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Grace CL305

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Review of 9-12

#9. Adopted. *The peculiar position of one who is adopted is an important feature of the riches of divine grace. Its unique place in the following passage indicates its major import: "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 having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:4-5).*

According to human custom, adoption is a means whereby an outsider may become a member of a family. It is a legal way to create father and son relationship as a substitute for father and son reality.

At the moment of regeneration, the believer, being born of God and therefore the legitimate offspring of God, is advanced in relationship and responsibility to the position of an adult son. All childhood and adolescent years, which are normal in human experience, are excluded in spiritual sonship and the newly born believer is at once in possession of freedom from tutors and governors—who symbolize the law principle—and is responsible to live the full orbéd spiritual life of an adult son in the Father's household.

In human experience legitimate birth and adoption never combine in the same person. There is no occasion for a father to adopt his own child. In the realm of divine adoption, every child born of God is adopted at the moment he is born. He is placed before God as a mature, responsible son. Thus adoption becomes one of the important divine undertakings in the salvation of men and is a position of great importance.

#10. Acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. *As a position before God, none could be more elevated or consummating than that a believer should be "made accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6) and "acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5).*

In respect to this union with Christ and that which it provides, wonderful declarations are made:

a. MADE RIGHTEOUS. *Reference here is neither to any merit nor good works on the part of the individual believer, nor has it the slightest reference to the unquestioned truth that God is Himself a righteous Being.*

Two major realities which constitute a Christian are: imparted eternal life (John 20:31) and imputed righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21).

Of the two great salvation books in the New Testament, it may be said of John's Gospel that it stresses the gift of eternal life, and it may be said of the Epistle to the Romans that it stresses imputed righteousness.

b. SANCTIFIED POSITIONALLY. *That there is a positional sanctification which is secured by union with Christ which has too often been overlooked, and, because of this neglect, theories of a supposed sinless*

perfection in daily life have been inferred from those Scriptures which assert the truth that the believer has been “perfected for ever” through his sanctification.

Likewise, the sanctification of an inanimate object, such as the gold of the temple or the gift on the altar (Matt. 23:17, 19), indicates that a moral change in the thing sanctified is not demanded.

Thus, in the case of the sanctification of a person, the moral change in that person’s life may not be the result of sanctification; but no person or thing is sanctified without being set apart or classified thereby.

Christ has been “made unto us ... sanctification” (1 Cor. 1:30), and the Corinthians—even when being corrected for evil practices—are assured that they were not only “washed” and “justified,” but that they were “sanctified” (1 Cor. 6:11).

As with **forgiveness**, as with **made nigh**, so with **sanctification** there is our union, our standing in Christ in all of these truths. And ‘in time’ there is our state before God while in these bodies. We are forgiven all sins in our standing, yet when we sin ‘in time’ we are to confess and He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We are ‘made nigh’ in Eph. 2:13, that is our standing in Christ, and yet ‘in time’ we are to draw nigh to God, James 4:8.

So we also in Christ are sanctified 1 Cor. 6:11 in the name or in the merit of Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God. Yet ‘in time’ we are to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts and purge ourselves from vessels of dishonor thus sanctifying ourselves and then ready for the master’s use in His house. 2 Tim. 2:21

c. “PERFECTED FOREVER”. This consummating phrase appears in Hebrews 10:14 and applies equally to every believer. It, too, relates to the Christian’s standing and position in Christ. Such a union with Christ secures the perfection of the Son of God for the child of God.

..... in the phrase:

d. “MADE ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED”. The student would do well to observe the force of the word made as it appears in a considerable number of passages, where it indicates that the thing accomplished is not wrought by the believer for himself, but is the work of God for him. If he is made something which he was not before, it is evidently the work of another in his behalf. In this instance, the believer is said to be made accepted. He is accepted on the part of God who, because of His infinite holiness, could accept no one less perfect than Himself. All of this is provided for on the basis of the truth that the believer is made accepted “in the beloved” (Eph. 1:6). Without the slightest strain upon His holiness, God accepts those who are in union with His Son; and this glorious fact, that the one who is saved is accepted, constitutes a measureless feature of divine grace.

..... in the phrase:

e. “MADE MEET OR QUALIFIED”. Here, again, the word made with all its significance appears, but with respect to that requirement which must be demanded of all who would appear in the presence of God in heaven. The text in which this assuring phrase occurs is Colossians 1:12, and it asserts that the believer is, even now, fitted for that celestial glory: “giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet or qualified to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

#11. Justified. No present position in which the believer is placed is more exalted and consummating than that of being justified by God. By justification the saved one is lifted far above the position of one who depends on divine generosity and magnanimity, to the estate of one whom God has declared justified forever,

which estate the holy justice of God is as much committed to defend as ever that holy justice was before committed to condemn.

Theological definitions respecting justification are more traditional than Biblical. Only inattention to Scripture can account for the confusion of justification with divine forgiveness of sin. It is true that each of these is an act of God in response to saving faith, that none are forgiven who are not justified, and that none are justified who are not forgiven; but in no particular do these great divine undertakings coalesce.

Likewise, though they are translated from the same Greek root, the terms righteousness (imputed) and justification represent wholly different conceptions. The believer is constituted righteous by virtue of his position in Christ, but he is justified by a declaratory decree of God.

For a picture of this different usage of the same original word in Hebrew see Ez. 16:52

#12. *Made Nigh.* *The saved one, according to Ephesians 2:13, is said to be “made nigh.” This text states: “But now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” As seen before, the word made is significant in that it assigns the whole undertaking to another than the one who receives the blessing.*

Divinely wrought positions are often accompanied by a corresponding Christian experience. This is true of the subject in hand. While, as has been stated, the position which is described as nigh to God is itself complete and final, the one who is thus nigh is exhorted to “draw nigh” to God. It is written: “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded” (James 4:8); “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:22).

These exhortations belong wholly in the realm of Christian experience, in which realm there may be a consciousness, more or less real, of personal fellowship with the Father and the Son (1 John 1:3).

#13. *Delivered from the Power of Darkness.* *As declared in Colossians 1:13, this special position, as described here in this passage, may be taken as representative of all the Scripture bearing on the Christian’s deliverance from the power of Satan and his evil spirits. Previously, certain passages have been cited relative to the power of Satan over the unsaved. One passage, 2 Corinthians 4:3–4, reveals the blinding power of Satan over the unregenerate person’s mind respecting the gospel; Ephesians 2:1–2 declares the whole company of the lost—designated “children of disobedience” (disobedient in the headship of disobedient Adam)—to be energized by Satan; 1 John 5:19 states that the *cosmos* the world system, in contrast to believers who are of God, “lieth in” the wicked one. The passage under consideration—Colossians 1:13— reads: “who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”*

It will be observed that all these passages, to which reference is made, assert that the unsaved are under the power of Satan and that the believer is delivered from that power, though he must continue to wage a warfare against these powers of darkness; and the Apostle assures the Christian of the victory made possible by an attitude of faith in the Lord (Eph. 6:10–12). The same Apostle, when relating his own divine commission, mentions one certain result of his ministry, namely, that the unsaved were to be turned “from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God” (Acts 26:18).

To be liberated thus is a great reality and constitutes one of the major positions into which the believer is brought through divine grace.

Class Discussion: What are the practical applications of this work of Grace?

#14. Translated into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love. As Dean Alford points out in exposition of Colossians 1:13 (*N.T. for English Readers*, new ed., *in loc.*), the translation *into the kingdom* is “strictly local”; that is, it is *now* that it is accomplished, when saving faith is exercised, and the entrance is into the present form of the Kingdom of God and of Christ.

Two other passages shed light upon this great change which is experienced by all who pass from the lost estate to the saved estate: “that you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory” (1 Thess. 2:12); “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:11).

In Colossians 1:13, the term “translated” evidently refers to the removal from the sphere of Satan’s dominion to that of Christ. The kingdom is that of God, which may be considered also the kingdom of the Son of His love. Entrance into the kingdom of God is by the new birth (John 3:5). Such a position is far more than merely to be delivered from darkness, however much the advantage of that may be; it is to be inducted into and established in the kingdom of God’s dear Son.

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#15. On the Rock, Christ Jesus. In the consideration of divine grace as exercised in behalf of the lost, it is essential, as in other matters of similar import, to distinguish between the foundation and the superstructure. In the parable of the two houses—one built upon the rock and one built upon the sand (Matt. 7:24–27)—Christ made no reference to the superstructure, but rather emphasized the importance of the foundation. For who is the Rock see 1Cor. 10: 4

The smallest edifice built on the rock will endure the tests which try foundations, and only because the rock endures. Over against this, the Apostle writes (1 Cor. 3:9–15) of the superstructure which is built upon the rock, which superstructure is to be tested by fire.

Reference is thus made, not to salvation, but to the works in which the Christian engages. It is not character building, but Christian service. There are, again, two general classes of superstructure being built upon Christ the Rock, and these are likened to gold, silver, and precious stones, on the one hand, and to wood, hay, and stubble, on the other hand (see 1Cor. 3:11-15). As gold and silver are refined by fire, and wood, hay, and stubble are consumed by fire, so the judgment of Christian service is likened to fire in which the gold and silver will stand the test and receive a reward, while that which corresponds to wood, hay, and stubble will suffer loss. It is declared, however, that the believer who suffers loss in respect to his reward for service will himself be saved, though passing through that fire which destroys his unworthy service.

The important truth to be recognized at this point is that, while the unsaved build upon the sand, all Christians are standing and building on the Rock, Christ Jesus. They are thus secure with respect to salvation through the merit of Christ, apart from their own worthiness or faithfulness. While this figure used by Christ does not lend itself to a literal development in every particular, it is clearly stated by this object lesson that Christ is the Foundation on which the Christian stands and on which he builds. To be taken off the sand foundation and to be placed on the enduring Rock which is Christ, constitutes one of the richest treasures of divine grace.

Follow the Rock: Ex. 17:6 to Ex. 33:21 to Nu. 20:8-11 to Deut. 32:3-4 to 1Cor. 10:4

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#16. A Gift from God the Father to Christ. No moment in the history of the saints could be more laden with reality than that time when, as a consummation of His redemptive mission—foreseen from all eternity and itself the determining factor in the character of all ages to come—the Lord Jesus Christ reviewed in prayer to the Father that which He had achieved by His advent into this *cosmos*, world.

He fully intended for His own who are in this world to hear what He said in that incomparable prayer (John 17:13). Devout minds will ponder eagerly every word spoken concerning themselves under such august and solemn circumstances. What, indeed, would be the designation by which believers will be identified by the Son? What appellation is proper in such converse? What cognomen (*special personal name*) answers the highest ideal and conception in the mind of Deity with respect to Christians? Assuredly, the superlative title, whatever it is, would be employed by the Son when He presents formally His own, and petitions the Father in their behalf.

Seven times in this prayer by one form or another and quite exclusively His saved ones are referred to as “***those whom you have given Me***”. Nothing but ignorance of the great transaction which is intimated in this title will explain the inattention of Christians to this descriptive name.

When it is considered, it is seen that in the background are two important doctrines, namely, that all creatures belong inherently to their Creator and, hence, that in sovereign election He has determined in past ages a company designed to be a peculiar treasure for His Son; but the title itself tells its own story of surpassing interest and importance, which is, that the Father has given each believer to the Son.

This is not the only instance in which the Father gives a company of people to the Son. In Psalm 2:6–9 it is predicted that, at His second advent and when He is seated upon the Davidic throne, the then rebellious and raging nations will be given by Jehovah to the Messiah. The imagination will not have gone far astray if it pictures a situation in eternity past when the Father presents individual believers separately to the Son—each representing a particular import and value not approached by another. Like a chest of jewels, collected one by one and wholly diverse, these love gifts appear before the eyes of the Son of God. Should one be missing, He, the Savior, would be rendered inexpressibly poor. Immeasurable and unknowable riches of grace are latent in that superlative cognomen, ***those whom you have given Me***.

Dr. C. I. Scofield’s comment on this truth is clear and forceful: “Seven times Jesus speaks of believers as given to Him by the Father (vs. 2, 6 [twice], 9, 11, 12, 24). Jesus Christ is God’s love-gift to the world (John 3:16), and believers are the Father’s love-gift to Jesus Christ. It is Christ who commits the believer to the Father for safe-keeping, so that the believer’s security rests upon the Father’s faithfulness to His Son Jesus Christ” (*Scofield Reference Bible*).

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