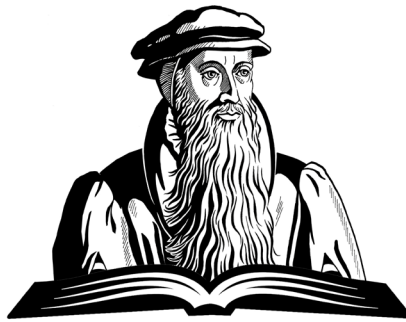


VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

# *The Application of Redemption*

by Rev. William Macleod

*12 Lectures*



**The John Knox Institute  
of Higher Education**

*Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide*

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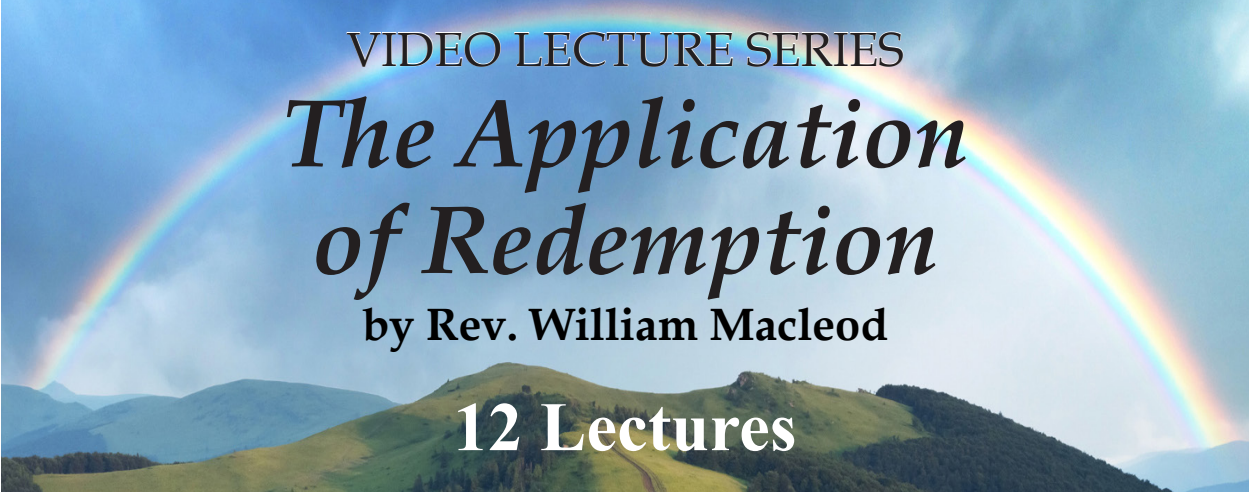
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Rev. William Macleod recently retired, after serving as minister of the gospel for 45 years at Knightswood Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), in Glasgow, Scotland. In addition, he was for many years the editor of the denominational magazine, *The Free Church Witness*. He was also Professor of Systematic Theology and Principal of the Free Church (Continuing) Seminary, in Inverness, Scotland. He is married and has three adult children and six grandchildren.

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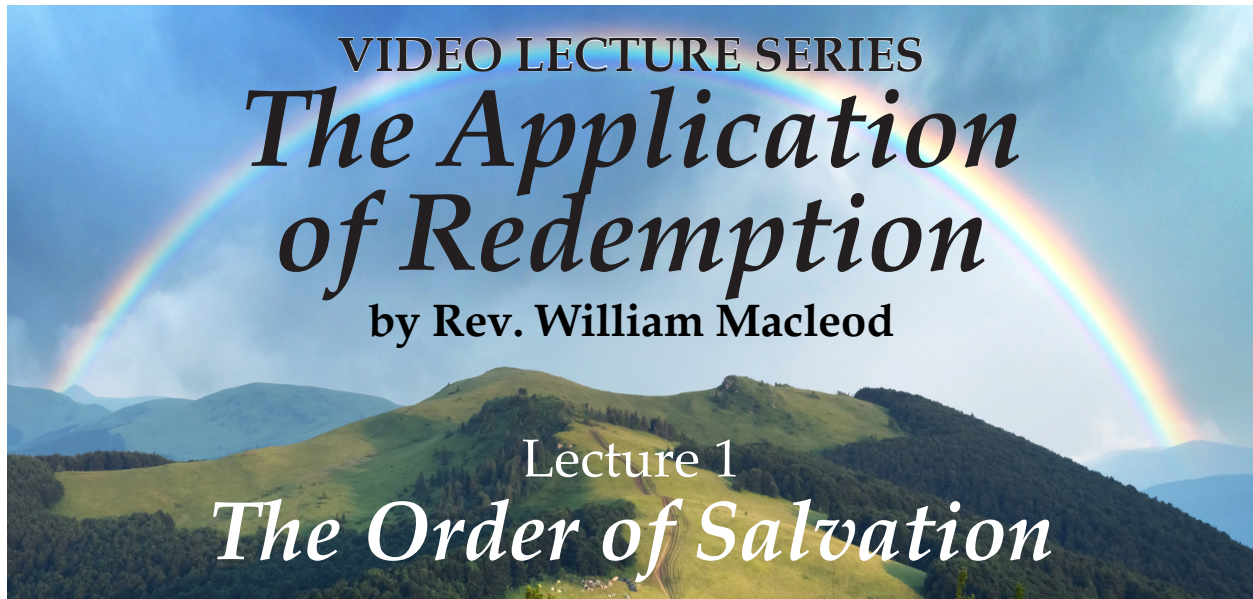
# *The Application of Redemption*

by Rev. William Macleod

**12 Lectures**

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In this series of lectures, we will be looking at “*The Application of Redemption.*” Our redemption was accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary’s cross, when he died as a sacrifice in our place. He was the Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world. We will look at how this redemption is applied to the individual believer. God the Father planned our salvation. God the Son, in our nature, earned our redemption 2,000 years ago when he died for the elect, suffering hell for them. God the Holy Spirit applies it in time to the individuals who are elected in eternity, and for whom Christ died.

In this first lecture, we will study the order which God follows in the application of redemption. God is systematic in all that he does. He is the God of order, and not of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). The universe he created is an amazingly ordered universe. It is because of this that science is possible. Many of the early scientists were Christians who believed that because God is an orderly God, there would be scientific laws which man could discover. Mathematics, too, is possible because God is the God of order, and his orders are governing the universe. It was Christian faith that provided the great scientific advances of the past. Things do not happen randomly and by chance. God has created a universe which has laws. Scientific investigation is thinking God’s thoughts after him. Animism, with its belief in conflicting spirits, and Atheism, with no god in charge, would leave everything in chaos. So also when it comes to the work of God in the soul of man, there is an order which we are going to study.

First of all, looking at *The New Birth*. Jesus said to Nicodemus, with regard to the new birth, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3, verse 3). So here, we note an order. First, the new birth takes place, and then seeing the kingdom. This statement is preceded by “Verily, verily”—this is a fundamental truth which must be carefully considered. So the order is set out, and it essential to remember it. A little later, our Lord said to Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3, verse 5). So the new birth comes before entering the kingdom, that is, before salvation, or at the very beginning. It is the first step, and the beginning of the work of God in the soul of man. The common theological term used for being born again is “regeneration.” So regeneration must come before faith. Faith is seeing the kingdom. Faith

is an eye with which we look to Christ to be saved. We are told, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3, verses 14 and 15). Entering the kingdom is salvation, so regeneration is before salvation. By nature, we are dead in sin. The Bible states, “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2, verses 1 and 2). Regeneration is spiritual resurrection, or rising from the dead spiritually. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Colossians 3, verse 1). There can be no spiritual activity til we are raised from the dead, or regenerated. John, in his first epistle, makes the following statement: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (1 John chapter 3, verse 9). So we can see from this that new birth comes before breaking the dominion of sin. The seed of regeneration is planted, and remains in him. So the new birth comes before sanctification, even definitive sanctification, which is the breaking of the dominion of sin. Faith comes before adoption. We read in the Gospel of John, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1, verse 12), so receiving Christ comes before adoption. This must mean that faith is before adoption. The same truth is taught by Paul when he writes, “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3, verse 26).

A very important passage in setting out the order in the application of redemption is Romans 8, verses 28 to 30, “the golden chain,” as it is sometimes called: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Predestination, which is the purpose and plan of God, took place before calling. It took place in eternity. People are called in time, according to God’s purpose determined from eternity. So, “the called according to his purpose” means obviously that the purpose is before the calling (verse 28). This is emphasized by the words, “whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate” (verse 29). So, foreknowledge leads to predestination. Both are from eternity, and yet there is a logical order. Foreknowledge means that God sets his love upon some. It does not mean that God foreknows something about them, because then it would state what he knows about them. This intransitive form of the verb “to know,” or as it is here, “to foreknow,” always means “to love” or “to fore-love”—to love before. The verb is intransitive when it does not have an object. It does not mean to know something about, but rather, to know a person. God foreknew or set his love upon some. Then having done that, he predestinated them; he settled their destiny beforehand. Basically, he elected them in love. We are chosen in love, and chosen in him (Ephesians 1, verse 4).

Next, notice *The Great Unbreakable Chain*: “Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Romans 8, verse 30). So the order is predestination, calling, justification, and glorification. Predestination begins in eternity, and glorification must be last because it reaches into future eternity. The implication is that calling and justification are in the right order too. Some people speak of “justification from eternity.” Hyper-Calvinists argue like this, that justification is only from eternity in the sense of the decree, or plan of God. Everything is in the decree from all eternity. Sometimes it is said that we were justified when the resurrection of Christ took place. That seems to be a teaching of Romans

4, verse 25, “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” But there, justification is used for reconciliation. We have there the ground or basis of our justification. The foundation of our justification is the accomplished work of Christ on the cross.

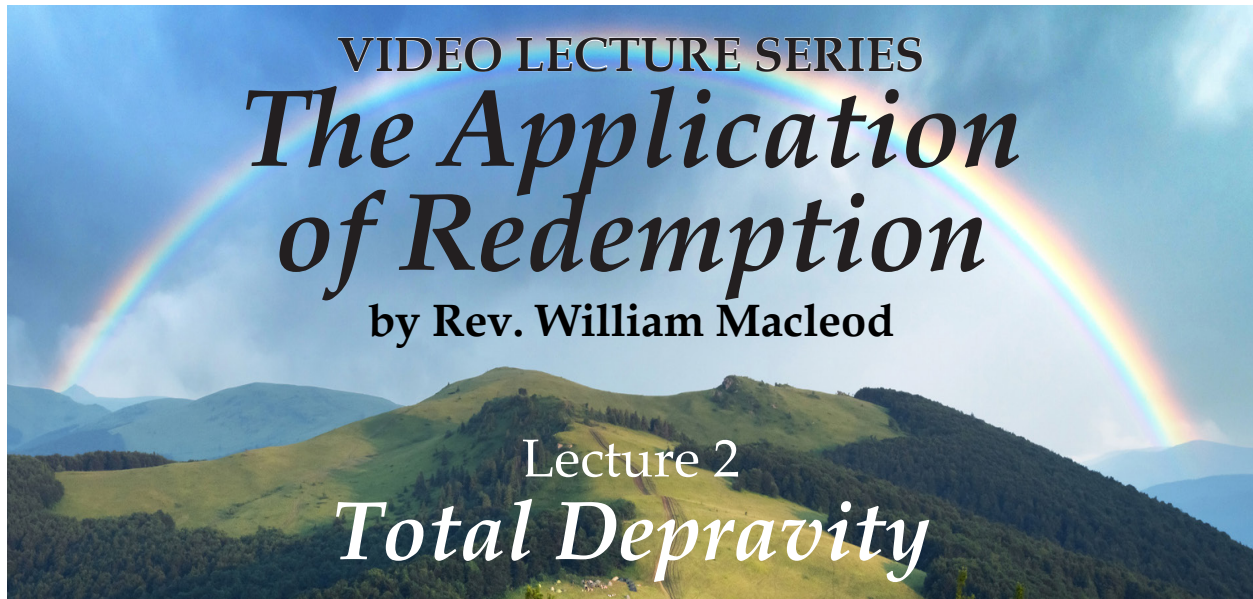
Now, thinking of *Justification and Faith*. Constantly in Scripture, justification is by faith, and so, must follow faith—for example, Romans 1, verse 17: “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” Faith is first, and then a person is justified, and so becomes just or righteous. Think also of Romans 5, verse 1: “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Faith is the instrument of our justification, and so faith comes before justification. Logically, faith comes after calling, because you are called to faith in Christ. What is the call? It is a call to repent and believe the gospel. That is the gospel call, and it becomes the effectual call when it comes with power, accompanied by the irresistible grace of God.

Regeneration must come before faith, because, as we noticed in John 3, verse 3, “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Faith is seeing the kingdom of God, and must be preceded, therefore, by a new birth. In John 6, verse 44, Jesus says, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” Coming is faith, but it is preceded by the drawing of the Father. Christ proceeds to state, “Therefore, said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father” (John 6, verse 65). This shows that God must be at work before man, and therefore, we must put effectual calling before faith. Calling must be before regeneration, because of how Peter describes Christians. He says that you are “a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter chapter 2, verse 9). So calling must be before coming out of darkness, which is regeneration.

Repentance is the twin sister of faith. They are two sides of one coin. Conversion is faith and repentance. Thus, repentance, too, must follow regeneration. Adoption must follow justification. We cannot envisage God adopting someone who is under his wrath and condemnation. The condemnation must be first removed by justification, and then a person is adopted. Sanctification ends in glorification; it is the process by which someone is made holy. It starts in regeneration, so logically, it is placed after adoption. Perseverance is from the first step of God’s work in us, which is regeneration, and does not end until glorification. Union with Christ is also lifelong, and it, too, begins with regeneration. In regeneration, we are planted in Christ forever.

So finally, we have the *Proper Order*, which is: effectual calling, regeneration, faith and repentance, then justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, and glorification.





Our second lecture is on man's need, that is, "*Total Depravity*." For all of us, it is of great value to consider our past. God said, through Isaiah the prophet, "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged" (Isaiah 51, verse 1). Paul reminds the Ephesian Christians that they were at one time "children of wrath, even as others" (Ephesians 2, verse 3). Reflecting on our past should benefit us in various ways. For one thing, it encourages humility. We were hell-deserving creatures in a spiritual mess. The best of us were spiritually filthy and polluted. We had no righteousness or merit. And then, too, when we consider what we were, it demonstrates to us that salvation is all of grace. We were dead in our sins, and we could never save ourselves. A third point is, it should stir us up to praise God with a new song (Psalm 40)—our salvation is from an awful pit and miry clay (verses 2 and 3). It's all God's work from the beginning to the end. And fourthly, this ought to give us confidence and expectancy in evangelism. Since God saved us, he can save anyone. Even the most sinful and hostile sinner can be born again. The behavior, beliefs, and educational attainment of the individual essentially makes no difference. It takes the same mighty, sovereign grace of God to convert every individual who is dead in sin. No matter how gifted we are in our evangelism, how persuasive in our arguments, how loving in our personality, we are totally ineffective without God. But even weak creatures like us, if God chooses to use us, will see the greatest sinners and the most hardened atheists converted. We discover that with God's help, all things are possible.

So first of all, consider *The Fall*. Adam was created in the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. Knowing God, he was in a loving relationship with Him. Being righteous and holy, he was in a right standing with God, and pleasing to Him. Adam, however, had a free will, in the sense that he could choose to obey or disobey. When God created Adam, He entered into a covenant with him. We call it the Covenant of Works. In this covenant, He threatened him with death if he ate of the forbidden fruit, and promised him life and blessing if he continued obedient. Adam did not have a tendency towards sin as we do. In fact, there was only one sin he could commit, and he did that. Once he had chosen to eat the forbidden fruit, he lost the core elements of God's image. Instead of being righteous and holy, and in a loving relationship with God, he was now alienated from God, and his will was in bondage to evil. So, sadly, as fallen

mankind, sin is now easy and natural for all of us.

We were all in Adam in this Covenant of Works. We all sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression. In this way, all men and women are, by natural generation, children of Adam, and are sinners even before they are born. Jesus, the seed of the woman, was protected by his special conception and his virgin birth, so that he did not inherit this sin. The Bible reveals a progression of sin, from Adam to Cain, who murdered his brother. Then we are told of Lamech, who boasted of having committed murder. Eventually, just before the flood, God pronounced His judgment on men and women, because “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6, verse 5).

So then, we are in *A State of Total Inability*. By nature, we are not just dull or spiritually sleepy—we are dead. The Bible says man is dead in his sins (Ephesians 2, verse 1). We have eyes that cannot see the holy God who is everywhere, nor are we aware of our own sinfulness and lostness. Being blind, we are unable to see the hell to which we are headed, or the wonderful gospel provision in Christ, or the way of salvation through him. We cannot see the glory of heaven that Christ has purchased for us. And we are deaf, so that we may sit in church and outwardly hear the preaching and the reading of the Bible, yet fail to hear the gospel call. We have mouths that cannot pray for our needs, or praise God we ought. We have heart, yet we cannot love the altogether lovely One. Our hearts are as hard as stone, and we are as cold as ice. We have a duty to repent and believe the gospel, but cannot because we are dead. Can the leopard change his spots or the Ethiopian the color of his skin? (Jeremiah 13, verse 33). We are, by nature, in a state of total inability to start seeking, or to make one move toward God without divine help. Because of this, when Christians are witnessing, or ministers are preaching, pleading with sinners to flee to Christ, it is like speaking to a corpse. Ministers do sometimes feel as inadequate, as if they were preaching in a cemetery. They say the most moving things, pleading with tears in their eyes. They warn sinners of the hell to which they will certainly go if they do not repent, and indeed that hell may at any moment open its mouth and swallow them, yet there is no response. They tell of a loving Savior willing today to receive them if they will but call upon them, but it makes no impression. Yet, praise God, when it pleases him, he accompanies the Word by his Spirit, and that is what makes all the difference, raising the spiritually dead.

So, we’re in a condition of *Total Depravity*. Our moral condition, by nature, is not just that we have some serious sins and guilty stains, but rather that we are dead in trespasses and sins. This state is described for us in Ephesians chapter 2. “Trespasses” (verse 1) refers especially to outward sins, open transgressing of the commandments. Although we are dead to God, yet we are alive in sin. In our unconverted state, we break God’s commandments in thought, word, and deed, and sadly, love to do so. We have conscience that condemns us, but we suppress it. We wish, in fact, that God was dead, so that we would not have to give account to him. As unconverted people, we want to be free to wallow in sin. We are dead in sins (verse 1). Dead in sins refers to something more inward. The Greek word for sin here means, essentially, “missing the mark.” God set the standard, his law, when he created us, but we miss it. Our hearts, by nature, are “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17, verse 9). We are all under sin, and there is none righteous, no not one (Romans 3, verse 9 and following). And “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64, verse 6). We were actually born dead—dead in sins.

The fallen world is opposed to God and is the enemy of God. All men, since the fall, are born in sin, walk along the broad road, following the fashions of majority, and are powerfully subjected to peer group pressure by the ungodly society around them. John Bunyan, in his classic work, *The*



*Pilgrim's Progress*, described this as "Vanity Fair." The world is seductive in tempting to sin; it is persecuting and threatening, and oppressing the godly. Each one of us, in the past, was a friend of the world, and therefore an enemy of God (James 4, verse 4). One sin leads to another. Sin matured in Cain from initial self-righteousness, to jealousy, to hatred of his brother, because Abel was more righteous than he was, and finally, to the murder of Abel. In Judas Iscariot, sin developed from unbelief, to coveting, to stealing, to eventually betraying Christ for thirty pieces of silver, and finally to self-murder or suicide.

In our unconverted state, we walk "according to the course of this world" (Ephesians 2, verse 2). This refers to the universal sinful path of mankind. Satan is "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (verse 2). He was created in the image of God as an angel; indeed, he was a prince among the angels, or an archangel. But he was banished from heaven for his sin and his rebellion against God. He entered the garden of Eden, and succeeded in tempting our first parents to join him in rebellion against God. In a sense, he and his fellow fallen angels rule this world, and so, he is called here "the prince of the power of the air." He is not like God, who is omnipresent and so present in the totality of his being everywhere. Satan is limited to being in one place at one time. But not having a body, he is not subject to the force of gravity. Because of this, he can move quickly through the air. Thus, he is called "the prince of the power of the air" (verse 2). He knows that his days are short, and that he is doomed to spend eternity tormented by God in hell. Therefore, he is very active seeking to hurt God. Because he cannot directly attack God, he attacks the people of God. He hates God, and tries to do maximum damage to His kingdom, busily flying through the air, tempting people. He has many devils under his command who follow and obey him. All those who are unconverted are Satan's children. He dwells in them, and they are his slaves. Jesus said to the Jews who opposed him, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John 8, verse 44). There was a time when Satan ruled over us, and so, we too were the children of disobedience.

Moving on to verse 3, we read that our lives in the past were dominated by the lusts of our flesh. These are the desires of the flesh, which involve immorality, greed, and drunkenness. We are also deeply affected by the desires of the mind, which include idolatry, pride, covetousness, hypocrisy, and deceit. We all had our conversation, or lifestyle, with these things in the past. Paul, along with the Ephesians, the Jews, and the Gentiles, and also Christians today were, in their unregenerate state, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. We were children of wrath, like our father the devil. Ours was a lifestyle of constant sinning, and so all of us were under the wrath and curse of God.

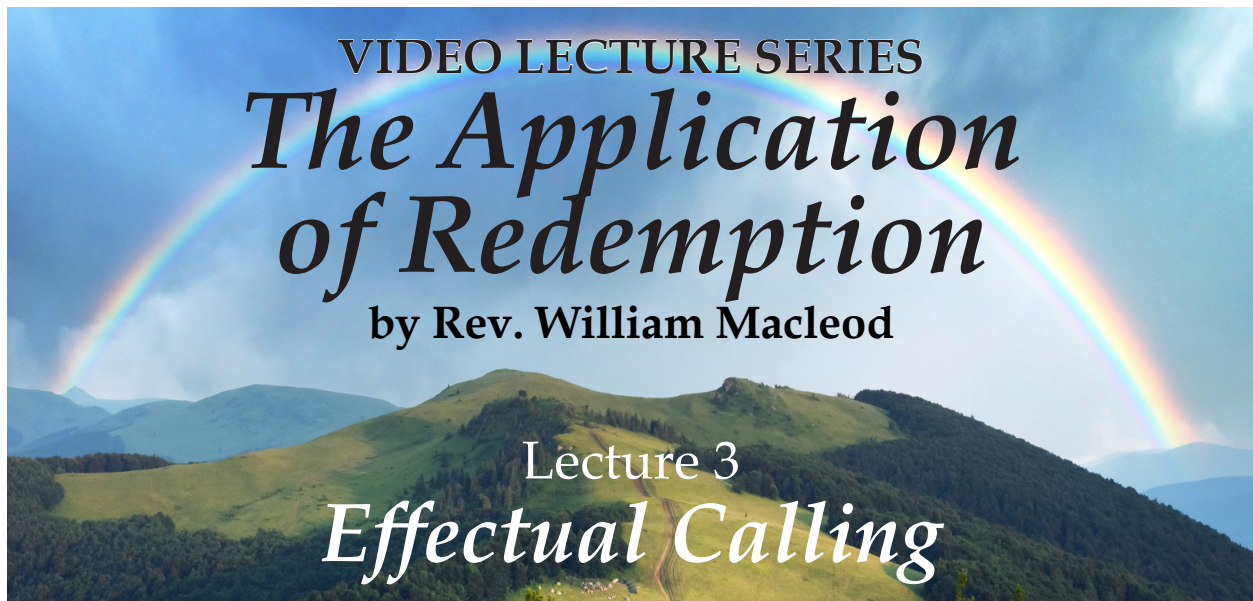
This doctrine of total depravity means that every part of man's being is depraved. His understanding is darkened, and his mind is at enmity with God. His decision-making is twisted. His will is a slave to his darkened understanding and rebellious mind. His heart is corrupt, and his affections naturally gravitate to what is wicked. His conscience is untrustworthy. His emotions are perverted and distorted. Further, his body is subject to mortality. There is, however, a difference between total depravity and absolute depravity. Man is not absolutely depraved, as bad as he could be. Those who will be in hell will be absolutely evil there. In this world, man is restrained by God's common grace, and by fear of punishment, also by government and public opinion, and by the desire to please and be popular. The barbarians in Malta showed great kindness to shipwrecked Paul and his companions (Acts chapter 28). Some unconverted people do amazing acts of kindness and charity, and indeed should many Christians. Yet, Paul asserts, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14, verse 23). In the eyes of God, the unconverted are constantly sinning. "There is

none that doeth good, no, not one” (Romans 3, verse 12).

Thinking then of *Guilt*. Sin is wicked—it involves breaking the commandments which God has given mankind to be kept. God is love, but God is also a consuming fire (Hebrews 12, verse 29). He is holy and just, hates sin, and must punish it. So, we “were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Ephesians 2, verse 3). We were holding back and suppressing the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1, verse 18). And we were resisting the Holy Ghost (Acts 7, verse 51). “God is angry with the wicked every day” (Psalm 7, verse 11). But someone might object and ask, “Surely, if I am in the elect, God loved me from all eternity.” Yes, in God’s plan, he has certainly always loved his elect, but they are still guilty before God till they are justified. We are, all of us, under condemnation until we repent. You are reconciled to God and justified when, and only when you believe. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5, verse 1). Before we believe, we are not justified, and so, we do not have peace with God. We are, by nature, under God’s condemnation. We need to make our peace with God. We do that when we believe in Jesus and claim him as our Savior. Then, and only then, is the redemption which was purchased by Christ for us on Calvary, applied to us.

So then, our *Conclusion*. Having described fully the awful state of those totally depraved, and in a condition of total inability, the Apostle writes these tremendous words, in Ephesians 2, and verse 4: “But God”—“but” is a small word, with great significance. When our case was hopeless, God intervened. God did it all. We were totally undeserving and completely unable to save ourselves, but sovereign grace changed us. The power which raised up Christ from the grave (Ephesians 1, verses 19 and 20) raises up us from being dead in sins. Let us be humbled by considering what we once were. It took sovereign grace to convert us. Let us praise the Lord, realizing that this salvation is all of God’s work and not of man. Yes, we must believe, it is our duty, but even faith itself is the gift of God (verse 8). Glory be to God. Look back, and give thanks to the One who took you from the horrible pit and from the miry clay (Psalm 40, verse 2). Let us sing a new song to our God as we realize afresh the desperate low condition from which he saved us. Even in heaven, we will remember our initial low, lost, depraved state, and our song of praise will be, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 1, verses 5 and 6).

We need God’s help in evangelism. Jesus said to us to go and make disciples, then baptize and teach these converts. This would be an impossible burden, but for the fact that he also said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,” and, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28, verses 18 and 20). Christ, by his Spirit, builds his church, “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16, verse 18). He speaks through those who share the gospel with their neighbors. He anoints New Testament preachers with his Holy Spirit. Christ saves those dead in sin. He penetrates stony hearts. Success is guaranteed, glory be to God.



We come today to our third lecture, and our subject is *Effectual Calling*. The saving work of God in the soul of man begins with the Effectual Calling. Reference is made to this call in the words of the famous promise of Romans 8:28. Too often, only the first part of this verse is quoted: “All things work together for good.” The promise is taken as if it refers to everyone; that is a mistake. There is no promise at all in the Scripture for unbelievers, but rather the wrath and curse of God will surely come upon them unless they repent. For whom then do all things work together for good? It is clearly stated in the rest of the verse: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” It is for those, and only those, who love God, and no one loves God but “those who are the called according to his purpose.” Three truths are stated concerning these happy people. Firstly, God has a purpose for them. They are the elect of God. Secondly, they are called in time, that is, effectually called. This calling flows from the purpose or plan. Thirdly, they love God. This is the evidence of the transformation effected by the effectual call, and indeed is the only proof of their election.

Usually theologians refer to two calls: a general call, and an effectual call. The general call is the gospel call. It is found in words such as those in Proverbs: “Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man. O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart” (Proverbs 8, verses 4 and 5). Isaiah utters that general call, when he says, “Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Isaiah 55, verse 1). It is a call to repent and believe the gospel, and it is addressed to everyone in the world. The disciples were sent out with this call, and so are ministers, evangelists, and missionaries today. “We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5, verse 20). It is a call from God; it calls for sinners to repent and believe the gospel; and it is a sincere call from the Lord. It is addressed to all, and everyone who responds by believing in Christ will be saved. Our Lord Jesus is recorded as saying, “Many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22, verse 14). Thousands and millions are called with the gospel call, but sadly, relatively few respond. Those who do respond show by their response that they are the



chosen ones and belong to the elect. Only the elect will obey the call. This verse actually is the only one in the New Testament where the word “call” is used for the general gospel invitation. In every other reference, the term “call” refers, in the New Testament, to the effectual call. The word “effectual” is not used in the Scriptures to define the call, but it is implied. Effectual call is the all-powerful call of God that is effective and must be answered in submission and obedience. It is the same call as the general call, but comes with irresistible power. The elect can hear the general call for years, but at a special point in time, it is made effectual to them.

So thinking, then, of the *Characteristics of the Effectual Call. The one who calls*. Scripture speaks specifically of the Father as the author of the call. This is plain in Romans 8, for it is stated, “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Romans 8, verses 29 to 30). The one who predestinated us to be conformed to his Son can only be the Father. And then he is also said to call us. Another verse states, “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Corinthians 1, verse 9). There is, however, another passage which speaks of the call as being uttered by the Son. Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself” (John 5, verses 25 and 26). The dead who hear the voice of the Son of God are the spiritually dead, and they are spiritually resurrected by it.

Interestingly, the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Shorter Catechism* speak of the call as a work of the Holy Spirit. The Westminster fathers defined effectual calling more broadly, so as to include conviction of sin, regeneration, and conversion. They used the term for the application of redemption to the soul. The Father plans redemption, the Son accomplishes it on the cross, and the Spirit applies it. Yet, we must not think of the Father as distant and uninvolved. He specifically calls, and he does so through his Son who is the Word of God and the revealer of his Father. The Son speaks forth the call from heaven, and the Spirit—the Holy Spirit—accompanies that call and applies it to the heart of the elect sinner when the Lord’s appointed time has come. God works on the soul through his Spirit.

Although the general call of the gospel is addressed to all, only those who are elected are effectually called. They are “the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8, verse 28); “Them he did foreknow, he also did predestinate” (verse 29). Everything starts with God’s loving certain people before time began. “To know,” as we said in an earlier lecture, is used here intransitively, that is, without an object—always in the Scriptures, “to know,” in this sense, means “to love.” He chose them in love. “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (1 Peter 1, verse 2). “He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1, verse 4). Those whom he loved in eternity, he always loved, because eternity does not have a beginning. God’s love is like himself—infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. Them, he purposed or planned to save. Eventually, God’s time came, and they were powerfully called by the Spirit.

*Redemption and the Call.* Those whom God fore-loved, he gave to his Son. In his great high-priestly prayer, Christ, on the night before his crucifixion makes constant reference to this. He says, “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me” (John 17, verse 9). A certain number were given to Christ to redeem them. Earlier, he said, “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10, verse 11). He died for his sheep, making atonement for their sins on the cross. Christ offered himself for the elect and only

for them. Scripture makes reference to “the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20, verse 28). The church is distinguished from the world by the fact that Christ died specifically for them, and not the rest of mankind. All for whom Christ died will be effectually called, and only them.

Thinking next of *The Condition of Those Called*. At the point which men and women are effectually called, they are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2, verse 1). Being dead, they are totally unable to respond to the call of the gospel, or indeed, even to hear it. They are totally depraved, and suffering from total inability. They are dead and cannot hear, blind and cannot see, paralyzed and cannot take a step. They have hearts of stone which need to be replaced before they can receive the love of God and the Lord Jesus Christ himself. It is only after the new birth takes place that you can “shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2, verse 9). We had no hand in this call. It is all of God, and all of grace. “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain” (John 15, verse 16).

*We Are Called Through the Word*. God works our salvation through the message of the Bible being communicated to us. The Word must be preached to us, or read to us, or told to us before we can be saved. Unless the gospel is communicated to us in some way, either in books, or tracts, or remembered by us from what we’ve heard many years before, we will not be called. Elect infants who die in infancy, or those with severe learning difficulties are, of course, exceptions to the rule, as they are unable intellectually to receive the Word. This truth that we are called through the Word is made clear by the Apostle, when he wrote, “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Corinthians 1, verse 21). In another place, Paul stated, “How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10, verses 14 and 15). He adds (verse 17), “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Thus, we must send out missionaries and evangelists. Every Christian has a duty to witness and to communicate the truth to others. God calls his people through his own Word.

*The Spirit accompanies the Word*. The Word in and of itself will make no impact—it must be accompanied by the regenerating, resurrecting power of the Holy Spirit. There is a wonderful Trinitarian involvement in our salvation. The Word comes from the Father, through the Son who is the Redeemer, and is applied by the Spirit. A preacher/theologian of my youth, the late Reverend John MacSween, used to say, “The Word is dead without the Spirit, and the Spirit is dumb without the Word.” Paul noted this special work of the Spirit when he preached in Thessalonica and asserted, “Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost” (1 Thessalonians 1, verses 4 to 6). The general call of the gospel becomes the effectual call when it is accompanied by the irresistible power of the Holy Spirit.

*The Call is a Summons*. The common or gospel call comes as a summons from heaven to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, the Savior. It comes with all the authority of heaven behind it. It is a sin to reject it, and every time you reject the call of the gospel, you sin again, and with increasing sin each time. When, however, it is accompanied by the almighty power of the Spirit of God, it must

be obeyed. A summons to an earthly court can, depending upon the power of the military or police, be resisted with difficulty. But this summons comes with irresistible force. We are persuaded and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ as Savior.

*The Call is an Act.* The call takes place in a moment. We could have heard the common gospel call many times, but now, on a certain day, at a specific moment, it becomes effectual and irresistible. For example, we are told of Lydia: “A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us” (Acts 16, verses 14 and 15). She had attended the meeting by the river’s bank outside the city many times, but at that day, at that minute, at that second, her heart was opened, and she was born again. The Westminster divines talk of effectual calling as a work, but that is, as is noted above, because they defined effectual calling more broadly, as conversion, rather than simply the call. The effectual call is an act, like regeneration, justification, and adoption. But it’s different from sanctification, which is a work which takes place over a period of time.

*It is a High and Holy Calling.* Effectual call is described by Paul as a high call: “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3, verse 14). It is a call upwards, to live above fleshly values. Elsewhere, he refers to it as a holy call: “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace” (2 Timothy 1, verse 9). It is a call to be separated unto God, sanctified, and devoted to him.

*It is Also a Heavenly Call.* “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of profession, Christ Jesus” (Hebrews 3, verse 1). It is a heavenly call because of its origin—it’s a call from above; but especially because of the destiny to which we are called—we are called to heaven. It is a call upward, away from our low, sensual, earthly life, to a holy and heavenly life.

*It is Followed Immediately by Regeneration.* The order of salvation is electing love, predestination, calling, regeneration, faith and repentance, justification, adoption, sanctification and glorification. The moment effectual call is issued from heaven, the Holy Spirit enters the dead sinner, regenerating him and bringing him to life. His ears and eyes are opened spiritually; the heart of stone is replaced with a heart of flesh. The closed door of the heart is opened, and the sinner receives and embraces Jesus Christ who is freely offered in the gospel.

So then, a word of application—*Make Sure You Have Been Effectually Called.* Peter wrote, “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure” (2 Peter 1, verse 10). He mentions calling before election. The only way you can know that you are the elect of God is by discerning your effectual call. A person knows that they have been effectually called because they have been converted. They have repented of their sins, and believed in Jesus as their Savior. And this is a matter too important to be taken for granted. ‘Tis not enough to say, “I hope I have been called.” Beware of being deceived. If you have not been effectually called, you are under the wrath and curse of God, and on the road that leads to hell. Any moment you can die, and once you have died, there is no second chance. In the condition in which you die, you will spend eternity. If you die rejecting the gospel call, you will spend eternity tormented in the lake of fire. Effectual calling, then, is the evidence that you have been elected from all eternity. If you are at home in a life of worldliness, carelessness, and unbelief, it’s obvious that you were never called.

You are effectually called, and by that, you show that you are one whom God loves. Effectual



calling proves that you are one of God's elect, whom he loved from all eternity, and one of those for whom Christ died, making atonement for their sins. So effectual calling then, is showing that you are special to God.

*Rejoice in this effectual calling.* Rejoice in God's infinite and eternal and unchangeable love for you. God really does care for you. All that is in your cup has been placed there by your Father who loves you, and "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). Everything that happens is for your good. More than that, it works together, blending in a great unified pattern for your good.

Another application—*Walk as Those Who Are Called.* Paul, a prisoner, wrote to the Ephesian church: "I beseech you that you walk worthy of your vocation wherewith you are called" (Ephesians 4, verse 1). Live as one who has been called of God—one who has been effectually called. You are to be completely different from the world around you. You are a person with a vocation. Do not disgrace the one who called you.

*Praise the One Who Called You.* Peter encourages us to "shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2, verse 9). What a wonderful blessing we enjoy as those who have been effectually called! We have not simply been called as others with a general call, which would leave us without excuse, but with a powerful, effectual call of God, who, in this way, came by his Spirit into our lives. We are saved! Praise him now, and praise him forever!



Our lecture today is on the subject of *Regeneration*. The effectual call is a powerful summons from a mighty God. It reaches the spiritually dead. Immediately following the call, regeneration takes place, and the sinner responds in faith and repentance. When this takes place, he or she is justified, and adopted, and sanctification begins. Several different names are given to this act of God. “Regeneration” is the one preferred by the theologians. Paul uses this term when he speaks of the “washing of regeneration” (Titus 3, verse 5). “Resurrection” is the term used in Romans 6, verses 4 to 8, or “quickened” (Ephesians 2, verse 5). He also employs the term “new creation” (2 Corinthians 5, verse 17). “New birth” is the popular term, which evangelical preachers often proclaim as vital. It is used by Jesus in the classic passage in the Gospels, to which we will now make special reference, that is, John chapter 3.

So first of all, thinking of the *Necessity of Regeneration*. Nicodemus was a good man, very religious, and indeed, a teacher or minister in the church of his day. Obviously, from the account, we can see that he had been disturbed and convicted by the life and ministry of Jesus. He came to see the Lord under the cover of darkness, because he was afraid of what his fellow Pharisees would say or think. He had questions. He asked, “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him” (John chapter 3, verse 2). Jesus responds in a surprising way, by asserting, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (verse 3). The repetition “verily, verily,” or “truly, truly” stresses that what Jesus is saying is of vital importance. The one who is not born again cannot see, but is blind to God and the great truths of the gospel. Nicodemus showed his blindness by asking, “How can a man be born when he is old?” (verse 4). Jesus repeated what he had said, in order to stress the necessity of regeneration: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (verse 5). Unless you are born of water and of the Spirit, washed from the filthiness of your sins, and transformed by the Holy Spirit, you cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Every one of us, no matter who our parents are, how well we have been brought up, is by nature and birth, dead to God. You and I begin our lives outside of the kingdom, and thus, in a lost condition. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” (verse 6). To be “flesh” is to be sinful

and corrupt. It is the opposite of being spiritual. You need to be spirit, rather than carnal flesh to be saved and to have fellowship with God. “Flesh” here, as is often the case in Scripture, has a decidedly sinful connotation to it. In verse 7, Christ repeats, “Ye must be born again.” It is absolutely necessary. Unless you are regenerated, you remain “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2, verse 1), and on the way to eternal death and hell. Even Nicodemus, though he was a sincere, good-living, and religious man, need to be made a new creation. Good works and morality will not save. Good works are never good enough. They are not perfect, and anything less than perfection will come under God’s condemnation, and therefore, his wrath and curse.

*Where does Regeneration Come From?* Many evangelists wrongly ignore the new birth. Others speak of it as if it was something which a man could produce by himself, or at least to which he could contribute. They see it as a mere decision for Christ, or the offering up of the so-called sinner’s prayer—this is Arminianism. But just as the dead can do nothing to save themselves, nor contribute to their own resurrection, so those dead in sins cannot raise themselves up spiritually. When we were first begotten or born, we had nothing to do with it. It was not our decision. We were not consulted about our own birth, but we were completely passive in it. So also with the new birth. Real Christians are a people “which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John chapter 1, verse 13). The new birth was not by natural descent, nor by human decision. Christ makes that plain. He says, “No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him” (John 6, verse 44). And later, in the same chapter, Jesus, for clarity, repeats, “Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father” (verse 65). “Born again” can also be translated “born from above.” It is totally the work of God.

Well, *What Exactly is Regeneration?* What is the new birth? Nicodemus asks this question in chapter 3, verse 4. Jesus replies that it is to be born of water and of the Spirit. Some think that baptism is referred to here, in being born of water. There are indeed churches which believe in baptismal regeneration, that is, that the soul is automatically born again when the individual is baptized. But no mention is made of baptism in this passage. The sacrament of Christian baptism was not yet instituted. Others see the two births referred to here, they see that being born of water as being the first birth, that is, the natural birth with the breaking of the waters. But the reference here is to something which every person must obtain. It is something people do not have by nature. But everyone has that first birth. Rather, it is to the one experience that the term “being born of water and the Spirit” refers. What would Nicodemus think that this “water” meant? The Jews had many purification rites and cleansings with water. Surely it refers to something which would cleanse our past sins and defilement, that is, “the washing of regeneration” (Titus 3, verse 5). The Old Testament parallel passage is Ezekiel 36. Referring to the new covenant, in verse 25, God promises to “sprinkle clean water upon them,” and take away the heart of stone, and replace it with a heart of flesh. So in the new birth, there is a cleansing, and also a taking away of the dead heart, and giving of a new heart, and a new spiritual life.

At regeneration, the Holy Spirit enters the heart of the effectually called, and takes up permanent residence, never to leave again. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Romans 8, verse 9). In the effectual call, God “callesh those things which be not as though they were” (Romans 4, verse 17). He called the world into existence at creation, out of nothing, and now he calls sinners and does a new creation work in them. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature” (2 Corinthians 5, verse 17).

There are two actions taking place concurrently in the words “born of the Spirit.” Firstly, there



is the Father's work in begetting, putting His seed in him, His seed of regeneration (1 John 3, verse 9). Secondly, there is the act of bringing forth, giving birth, when an individual enters a new realm of existence. But we see no Scriptural evidence for separating these two in time, but some Dutch theologians try to argue for this. "The wind bloweth"—this speaks of power (John 3, verse 8), it blows where it listeth. And this indicates God's sovereign freedom to work the new birth when he chooses in those he has elected. The words "thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth," describes the mysteriousness of this new birth.

*What Follows or Flows From Regeneration?* The great change that regeneration brings is life—real spiritual life. The effectual call was a call to repent and believe, and the sinner now, being born again, immediately responds in obedience. Justification and adoption follow, and then sanctification. Everything changes when one is born again. God does the calling, but we are born again.

*Faith* is a Great Mark of the New Birth. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5, verse 1). The act of believing demonstrates that the individual is no longer spiritually dead, and has been resurrected, or born again.

*Love* is another mark. "Everyone that loveth is born of God" (1 John 4, verse 7). Before regeneration, we hated God, but now we love him. Also, we love one another. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3, verse 14).

*Holiness* would be a third mark to distinguish those born again. "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of him" (1 John 2, verse 29). "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (1 John 3, verse 9). None are sinless in this life (1 John 1, verses 8 and 10), yet, there is a radical break with sin, so that they are no longer under the dominion of it. "One who is born of God overcometh the world" (1 John 5, verse 4); "And that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John 5, verse 18). Satan's mastery is broken. They are no longer servants of sin. While they do still sin, they hate it, and seek the Spirit's help to stop sinning. Further, those who are born again will not sin the unforgivable sin.

A fourth mark of regeneration is *Prayer*. Prayer is vital. The first thing a new healthy baby does when it enters the world is to cry. And so, the child of God starts to pray. The regeneration of Saul of Tarsus was obvious from the words addressed to Ananias with reference to Saul, in Acts 9, verse 11—God said, "Behold, he prayeth."

A fifth mark of regeneration is *Hunger*. Hunger is a mark of the new birth. Those who are born again have an appetite for spiritual food. "As newborn babes they desire the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby" (1 Peter chapter 2, verse 2). Little babies are not interested in toys—they want milk.

*The New Birth is Essential*. "What must I do to be saved?"—believe, for it stands written that "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3, verse 16). Paul's answer to this vital question could not have been clearer. He said to the Philippian jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16, verse 31). Do not try to produce the new birth yourself. If you do not have the new birth, look to God for it. Seek salvation by prayer and faith. Do not let the new birth be a barrier keeping you back, rather, repent and believe the gospel. Flee from the wrath to come. Pray to Jesus and trust in him. For as Paul said, in Romans 10:13, "Whosoever shall call upon the Lord shall be saved." Leave God to perform the new birth. If you have a desire for salvation, that is an encouragement. It shows that he is already working in your life. Pray for the unregenerate—only God can regenerate them.

The new birth should not be seen as a hindrance to evangelism, but in fact, the very opposite. It

encourages us to preach and to witness to all. The most hostile enemy can be born again, as Paul was. What a transformation took place in the Apostle's life, from being a persecutor and a blasphemer, to being a humble believer. God is able to do it. This is an encouragement to evangelize. God can change anyone. He performs the new birth in connection with the communication of his Word. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Corinthians 1, verse 21).



Our lecture today is on *Repentance*. Repentance is very closely related to Faith. They are like two sides of the one coin. Repentance is turning away from sin, and faith is turning to God. Which comes first? Logically, turning from sin takes place before turning to Christ. However, there can be no truly turning from sin until we come to the cross. It is only in the light of the cross that we see the real wickedness of sin. Faith is essential to true repentance. It is only in the light of Christ's sufferings that your repentance is an evangelical repentance, rather than a legal one. Further, you can't have a saving faith without repentance. It must be a repentant faith and a believing repentance—you cannot separate the two.

*So what is Repentance?* Repentance is a radical change of life and behavior. It is a change of views—intellectually, a change of feelings—emotional, and a change of purpose—volitional, with respect to God, to self, to sin, and salvation. *The Westminster Shorter Catechism*, as usual, gives an excellent definition. What is repentance? The answer is, “Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience”—that’s the answer to Question #87. So repentance is a Scriptural command. The command to repent is found often in the Old Testament. Isaiah exclaims, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55, verse 7). Ezekiel cries, “Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezekiel 33, verse 11). Zechariah pleads with Judah in God’s name: “Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD” (Zechariah 1, verse 4). Repentance was the characteristic note of the preaching of John the Baptist: “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3, verse 2). Jesus actually proclaimed the same message: “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4, verse 17). Peter, on the day of Pentecost, preached, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2, verse 38). Paul, at Athens, declared that “God...commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17, verse 30). All are to repent and to turn to Christ for forgiveness.



*Repentance is unto Life.* Though we were created in the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, we “sinned in [Adam], and fell with him, in his first transgression”—answer to Question #16 of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*. We are born in sin and “shapen in iniquity” (Psalm 51, verse 5). We are, by nature, sinners under the wrath and curse of God, and are on our way to hell. We are on the broad road that leads to destruction, and need to turn in to the narrow way which leads to heaven (Matthew 7, verses 13 and 14). Repentance is unto life. Without repentance, we go on in sin and perish.

*Repentance is a Saving Grace.* “Grace” means “gift,” and so a saving grace is a gift that leads to salvation. Grace also has the idea that it is a gift to those who do not deserve it. Further, it is not something we can produce by human resolution. There can be sorrow for the consequences of sin, as well as the case of “Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears” (Hebrews 12, verses 16 and 17). Actually, the repentance which Esau failed to obtain was his father’s repentance of giving Jacob the blessing. Esau wanted his father to repent and give the blessing to him. He was a profane man, and what he sought was earthly and material blessings. The early Christians spoke of repentance as a gift. For example, in Acts 11:18, “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”

*It is an Evangelical Grace.* We might think of repentance as a kind of penance, feeling sorry for what we have done. It is sometimes regarded as something that we can work up and perform. It is certainly our duty to repent. Peter preached, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3, verse 19). We must repent, yet, like every other part of salvation, it is “not of works lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2, verse 9). There is a legalistic repentance, a remorse such as Judas had when he returned the money for betraying Christ and went away and hanged himself. And that’s in contrast to the evangelical repentance which Peter had when he wept bitterly and came back to Christ for having denied the Lord.

*It’s to be Preached by every gospel minister.* Every sound minister should start his preaching of the gospel by explaining man’s need because of his sin, and God’s wrath against sin. He must proclaim the law, and should seek, with the help of the Spirit, to convict his hearers of their sin. Then he calls to repentance and faith. It is not something that a man can do with his own willpower. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?” (Jeremiah 13, verse 23). But yet, it is the duty of all to repent, and is to be pressed upon every individual, with a conviction of helplessness and hopelessness, God is usually pleased to grant the gifts of faith and repentance. Paul can say, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Romans 1, verse 16).

*A True Sense of Sin is Required.* In order truly to repent, a sinner must be convicted of sin. No true repentance or conversion can take place without it. This conviction is not just a fear of hell, but a genuine hatred for sin, as that which is obnoxious to God. It was our sin that crucified Christ. A sight of our sin should make us aware of our danger. There is a judgment day coming, when sinners will be punished. Indeed, sometimes God begins the punishment, even in this life: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1, verse 18). Also, sin is filthy and disgusting to the holy nature of God. It is directly contrary to his righteous law. Some consciousness of this is essential to repentance. David came to an awareness of this when he exclaimed, “For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done

this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest” (Psalm 51, verses 3 and 4).

*An Apprehension of the Mercy of God is Required.* If there is no sense of mercy being available, despair will be outcome, as was the case with Judas Iscariot. He went and committed suicide, which is the consequence of loss of any hope. But God encourages faith and hope: “Come now, let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1, verse 18). How encouraging are Paul’s words! “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1, verse 15). We must have a grasp of the mercy of God in Christ. Peter, who denied Jesus, did not despair. David committed adultery and murder, yet he repented and found forgiveness. Paul asserted, “Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Corinthians 7, verse 10). There are two very different kinds of sorrow: one unto salvation, and the other unto despair. The rich young ruler was very sorrowful, yet went away from Christ grieved (Matthew 10, verse 22).

*Mercy in Christ.* God is merciful to sinners, but there is no mercy apart from Christ. Outside of Christ, God, in justice, is full of wrath against the wicked. God, in his love, elected men and women in Christ. Viewing them in Christ is so he sees no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel (Numbers 23, verse 21). Every blessing that we enjoy comes to us as a result of the Lord Jesus earning it for us on the cross. Christ bore our sins and suffered the penalty due to us.

*Grief for Sin.* Sin against God is truly heinous and wicked. How awful to rebel against God, the God who created us! Disobedience against the good God, who, in providence, provides all things in rich abundance for us, is a great evil. Sinning against our heavenly Father, and our loving, suffering Savior is the height of wickedness. In the light of who God is and what he has done, we must grieve over sin. “Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Corinthians 7, verse 10).

*Hatred for Sin is Required.* True repentance arises when we hate sin. When we see sin in the light of the cross, we realize that Christ was scourged by sin. Sin nailed Christ to the tree and kept him there. Aware of this, we will detest sin. We love Christ because he first loved us. Loving Christ, we will hate what made him suffer. Worldly people love sins, but are restrained by what other people will say, or by the fear of punishment. But the motive of the Christian is love. One of the things that makes heaven a delightful prospect for the child of God is the fact that we will never sin again. Pride, lust, and anger will never again have a place in our hearts. Will that not be wonderful?

*We Must Turn from Sin unto God.* The repentant sinner must turn from sin in general, but also from specific sins. The Thessalonians were clearly real Christians, because they “turned to God from idols to serve the living the true God” (1 Thessalonians 1, verse 9). There is a positive side to this turning, as well as a negative. The individual strives with all his might, and by God’s grace, to live a holy, God-honoring life.

*Conversion is Vital to Salvation.* A huge change must take place. A Christian is known by his fruits, that is, by his transformed and holy life. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5, verse 17). Egypt is left behind, and its fleshpots are no longer desired. If a professing Christian is living just like the world, it shows that he is a mere hypocrite. It is not our baptism or our words which prove who is a true Christian, but our godly lives. And there must be a purposing to walk in God’s way. The

Christian endeavors and purposes to talk with God in the way of his commandments. There is a desire and a will on our part to walk with God. We now “delight in the law of God after the inward man” (Romans 7, verse 22). We have died to sin. True, a battle continues: “I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” But then, the Apostle adds, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” That’s from Romans 7, verses 23 to 25. We need grace to do what we desire to do, and God gives us that grace. We are told that Enoch walked with God, and we long to do that as well.

*We Cannot Trust in Our Repentance.* Repentance is essential, and all sinners must repent to be saved, yet, we cannot rest on our repentance as a satisfaction for sin. Many Jews think that God will take their repentance as satisfaction for sin. Muslims have a similar idea—if they repent, Allah will be merciful to them. Roman Catholics, too put a stress upon penance as an earning forgiveness. Forgiveness, however, is only given for Christ’s sake. ‘Tis only because he has sacrificed himself for us, suffered for us, and satisfied the demands of God’s law by his death, that we are pardoned.

*Sin Deserves Hell.* No sin is so small but that it deserves eternal punishment. In fact, the only small sin is a sin against a small god. Because God is so great, and so good, every single sin is exceeding wicked and deserves eternity in hell. On the other hand, there is no sin so great as will damn the sinner who truly repents and believes in Jesus. The Bible talks of the “unforgivable sin,” but this refers to a rejection, and indeed, a persistent rejection of the testimony of the Holy Spirit to Christ (Luke 12, verse 10). The writer to the Hebrews, in chapter 6, describes those apostates who cannot be brought back and restored. He is referring to people who have turned away from Christ after having had many privileges and blessings. They are guilty of crucifying the Son of God a second time, trampling the blood of Christ under foot (Hebrews 10, verse 29). They are hardened and careless. The sensitive penitent, who fears having committed this sin, and longs for peace with God, is not an apostate.

*Men Should Not be Content with General Repentance.* Every sin should bother us. It’s not just at the beginning of the Christian life that we are to repent. We should be daily repenting. Every day, we are to be repenting and believing the gospel. Jesus taught us to pray, “Forgive us our debts” (Matthew 6, verse 12). This should be, for us, our way of life. When Christ preached, in the Sermon on the Mount, “Blessed are they that mourn” (Matthew 5:4), he was describing a daily lifestyle. We should confess every sin, and seek forgiveness. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John chapter 1, verse 9).

*Confess Your Faults to One Another.* Just as we are to confess our faults to God, so we are to confess to one another the sins we commit against each other (James 5, verse 16). We should not let the sun go down upon our wrath (Ephesians 4, verse 26). If someone sins against us, we should go to see them privately, show them their fault, and lovingly try to bring them to repentance (Luke 17, verse 3). Those who sin against the church and bring shame on the church are to be dealt with privately at first, to seek confession and repentance. If they repent, discipline may still be necessary, for a public or a scandalous fault. But we have a duty, in love, to seek to restore such (Matthew chapter 18, verses 15 to 20).

*Repentance is a Great Duty.* In Paul’s wonderful sermon on Mars Hill, he referred to the ignorance and idolatry of the Greeks and other nations in the past. But now, a new day is dawned. The gospel is not just for the Jews, but “God commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17, verse 30). Sinners are to repent and believe the gospel. Christians are daily to repent of their sins. It is true that all our sins are forgiven when we are justified, yet, repentance is commanded.

Repentance will only cease to be necessary when we cease to sin. If we do not repent of our sins, there is no promise of forgiveness. Sin will bring chastisement upon the child of God, and that is painful. God is teaching us to hate sin as he hates it.





This next lecture is on *Saving Faith*. Saving Faith is vitally important. The Philippian jailor asked the question, “What must I do to be saved?” The clear and unequivocal answer of Paul, and so of Scripture, is “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16, verses 30 and 31). Faith is essential, and none are saved without it. All who trust in Christ will be saved and can never perish. “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1, verse 12). Faith is receiving and embracing the Lord Jesus Christ, who is freely offered to us in the gospel.

*Faith and Repentance.* Repentance is often mentioned first in Scripture. Logically, it comes first, because we turn from sin to believe in Jesus. But no proper evangelical repentance takes place until we come to the cross. We can only see aright, in all its wickedness, in the light of the sufferings of Christ. Also, repentance is mentioned first, because the unconverted have some concept of repentance, but they have no idea what saving faith means. The repentance of the unregenerate is simply sorrow for the public shame caused by sin, or fear of the consequences which will follow evil. True repentance involves grief, because sin offends God, and sin crucified Christ. Really, repentance and faith are very closely bound together. Repentance is turning from sin unto prayer; it must be to Christ, which is faith. Faith is believing in Christ to save from sin, and that is repentance. True repentance begins with faith, and faith starts with repentance, so both are exercised together.

*Faith is a Gift.* The *Westminster Confession* describes faith as “the grace of faith” (chapter 14, section 1). “Grace” means “gift.” Paul states, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2, verse 8). This means that faith is not something that we can work up. True, we have a duty to believe, but we cannot unless God enables us. Before you believe, there is nothing harder to do than to believe. But after you believe, there is nothing simpler than to believe. All are commanded to believe. It is our duty and human responsibility, yet the gift of faith is given only to the elect. When God’s time comes, then and only then, the elect are enabled to believe. God has chosen some to be his children. He does not give the gift of faith to all, but only to those whom he loved and chose before the foundation of the world.

*Faith and the Spirit.* Faith is worked in us by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit comes to live in our

hearts at regeneration. He applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ. He makes us able and willing to believe, to trust and commit our souls to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. Further, faith is not a decision made once at the beginning of our Christian lives. Rather, it is a whole new way of life. We must believe in Christ afresh every day of our lives. It is an ongoing work of the Spirit within us, and not only an act.

*The Word of God is Vital for Faith.* “How shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them which bring the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”—that’s Romans 10, verses 14 to 17. No one normally believes without hearing the gospel message. “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Corinthians 1, verse 21). The preaching of the Word is the common means whereby people come to faith. Sometimes folk are saved through someone else communicating the Word in conversation to them; or maybe it’s through reading the Scriptures, or a book containing the Scripture. The Word is vital to faith. The Spirit takes the Word and applies it to our heart. He enlightens our minds and enables us to receive and embrace Christ presented to us in the gospel.

*The Role of the Sacraments and Prayer.* As well as the Word, which is the main means to strengthen faith, the sacraments also have a vital role. They visibly present Christ and his salvation to our senses. They are signs and seals of the gospel. In baptism, water is used. It shows our need for the spiritual washing and cleansing of the blood of Christ. We are baptized into the name of the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This means that we must be united to God in Christ. Baptism symbolizes our engrafting into him. Whether baptized as infants or as adults, the efficacy of our baptism is not confined to the moment of administration. We are to continue to reflect on our baptism, and to seek to strengthen our faith through this means of grace. Similarly, the Lord’s Supper reminds us of the death of Christ for us. We are to meditate on what the Lord Jesus did for us. We are, by faith, to feed spiritually on his broken body and shed blood, as we eat the bread and drink the wine, and later as we reflect on what he did. Remembering the Lord’s death in this way will cause our faith to grow.

Next, thinking of *Prayer and Faith*. Faith expresses itself in prayer. The tax collector in the temple cried out, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18, verse 13), and in this, he exercised faith and was justified. Paul asserts, “Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10, verses 11 to 13). From this, we can see that believing, and calling upon the name of the Lord we are saved. James asserts, “The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (James 5, verse 15). The prayer of unbelief saves no one, and is simply vain repetitions (Matthew 6, verse 7). Prayer also, as a rule, is a means of grace. On one occasion, the disciples prayed to the Lord, “Increase our faith” (Luke 17, verse 5). Faith is increased in answer to prayer. Also, there is a blessing upon the act of praying itself. We are conscious, at times, of being heard by God, and our faith develops. God wonderfully grants us, at times, what we pray for, and this encourages our faith.

*Wrong Objects of Faith.* Many people claim to have faith, but it is faith in the wrong object. First, some put their faith in false gods, such as those of Hinduism; or in Islam, they put their faith in Allah. Second, others have an heretical view of God; for example, a god of love who has no

justice and will not send people to hell. Thirdly, many place faith in their own good works, that somehow God will accept them because they have not done anything terribly bad, and they have done some good deeds, therefore God should reward them. Fourth, crowds place their faith in the fact that they belong to the majority, and foolishly think that in some way, one day, all will work out fine—surely most of the wonderful race of mankind which God has created will not end up in hell forever.

There are *Different Kinds of Faith*, which fall short of Saving Faith. First, there is *Historical Faith*—this faith believes the facts revealed in the Bible, for example, the existence of God, the substitutionary death of Christ, and the resurrection of the Lord. It is a superficial faith. James calls it a faith without works: “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou now, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” (James 2, verses 19 to 20). Historical faith is not any better than the faith of devils. Saving faith, in contrast, changes our lives and, by our works, is shown to be genuine, or genuine faith.

Secondly, there’s the *Faith of Miracles*—this is the faith which sees great answers to prayer. Judas was able to heal the sick and to cast out devils, though he himself was unconverted. Jesus warned, in the Sermon on the Mount, “Many will say to me in that day”—the judgment day—“Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?” (Matthew 7, verse 22). God gives the gift of faith by which many wonderful miracles are performed. Some think that miracle workers are special Christians with a special baptism of the Holy Spirit, but here we see that miracle-working does not even prove that someone is a real, saved Christian. Many tongue-speakers and miracle-workers will end up in hell.

Thirdly, there’s *Temporary Faith*. In the parable of the sower, we’re told about rocky-ground hearers, which are an illustration of people who receive God’s Word with joy, yes, but sadly, have no depth. As a seed on rocky ground grows quickly but has no root, but withers in the hot sun, so they do not last. These hearers have faith, but it is just superficial, and under trials and persecution, their faith disappears.

So then, turning to look at *Saving Faith*. There are three essential elements in Saving Faith. First, there must be *Knowledge*. The reading the preaching of the Scriptures informs the mind of the gospel, and Saving Faith receives that truth. Second, there is an *Assent*, where the faith accepts the teaching and believes that it is the truth of God. The third element is *Trust*. This is vital. It is like someone in a shipwreck trusting the lifeboat. A bridge may appear shaky, but faith trusts the bridge. By trust, you cast your soul on Christ. Do not build your house on the sand, but on the Rock. This is explained in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* as “accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life” (*Westminster Confession*, chapter 14, section 2).

*Faith is Receiving the Covenant of Grace*. “Incline your ear, come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David” (Isaiah 55, verse 3). Faith is not the mere making of a decision at a crusade, or saying a prayer after someone else. It involves realizing that you have broken the covenant of works, and are therefore under the curse of a broken covenant, and now are embracing God’s provision for us in the covenant of grace. It is believing what is written in the Bible, and especially the gospel of Christ, and personally taking his Savior for yourself. It involves doing what God says, trembling at the threats of God’s Word, and joyfully receiving the promises. Faith is a gift of God, purchased by Christ, and given to us in the covenant of grace.

*What Right or Encouragement Do We Have to Believe?* First, the universal offer—even in Old Testament times, when salvation was largely restricted to the Jews, God said, “Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters” (Isaiah 55, verse 1). And in another place, “Look unto me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth” (Isaiah 45, verse 22). Even those from far away, “the ends of the earth” are invited. This free offer to everyone in the world is again made in the New Testament: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3, verse 16). And later, “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22, verse 17). “Whosoever” implies “everyone.” The offer is universal, and all are invited to come, and to believe.

Hyper-Calvinists are against the free offer, arguing that it is improper to call to repentance and faith in Christ those who do not have the ability to respond, because they have not yet manifested evidence of regeneration. And indeed, they regard it as derogatory to God to offer salvation to all indiscriminately. The gospel, they say, is only for the elect. They base the offer of the gospel on the atonement, and since the atonement is limited, the offer, they argue, must also be limited. However, the offer of the gospel is rather to be based upon the express command of God. Christ said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16, verses 15 and 16). Some see no kindness in a gospel offer to mankind in general. They dislike the term “offer,” as they think it gives the impression of a weak God waiting on the will of man. But many verses of Scripture show God offering salvation to all who would repent and believe. When God says, “whosoever,” we must take it as genuine. Paul said to Timothy that God “will have all men to be saved” (1 Timothy 2, verse 4). And Matthew Henry comments: “Not that he had decreed the salvation of all, for then all men would be saved, but that he hath a goodwill to the salvation of all, and none perish, but it is their own fault.” Matthew Poole explains that when Scripture says, “God will of all men to be saved,” we must “understand it not with respect to his decretive will, but his complacential<sup>1</sup> will, that is, the repentance and life of a sinner is very pleasing to his holiness and mercy.”

There is a great warmth to the way the gospel is presented to sinners in the Scriptures. Paul wrote, “We are ambassadors for Christ, as if God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5, verse 20). The offer is made to all, and all are besought to accept it. However, we know that none but the elect will accept the offer because of the enmity that there is in the human heart to God, and the inability of those dead in sins to repent and believe without God’s irresistible grace. Calvin makes his own position very clear, when he says, “God invites all indiscriminately to salvation through the gospel;” or in another place, “Paul makes grace common to all men, not because it in fact extends to all, but because it is offered to all;” and in another place, “God commands the gospel to be offered indiscriminately to all.”

Secondly, *The Sufficiency and Suitability of the Savior Presented*. It is not the possibility of salvation that is offered in the gospel, but the Savior himself. It is a suitable and capable Savior who is freely offered to all who would take him. It is not the possibility to be saved, but rather, a full Christ who will certainly save. He is able to save the worst of sinners. He saved Paul, who described himself as the chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1, verse 15). Christ himself said, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6, verse 37). “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that cometh to God by him” (Hebrews 7, verse 25).

Now, *Degrees of Faith*. There are different degrees of faith: some are weak in faith, and others

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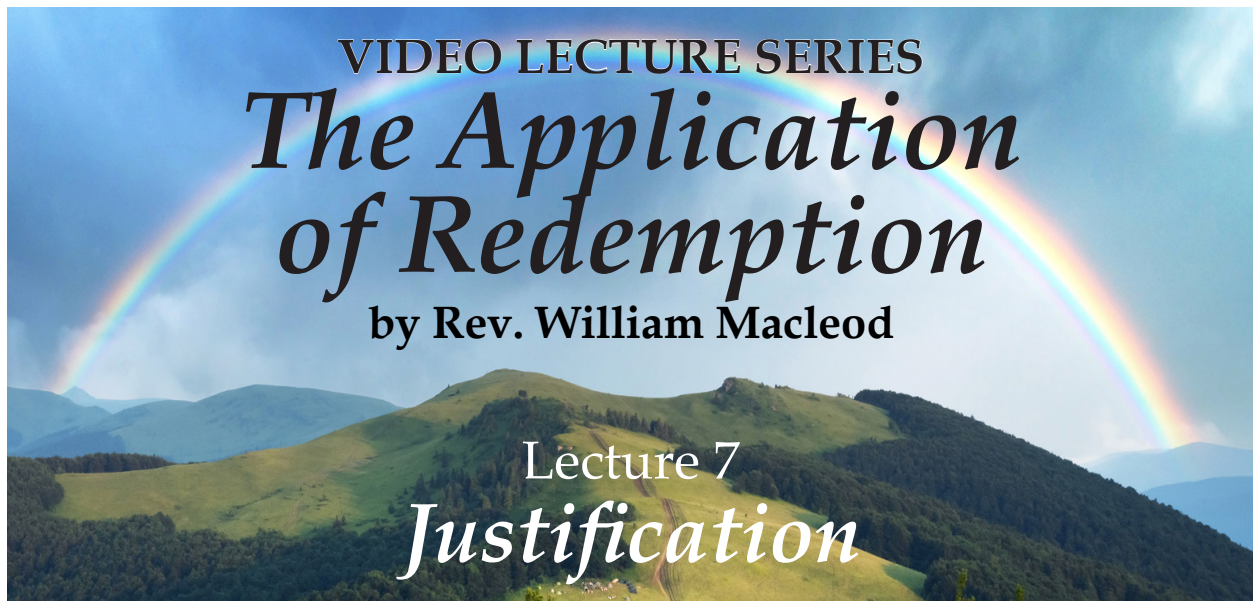
1 Complaisant (obsolete) – marked by an inclination to please or oblige or by courteous agreeability.



strong. The disciples prayed, Lord, “Increase our faith” (Luke 17, verse 5). Faith should grow as time passes. The trials of life are ordained to cause our faith to grow. Satan attacks our faith, but by God’s grace, we have the victory, and every victory strengthens our faith. Some attain full assurance of faith—this should be the aim of us all. “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure” (2 Peter 1, verse 10). Do not just take it for granted that you are saved. “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” (2 Corinthians 13, verse 5).

Now, things pertaining to the *Shorter Catechism Definition*. As always, the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* gives an excellent definition: “Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel”—that’s the answer to Question #86. This is most helpful. Christ is the object of our faith. We receive and rest on him alone. He is offered to us in the gospel. Now, we know that faith is the gift of God, and that a man needs the Spirit to believe. Yet, the Scriptures invite and command all to believe in Jesus. “Whosoever believes will be saved.” The Scripture says, “Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come” (Isaiah 55, verse 1). Jesus says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour” (Matthew 11, verse 28). Paul wrote: “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10, verse 13). John, at the end of his Revelation stated, “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22, verse 17).

*So, in Conclusion*, faith is not belief that we have been saved, but trusting Christ to be saved. It is not the belief that Christ died for you, but dependence upon Christ’s death for salvation. It is not faith that saves, but faith in Christ. It is not, strictly speaking, faith in Christ that saves, but Christ through faith. The saving power resides not in the action of faith, or the attitude of the believer, but in the nature of the object of faith, which is Christ. Faith is not a cheap decision. Too many evangelists present it as such. Faith and repentance are intimately linked, and there must be repentance along with faith. Christ must be accepted as both Savior and Lord. True saving faith is seen by its fruits. Amen.



Our lecture today is on *Justification*. Justification, by faith alone in Christ alone is one of the great fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. It is vital to be correct and accurate in our understanding of this truth, as it affects all other doctrines, and is essential for our standing before God. This doctrine is clearly taught in the Scripture. During the third and fourth centuries, the doctrine of God, the Trinity, and the person of Christ were worked out and stated by the church. It was during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the doctrine of justification was clarified.

Martin Luther had a very important role to play. One day, Luther was thrown to the ground by a thunderstorm. Terrified, he promised God that if he was spared, he would become a monk. In the monastery, he tried to save himself by his works. The way of salvation that was commonly taught by the church of his day was by self-humiliation, penance, flagellation, fasting, prayers, and good works. After years of fruitless struggle, he discovered the glorious, liberating doctrine that “The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1, verse 17). This was the beginning of the Reformation, and Luther went on to assert that justification by faith alone in Christ alone is the article of a standing or a falling church. Calvin, the later Reformer, declared that justification is the main hinge on which religion turns.

There have been many heresies which are wrong on this point. The Roman Catholic teaching is that justification is by faith plus works. Justification and sanctification are mixed and confused by them. The Reformation delivered men and women from this darkness, and recovered this biblical truth. It’s sad to see some modern evangelicals attacking this foundational doctrine, in the interest of ecumenicity and union with Rome. For example, the *New Perspectives on Paul*, taught by N. T. Wright, argues that justification by faith was simply a marker of church membership amongst the Gentiles, but that the Jews were marked out as members of God’s covenant people by circumcision, dietary laws, sabbath days, etc.—people are saved by being part of God’s covenant people, and by faithfulness—that’s what the *New Perspectives on Paul* teaches. It’s just another way of presenting the old heresy of justification by faith plus works.

Looking then at *the Meaning of Justification*. Roman Catholicism believes that justification changes the person. They say it infuses with grace and sanctifies the individual. By asserting this, they confuse justification with regeneration and sanctification. Actually, justification does

not touch us. Rather, it is judicial, and deals with our standing before God. In justification, we are simply declared to be righteous. Justification is, thus, an act of the judge. It is the opposite of condemnation. A criminal is not made wicked when a judge condemns him. He was already wicked, and the judge simply declares him to be such. Indeed, a man may be innocent, and yet be unjustly condemned by a judge. Condemnation does not make a person wicked, neither does justification make a person righteous. Condemnation pronounces a man wicked, whether he be that or not. He is a criminal in the eyes of the law. Justification is the opposite, and pronounces the individual righteous in the eyes of the law. When the Scripture says that the people “justified God,” in Luke 7:29, that does not mean that they made God righteous, but rather, that they declared God to be righteous. It is a legal term. The Great Judge pronounces a person to be justified and righteous in his sight.

So then, looking at *the Problem*. There is a basic problem which the gospel has to answer. It is the question, *How can God be just and justify the ungodly?* In the Old Testament, we find the words, “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD” (Proverbs 17, verse 15). We must not justify the wicked, but yet, God does. You and I are wicked, yet God justifies us. How can he do this? If a cruel, evil murderer was caught and his guilt clearly demonstrated for all to see, yet the judge pronounced him not guilty, there would be outrage, and rightly so. Popularly, though not completely accurate, justification is sometimes defined as “God treating me just as if I had never sinned.” How can he? We are all sinners. But people will sometimes argue that surely a sovereign, almighty God can do anything. But no, God cannot do anything; there are certain things which he cannot do. He cannot act contrary to his own nature. God cannot do anything against the law of God, which is actually an expression of his own nature. He cannot cast sinless angels into hell. He cannot look on iniquity (Habakkuk 1, verse 13); nor clear the guilty (Numbers 14, verse 18); God cannot tell a lie (Titus 1, verse 2). How, then, can God be just and justify the ungodly?

That leads us then to consider *the Basis of Our Justification*. The ground, or basis, of our justification is the work of Christ. God’s wisdom found a way by which he could be just and justify sinners. The Son of God was chosen to be the Savior. He took human nature and became a man. He became one of us, and took our place as our substitute. He kept the law perfectly for us. Our sins were imputed to him, and his righteousness was imputed to us. He suffered as our substitute for our sins, and he suffered all the penalty that the law of God demanded. “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6, verse 23)—he died for us. The following illustration will help us to grasp this truth. An African president came to power, promising to root out all bribery and corruption. Anyone found guilty of bribery would be whipped. Shortly after his installation, his mother was caught in corruption and found guilty. He loved her, so what would he do? He could not bear to see her whipped. He could give her a presidential pardon, but then everyone would see him as partial and despise his government as being corrupt like his predecessors. The day came for the sentence of whipping to be carried out. His mother was taken, led to the whipping post, and tied to it. But then, the president stepped forward and asked that she be released. People thought he was just like the previous presidents. But he then took her place, and asked to be tied to the post and whipped in her stead. By this way, the law was upheld, his mother escaped the punishment, but justice was done, and the law was honored. So God, in human nature, suffered for our sins, and we received his righteousness. In this way, God is just, and the justifier of the sinner who believes in Jesus.

Considering now *the Place of Faith*. The Bible describes justification as being “by faith” (Romans 5, verse 1). Faith is the instrument which lays hold of Christ as our substitute and Savior.

Faith is the empty hand that receives God's gift, and the channel through which the blessing of eternal life flows to us. Faith is not, in itself, meritorious. It is not a work. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2, verses 8 and 9). We cannot even boast of our faith because it is actually a gift from God. Moses raised the brass serpent in the wilderness so that the bitter, poisoned Israelites who were dying would look to it and be healed. In the same way, faith is simply looking to Christ for healing (John 3, verse 14 and 15). Christ alone saves, and faith receives and embraces this Savior. Justification immediately follows faith. The Dutch American theologian, Herman Hoeksema (1886–1965) was wrong in arguing for eternal justification. Certainly, there is from before the foundation of the world, a decree to justify individual men and women. But until we believe, we are "the children of wrath, even as others" (Ephesians 2, verse 3). Karl Barth (1886 to 1968), a Swiss theologian, taught that justifying faith is the faith of Christ, not our faith, but this is nonsense. "What must I do to be saved?" the Scripture is clear; God commands us to believe and trust in the work of Christ, and then we will be saved (Acts 16, verses 30 and 31). Christ's work saves us, and we are to have faith in that finished work.

What then is *the Place of Works*? The Judaizers, in the early church, taught that faith alone was not enough for salvation. An individual also needed to perform certain rituals—for example, circumcision. Paul makes plain that this teaching, which required people to be circumcised, undermined the gospel: "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law....ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5, verses 2 to 4). Also, the Judaizers taught that a person needed to perform good works. However, Paul argued that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans 3, verse 28). But then, James wrote: "By works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2, verse 24). Paul, however, is talking about conversion, while James is describing the ongoing life of the Christian. James is against a cold, intellectual kind of mere faith. Saving faith always shows itself in works. It cannot remain alone. Paul, too, writes of justifying faith as that which works by love (Galatians 5, verse 6). Though justification is by faith alone, the faith that justifies never remains alone. On the judgment day, we will be judged according to our works (Revelation 20, verse 12). A distinction can rightly be drawn between actual justification, which is by faith alone, and takes place at the point when we first believe; and declarative justification, which is what is referred to by James, and follows on from our conversion until the judgment day. Declarative justification is the manifestation of our actual justification.

Looking now at *the Shorter Catechism*. The definitions given in the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* are always very helpful. "What is justification?"—"Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone"—that's the answer to Question #33. God does it; it's an act, not an ongoing work. It is freely bestowed, not earned. All our sins, past, present, and future, are forgiven in a moment. We are justified because we are righteous. But our righteousness is that of Christ which has been imputed to us, and which we receive by faith alone.

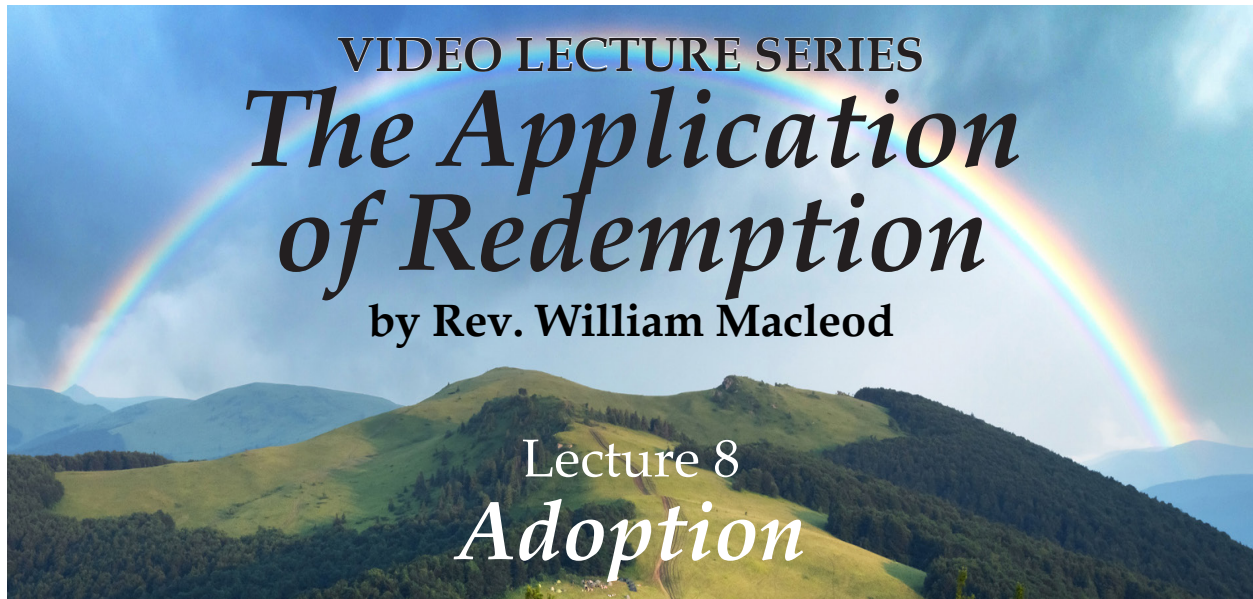
And, a question Arises: *Does justification by faith alone encourage sinning?* Justification by faith alone definitely does not encourage sinning. Having been regenerated by the Holy Ghost, we are also being sanctified by the Spirit. If we carry on carelessly sinning, that proves that we were never born again, never converted, never justified in the first place. Paul deals with this objection as he addresses the Romans: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may



abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6, verses 1 and 2). Having died to sin, and been resurrected to a new life in Christ, we cannot happily go on in sin.

Another question: *But why should we go on praying for forgiveness if our sins are already forgiven the moment we believe?* Jesus taught us, in the Lord's Prayer, to pray for forgiveness. Although our sins are forgiven, we still displease our heavenly Father. If we do not repent, confess, and forsake our sins, his chastisement will come upon us, and that is painful (Hebrews 12, verses 5 to 11). Part of our growth in holiness is growing in our hatred for sin, and in this, becoming more like our Father. God does not spoil his children, but molds and forms them, shaping and preparing them for eternity with himself in heaven. Because we are justified by faith alone, and not by faith plus works, we can have assurance of our salvation. This is impossible, for example, in the Roman Catholic system, where your good works are weighed constantly, and may not be good enough. Let us rejoice in the glad tidings of justification by faith alone. Our salvation is not dependent upon weak and sinful us, but is all of God, all of grace, and all to the glory of God.

So, *in Conclusion*, justification by faith alone in Christ alone is a wonderful doctrine. All our days in this world, we are sinners. We have to keep coming to the Lord for forgiveness. To our dying day, our prayer will be, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18, verse 13). But rejoice in the Lord! Christ died for your sins. All is forgiven. Heaven is yours. Amen.



Our lecture today is on *Adoption*. God’s love is amazing; who can measure it? “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3, verse 16). In his epistle, John wrote, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not” (1 John 3, verse 1). God could not do more for us than he has done, and God could not raise us to a higher position. We were sinners by nature and by practice; we were born into this world as enemies who hate God, and are under his wrath and curse. We were, in fact, children of the devil (John 8, verse 44). We sinned in Adam and fell in him. We died to God spiritually when Adam ate the forbidden fruit, and we’re, by nature, on the way to eternal death in hell. Yet, God stepped in. He had elected us from before time began. Two thousand years ago, he sent his Son to die for us on the cross. We entered the world as rebels, yet God sent his Holy Spirit into our hearts to change us, to regenerate us; we were born again. We repented and believed in Jesus as our Savior. We were justified. Our sins were pardoned in justification, and we were accepted as righteous in God’s sight for Christ’s sake. Then we were adopted by God. This amazing truth that Jehovah adopted us is the theme of this lecture. How thankful, and obedient, and holy, and loving we should be for all that the Lord has done for us.

First of all then, *What is Adoption?* Adoption is taking a stranger into the family and treating him as a son and heir. If you or I were looking for someone to adopt, we would look for a healthy, strong, obedient, and intelligent child. But amazingly, God chooses creatures who are small, weak, sick, sinful, and stupid in comparison to him. He picks sons and daughters from amongst his enemies to adopt. Oh, the wonder of God’s love in adoption.

*Adoption is an Act.* Adoption is not a process, but an act. We are not half adopted one day, and the process completed another day. Rather, in a moment, we are adopted. Justification pronounced us righteous. It changed our status, but not our state. So adoption, too, does not change our nature, but rather our status before God. Adoption is the climax of our salvation. God has “predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Ephesians 1, verses 5 and 6). No higher position is possible. As Paul stated to the Corinthians,

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2, verse 9). The world does not recognize our high position, because it did not recognize Christ: “It knew him not” (1 John 3, verse 1). Adoption is not simply a future blessing, but, “Now are we the sons of God” (verse 2). We already enjoy many blessings.

Considering then *the One Who Adopts*. Adoption is specifically an act of the Father. “Behold, what manner of love the *Father* hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (1 John 3, verse 1). God is Father in several different ways. First, he’s the Father in the Trinity—he’s the Father of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In his universal fatherhood, secondly, he is the Father, or Creator, of all mankind, but there is little mention or emphasis upon this in Scripture. Paul makes reference to it in his sermon on Mars Hill, when he quotes a heathen poet who says, “We are his offspring” (Acts 17, verse 28). By saying that, he implies that our life comes from God—we are his offspring. In a third sense, we are sons of God in this relationship to our Father by adoption. And this is the fatherhood which is especially stressed in Scripture.

Christ’s position is the only begotten of the Father, and if course, his case is unique. So he says, “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father” (John 20, verse 17). He never includes the disciples with himself, saying, “Our Father,” but “my Father, and your Father.” The three persons of the Trinity have different roles. The Father elects and adopts. The Son pays the required ransom price to divine justice, so that, “in bringing many sons unto glory,” he was made perfect in sufferings (Hebrews 2, verse 10). The Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of adoption, enters the hearts of the adopted, granting them assurance, and enabling them to cry, “Abba, Father” (Romans 8, verse 15).

*Who, then, Are Adopted?* Not everyone is adopted. ‘Tis a blessing bestowed upon those who repent and believe the gospel and so, are converted. The two ways of becoming part of a family are either by birth, or by adoption. We are born as children of Adam. For Christians, a point comes in their life, when, in Paul’s terminology, they are adopted (Ephesians 1, verse 5). As Paul wrote to the Romans, “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8, verse 29). Christ died only for the elect (Acts 20, verse 28). The Holy Spirit applies redemption only to them: “God hath sent for the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Galatians 4, verse 6). Interestingly, in John’s terminology, we are “born again” into the relationship of children: “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1, verses 12 and 13). Regeneration changes our nature, fitting us to be sons. Justification changes our status, pardoning us and accepting us as righteous, so that we can be adopted. Both Regeneration and justification must take place first, and then, immediately adoption takes place. Some regard adoption just as part of justification, yet it is such a special blessing that it is best that we treat it separately. Like justification, adoption immediately follows upon our exercising faith in Christ: “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3, verse 26). Faith is the instrument of justification, and faith is also the instrument of adoption: “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God” (John 1, verse 12).

What then are *the Privileges of Adoption*?

First, *it gives us a new name*. We were children of Adam, fallen in him, and disgraced with him. And now we are the children of God, sons and daughters of the great King. When you are adopted, you take the name of the new family to which you now belong. We are Christians, God’s people, called by his name.

Secondly, *comfort in this life*: God providentially cares for his children. He feeds the little sparrows and clothes the wild lilies. And how much more will your heavenly Father look after you, his children; feeding you, clothing you, and providing you with all your daily needs (Matthew 6, verses 26 to 30). We will lack no good thing: “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4, verse 19). So that’s the second great privilege of adoption.

The third is *the Spirit assuring us*. God does not give to his children the Spirit to make them afraid, but to assure them of the wonderful relationship which they now have to themselves: “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Romans 8, verses 15 and 16). We know we belong to him. The Spirit’s presence and communion gives great joy and assurance.

And then, fourthly, the fourth privilege is *liberty*. God delivers from slavery to Satan and to the law. God took his ancient people out of the bondage that they were in, in the land of Egypt, to be his sons and his daughters. As God’s children, we are set free. Paul asserts, “The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8, verse 21).

A fifth privilege is *access to the Father*. As his children, you can come boldly into your Father’s presence, to his throne. You are his family; not mere beggars or even servants. He will answer your prayers, and he will give you, through his Spirit, all good things: “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11, verse 13).

The sixth privilege is *angels protecting you*. God sends out his angels to watch over you, and to care for you: “They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone” (Psalm 91, verse 12). They surround God’s children and save them from many dangers. “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Hebrews 1, verse 14). The angels are ministering spirits to God’s children.

The seventh privilege is *fatherly chastisement*. The Lord will not spoil his children, nor allow us to destroy ourselves, but corrects our backslidings. It is a token of his love, this chastisement. Like rebellious children, we don’t always appreciate chastisement as something good. But we must remember, “Him the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons” (Hebrews 12, verses 6 to 8).

An eighth privilege is *fatherly direction*. God overrules in our lives. He has a good plan for us. Even when we are motivated by sinful desires, and we make mistakes, he sorts things out for us: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8, verse 28). In every decision of life, we must seek his guidance.

A ninth privilege is that *we belong to a great family*. We now have many brothers and sisters, and we love them. “We know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death” (1 John 3, verse 14). God is our Father: “Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven” (Matthew 23, verse 9).

And a tenth privilege is that *we will go to heaven*. We are heirs and joint heirs with Christ. We have a title to the house of our Father: “Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe



also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14, verses 1 and 2). Many others will find the door to heaven shut, but God brings his children home to be with himself, where, "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3, verse 2).

*What then are the Responsibilities of Those Who Are Adopted?*

First, we're to *love the Father*. Remember, he is our Father, and what a father he is! He first love us, and he won us by his love. It should be easy for us to love him, who did and does so much for us.

Secondly, *be obedient*. Because he is our Father, we are to be obedient to his commandments, showing our love by our submissiveness and performing the duties of his children.

The third responsibility is to *speak the Father's language*. We should learn God's ways and seek to please him, and relate well to him. In this sense, we will speak the language of heaven.

A fourth responsibility: *be like our Father*. Children are often recognized by how like they are to their father. "Be holy as he is holy" (1 Peter 1, verses 14 to 16). "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5, verse 48).

A fifth responsibility is to *carry his name in the world*. Be a bright witness to God your Father, and take care not to bring shame upon him. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3, verse 3). Remember, you're God's children and live as children of God.

A sixth responsibility is to *love one another*. We, as Christians, all belong to the same family. We are brothers and sisters. Let us be sure to take care one for another, and let nothing come between us. It grieves our Father when we quarrel.

A seventh duty is, *do not envy the wicked*. We sometimes see the wicked prospering and envy their success, as the psalmist did in Psalm 73. But remember, their heaven is in this world, and is soon over. Even here they miss out on not having the Father. We are the privileged ones. "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6, verse 6).

An eighth responsibility is *be at peace*. Trust the Father and relax. He is working out all things for the best for you. You are precious to God. You are engraved upon the psalms of his hands (Isaiah 49, verse 16). "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isaiah 49, verse 15). Cast your burdens on the Father who will look after you.

A ninth responsibility is *the necessity for self-examination*. Make sure that you are one of his children. "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1, verse 10). Do not just take it for granted that you are one of God's children. It's too important a matter to leave to chance. If you are not a child of God, turn and seek the Lord now. Today is the day of salvation.

And a tenth responsibility is *praise God for adoption*. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God"—how amazing! (1 John 3, verse 1). Behold it, and consider it, and revel in it. Enjoy the privileges of his children, and praise God for them. It is all of grace, and to God must go the glory. Amen.



We come now to our ninth lecture; and this lecture is on *Sanctification*. What is sanctification? Basically, it is the process by which sinners are made perfect saints. It is the transforming of the wicked into holy men and women. The aim of sanctification is that we should be like Christ, perfectly holy. The essence of holiness is obedience. The word “holy” means “separate.” It is a twofold separation: separation from sin, and separated unto God. Christ said, “Be ye therefore perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5, verse 28). Your duty is to “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2, verses 12 and 13). We are to put energy into it and labor at it. Yet, it is not all of man, not even is it part of man and part of God. Rather, it is you working, and God enabling you to work. As you strive to be holy, he gives you the desire the ability, and all the glory, at the end of the day, must be given to God.

*Definitive Sanctification*—what is it? Regeneration takes place in a moment. The dead sinner is resurrected and brought to spiritual life. Justification and adoption also take place in a moment; they are acts of God. Sanctification has two aspects. There is the act, by which God transforms us in an instant, which is known as *definitive sanctification*—it changes a sinner into a saint, and yet, that saint is far from perfect. Then, there is the ongoing work of making the born-again saint perfectly holy, which is known as *progressive sanctification*. It follows definitive sanctification, and it takes place during the rest of the Christian’s life. Definitive sanctification involves a radical break with sin. You die, and are buried, and rise with Christ—died to the old life, buried to it, rising to a new life. The old man, or the unconverted man, is crucified (Romans 6, verses 4 to 6). The world is crucified to you and you to the world (Galatians 6, verse 14). You are dead with Christ to the past. The old master, Satan, is dead. We must not play down the immensity of this change. Be what you are: “Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin” (Romans 6, verses 11 to 13). Be as those dead to sin. No longer be Satan’s slaves. Be God’s servants. You are freed from sin, and therefore, you should walk in this liberty. (Romans, 6, verse 22).

*Perfectionism*—taking the biblical language for definitive sanctification, some have argued

for perfectionism. This is the idea that it is possible for some to achieve perfect holiness in this life. Such special people claim in every way to be dead to sin and free from sin. They usually speak of an experience subsequent to conversion—the second blessing or the baptism of the Holy Spirit, following of which they stop all sin, or at least all conscious in. But in Romans 6, Paul is not speaking of a very few special Christians, but he’s speaking of the universal experience of all Christians. All who have been converted have died to sin. John says, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin” (1 John 3, verse 9). All who are born again do not commit sin, yet earlier in the epistle, he writes, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1, verse 8). Those who claim to have stopped sinning deceive themselves and call God a liar; his word is not in them (1 John 1, verse 10). Every Christian is a sinner, but there has been a huge change at conversion, and those born again will not sin unto death and unto damnation. The Christian life is one of constant warfare against sin (Romans 7, verses 14 to 25). Sometimes, conscious of our sin and failure, we cry out in disappointment, “O wretched man that I am,” but at the end of the day, we will have the victory: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (verse 25).

Looking now at *Progressive Sanctification*. Following the act of definitive sanctification, progressive sanctification continues for the rest of our lives. It involves, negatively, dying to sin, turning from sin, and positively, growing in grace. “If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Romans 8, verse 13). There is an ongoing work, a pilgrim’s progress. *The Westminster Shorter Catechism* refers to this progressive sanctification as follows: “What is sanctification?”—“Sanctification is the work of God’s free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness”—that’s the answer to Question #35.

What then is *the Pattern*? There’s a pattern set before us that we are to aim at, and it’s, first, *the Ethical Holiness of God*: “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1, verse 16). Then secondly, there’s *the Example of Christ*: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2, verse 5). We are to “be conformed to the image of his Son” (Romans 8, verse 29). And then, thirdly, there is *the Preceptive Will of God*, his commandments, which we are required to keep. Holiness is essentially obedience to God’s revealed will.

What is *the Goal of Sanctification*? In sanctification, we aim at perfect conformity to the pattern that God has given us. But we strive for something more than mere obedience. We must also struggle to know God: “That I might know him” (Philippians 3, verse 10). That was a great longing of the Apostle Paul. Knowing God is not simply an intellectual thing, rather, it is a relationship. We are to strive personally for an intimate knowledge of God. A holy person is one who has warm piety, love and devotion to God. It involves delighting in God, and enjoying him. We must be content with nothing less than experiencing God, as we walk with him, listen to him, and talk to him.

Then, considering *Legalism*. Today, if you stress the duty of keeping the commandments, many will accuse you of legalism. But legalism is adhering to the law as a way of salvation, rather than to the gospel. It is trusting in your own keeping of the commandments and your own goodness rather than the cross of Christ. Legalism is seeking salvation in the covenant of works, rather than in the covenant of grace. It is putting faith in your own efforts to save yourself, rather than receiving the gift which God freely offers. Legalism is trusting in your own abilities, rather than union with Christ as the dynamic power, the energy to expel sin from your heart and life. Legalism is failing to look to the enabling of the Spirit. Although we are saved by faith in Christ alone, yet God’s law

summarized in the Ten Commandments, has a vital part to play in our salvation.

*The Law's Three Uses:* First, it is the God-given code for life in society. Secondly, it's a schoolmaster to convict you of your sin and force you out of every refuge till you come to Christ. And thirdly, it is the rule of life for the Christian. "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14, verse 15). Our love for God is expressed in our keeping of the commandments. Paul, who so forcefully stated, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6, verse 14), also declared that he is "under the law to Christ" (1 Corinthians 9, verse 21). John, the Apostle of love, puts it quite plainly: "For this is the love of God, that ye keep his commandments" (1 John 5, verse 3). Sadly, the heresy of Antinomianism, which rejects the law as a rule of life for the Christian, is very common. Rabbi John Duncan, called it "the mother of all heresies," the one from which all other heresies come.

*The Means of Sanctification*—sanctification is the work of God's Holy Spirit. He is called "holy" because his work is to make men holy, not because he is holier than the other persons of the Trinity. It is through the Spirit that we are to "mortify the deeds of the body" (Romans 8, verse 13). Yet, the Spirit uses means in our sanctification, and the means are as follows.

First, the primary means is *the reading and especially the preaching of the Word*, and also the reading of good books which explain the Word: "Sanctify them through thy truth" (John 17, verse 17).

Secondly, there's *the sacraments*, a very important means of grace. Being baptized, separate yourselves from your sins and seek to live according to your high profession. Remember, you are baptized, united to Christ, and therefore, carry the name of Christ to the world. In the Lord's Supper, feed on Christ and remember the Lord's death till he come.

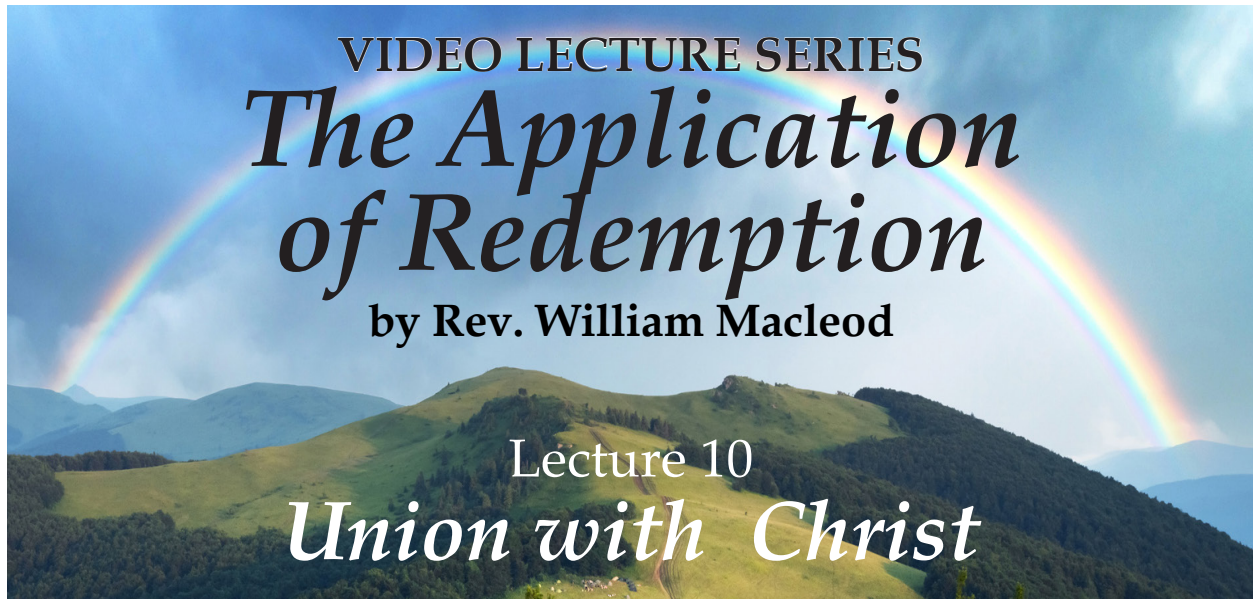
Thirdly, *prayer* is vital. Pray against temptations; pray for forgiveness; pray for grace to persevere and grow. Meet God in prayer; there, you will get to know him.

Fourthly, *the fellowship of the saints* stirs us up and encourages us. It is dangerous to be isolated. "Provoke one another to love and good works" (Hebrews 10, verse 24). In the old illustration, a lump of burning coal will soon cool down and blacken, if it is removed from amongst the other coals on the fire and placed alone on the hearth. In the same way, Christians grow cold without fellowship.

Fifthly, *providence* has a role. God chastises and corrects us for our sins and backslidings. We must learn from this. Also, the trials of life, the troubles, the difficulties, the illnesses purify faith and strengthen it, and weaken our attachment to this world, and make us long for heaven.

So then, *in Conclusion*—children need to see holy parents who walk with God. What an impact that has upon them. Nothing is more effective in bringing them up for the Lord than the example of happy godliness. Congregations need holy pastors and elders. This reinforces the message, and provides an example to the flock. Paul could say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11, verse 1). The world needs to see a holy church walking with God. Then they will no longer be justified in saying that the church is full of hypocrites. Then Christians will truly be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Amen.





Our lecture today is on *Union with Christ*. Nothing is more important than our union with Christ. It underlies the whole application of redemption. Every blessing that we receive comes to us because of our union with Christ; and outside of Christ, there is no blessing, but only God's wrath and curse. Why then leave the treatment of such an important doctrine to this point in our lectures? The reason is that, having dealt with most of the other aspects of the application of redemption, we can now consider them in relation to the Bible's teaching about union with Christ. So we look then at *the Relation to Other Teachings*.

First of all, *the Eternal Plan*. Our union with Christ began before time. We were chosen in Christ and loved in Christ before the foundations of the world were laid. And the purpose of this choosing in him was that we might be holy. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord and Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Ephesians 1, verses 3 and 4).

*Chosen in Him*. The Father predestinated us to be adopted as his children, by and in Christ. There never was a time when God did not view us in Christ.

Thinking of *the Covenants*. When God created man, he created all mankind in Adam, in the covenant of works. Adam was our covenant head. That is why, when Adam sinned, we all sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression. In a similar way, all God's elect are related to Christ in the covenant of redemption. As Adam was our covenant head in the covenant of works, so Christ is our head in the covenant of redemption. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15, verse 22). With Adam, we all sinned and died. In Christ, we are perfectly obedient to God, keeping all his commandments in union with Christ. And more, when Christ suffered the penalty for sin, we suffered, and we died with Christ. We were buried with him, and rose with him. We were united to Christ as he atoned for us on the cross. "He hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1, verses 6 and 7). Christ's righteousness is ours, and his satisfaction rendered to the justice of God when he was punished for our sins is ours too.

Now thinking of *Effectual Calling*. The work of salvation starts, in our experience, with

effectual calling. There may be convictions and stirrings before that time, but it's only when we are effectually called that we rise from being dead in sins. And effectual calling is being "called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1, verse 9). Prior to conversion, we "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2, verses 12 and 13). We have been called into union with Christ by faith, because we were elected in Christ, and suffered on the cross in Christ, our covenant head.

Now thinking of *Regeneration*. Immediately following effectual calling in the application of redemption comes regeneration, or the new birth. What happens in regeneration is that the Spirit of Christ enters into us and raises us from being spiritually dead. From now on, Christ lives in us by the Spirit. We are crucified to the old life and risen with Christ to a new life. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (that's from Romans 6, and verses 4 to 6). We are united to Christ by being planted in Christ, and by Christ dwelling in us by his Spirit. Paul wrote, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Romans 8, verses 9 and 10). So, regeneration unites us to Christ.

Now thinking of *Faith*. The first act of the regenerate soul is to respond to God's call in faith and repentance. Repentance is turning from sin, and faith is turning to Christ, and receiving Christ as he is freely offered to us in the gospel. To the church at Laodicea, Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3, verse 20). Faith welcomes Christ into the heart. Christ, by his Spirit, comes to dwell in the heart, and we become "the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you" (1 Corinthians 6, verse 19). Faith comes to Christ and rests on him. Jesus said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6, verse 37). And having come, by faith we receive and embrace the Lord Jesus. By faith, we are united to Christ, who is in us and we in him: "And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (1 John 3, and verse 24).

Next, *Justification*. Faith is the instrument of our justification: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5, verse 1). By faith, we lay hold on Christ for our justification and are united to him: "Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification" (Romans 4, verse 25). In justifying us, God views us as perfectly obedient in Christ. He pronounces us pardoned and accepted because we are united to Christ. He sees us as having paid the penalty for our sins, in Christ, and now risen with him.

Next, *Adoption*. Paul states that our adoption follows our union with Christ by faith: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ" (Galatians 3, verse 26). All who believe are assured of their adoption, because "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4, verse 6). We are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8, verse 17; and so, united to Christ in the family of God. The Spirit dwelling in us assures us of our adoption by witnessing with our spirit that we are the children of God.

Now, thinking of *Sanctification* in connection with our Union with Christ. Our union with Christ

plays a major role in our sanctification, as an incentive, and as an encouragement. As Christians united to Christ, we are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6, verses 14 to 18). Being one body with Christ, we are not to have fellowship with devils (1 Corinthians 10, verses 16 to 21). Surely it would be outrageous to take the members of Christ's body, the parts of Christ, and join them to a harlot. Remember, your bodies are the members of Christ, parts of his body (1 Corinthians 6, verses 15 to 20). The Spirit of Christ is in you, and he is sanctifying you, fighting against the flesh (Galatians 5, verse 17), and enabling you to die to sin (Romans 8, verse 13). You are to "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2, verses 12 and 13).

Then, thinking of *Perseverance*. Union with Christ assures us of our perseverance. Where Christ begins the good work in us, he will complete it (Philippians 1, verse 6). Christ dwells in us by his Spirit, and will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13, verse 5). Paul assures the Romans, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8, verses 38 and 39). Christ has come to live in us permanently, and assures us that he is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12, verse 2).

And then, *Glorification*. The Christian's death is described as falling asleep in Jesus (1 Thessalonians 4, verse 14). *The Westminster Shorter Catechism* makes the amazing statement: "Their bodies,"—the bodies of Christians—"being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection"—the answer to Question #37. Man is made up of a body and a soul, and that whole person is united to Christ in regeneration, and shall remain so forever. So Christ returns at the end of the world to raise our bodies, to unite our bodies and souls together once more, and so, we will forever be with the Lord in eternal union. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him... For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4, verses 14, and 16 to 18). Our Lord says, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne" (Revelation 3, verse 21).

Now, I'd like us to think of *Pictures of Our Union with Christ*. The Scriptures present us with several pictures of our union with Christ.

The church is described as a building, with Christ as the foundation, and we are built on him: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3, verse 11).

Christ is the rock: "Upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16, verse 18).

We are living stones, but he is the cornerstone: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2, verses 4 to 5).

In another picture, Christ is presented as the vine, and we the branches: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15, verse 5).

Paul speaks of God's church as being like a body with Christ as the head, and we the members, or individual parts, of that body. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the

members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many...Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular” (1 Corinthians 12, verses 12 to 14, and verse 27).

When dealing with the subject of marriage, the Apostle goes on to present Christ as the husband and the church as the spouse: “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Ephesians 5, verses 31 and 32).

Even the Trinity, the closest union there is, the closest union possible, has been used by our Savior to describe the relationship of union with himself. He prayed, in the High Priestly Prayer, “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17, verse 21).

Now, thinking of *the Implications of Union with Christ*. Taking the pictures given above, and using the insights which we receive from them, there are certain implications of our union with Christ which it is helpful to express.

First, take the picture of a building on its foundation. This implies our duty to abide on him, on Christ—resting, trusting, loving, and building upon him as our foundation. Some build on sand and perish, but we, by grace, are building on Christ, the rock.

Second, think of the cornerstone. United to one another in the building, and to the cornerstone, we find strength. Our eye must be upon him constantly in prayer and faith. Without the cornerstone, the building falls apart. But cemented to him and to one another, we stand.

Thirdly, the illustration of the vine emphasizes that we bear fruit only through union with Christ. Outside of him, we are dry, shrivel up, and die. We are barren, cast away, and burnt in the fire. But abiding in Christ, we bear much fruit.

Fourthly, the vine also makes clear that we should seek closer and closer union with Christ, for it is only through this relationship that we can draw the nourishment we need from Christ. The sap and the Spirit which we need comes from him, and that’s what makes us healthy and fruitful.

Fifthly, the vine exists in the branches. It is seen there. We, as the branches, are to be witnessing constantly to him, to Christ. Christ is the light of the world, but then he says that “Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5, verse 14). We are to shine and transmit his light to the world. He is seen in us.

Sixthly, the figure of the body and the head emphasizes that we must constantly look to him for directions. The head guides the body in everything, and so, Christ should be our Lord and Master. The body can do nothing without the head.

Seventhly, without the head, the body has no living existence. Outside of Christ, we are headless, like a beheaded corpse and have no life or blessings, but rather, death and hell.

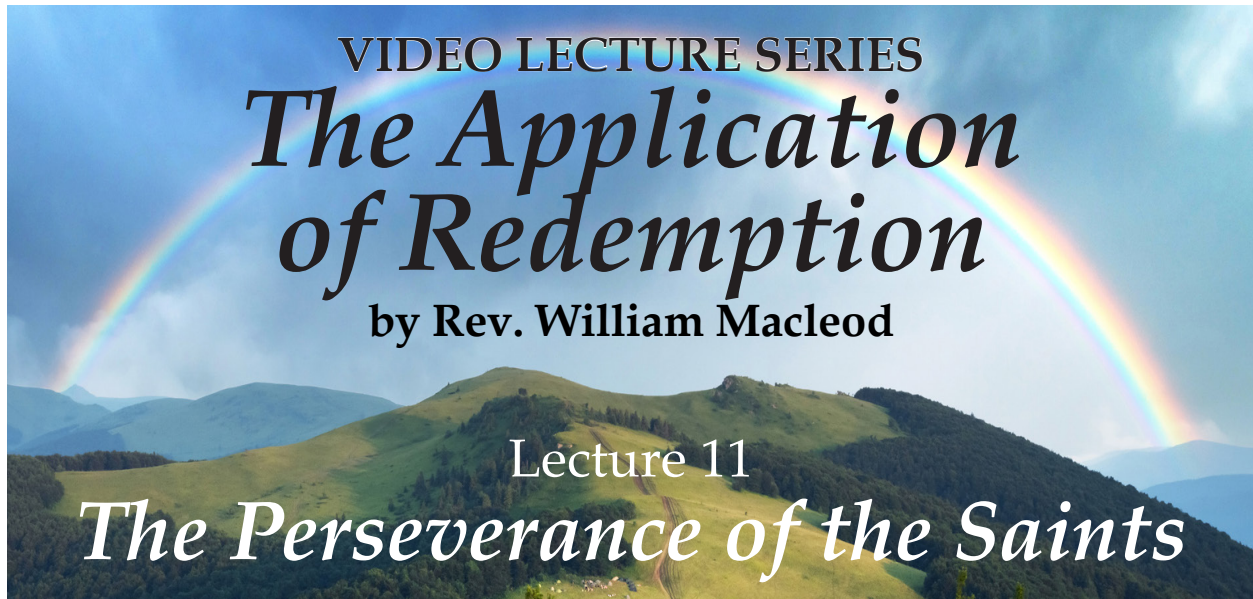
Eighthly, union with Christ in the body means also union with one another. The hand needs the foot. We need one another. Let us love our fellow Christians. They are part of us. If one member is in pain, the whole body is in pain. And if one member is honored, all are honored.

Ninthly, marriage is the closest bond of love known in this life. It is wonderful that the love of Christ should be described in these terms. The Lord loved his bride and gave himself for her. Keep yourself morally pure for him. You are joined to the Savior; how then, can you join yourself to a harlot? Remember, idolatry is adultery from him, from Christ.

Tenthly, the Trinity is a deep, mysterious union. Be intimately united to the Lord. Let his peace, and joy, and love flood your heart. Be filled with the Spirit. Walk in the Spirit, and quench not the



Spirit. Christ in us, the hope of glory, and so we are assured of heaven. Glory be to God, he came to live in us and has transformed us, will finish the work, and will never leave us. We will share with him in his throne, in his house, and we will be made perfectly blessed to the full enjoying of God to all eternity. Amen.



We come now to lecture 11. This lecture is on *The Perseverance of the Saints*. What do we mean by the perseverance of the saints? Peter explains what it is, when he states that the Christian is “Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation” (1 Peter chapter 1, verse 5). His epistle is addressed “to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (verse 1). These people were strangers on the earth, but they are the citizens of heaven, where an inheritance is awaiting them. Every true Christian is kept unto salvation, and so, preserved for that inheritance. They shall all enjoy heaven. Although they have many enemies on earth, yet they are safe and secure. They are feeble, and cannot keep themselves, yet God keeps them with his Almighty power. But this does not mean that they have no responsibility for themselves. They are kept through faith. The duty of the Christian is to believe, depend, follow, and pray, and it is only as he does this that he is kept, and all who trust in Christ will be kept. As gold emerges purified from the fire, so God will have his own precious ones prepared for glory. The dross is burnt up, but the child of God is kept safe and purified.

Now, thinking of the teaching of *Arminianism*. Arminian theologians object that the Scripture warn of the possibility of Christians falling away. Some verses seem to teach that this is a real danger. For example, Jesus’ words, where he says, “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:...If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered” (John 15, verses 2 and 6). Jesus also said, “He that endureth unto the end shall be saved” (Matthew 10, verse 22). Paul, the great Apostle, speaks of his fear of being a castaway: “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Corinthians 9, verse 27). These verses should be taken as warnings and challenges. Every true Christian will bear good fruit, and so, will not be cast away. Let us make sure that we are real Christians, and that we are bearing fruit. If we abide in Christ, we will be fruitful. Let us, then, abide in him. Those who endure unto the end will be saved, so, let us make sure that we endure. Paul warns of the danger of being a castaway. To make sure that he is not lost, he lives a disciplined life, laboring for the Master. None, who believe in Jesus as Savior, and follow him as Lord, will perish.

Thinking now, of *Theological Reasons for Believing in the Perseverance of the Saints*.

First, there's *God's electing love*, which has been set upon his people from before time began. This love of God is like God himself—it's infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, and therefore, God's people will always be loved.

Secondly, *Predestination is clearly taught in Scripture*. Predestination and the perseverance of the saints are intimately linked. God has foreordained all that comes to pass. He planned that the elect will be his holy children, and nothing will upset God's plan.

Third, *Christ has died for his people*. He has paid the price for all their sins, including their backslidings. His merit ensures heaven for his flock, whom he has purchased with his own blood. Limited atonement, that is, particular substitutionary atonement, and the perseverance of the saints go together. If Christ has suffered in our place, it would be unjust of God to require us also to suffer in hell.

Fourthly, *the Abiding Presence of the Spirit in the life of the believer guarantees heaven*. When a man is regenerated, the Holy Spirit comes to reside in his heart, and is there to unite him to Christ, to sanctify, and to glorify him. And the Spirit will not fail in this work.

Fifthly, *the Seed of God is within every Child of God*, and so he cannot sin unto death. He has been born of God.

Sixthly, *the Moment a Sinner Believes in Jesus, he is Justified*. That means that all his sins, past, present, and future, are forgiven. If all future sins are forgiven, how can his backslidings take him to hell?

Seventhly, *the Nature of the Covenant of Grace, as distinct from the Covenant of Works*, is such that the Christian will be preserved. Salvation is all of grace; it is not of works: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Romans 9, verse 16).

Next, looking at *the Prooftexts for Believing in the Perseverance of the Saints*. There are many verses of Scripture which would claim that the believer will be preserved. Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6, verse 44). All who come to Christ will be raised up on the last day. In another place, he said, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10, verses 28 and 29). The Father is Almighty, and none, not even we ourselves, can pluck ourselves out of his hand. Paul wrote, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1, verse 6). When God begins working in a soul, he will complete it. He never leaves a job half done. Romans 8 contains a wonderful unbreakable chain, from foreknowledge for love, to glory: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate...whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Romans 8, verses 29 and 30).

Now, thinking of *Antinomianism*. A contrasting view from that of the Arminians is that of Antinomianism. Heresies often emerge simply by people laying too much stress upon a certain truth to the exclusion of other truths. This is the case here, where the saying "Once saved, always saved" is stretched to imply that you can relax and do as you please, and you will still get to heaven. The Apostle asks, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6, verses 1 and 2). Away with such a wicked thought! Anyone who would argue in that way, but especially anyone who would live in that way is simply demonstrating that they were never born again.

Perseverance is a better work than “security” or “preservation.” It has the idea in it of the effort involved in keeping on going, as well as the concept of being kept. We will only be kept as we persevere. But by grace, true Christians will always persevere. Not every professing Christian is saved. Many think they are true Christians when they are not. It is possible to be accepted by the church as a Christian, and yet, not to be one. In the parable of the sower, the rocky-ground hearer could initially appear to grow quickly, and yet have no fruit. Some people receive the Word with joy, yet have no root, and so eventually wither away in times of trial. Judas Iscariot was like that. Hebrews chapter 6, verses 4 to 6 speaks of those who were once enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come, and yet are fallen away. Sadly, they cannot be renewed to repentance. They tasted many good things, but went no further than that. They were not truly converted. Similarly, Peter gives a description of professing Christians who eventually, like the dogs, return to their own vomit (2 Peter 2, verse 22). This proves that their dog nature had not been changed, though they dressed as children. Are you a true Christian? Satan can give you experiences similar to conversion in order to inoculate you against conversion. Do not just take it for granted that you are saved. Repent and believe afresh each day, that Christ is your Savior, and follow him at your Lord, then you will never perish.

*True Christians Can Fall.* Tempted by Satan and the world, and weakened by indwelling corruption, true Christians can backslide horribly. If they neglect the means of grace—the reading of the Word, prayer, preaching, the sacraments, and Christian fellowship—they are in great danger. But they will only fall for a time. David, Peter, and Mark backslid like this. Simon, in Acts chapter 8, is different. Though he appeared to begin well, and was baptized, he was really still “in the gall of bitterness and the bondage of iniquity” (Acts 8, verses 21 and 22). When a Christian backslides, he displeases the Father and grieves the Holy Spirit. He loses the graces and comforts which God gives his people. His heart is hardened, and his conscience is wounded. He hurts his fellow Christians, and his scandal becomes an offense to others in keeping them from Christ. Open sin and backsliding brings chastisement and temporary judgments for those involved. And these chastisements and judgments can be exceedingly painful. Yet, the Father will restore the true Christian. A Christian can rejoice, can say to the enemy, “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me” (Micah 7, verse 8). God assures Israel, “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him” (Hosea 14, verse 4). God Cares for His Children. “My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth” (Hebrews 12, verses 5 and 6).

*Is Assurance Possible?* Arminians, if consistent, must believe that assurance of salvation is not possible in this life, since, at any stage, a person can fall away and be lost. Yet, most of the Lord’s servants in Scripture had assurance. We are encouraged to “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Hebrews 10, verse 22). Paul confidently speaks of “a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day” (2 Timothy 4, verse 8). Jesus describes the way to find out what sort of trees we are, whether good or bad: “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7, verse 20). Such fruits as love to God, love to the brethren, delight in God’s law, longsuffering in persecutions and afflictions, humility, brokenheartedness over sin, and trust in the merits of Christ alone will not grow on the evil, natural tree. God also gives to his people the witness of the Holy Spirit with their spirit, to assure them that they are God’s children. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Romans 8, verse

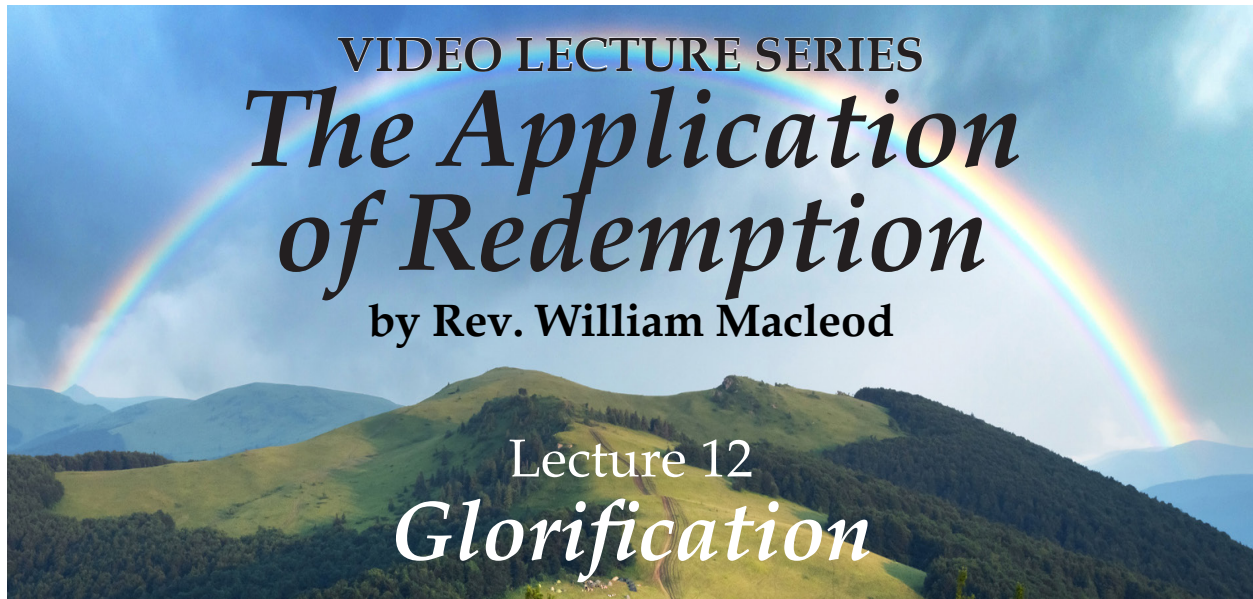


16).

But at the same time, Peter warns us that we must give diligence to make our calling and election sure, and be certain that ye are saved (2 Peter 1, verse 10). You do that by “giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1, verses 5 to 8). He then assures believers, “If ye do these things, ye shall never fall” (verse 10). Our duty is to persevere. We have a duty to persevere. We must keep on going: “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience”—with perseverance—“the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12, verses 1 and 2). Forgetting what is behind, we must press on toward the mark (Philippians 3, verse 13 and 14). As the Calvinistic Rev. Kenneth MacRae (1883–1964), my own minister in childhood, wrote in his final letter to the congregation before his death, “Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Revelation 3, verse 11).

So, *the Promise*. There are glorious promises in Scripture for God’s people, such as, “They shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels” (Malachi 3, verse 17). And another, really, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13, verse 5). Paul can write, “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8, verses 38 and 39).

So, *How to do the Duty and Promise Fit Together?* On Paul’s journey to Rome as a prisoner, after prolonged prayer and fasting, he assured those on the ship with him that every life would be saved. They were in the midst of a terrible storm, yet they were going to be saved. He was sure of this, since the angel of God had revealed it to him. Yet, he warned, when the sailors were trying to escape out of the ship in a small boat, he warned, “Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved” (Acts 27, verse 31). God had ordained that all would be saved, but he has also ordained the means to that end. Rejoice as you fight the good fight. You shall be more than conquerors (Romans 8, verse 37). But you must “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2, verse 12 and 13). Isaiah gives a wonderful promise: “The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee” (Isaiah 54, verse 10). Amen.



We come now to lecture 12, our last lecture, which deals with the subject of *Glorification*. God the Father elected us in eternity, and then, 2,000 years ago, God the Son died for us on the cross. Time passed, we were conceived in the womb, brought into the world. And then, one day, we were effectually called by God the Holy Spirit. We were regenerated, given the gift of faith and repentance, justified, adopted, the process of sanctification began, days passed, and we made progress in the Christian pilgrimage; growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and so, ripening for glory. Attacked by Satan, weakened by lusts, distracted by the world, we still kept going, persevering, through the Spirit, he united us to Christ. When our race is finished, we will be called into God's presence to receive our crown of glory. When the ears of corn are fully ripe, the sickle of death cuts us down, and the angels joyfully carry us into God's storehouses.

So, thinking, first, about *Death*. Unless Christ comes first, nothing is more sure than death. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9, verse 27). "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6, verse 23). We are all sinners, and therefore, we all die. Yet, for the Christian, death is simply falling asleep in Jesus (1 Thessalonians 4, verse 14). How easily we fall asleep, and how difficult it is generally to tell the exact moment when sleep took over. Nothing could be more gentle. Death, for the child of God, is like the kiss of our Savior who has come to take us home.

*The soul leaves the body*. Paul wrote encouragingly of the pull which he felt: "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Philippians 1, verses 23 and 24). Later, he said, "The time of my departure is at hand" (2 Timothy 4, verse 6). He viewed his end simply as a time to cast off the last ropes and sail off to the desired haven. For him, there was nothing threatening in death. Stephen was violently killed, yet said calmly, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7, verse 59). He was looking into heaven and seeing Christ. Our Lord is normally described seated at God's right hand, but Stephen sees him standing to receive him. When the beggar Lazarus died, the angels were ministering around his miserable deathbed and carried his soul to Abraham's bosom (Luke

16, verse 22). Christ has taken the sting out of death, and the victory from the grave (1 Corinthians 15, verses 55 to 57).

*The Westminster Shorter Catechism* gives a helpful summary of what happens when we die: “The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection”—that’s the answer to Question #37. Their soul goes immediately to heaven. There is no further suffering. There is no purgatory, neither is there soul sleep. To the thief dying on the cross beside Jesus, he said, “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise”—today (Luke 23, verse 43). The process of sanctification is instantaneously completed. The soul is made perfectly happy, yet, part of the person is missing. We were created body and soul, fell as body and soul, and so, glorification will be that of the body and of the soul—the whole person. Because we are united to Christ, our bodies, being vital parts of us, are united to him, as well as our souls. Therefore, until the resurrection, our body will rest in the grave, but will remain united to Christ.

Looking then at *the Resurrection*. The resurrection will take place at the end of the world. When will that be? No one knows but God. It is foolish to try and calculate. Some people find strange codes in the Bible by which they attempt to predict the future. There are many false prophets and false interpretations of prophecy. Jesus warned us against such, and made plain that even he, as a man, did not know when the second coming would be. God alone knows that date (Matthew 24, verses 24 and 36). Christ says, “Behold, I come quickly” (Revelation 22, verse 7). That is enough for us, and we should live in the light of the coming Savior and the brevity of time.

There are some indications that the world could be drawing to a close. For example, the gospel has now been preached to all nations, and the love of many has waxed cold (Matthew 24, verses 12 and 14). The second coming, or Parousia, will be as sudden and unexpected as the lightning shining from one end of heaven to the other. Christ will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the sounding of the trumpet of God (1 Thessalonians 4, verse 16). All shall immediately hear him and see him. There will be nothing secret nor mysterious about Christ’s second coming. It’s not something that will be broadcast on the news or media. Rather, the whole world will stop. The wicked will call on the mountains to fall on them and hide them, but the mountains shall depart (Revelation 6, verse 16). The graves shall open, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. It will be no advantage to be alive at that time (1 Thessalonians 4, verse 15). All the souls of the saints in glory will return with Christ and enter into their bodies.

The nature of the resurrection body is not clear. As a seed that is sown in the ground, and then grows as a plant, so the natural body will be sown in the grave, and it will be raised a spiritual body. Though spiritual, yet it will have flesh and bones. It will be a body in that it will be capable of being touched and will have dimensions and a certain mass. The best picture we have of the resurrection body is Christ’s body. After rising from the dead, he could eat, pass through closed doors, and could move quickly from one place to another. Perhaps further changes accompanied his ascension; we do not know.

The souls of the wicked shall also return from hell, enter their bodies, which will be raised to life again, and all shall be gathered before his judgment seat. To the unregenerate, the unconverted, he will say, “Depart from me, ye cursed.” But to the righteous, he will say, “Come ye blessed” (Matthew 25, verses 34 and 41). What will he say to you? On that day, God’s children will be able to say, “O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Corinthians 15, verse 55). Christ has conquered death, and he has conquered the grave for us.

*Eternal Blessedness*. We are the citizens of heaven while we live here (Philippians 3, verse

20). We are going home to be where our heart and our life is (Colossians 3, verses 1 to 3); and also, where our treasure is (Matthew 6, verse 21); and our inheritance (1 Peter 1, verse 4). We look forward to being with the Father, with the whole family of God, with our loved ones who died in Jesus, and with the angels, but especially with our spouse, the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

*Heaven* is described as a house of many mansions, implying that there is plenty of room there (John 14, verse 2). It is called a city, the new Jerusalem, because it will be crowded with joyful worshipers. There was great excitement going up to the old Jerusalem for the feast. The name “paradise” or “garden” indicates that it will be like a new Eden—a place of beauty, fruitfulness, and restful tranquility. This is the new heavens and the new earth, from which all evil has been expelled, and the curse is gone. The fallen earth at present groans and travails in labor pains, suffering from floods, earthquakes, volcanoes, disease, and violence. Nature is red in tooth and claw. It is waiting for the day when God’s children will be revealed, and when it will be itself regenerated, recreated (Romans 8, verses 19 to 23).

*Heaven is the marriage supper of the Lamb.* There will be no more sickness, weakness, sweat and tiredness. There will no night there (Revelation 22, verse 5), and no need for sleep. There will be no fear and no enemies. “The gates of the city shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there” (Revelation 21, verse 25). How wonderful to think that there will be no temptation, no Satan, and no sin. “His servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads” (Revelation 22, verses 3 and 4). Never again will we be troubled with pride, anger, hypocrisy, and lust. Perfect obedience is the longing of the true Christian, and will be a heaven in itself. Sin, which promises to make us happy, always makes us miserable. His name, Christ’s name, shall be on our foreheads, indicating likeness to Christ, as well as that we belong to him and he to us. God will himself wipe away all tears from our eyes; tears, so characteristic of this life, all wiped away. We will sit with Christ in his throne and judge angels. We will be made perfectly blessed to the full enjoying of God for all eternity. “We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John chapter 3, verse 2). This is glorification, and we shall cast our crowns at his feet. We will spend eternity singing the praises of “him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Revelation 1, verse 5). We will enjoy everlasting life, drinking from the river of the water of life, and eating the fruit of the tree of life (Revelation 22, verses 1 and 2). Fulness of joy and pleasures evermore will be our experience (Psalm 16, verse 11)—how wonderful! Will you be there?

To Him be all the glory! Salvation is all of grace. Praise be to God! Amen.