

## Salvation—Sanctification (5<sup>th</sup>)

(Today we will continue our study of judicial sanctification in the redemptive work of Christ by concluding a lengthy quote by Arthur W. Pink that began in our previous podcast.)

In the preceding podcast, we interrupted a lengthy quotation by Arthur W. Pink showing that many ignore the *eternal* aspect as well as the *judicial* (or as Pink termed it the *objective* side) of sanctification. He referred to the Westminster Confession and Larger Catechism and their omission of the subject matters addressed in the previous sentence and their focus on the experimental side of sanctification. After quoting from those historic documents and giving his humble defense as reason for differing from such an “excellent and helpful production,” he said, “It is in this spirit that we beg to offer two observations on the above quotation.” *The Doctrine of Sanctification*, published by Bible Truth Depot, P. 114. Though the first part of the first paragraph below was quoted in the preceding podcast, we will impose on the patience of the audience by supplying it again for the continuity of the entire quoted material. Therefore, we continue quoting Pink as follows:

First, the definition or description of sanctification of the Westminster divines is altogether *inadequate*, for it entirely *omits* the most important aspect and fundamental element in the believer’s sanctification: it says nothing about our sanctification *by Christ* (Hebrews 10:10; 13:12), but confines itself to the work of the Spirit, which is founded upon that of the Son. This is truly a serious loss, and affords another illustration that God has not granted light on *all* His Word to any one man or body of men. A fuller and better answer to the question of, “What is sanctification?” would be, “Sanctification is, first, that act of God whereby He set the elect apart in Christ before the foundation of the world that they should be holy. Second, it is that perfect holiness which the Church [Pink is using “Church” to denoted the elect.—JKB] has in Christ and that excellent purity which she has before God by virtue of Christ’s cleansing blood. Third, it is that work of God’s Spirit which, by His quickening operation, sets them apart from those who are dead in sins, conveying to them a holy life or nature, etc.”

Thus we cannot but regard this particular definition of the Larger Catechism as being defective, for it commences at the middle, instead of starting at the beginning. Instead of placing before the believer that complete and perfect sanctification which God has made Christ to be unto him, it occupies him with the incomplete and progressive work of the Spirit. Instead of moving the Christian to look away from himself with all his sinful failures, unto Christ in whom he is “complete” (Colossians 2:10), it encouraged him to look within, where he will often search in vain for the fine gold of the new creation amid all the dross and mire of the old creation. This is to leave him without the joyous assurance of knowing that he has been “perfected forever” by the one offering of Christ (Hebrews 10:14); and if he be destitute of that, then doubts and fears must constantly assail him, and the full assurance of faith elude every striving after it.

Our second observation upon this definition is, that its wording is faulty and misleading. Let the young believer be credibly assured that he will “more and more die unto sin and rise unto newness of life,” and what will be the inevitable outcome? As he proceeds on his way, the Devil assaulting him more and more fiercely, the inward conflict between the flesh and the Spirit becoming more and more distressing, increasing light from God’s Word more and more exposing his sinful failures, until the cry is forced from him, “I am vile; O wretched man that I am,” what conclusion *must* he draw? Why this: if the Catechism-definition be correct then I was sadly mistaken, *I have never been sanctified at all*. So far from the “more and more die unto sin”

agreeing with *his* experience, he discovers that sin is more active within and that he is more alive to sin now, than he was ten years ago!

Will any venture to gainsay what we have just pointed out above, then we would ask the most mature and godly reader, Dare you solemnly affirm, as in the presence of God, that *you* have “more and more died unto sin?” If you answer, Yes, the writer for one would not believe you. But we do not believe for a moment that you would utter such an untruth. Rather do we think we can hear you saying, “Such has been my deep *desire*, such has been my sincere *design* in using the means of grace, such is still my daily *prayer*; but alas, alas! I find as truly and as frequently today as I ever did in the past that, “When I would do good, evil is present with me; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I” (Romans 7). Ah, there is a vast difference between what *ought* to be, and that which actually *obtains* in our experience.

That we may not be charged with partiality, we quote from the “Confession of Faith” adopted by the Baptist Association, which met in Philadelphia 1742, giving the first two sections of their brief chapter on sanctification: 1. “They who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit in them through the virtue of Christ’s death and resurrection, are also (a) farther sanctified, really and personally, through the same virtue, (b) by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them; (c) the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, (d) and the several lusts thereof *more and more weakened* and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. 2. This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abides still *some remnants* of corruption in every part, whence arises a continual and irreconcilable war.”

Like the previous one, this description of sanctification by the Baptists leaves something to be desired, for it makes no clear and direct statement upon the all-important and flawless holiness which every believer has *in Christ*, and that spotless and impeccable purity which is *upon* him by God’s imputation of the cleansing efficacy of His Son’s sacrifice. Such a serious omission is too vital for us to ignore. In the second place, the words which we have placed in italics not only perpetuate the faulty wording of the Westminster Catechism but also convey a misleading conception of the present condition of the Christian. To speak of “some remnants of corruption” still remaining in the believer, necessarily implies that by far the greater part of his original corruption has been removed, and that only a trifling portion of the same now remains. But something vastly different from *that* is what every true Christian discovers to his daily grief and humiliation. Pp. 114-116.

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Here, then, is a real dilemma. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves; and yet, according to the doctrine of “progressive sanctification,” until we can *say* it (though it be inarticulately in the moment of death) we are not meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. What an awful thought it is, that Christ may come any hour to those who realize that the process of sanctification within them is *incomplete*. But more: not only are those who have no complete sanctification unfit for eternal glory, but it would be daring presumption for them to boldly enter the Holiest now — the “new and living way” is not yet available for them, they cannot draw near “with a true heart in full assurance of faith.” What wonder, then, that those who believe this doctrine are plunged into perplexity, that such a cloud rests over their acceptance with God. But thank God, many triumph over their creed: their hearts are better than their heads, otherwise their communion with God and their approach to the throne of His grace would be impossible.

Now in blessed contrast from this inadequate doctrine of theology, the glorious Gospel of God reveals to us a *perfect* Savior. It exhibits One who has not only made complete satisfaction to the righteous Ruler and Judge, providing for His people a perfect righteousness before Him, but

whose sacrifice has also fitted us to worship and serve a holy God acceptably, and to approach the Father with full confidence and filial love. A knowledge of the truth of justification is not sufficient to thus assure the heart: there must be something more than a realization that the curse of the law is removed — if the conscience be still defiled, if the eye of God rests upon us as unpurged and unclean, then confidence before Him is impossible, for we feel utterly unfit for His ineffable presence. But forever blessed be His name, the precious Gospel of God announces that the blood of Christ meets this *exigency* also.

“Now where remission of these (sins) is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Hebrews 10:18, 19). The same sacrifice which has procured the remission of our sins, provides the right for us to draw near unto God as acceptable worshipers. “By His own blood He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:13). Now that which gives the One who took our place *the right* to enter Heaven itself, also gives us the right to take *the same* place. That which entitled Christ to enter Heaven was “His own blood,” and that which entitles the feeblest believer to approach the very throne of God “with boldness,” is “the blood of Jesus.” Our title to enter Heaven *now*, in spirit, is precisely the same as *Christ’s* was!

The same precious blood which appeased the wrath of God, covers every stain of sin’s guilt and defilement; and not only so, but in the very place of that which it covers and cleanses, it leaves its own excellence; so that because of its finite purity and merit, the Christian is regarded not only as guiltless and unreprouable, but also as *spotless and holy*. Oh to realize by faith that we are assured of the same welcome by God *now* as His beloved Son received when He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. God views us *in Christ* His “Holy One,” as possessing a holiness as perfect as is the righteousness in which we are accepted, both of them being as perfect as Christ Himself. “In us, as we present ourselves before Him through Christ, God *sees no sin!* He looks on us in the face of His Anointed, and there He sees us purer than the heavens” (Alexander Carson). Pp. 117-119.

I realize this was an extremely lengthy quote from Pink, but I believe it worthy of our consideration. His explanation and insight clearly show the importance and benefit of *judicial* sanctification in the Person and work of Christ. The Lord willing we will comment on other passages that set forth this truth. However, our time is up for today. Farewell.