a misunderstanding of the truth of total depravity. They conclude that even in the state of grace the saint is totally depraved, incapable of doing any good. Still others fall into the error of antinomianism as a result of an unbiblical view of election. They divorce election from the cross. A salvation rooted in such an election is a salvation that leaves good works impossible as well as unimportant.

The antinomian really denies the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the child of God. He denies that the child of God is the workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10) He denies that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (II Cor. 5:17) The antinomian even denies the possibility to be called a saint, one made holy.

Needless to say, those who drift into this antinomian direction tend to be careless in their living. Why be zealous for good works, if good works are unimportant? How can we expect godliness, if godliness is really impossible? The spirit of antinomianism is the death of all holy living.

Well may the antinomian take heed to the warning of Scripture. "Know ye not that that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (I Cor. 6:9, 10)



To come to a proper view of the sanctified life of the Christian we note first of all that the work of sanctification effects a radical change in the lives of God's people.

When the child of God is sanctified, his old sinful self, called in the Bible the old man of sin, is destroyed. The old man, with all its lusts and sins, is crucified in the power of the cross. (Cf. Romans 6:6.) The result is that the child of God is dead to sin and can no longer live therein. (Cf. vs. 2.) In other words, sin has lost its power over him. He no longer is irresistibly attracted to sin as before. In the depths of his own being he has broken with sin and despises sin. Neither, therefore, can he live in sin as before.

There is also a positive work of God in sanctification, the quickening or bringing to life of a new man. In the power of Jesus' resurrection the child of God is so radically transformed and renewed, that in a very real sense he becomes a new man. He is a new man in that he lives unto God. (Romans 6:10) The basic direction of his life is towards God. He delights in the law of God. He is dedicated to

the service of God. He yields himself unto God, as one alive from the dead, and his members as instruments of righteousness unto God. (verse 13)

And this is what we ought to expect of ourselves and of one another as fellow saints. As a result of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit we must be new men and women whose lives are radically different from those of the world. There should be a marked difference between the way we live and the way the world lives. It ought to be plain to all that the direction of our life is towards God.

However, we must hasten to add that the sanctifying work of God is not complete in this life. Sanctification is one of the works of God only begun in this life, but not finished.

Consequently, in this life we still have a sinful flesh filled with all sorts of evil lusts and desires. In Christ we may be dead to sin; but sin is certainly not dead in us. For these fleshly lusts war against the soul (I Peter 2:11) so that we can not do the things we would. (Galatians 5:17) As a result of God's sanctifying work in us, we would serve God according to His law. But

because of the fleshly lusts that war against our soul we find that we can not always do that which we would. Again and again and again we stumble into sin. We fall far short of the perfection of God's law. In fact, all that we do is somehow tainted with sin. (Isaiah 64:6)

But the fruit of the work of sanctification is that the saints of God grieve over these sins. They are filled with true sorrow after God. Moreover, with their grieving hearts they come to God in prayer, confess their sins, and find forgiveness in the blood of Jesus Christ. Then in gratitude for God's forgiveness and salvation they continue to fight against their sinful flesh and the sins into which they so easily fall.

The sanctified life is therefore a life of continual struggle against sin. It is filled with joys and sorrows, with highs and lows. There is falling into sin, but also overcoming sin in the power of the cross. But it is primarily a life consecrated to the service of God.

May God give us grace to live the sanctified life every day, that we may serve the glory of His name. □

Carl J. Haak

## The Sore Fight

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The elect, justified, sanctified child of God must battle his indwelling sin. The Christian is a new man in a corrupt nature. Implanted in him is the new life of Jesus Christ, a new obedience to the divine will, a principle of the

sinless resurrection life of Christ. But this new life dwells now in a corrupt flesh which can do no good. This is not the same as saying that the Christian can do no good. The old man of sin in us, the flesh, the corrupt nature in-



herited from Adam and transmitted to us in our birth, can do no good. It never gets any better, even after a life of sanctification. The old man of sin in us never becomes any less vicious, tamed, subdued, or willing to declare a truce with the new man in Christ given to us. No, the only thing we are to do with it is to kill it, crucify it, give no occasion to it, put it off, offer no excuses for it. But the renewed child of God, by virtue of the life of Christ in him *can* and *does* walk in a new life. Indeed, he both wills and acts according to God's good pleasure: that is, lives with a sincere resolve to obey God's commands. The result of the new obedience implanted in a corrupt nature is a sore fight against indwelling sin.

The presence of the struggle with sin is precisely due to the small beginning of the new obedience of Christ given to us in our regeneration. Without it there would be no conflict with sin in us, no occasion for any inner strife, no feeling of Godly remorse, guilt, or shame. The principle of the new obedience of Christ does not exist in an unconscious form in our being so that we would be unaware of it. But it is brought to our consciousness through the work of the Spirit as He brings us under the penetrating light of the Word. It evidences itself in a sincere sorrow of heart that we have offended God in our sins, in a trust in Christ as our Savior, and righteousness with God, and in a desire to live obediently to God's will, which desire stems from an immense gratitude to God for His gracious deliverance. What all this means is this: exactly because of what the child of God has been made to be, namely a new man in a corrupt nature, there *is*, *must be*, and *will be*, a sore fight against remaining sin

in him. A sanctified man is one who is engaged in a daily struggle against the sins of his flesh, in an unceasing fight to resist temptation, in a constant battle against every appearance of evil — both old and new — in him.

This is equally applicable to the strongest and weakest Christian. The weakest in faith need not say more, the strongest will hardly venture to say less. The Lord has given to us a desire and a will to obey Him and a joy in doing so; without this we would be unworthy of the name Christians; but our best desires are weak and covered with sin due to indwelling sin, which must be put away at every turn of our life. Hence, while we have great cause to be thankful for the new obedience He has given to us, and for the measure in which that new obedience is answered in a Godly life, yet we have equal reason to be ashamed and abased under a sense of our defects and the evil which mixes with, taints, and debases our best endeavors.

Evil is present with the believer. This statement does not deny the reality of sanctification in our lives, but it tells us of the *need* for it. The Scripture states the case soberly in Gal. 5:17 "Ye cannot do the things that ye would. *"I would not (I as a sanctified child of God given joy and peace in believing Jesus Christ, assured of my salvation and henceforth desirous to live unto Him) be prey to vain, foolish, lustful imaginations in my thinking: but this evil is present with me. My thoughts seem to be as an open thorough-fare, so that false, horrid, down right base thoughts obtain access, at any time or in any place. I would not allow this or indulge in it. Much rather, to me, thoughts of God and his mercies are better. Yet this I find I do; in defiance (so it seems to me) of that new life I*

find something in me which cherishes and cleaves to these evils, from which I ought to flee as I would flee from a snake put in my bed. And I would have all such inward filth crushed, destroyed in me, rooted out. Yet one battle against such thoughts leaves me weary in the Lord's battle, and the enemy soon returns and after such a hard battle engaged yesterday, I find myself meekly surrendering to-day. (*"Oh wretched man that I am!"*)

Application is endless. It is our entire life. I would not live out of the principle of pride, self, self-grandeur, self-exaltation, yet often I do. I would not be rebellious to the providence of Father when He makes crooked what I want straight and sends things into my life which are against my grain. Yet I am prone to do it, and that in a moment. Do we not believe that He has the sovereign right to do as He will with His own, and are we not assured by Him on the basis of Calvary, that He shall do the right, that is, order everything for our advantage and salvation? Yet I feel (you, too) a presumptuous spirit in me that would dispute His wisdom and at least demand an accounting of His ways. What an evil this is for dust to contend with its Maker! I would not do it; I would say, "Silence to all doubts and discontent. Commit thy way to the Lord, trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass." But this is a sore fight. Christian soldiers are to be seen engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the flesh and old man of sin on sick beds and in the straits of trial. Sanctified Christians are engaged in a blood battle with lust, temptations, and their own self-will. Every Christian I have met or had the calling to pastor I have found to be engaged in a sore fight.



The good that we would does not come without this struggle. Prayer is something that we recommend to others, and tell them of the wonderful condescension of God who stoops low to behold in mercy our needs and to grant us a gracious ear to hear our supplications and apportion sufficient grace. But we find ourselves negligent, performing it as if it were a mere task and allowing the least little excuse to cancel it. It is right in the performance of spiritual privileges that this battle rages the fiercest. No child of God walking in sanctification has difficulty in understanding why God has represented prayer in His Word as a wrestling with God and an agonizing after God. Yet, so often we can find little heart to engage in the strife, to toil through the night and to plead, "I will not let Thee go till Thou bless me." Bible reading is the mark of one in whom dwells the sanctifying Spirit. We have been given to see the Word of God as thirst-quenching water and hunger satisfying food, and we do say with David; it is preferable to thousands of silver and gold. Yet the newspaper is scanned with searching and interested eye, while the Bible remains closed. The reading of the Word of God dwindles into a task, (which I would not) and thus we must plead with God to create in us an appetite for the food which alone satisfies.

The battle against indwelling sin is fought on many fields, takes on myriad forms, and is an unceasing reality of the sanctified life.

The sore fight is conducted by the sanctified believer in the knowledge of victory. The outcome is not in doubt. Sanctification will proceed because it is the work of God, who both begins a good work in us and completes it in the day of Christ. Though sin

wars in us, it does not reign; and though it breaks our peace, it cannot separate us from His love. The enemy shall not prevail. He shall not and does not have dominion over you. The principle of the new obedience of Christ is unquenchable, conquering, and victorious. This fact is so marvellous that you and I must daily lay hold of it by a true and living faith. Our experience would seem to contradict this and our repeated falls would cause us great searching questionings. Yet it is so, that the resurrection life of Jesus Christ is victorious over sin, also now in principle as we are in the fight. We are supported by almighty power; power which also holds this enemy in His hands; power of sanctifying grace which manifests itself in repentance of sin and trust in Christ.

The sore fight against sin has a purpose. The longer our fight the more we are led to abandon ourselves and cast ourselves upon Him for all our strength and hope. We see His grace in forgiveness, His faithfulness in preserving us in the fight, His unchanging love illustrated in multiplied pardons granted to us. We are humbled. This sore fight is the Lord's school to teach us slow learners that we have no wisdom and strength of self to stand. A life of sanctification will

every day draw forth to your consciousness some new corruption which before was little noticed, or not recognized as the filth that it is. Thus we are weaned from leaning on any supposed goodness, strength, or power of ourselves, and feel the full force of the Lord's words; "Without me ye can do nothing."

The knowledge of this unrelenting warfare with our many backslidings will make the child of God ashamed and silence the stirrings of pride in his heart. We shall open our mouths to praise Him, "Who upholds us in the fight." But we will not open our mouths to praise ourselves. In the midst of the fight we will look to Him, a powerful Savior, Who is able to save to the uttermost them that trust in Him, and present them without spot or blemish at His appearing. He knows our frame, He remembers we are dust. He who has justified us in the blood-shedding of the Cross, will also through the blood sanctify us wholly.

The battle will not remain long. We shall not always be as we are now. Freed from this vile flesh at the coming of Jesus, then we shall see Him as He is, and we shall be like Him and be with Him forever. □

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# The Christian And The Law

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Robert D. Decker

By "The Law" we mean the will of God for His redeemed in Christ. That will of God is expressed in the inspired, infallible Holy Scriptures and summed in the law of the Ten Commandments. There are, according to Scripture, two uses of God's law or we could say, the law serves two purposes. It is the teacher of our misery (cf. Lord's Day II, Heidelberg Catechism) and the law is the rule for the Christian's life of gratitude to God for the salvation God has wrought in Jesus Christ. Jesus taught us that the entire law of God may be summed in two words: We are to love the Lord our God with all that we are, and we are to love the neighbor as ourselves. (cf. Matthew 22:34-40) Standing before the law's demand, the Christian learns his misery. That misery is that he is prone by

nature to hate God and the neighbor. In no wise is the Christian able to keep the commandments of God. (cf. Heidelberg Catechism, L.D. II) The Christian's only hope of salvation lies in Jesus Christ Who is: "... the end (fulfillment, R.D.D.) of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." (Romans 10:4) Thus the law functions as the teacher of the Christian's misery.

It is, however, to the second use of the law that we wish to call attention in this article, the law as the rule for the Christian's life of gratitude. By way of introduction we should notice that the form of the law suggests the idea of completeness and perfection. There are *ten* commandments and that number ten is the number of completeness, of fulness of measure as determined by God. Those ten Words are divided into two tables. Commandments one through four teach us how we are to behave towards God, and Commandments five through ten teach us how we are to behave towards the neighbor. Thus our entire life in all its relationships is covered by the law. The law was written on both sides of two tables of stone. That it was written on tables of stone implies that it can never be erased. The law stands eternally as the expression of

God's perfect will. That those two tables are filled on both sides emphasizes once more that the law is the complete, the full expression of God's will for us. Finally as to its form, the law is negative. Each commandment, with the exception of the fourth in part and the fifth, comes with a: "Thou shalt not . . ." This emphasizes the fact that we are by nature always inclined to transgress God's Law. The law clearly points to our sinful natures according to which we are not able to keep God's law.

But if the form of the law is negative, its content is positive. Some people, many in fact, never get beyond the form of the law. These consider the law to be a code of negatives which govern the outward actions of men. As long as one does not commit the act of murder or the physical act of adultery he keeps the law. Jesus (cf. Matthew 5) taught otherwise! Our Lord points us to the fact that murder is hatred of the neighbor and that adultery is committed in the lustful heart of a man. The law requires the inner obedience of love to God and the neighbor.

What is the content of God's law? What does the law say to us? The law of God begins with

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these powerful, beautiful, and majestic words: "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." (Exodus 20:1, 2) What is this if it be not the very gospel of God in Jesus Christ? The law came four hundred and thirty years after the promise and was added to the promise. But the law could not annul or make the promise of no effect. On the contrary, the law served as the schoolmaster to lead God's Israel to Christ, in whom was all of their redemption. (cf. Galatians 3)

But what a tremendous word: "I am the Lord thy God." The Lord reveals His unique relationship with His people, Israel. The Lord is saying: I am Jehovah THY God, i.e., in distinction from all other nations, I am THY God. You are my peculiar treasure. I will bless you and your children. Because I am thy God I have redeemed thee from Egypt's bondage. God speaks that same word to us. He says to us: I have redeemed thee from bondage of sin and death. I have delivered you from the oppression of the Egypt of this world through Jesus Christ. I bless you with all spiritual blessings in Christ Who died for you and arose again. You shall be preserved by my Spirit and taken into the glory of the heavenly Canaan. Because I am thy God, the God of thy salvation, I come to you with my law. This is the path of perfect freedom for you as My children. This is the way you work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, in thankfulness, and to my praise.

God is saying to us: because I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Yes, the law is expressed in negative terms for reasons already cited, but positively the law says: thou shalt love the Lord thy God! This is the essence of the entire law, the issue at stake in every commandment. The love of God must be our motive in serving Him alone, in worshipping God as He has commanded in His Word, in reverencing His holy Name, in keeping the Sabbath holy, honoring father and mother and all in authority over us, in loving the neighbor in his person, in his marriage relation, property and possession, in his name. The love of God must fill our hearts with contentment so that we refrain from coveting. In every sphere and relationship of life God says just one thing: love me!

And, we must love God not just by outward conformity to His law, but with the heart, mind, soul, and strength. In the world outward conformity is sufficient. A man may covet as long as he does not steal. But God looks at the heart, and if the love of God is not there, we stand condemned. Here there is no compromise. The law is absolute. It is never: "both . . . and," but always: "either . . . or." If we do not love God, we hate Him. This is precisely what Jesus taught us in Matthew 22:37-40: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Into this freedom God brought us by the wonder of the cross of Jesus Christ.

In the light of this it is very difficult to understand why many deny the necessity of God's law. Some object to the law by saying it conflicts with the Christian's liberty of Christ. It is, according

to these, contrary to the very nature of grace to confront the Christian with the law. The law is fulfilled in Christ. We are no longer under the law, but under grace. Neither are we any longer little children who need a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law so don't preach the law to me," these will say. Others place all of the emphasis on justification. We are justified through faith in Jesus Christ. We are saved by grace. Hence the law cannot be the whole or even a part of our salvation. Preaching the law, these objectors claim, will lead to the heresy of Phariseism.

What does the Bible say to this? The Bible says we are free in Christ! Never ought we deny or minimize this great truth. To do so is to fall into either legalism or antinomianism. And both are grievous errors which have caused much grief and harm in the history of God's church. We are free in Christ! Free we are from the curse of the law, for Christ was made a curse for us. The law is not the way of salvation for us. We do not earn salvation by doing the

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works of the law. We are free in Christ. Jesus Christ is all of our righteousness, and the law is written in our very hearts.

But that freedom is not license. We are not free to trample God's law under foot. We are not free to sin, that grace may abound. And we may not use our liberty in Christ as an occasion for the flesh. (cf. Galatians 5) We are free

in Christ to live in the sphere of God's law. We are free from the guilt of sin, free from the power of death and the corruption of sin. Free we are in Jesus Christ to love and serve the Lord our God and for His sake to love the neighbor as ourselves.

Now, it is a struggle. Daily we have to put off the old man and put on the new man in Christ. We need the admonition of God's

Word: "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage . . . only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Galatians 5:1, 13, 14) □

*Gise J. Van Baren*

## Daily Conversion

Thomas Guthrie said, "If you find yourself loving any pleasure better than your prayers, any book better than the Bible, any house better than the house of God, any table better than the Lord's table, any persons better than Christ, any indulgence better than the hope of Heaven — take alarm."

Is there reason for alarm with us?

We treat the subject of sanctification in this issue. With this truth, as with all Scriptural truth, there is the real danger that we twist good doctrine to condone or excuse sin. There is, for instance, the distortion of the decree of eternal election and eternal security so that it becomes one's own guarantee for eternal salvation — regardless of what one does or believes. So also there is the danger that one regards sanctification to be a full and complete work of God which makes us holy no matter how we live.

There is reason for alarm when we speak of our sanctification while holding still to the world about us.

Two facts face the church — our churches. Both involve a loss of the "first love" (Rev. 2:4). First, there are those who were suddenly converted from sin and brought to the glorious light of the gospel. In such newly con-

verted ones, there is understandably great joy. Only one delivered from the terrible bondage of sin, who is brought into blessed communion fellowship with Jesus Christ, knows what a wonderful fact salvation is. But after several years, the wonder of such deliverance seems to fade from their minds. These take many things now for granted. That "first love", that great enthusiasm for the wonder of God's work, seems to wane. It is not that one falls from grace, but rather the original zeal is no longer seen.

Or, as is true for most of us, we have been born and raised within the church. From infancy on, we have been instructed in the truths of the Word of God. Our conversion was not a sudden event in our lives. Rather, gradually we have become aware of the work of the Spirit within us. There was, perhaps, not a time that we can recall being in

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the shackles of sin and in the darkness of death. But how often we again take for granted what we have been given. We can easily regard the privilege of our birth within the sphere of God's covenant as a guarantee to heaven. We find ourselves excusing our sins on the grounds that Jesus has fully paid for them. The beauty of grace, the blessedness of dwelling in God's house, the comfort of the Word, seem not that important always to us. If this is true, we have lost our first love.

Is there reason for alarm? Have we lost that first love? Consider some examples. There are those who minimize the need for attending the preaching of the Word of God. Going to church on Sunday appears to be a drudgery rather than a joy. Or the affairs of the church appear not to be important to some who do not attend the annual congregational meeting. Societies suffer because of lack of attendance and lack of preparation. Where is the old interest in careful study of the Word? Others find all kinds of excuses not to serve in the offices within the church. Some even show scorn towards those who seem too spiritual. The sins of gossip and slander are all too common. The reading of Scripture and earnest prayer wane.

Antinomianism is not utterly unknown in our midst. This is that old but evil theory that since Christ paid for our sins, therefore we can do now as we please. We rest assured that any sin which remains by our own will in us, will surely be forgiven. Christ was obedient for us — therefore we are not obliged unto new obedience.

Satan would encourage the abuse of the wonderful doctrine of grace too. Salvation is truly the gift of God, not of the works of man. Some have therefore concluded, as Satan would have us to do, that works are not very necessary. If salvation is of grace, if works are not needed unto salvation, why do good works? Or is the conclusion correct, "Let us sin that grace may abound" (Rom. 6)?

Where is the old enthusiasm, the zealotry, that was first seen? What is the problem? The sanctified Christian still has a continuing struggle here on this earth. He faces the enemy, that old triumvirate: the devil, the world, and his own sinful flesh. There is, first, that old nature which we have while still here on this earth. Though the new life of Christ is worked in our hearts, the old man remains with us as long as we live here. Scripture speaks of our small beginning of new obedience. So much seems to attract the old man of sin.

The materialism of this world affects us. The world in its advertising shows all the things we need here on the earth. We can so easily become concerned first of all with our standard of living. Too often this distracts from our seeking the kingdom of heaven.

In this world there is an emphasis upon the pleasure of this life. Entertainment of every sort provides pleasure for many — so that little time is left for those things which are spiritual. Isn't a basketball game, or a baseball game, more interesting and exciting than Bible study in society?

Then too, the modern inventions of this world, wonderful though these may be in themselves, have contributed to the worldliness so evident even in the churches. Television, radio, and phonograph have brought the world into our homes and

lives. The automobile allows members of the family to be everywhere but at home.

There is also the general apostasy of our own age. The strictness of the church, and its emphasis on the doctrines of Scripture, are seldom evident anymore. The church appears to allow virtually anything — provided it is "redeemed" for Christ. One can go to the movies or the dance, he can break the Sabbath, provided these are somehow "redeemed" Christianly.

Nor is the church the center of the activity of the family. Now so many other things seem so much more important than church activities.

How is it that those who claim to have been born again and converted, seem to show so little evidence of this in daily living?

What every Christian must remember is that conversion must be evident *daily* in our lives, and sanctification must *constantly* be taking place. Conversion can indeed be a sudden, one-time event (though that is not normally true for those born within the church). Yet it is also true that there must be a constant, daily turning from ways of sin to the narrow way of life. One must repent of grievous sins not only, but he must also repent of those sins committed daily. Repentance, confession of sins, turning from ways of disobedience are required daily of us.

This means that we must get out of our heads the notion that being a Christian is easy. On the contrary, it requires great effort; great striving. Jesus speaks of those who follow Him as "taking up their crosses" (Matt. 16:24). That command of Christ implies both the great activity required and the great difficulty involved. The "taking up" points to the activity of the Christian. The



"cross" reminds of the suffering and trials entailed by following after Christ.

So the Christian is to be active — deliberately, purposefully active. Daily there must be evidence of repentance from sin and a turning to righteousness. But one is to be active and spiritual in all that he does. Though he must sometimes force himself to do those things which Scripture requires of him, he must continue to labor faithfully.

Thus he carries out his duties faithfully — even when he might not always "feel" like it. He is faithful in church and in the activities of the church.

He is earnest in his prayers and in his reading of Scripture at home. His devotions, his "family altar", are important to the whole of the family.

And he flees from the corruption of this world.

All of this requires that he be on his knees in prayer to God every day. He prays earnestly for forgiveness of his many sins and asks for the strength to walk in the way of life. And God, Who rejoices in the asking of His people, provides. He directs in the way of truth.

In this way, we also enjoy a restoration of that "first love". He who sincerely repents of his sins, works faithfully by grace, also will grow in the love of God and of His Son Jesus Christ. Such understand the truth of sanctification not as an excuse to sin, but as the process whereby one continues to develop in his faith.

May necessary alarm have its proper fruit: true repentance and greater holiness by the grace of our glorious God. □

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## Progressive Sanctification

Herman C. Hanko

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The problem of progressive sanctification is always a troubling one for the saints. Does the regenerated and sanctified child of God become, throughout his life, progressively more holy? May he, in the midst of the battle of faith, expect growth in sanctity and piety? increasing victories in the battle against sin? May he, on the basis of the Word of God, expect that as he grows older he will become more and more virtuous and that he will live in greater and more frequent good works?

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Or, to put the question in another form: When God, through the Spirit of Christ, performs the work of sanctification in the hearts of His people, does God so work that that sanctification is a process which significantly and noticeably makes the child of God a more holy person? Does God continually cleanse from sin so that sin more and more is defeated and holiness more and more dominates in the life of the one redeemed in the blood of the cross of Christ?

This question can be considered from two different viewpoints. It may be considered from the viewpoint of the doctrine itself, i.e., does Scripture teach such progress in sanctification?

Or it may be considered from the viewpoint of the personal experience of the child of God, i.e., in the heat and struggle of the battle against sin, may a Christian expect that, through God's grace in His heart, he will increasingly subdue the sin in his flesh and more and more live a life of holiness? Put in this way, the question becomes an intensely personal one. The opposite is, after all, bitter to contemplate. It may be that in the battle the child of God knows only retreat, that sin increases its strength and force, that evil gains more and more power over him. Some-



times it seems that way to God's people. They speak rather sorrowfully of the fact that the older they become, the more sinful their lives are. As they reach old age, they see more and more sin, more corruption in their evil nature which they struggle against all their life long and greater evil present in them.

But even if the battle is a kind of spiritual "stale-mate," the life of the believer takes on a rather dark hue. It is always true, of course, that the believer looks forward in hope and anticipation to the time when the battle will be over and the victory will be won. But while he continues in this life the struggle remains, from the viewpoint of his own experience, indecisive.

When we turn to Scripture and the testimony of the Reformed Confessions on this question, it appears at first glance as if the teachings found there are contradictory.

On the one hand, there is no question about it that the Scriptures emphatically teach and emphasize growth and progress in sanctification. We have the space to cite only a few evidences of this strong emphasis in God's Word. The Bible speaks often of spiritual growth. Ephesians 2:21 speaks of growing unto a holy temple, and the same figure is used by Peter in I Peter 2:5 where the saints are compared to living stones, i.e., stones which, because they live, also become increasingly fit to occupy a place in the holy temple of God. In the second verse of this same chapter, Peter urges upon the saints to desire as newborn babes the pure milk of the Word "that ye may grow thereby." And in the very last verse of his second epistle, Peter admonishes the saints to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (3:18). In II Corinthians 7:1 we are exhorted

to perfect our holiness in the fear of God; in Hebrews 12:14, we are told to follow after sanctification without which no man may see the Lord; and in II Thessalonians 1:3 Paul tells the members of that congregation that their faith grows exceedingly and that the love each one has for the other abounds. Repeatedly Scripture presses upon us the calling to increase in holiness, for we are called to be holy even as our Father in heaven is holy (I Peter 1:15, 16).

On the other hand, another picture is drawn in Scripture of quite a different kind. It is a picture of people of God on their knees with tears streaming down their faces, crying out in the agony of their sin. David, after his sins of murder and adultery, confesses that he was conceived and born in sin (Psalm 51:5); Job, when confronted with the great majesty of God, complains, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee?" (Job 40:4). And again, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6). The Psalmist complains that his sins rise up against him, *prevailing* day by day, (Psalm 65:3) and this is only one of many plaintive cries repeatedly made in the Psalms concerning the great burden of sin.

The New Testament sounds the same note. Paul speaks of the good which he would, but does not, and the evil which he would not, but which he nevertheless does, because he is carnal and sold under sin; and he ends his deep confession of sin with the anguished cry: "O wretched man that I am" (Romans 7:14-24). Not the Pharisee in the temple, who boasted of all his holiness, went home justified, but the publican who could only smite on his breast, fearful to lift his eyes to heaven, and who pleaded, "God be merciful to me, the sinner" (Luke 18:9-15).

Our creeds echo these truths of Scripture. Our Heidelberg Catechism speaks of even the holiest of men having but a small beginning of the new obedience (Lord's Day LXIV, 114), and of our best works as being imperfect and defiled by sin (Lord's Day XXIV, 62). And, in praying for the forgiveness of sins, the Heidelberg Catechism speaks of our confession as being that we are poor sinners and that our transgressions and depravity always cleave to us (Lord's Day LI, 126).

Over the years various solutions to this problem have been proposed. Generally speaking, they have divided themselves into two camps, the camp of the perfectionists and the camp of the antinomians. Both attempt to solve the problem by going in different directions.

The perfectionists are proud to speak of such great advances in sanctification that they attain to a state of perfection in this world. Dr. Abraham Kuyper, e.g., once spoke of a minister whom he heard who announced one Sunday to his congregation that he had succeeded in living for an entire year without sin. The Pentecostalists are eager also to speak of this kind of perfection which comes with the second blessing. But such a notion is not only contrary to the Scriptures, it inevitably falls into the trap of Arminianism. Such have a very moralistic view of goodness: they have no conception of the bitter struggle against sin which goes on in our members, and they reduce piety to some outward observance of the law of God. They separate the work of sanctification from grace and, while speaking rather piously of justification only through faith, nevertheless leave sanctification in our



hands and make it our work. They fall into the dreadful trap of relying upon works, an evil against which our Belgic Confession warns so seriously when it says, "Moreover, though we do good works, we do not found our salvation upon them; for we do no work but what is polluted by our flesh, and also punishable; and although we could perform such works, still the remembrance of one sin is sufficient to make God reject them. Thus then we would always be in doubt, tossed to and fro without any certainty, and our poor consciences continually vexed, if they relied not on the merits of the suffering and death of our Savior" (Article XXIV).

The antinomians, on the other hand, want to deny the work of sanctification altogether. They speak of our righteousness in Christ, of the fact that our holiness is only in Christ (but not in us), that good works are forever impossible because of the continuous corruption of our natures, that all good works are done *for* us by Christ (while denying that they are done *in* us by the Spirit and power of Christ.) Emphasizing our perpetual and unrelieved depravity, they have no room in the life of the believer for being the branches of the vine, for living in Christ and out of Him, and for bearing good fruit in union with Christ. So often a practical antinomianism raises its ugly head in the church by becoming an excuse for sin and a plea to tolerate sin because the justified sinner is unable to do anything else but sin. Hence, it becomes nonsense to speak of progressive sanctification simply because no holiness is present in the justified sinner at all and nothing exists which can possibly grow into something stronger and better. All awaits the day when the elect sinner goes to heaven.

Lord's Day XLIV (a Lord's Day we have referred to earlier, but now question 115) points the way of Scripture's answer to this question. It relates for us the need for a strict preaching of the law of God to sanctification. The whole question and answer reads:

*Why will God then have the ten commandments so strictly preached, since no man in this life can keep them?*

*First, that all our lifetime we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature, and thus become the more earnest in seeking the remission of sin, and righteousness in Christ; likewise, that we constantly endeavor and pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may become more and more conformable to the image of God, till we arrive at the perfection proposed to us, in a life to come.*

Several elements are emphasized here, each of which is important. The Heidelberg Catechism is asking the question: Why, in the light of our inability to keep God's commandments, does God want the perfection of His law constantly brought to our attention? Why a call to perfection when perfection is, in this life, out of reach?

The first answer given is that we may all our lifetime learn more and more our sinful nature. That pointed and powerful answer surely speaks directly to the consciousness of the sin-burdened believer. As he grows older, he learns more and more about the depths of the depravity of his sinful nature, about his capacity for sin and for every vile corruption, of his inability to do anything right in God's sight. But, and this needs so much to be stressed, that very lesson which he learns is progress and growth in sanctification. It is the "more and more" of growth and spiritual development. Only by the increasing power of the Holy Spirit does the child of God come to know his sins in all their horror.

The second answer that is given is that the greater knowledge we have of our sin, the

more we will learn to seek remission for them in the cross and the more earnest we will be in seeking our righteousness in the blood of our Savior. And that too is astonishing and remarkable growth and progress. It is growth in humility. It is growth in forsaking ourselves. It is growth in escape from all Phariseeism, from all trust in our power. It is the great progress of fleeing more and more to Christ and clinging by faith to His cross. And again, this kind of progress the believer finds in his life, for his only comfort in life and in death is that he belongs to his faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

The third answer which this Lord's Day gives is that we trust more and more in the grace of the Holy Spirit. What tremendous progress one makes in the life of sanctification when more and more he abandons himself and his own efforts, when more and more he forsakes his own works, when more and more he no longer trusts in what his hands have done; but rather relies solely upon and seeks only the grace of the Holy Spirit. This is the end of all Arminianism in his own soul. It is the full judgment of his own consciousness upon every work which he does. It is the death knell for self-righteousness. Grace and grace alone is the power by which he becomes increasingly conformed to the image of God's Son. And relying upon that grace alone, he lives as a branch out of the Vine, which is Christ, and that life of Christ pulses within him.

And finally, the Catechism points us to the perfection which awaits the believer. Struggling with his flesh, fighting a wearying battle against his own corrupt nature, he increasingly longs for



the day when he can lay aside once and for all the weapons of his spiritual warfare and claim the palm branch of perfect victory. Wounded, bloodied repeatedly in the battle, indescribably weary from the conflict, he lives in the hope of the day when the enemy shall forever be vanquished and he can receive from the Captain of his salvation the wreath of victory which is His through the blood of the cross. This, too, is growth in sanctification. He is torn away from this world and all its pleasures and lusts. He is pulled powerfully in the depths of his being towards

glory. He turns his back increasingly upon all that belongs to this sinful life. And he grows in the hope of the day when he shall be with His Savior.

If we look for growth in the outward good works which attract the attention of men and which are praised by men, we shall fall into the trap of Arminianism and moralism, and fail to see what sanctification is all about. But if we understand that sanctification is God's work, performed by grace, wrought in us in the profound way in which

our fathers have explained it; if we know the quiet working of the Spirit, the still small voice, the unheralded humility of the crushed sinner who cries to heaven, the tears which God collects in His bottle, above all, the desperate clinging to Christ for everything, then we shall come to understand a bit of what remarkable and astonishing progress the sanctified child of God makes on this difficult path of life and holiness which leads to heaven. □

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## Sanctification And Assurance

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In one way or another our Reformed confessions speak of the Christian's assurance rather frequently.

First of all, saving faith itself is assurance. This is very clear from Lord's Day VII. True faith is not only a *certain knowledge* . . . but also an *assured confidence* . . . that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits." In Question and Answer 44 this assurance is con-

nected with Christ's descension into hell: "That in my greatest temptations, *I may be assured*, and wholly comfort myself in this, that my Lord Jesus Christ, by His inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors, and hellish agonies, in which he was plunged during all his sufferings, but especially on the cross, hath delivered me from the anguish and torments of hell." In Question and Answer 54, concerning the holy catholic church, we find the familiar language of assurance on the part of the Christian: ". . . and that I am and for ever shall remain, a living member thereof." Lord's Day XXIII, concerning justification by faith, speaks the language of assurance.

The sacraments, according to the Catechism, serve the purpose of assurance (Q. & A. 67, 69, 75). In answering the question, "Why must we still do good works?" the Catechism states in part: ". . . also, that every one may be assured in himself of his faith, by the fruits thereof . . ."

Significantly, our Confession of Faith in Article 24 addresses the subject of assurance in connection with sanctification, and it does so at the conclusion of the article in a rather negative way, as follows: "Moreover, though we do good works, we do not found



our salvation upon them; for we do no work but what is polluted by our flesh, and also punishable; and although we could perform such works, still the remembrance of one sin is sufficient to make God reject them. Thus then we would always be in doubt, tossed to and fro without any certainty, and our poor consciences continually vexed, if they relied not on the merits of the suffering and death of our Savior."

The Canons of Dordrecht, so often characterized as being hard and without a pastoral element, address the subject of assurance more than once. Already in the First Head, where the subject is divine predestination, they speak of the *assurance of election* as follows:

*The elect in due time, though in various degrees and in different measures, attain the assurance of this their eternal and unchangeable election, not by inquisitively prying into the secret and deep things of God, but by observing in themselves with a spiritual joy and holy pleasure, the infallible fruits of election pointed out in the Word of God — such as a true faith in Christ, filial fear, a godly sorrow for sin, a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, etc. (Article 12)*

Notice that already here the Canons posit a connection between assurance and sanctification: "filial fear, a godly sorrow for sin, a hungering and thirsting after righteousness" are all concrete manifestations of a walk in sanctification.

But it is in Canons V that the matter of assurance is addressed directly and in connection with preservation and perseverance. First of all, in Article 9 the truth of the possibility and the reality of assurance is set forth. The article reads as follows (in my own, corrected translation):

*Of this keeping of the elect unto salvation, and of the perseverance of the true believers in faith, the believers themselves are able to be certain, and are certain according to the measure of faith, by which*

*they certainly believe that they are and always shall remain true and living members of the church, that they have the remission of sins and life eternal.*

Notice the following in this article: 1) It speaks of the object of assurance as being: the keeping of the elect, and the perseverance of the true believers in faith. It further spells out this object as being "that they are and always shall remain true and living members of the church," (a reference to Q. & A. 54 of the Heidelberg Catechism) and "that they have the remission of sins and life eternal." 2) It presents this assurance as being *normal* for believers. Assurance is not something elusive, something which is attained only by a few specially pious souls. But "believers themselves are able to be certain, and are certain." 3) At the same time, it is plain that the article is speaking of the *activity* of faith, i.e., believing, not of the *power* of faith as such. Or to use a distinction which has sometimes been used, the article is speaking of the *well-being* of faith in distinction from the *being* of faith. For the article recognizes that the *degree* of this assurance can and does vary. Believers "are certain *according to the measure of faith*." (emphasis added) Not only does one believer differ from another in degree of assurance; but the degree of assurance in the same believer may vary at different times. That variation is according to the measure of faith. If and when the activity of his faith is strong, his assurance is clear and bright; if and when the activity of his faith is weaker, the degree of assurance is also smaller.

But it is Article 10 of Canons V which sets forth the *way* of assurance and which connects assurance very clearly with sanctification. This article reads as follows (again, in my own, slightly corrected translation):

*This assurance, accordingly is not out of any special revelation, outside of the Word of God; but springs from faith in God's promises, which he has revealed in his Word most abundantly unto our comfort; from the testimony of the Holy Spirit, witnessing with our spirit, that we are children and heirs of God, Rom. 8:16; and lastly from an earnest and holy exercise of a good conscience and of good works. And if the elect of God in this world were deprived of this solid comfort, that they shall finally obtain the victory, and of this infallible earnest of eternal glory, they would be of all men the most miserable.*

This article makes it plain, therefore, that the *one way* of assurance is *threefold*. It is: 1) The way of God's Word, His promises. 2) The way of the testimony of the Holy Spirit that we are children and heirs of God. 3) The way of a walk in sanctification: an earnest and holy exercise of a good conscience and of good works. These three elements belong to the one way of assurance. They belong together. Take any one of them away, and assurance becomes impossible, changes to doubt and despair.

Now it is impossible within the limitations of this article to expound the instruction of the Canons here completely. For a more thorough exposition, I refer the reader to my book, *The Voice of our Fathers*. But let me draw a few main lines.

First of all, we must remember that any real assurance is the work of God. The question is not: how do I obtain assurance, as though the obtaining of assurance were my own work. Fundamentally the question is: how does God assure His children? For any assurance that has its origin in me is not worthy of the name; it is like lifting one's self up by his own bootstraps. If God, Who is really GOD, assures me, then I may be sure. Hence, the question is: what is God's way of



assurance? Then, when I know this, and when I walk according to this, I can grow in assurance day by day. For in order to enjoy assurance, I must be in God's way. I must walk by faith in the way in which God always assures His children.

What is that way?

There is, in the first place, the element of the speech of God Himself, objectively, in His Word, the Word of the Scriptures, the Scriptures which are inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of adoption. This does not merely mean that the way of assurance is the way of faithfully reading the Scriptures. No, it means that the way of assurance is the way of faithful use of the *means of grace*, primarily the *preaching of the Word*. These are the means through which God is pleased to assure us.

There is, in the second place, the testimony of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of adoption, with our spirit. The Spirit takes that objective revelation of God's promises in the Word; and He applies it *effectually and irresistibly* — for He is God! — to our hearts.

In the third place, there results the faith-testimony of our own spirit (for the Spirit testifies with our spirit), "I am a child and heir of God. I am and forever shall remain a living member of the holy catholic church. I have the remission of sins and life eternal."

That brings us to the place of sanctification, or rather, a walk in sanctification in relation to assurance. What is that place? Why is assurance possible only in the way of sanctification?

Is it thus, that here at last the matter of assurance becomes after all dependent on man, on the Christian? Is the exercise of a good conscience and of good works — briefly, sanctification — the condition of assurance, the ground of assurance?

Here we must be reminded that our Confession warns against this in Article 24: "Moreover, though we do good works, we do not found our salvation upon them; for we do no work but what is polluted by our flesh and also punishable . . ." It also warns that this is precisely *not* the way of assurance, but of doubt: "Thus then we would always be in doubt, tossed to and fro without any certainty, and our poor consciences continually vexed, if they relied not on the merits of the suffering and death of our Savior."

Nevertheless, the exclusive way of assurance is the way of sanctification. Outside of the latter there is no assurance possible. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord! And without holiness, therefore, no man can be sure that he shall see the Lord!

Why?

The root answer is that the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit Who assures us of our salvation through the Word is the HOLY Spirit, and He always operates as such. He operates to assure the people of God, therefore, only in the sphere of holiness, in the light, not in the darkness of sin and corruption. Further, He is the Author of holiness also in the heart and life of the elect. He applies the blessings of Christ to God's elect. And when He does so, He not only gives assurance of adoption, but He realizes our adoption and changes us into actual children of God, renewed after the image of Christ. His work is such that its sure fruit is the production of a sanctified and holy child of God, a saint.

Now the Spirit's work and the Spirit's testimony can never be separated.

He does not assure children of the devil, who are and remain children of the devil, that they are children of God. No, He changes children of the devil into children of God; and to those children of God, and to them only, He gives the assurance that they are God's children and heirs. It is, therefore, because sanctification is the sure fruit of the operation of the Spirit of adoption, that assurance springs from an earnest and holy exercise of a good conscience and of good works.

This also explains the fact that the degree of assurance can and does vary in the life of the child of God sometimes. If the life of sanctification is not strong and bright, then the degree of assurance is also not strong and bright. And if for a time a child of God departs completely from the way of sanctification and walks in sin, he may even lose his assurance for a time altogether. But in the way of a sanctified walk God's people enjoy the testimony of the Spirit with their spirit, through and in connection with the Word, that they are children and heirs! □ HCH

## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The members of the Priscilla Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan extend heartfelt Christian sympathy to their Secretary, Reka Sietstra in the passing to glory of her aged mother, MRS. JOHN SIETSTRA.

"As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." (Psalm 17:15)

Eleanore Bol, Pres.

Lois Kregel, Vice-Pres.



# Directory, Protestant Reformed Churches

Covenant Prot. Ref. Church  
454 Pulis Ave.  
Franklin Lakes, N.J.  
(Meeting in United Meth. Church)  
Services: 11:30 & 7:00  
Phone: (201) 790-4732

Byron Center Prot. Ref. Church  
8840 Byron Center Ave.  
Byron Center, MI  
(Meeting in Byron Center Chr. Jr.  
High School)  
Services: 9:30 & 5:00  
Phone: (616) 878-3255, 534-1927

Hope Prot. Ref. Church  
1580 Ferndale, SW  
(Corner of Riverbend & Ferndale)  
Walker, MI  
Services: 9:30 & 7:00  
Phone: (616) 453-3253, 453-2524

Kalamazoo Prot. Ref. Church  
4515 Green Acre Dr.  
Kalamazoo, MI  
Services: 9:30 & 6:00  
Phone: (616) 381-3385, 349-4420

Randolph Prot. Ref. Church  
229 Hammond St.  
Randolph, WI  
Services: 9:30 & 2:00  
Phone: (414) 326-5642

Hull Prot. Ref. Church  
1204 Third St.  
Hull, IA  
Services: 9:30 & 7:00 (May to  
Sept.) 9:30 & 1:30 (Oct. to  
April)  
Phone: (712) 439-1326, 439-1283

Hope Prot. Ref. Church  
Isabel, SD  
Services: 9:30 & 2:00  
Phone: (605) 466-2450

Hope Prot. Ref. Church  
1307 E. Brockton Ave.  
Redlands, CA  
Services: 10:00 & 7:00  
Phone: (714) 792-0307, 792-4923

First Prot. Ref. Church  
2800 Michigan St., NE  
(1/2 Mi. SW of I96/M44 inter-  
change)  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Services: 9:30 & 6:00  
Phone: (616) 247-0638, 245-4339

Southwest Prot. Ref. Church  
4875 Ivanrest Ave., SW  
Grandville, MI  
Services: 9:30 & 7:00  
Phone: (616) 532-6876, 532-4846

Faith Prot. Ref. Church  
7194 20th Ave.  
Jenison, MI  
Services: 9:30 & 7:00  
Phone: (616) 457-5848

First Prot. Ref. Church  
290 E. 18th St.  
Holland, MI  
Services: 9:30 & 6:30  
Phone: (616) 396-8303

Pella Prot. Ref. Church  
410 Franklin St.  
Pella, IA  
Services: 9:30 & 7:00  
Phone: (515) 628-4747

Doon Prot. Ref. Church  
6th Ave. & N. 2nd St.  
Doon, IA  
Services: 9:30 & 2:00  
Phone: (712) 726-3382

Loveland Prot. Ref. Church  
709 E. 57th St.  
Loveland, CO  
Services: 9:30 & 6:00 (Oct. to  
May) 9:30 & 7:00 (June to Sept.)  
Phone: (303) 667-1347

Lynden Prot. Ref. Church  
108 Beernink Lane  
Lynden, WA  
Services: 10:00 & 8:00 (summer)  
10:00 & 2:00 (winter)  
Phone: (206) 354-4337

Southeast Prot. Ref. Church  
1536 Cambridge, SE  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Services: 9:30 & 5:00  
Phone: (616) 452-7047

Grandville Prot. Ref. Church  
Wilson Ave., SW  
Grandville, MI  
(Meeting in Grandville High  
School)  
Services: 9:30 & 7:00  
Phone: (616) 538-2575

Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church  
5101 Beechtree Ave.  
(1 Blk. East of Public High  
School, 32nd Ave.)  
Hudsonville, MI  
Services: 9:30 & 7:00  
Phone: (616) 669-0755

South Holland Prot. Ref. Church  
16511 South Park Ave.  
South Holland, IL  
Services: 9:30 & 6:00  
Phone: (312) 333-1314, 596-3113

Trinity Prot. Ref. Church  
214 Barker-Clodine Rd.  
Houston, TX  
Services: 9:30 & 6:00  
Phone: (713) 492-0844

Edgerton Prot. Ref. Church  
3rd & Maple St.  
Edgerton, MN  
Services: 9:30 & 7:30 (March to  
Nov.) 9:30 & 2:00 (Dec. to Feb.)  
Phone: (507) 442-4441

First Prot. Ref. Church  
11533 135th St.  
(Mt. Zion Lutheran Church)  
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada  
Services: 11:15 & 3:00  
Phone: (403) 455-9803

Immanuel Prot. Ref. Church  
C & E Trail and 50th Ave.  
(St. Cyprian's Anglican Church)  
Lacombe, Alberta, Canada  
Services: 12:00 & 4:00  
Phone: (403) 782-4089



## Book Review

**Portraits of Bible Men (Second Series); Portraits of Bible Men (Third Series)**, George Matheson; Grand Rapids, Mich., Kregel Publications; 361 pp., 376pp. respectively; \$8.95, paper. [Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema]

Warren W. Wiersbe in a Foreword writes the following about the author:

"George Matheson was blind, but with the 'eyes of his heart' he could see farther and deeper than most of us. This was especially true when it came to penetrating the minds and hearts of the great Bible characters . . .

"Matheson was born in Glasgow, Scotland, March 27, 1842. Early in his life, his eyesight began to fail; but he managed to complete his basic schooling with the aid of strong glasses. From that time on, he had to have assistance with his studies; and his two sisters nobly stood by him. He earned two degrees at the University of Glasgow, felt a call to the ministry, and was licensed by the Glasgow Presbytery on June 13, 1866. He became assistant to J.R. McDuff, the well-known devotional writer, and then accepted the pastorate of the church of Inellan. He was ordained on April 8, 1868.

"Like many young preachers at that time, Matheson experienced a personal 'eclipse of faith' and even considered abandoning the ministry. His church officers were understanding and compassionate and advised him to stay on and give God an opportunity to deepen his faith. In due time, the young minister came out of the furnace with stronger faith and a deeper understanding of God's eternal message.

"It seems incredible that a blind minister in that day could accomplish all that George Matheson accomplished. He became an outstanding scholar and theologian, as well as a gifted devotional writer and preacher. Others, of course, read to him; but it was he who assembled the materials and prepared each message. He memorized his sermon, the Scripture lessons and the hymns; and it was said that he never missed a word! He was diligent to visit his people and enter into their joys and trials. In every way, George Matheson was a devoted pastor and teacher."

We are also informed in the Foreword that Matheson was the author of the hymn, "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go."

This Scottish Presbyterian author, it is plain, was a very

unusual man. And I believe his unusual character and circumstances are reflected in his writings and in his very interesting style.

Now about the books. The Second Series is sixteen chapters about as many Old Testament men, from Ishmael to Daniel. The Third Series, after an Introduction, contains fifteen chapters about as many New Testament men, from John the Baptist to Paul. I have not read these books from cover to cover, but sampled a few chapters from each. My general impressions are: 1) That neither volume is exegetically strong and solid; in fact, there are many points at which I would place a question mark. 2) That, on the whole, the Portraits of New Testament men are more accurate than those of Old Testament men. With regard to the latter the author is at times far off base. His case for characterizing Caleb as "the Explorer" and Isaiah as "the Philanthropist" is very weak and not Scripturally grounded. This stands related, of course, to the lack of exegetical foundation.

Nevertheless, if you can discern and overlook some of these flaws, there is some interesting devotional reading in these Kregel reprints. □