

“Preaching Grace”

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“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” (Eph. 2:8-10).

It comes as a surprise to us that central gospel doctrines are at risk today among the most theologically conservative of Protestants. It is a development that many of us failed to anticipate. We understand that we have historic differences with various denominations over the meaning of grace. However, sharp disagreements have emerged even within the most orthodox branches of Reformed Protestantism. Distressing numbers of preachers are truncating the biblical teaching on grace, preaching not “grace *alone*,” but “grace *only*,” that is, nothing but grace. On the other hand we have the “New Perspective” and “Federal Vision” ministries that redefine “faith” as “faithfulness,” thereby turning faith into a work and compromising our doctrine of justification. The “hyper-grace” ministries seem allergic to notions of law, good works, and the gospel’s sterner stuff. The “neonomians” objectify the sacraments, reduce salvation to covenant membership, and assign to works a positive role in justification. Both are motivated by valid concerns, the former by fears of legalism, the latter by rampant carnality in the church. Yet both are distorting the doctrines of grace. What then is the historic understanding of grace that is being compromised by some and silenced by others?

Divine favor

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Eph. 2:8, 7)

“Grace is God’s undeserved favor, His unwarranted love,” says J. I. Packer¹ It is also, Packer explains, “God acting in spontaneous goodness to save sinners.”² Packer’s definition is that of Reformed Protestantism. Grace is both divine *favor* and divine *action*, saving sinners *sola gratia, sola fide, solo Christo*, by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Our doctrine of salvation gives no place to law or good works. We contribute nothing to our salvation. God sovereignly regenerates us, causing us to be born again (Jn. 1:13; 3:5-8ff). He predestines and effectually calls us (Rom. 8:30). He then works faith in us and unites us to Christ. “By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God.” (Eph. 2:8, 9). Even our faith is given to us, “lest any man should boast.” Large chunks of the New Testament are devoted to this message of *sola gratia, sola fide, solo Christo* apart from good works, such as Gal. 1:1-5:12, Eph. 1-3, Phil. 3, and especially Romans 1-11. No one has understood the graciousness of the gospel with greater clarity than have Reformed Protestants, their doctrine of predestination undergirding the doctrines of grace. Election is unconditional, says the Apostle Paul, “otherwise grace is no longer grace.” (Rom. 11:6). We are saved because of nothing seen or foreseen in us. “By His doing we are in Christ Jesus,” the Apostle Paul tells the proud Corinthians, “who has become to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification and

¹ J. I. Packer, *God’s Words: Studies of Key Bible Themes*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1981), 96.

² *Ibid.*, 97.

redemption.” (1 Cor. 1:30). We contribute nothing, yet we are given what Luther called an “alien righteousness,” a righteousness not our own, Christ’s righteousness. Negatively, our sins are forgiven. Positively, the righteousness of Christ is credited to our account, all apart from obedience, morality, religion, or anything else. God “justifies the ungodly” (Rom. 4:5). We are, said Luther, *simul ius et peccator*, “at once righteous and sinner.” We are saved, safe, secure, possessing a salvation that we did not earn, and cannot lose. “Behold what manner of love,” says the Apostle John (1 Jn. 3:1). The peace, the joy, the contentment of the believer that flows out of God’s free grace is beautifully summarized by C.S. Lewis:

Like an accepted lover, he feels that he has done nothing, and never could have done anything, to deserve such happiness. . . .All the initiative has been on God’s side; all has been free, unbounded grace. And all will continue to be free, unbounded grace. His own puny and ridiculous efforts would be as helpless to retain the joy as they would have been to achieve it in the first place. Fortunately, they need not. Bliss is not for sale, cannot be earned. “Works” have no merit. . . .He is not saved because he does works of love; he does works of love because he is saved. . . .From this buoyant humility, this farewell to the self with all its good resolutions, anxiety, scruples, and motive-scratching, all the Protestant doctrines originally sprang.³

Problem

So far so good. However, there is a potential problem. In one sense the Counter-Reformation was the first to identify it. The Reformation’s doctrines of grace would encourage carnality and laxity, they charged. If one need not do good works in order to be saved, then grace becomes a license for sin, as even the Apostle warns that in the wrong hands it might. (Gal. 5:13; cf. Jude 4). I first became distressed about this potential problem as a spiritually earnest undergraduate. I met too many professing believers who identified themselves as Christians, who recalled when they walked the aisle, signed a card, or prayed a prayer, but who lived like the world, who showed no signs of authentic Christian faith. What were we to make of this very visible and disturbing phenomenon? I also began to notice the many warning passages addressed to members of the early churches whose habitual or characteristic behavior was evil. Repeatedly they were warned that their claims were spurious: knowledge of God without obedience to the commandments or love for the brethren (1 Jn. 2:3-6; 3:14ff; 4:7ff); faith without works (Jas. 2:14-26); knowledge of the truth yet persistent willful sin (Heb. 10:26), and so on. I believed in eternal security. The Bible clearly teaches it. Yet what were we to make of persistent “Christian” carnality and these warnings. How do they harmonize with Christian assurance?

Divine Power

The Reformed faith provided me with the answers that rescued me from the errors of legalism on the one hand, and antinomianism on the other, from Phariseeism on the right, and “cheap grace” and “easy-believism” on the left. Grace, broadly understood, is not only the favor of God, but also a powerful dynamic. Grace transforms. “God’s regenerating grace is dynamic,” says Philip Hughes. “It not only saves, but also transforms and revitalizes those whose lives were previously

³ C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 33.

broken and meaningless.”⁴ By God’s grace we are born again. By God’s grace we are given new hearts. By God’s grace we become new creations (Jn. 3:1ff; 2 Cor. 5:17). The Apostle Paul attributes the energy by which he serves Christ to the grace of God. “By the grace of God I am what I am.” He works more diligently than others. Yet he attributes his ability to do so not to himself “but the grace of God with me.” (1 Cor. 15:10-11). “My grace is sufficient for you,” the Lord tells the Apostle Paul in connection with his thorn in his flesh. Grace provides the power with which, the strength with which to deal with his affliction, “for My power is perfected in weakness.” (2 Cor. 2:9). Note the parallel. Grace is power. This dynamic provides the foundation for three principles of grace that guard us from carnality. By the gracious operations of God’s Holy Spirit, we are enabled more and more to die to sin and live to righteousness (1 Pt. 2:24).

The first of these grace principles is the *inseparable link between justification and sanctification*. They are “inseparably joined,” says the *Westminster Larger Catechism* (Question #77). The same grace that justifies also sanctifies. The gospel provides a “double cure” for sin, as Augustus Toplady put it in his beloved, “Rock of Ages,” saving us from its “guilt and power.” Consequently, the gospel promises both forgiveness *and* cleansing (1 Jn 1:7, 9; Heb. 9:14). Christ purifies His people and makes them holy (Ti. 2:14, 1 Pt. 1:14; 2:9). All those who are justified are sanctified. This is true without exception. Yet sanctification and justification differ, and they must not be confused. Justification is a *declaration*, sanctification is a *process*. Justification takes place at the *moment* of faith, sanctification continues for a *lifetime*. Faith is *passive* in justification, it is *active* in sanctification. In justification God *imputes* righteousness, in sanctification He *infuses* righteousness. In justification God *pardons* sin, in sanctification He *subdues* it (see *Larger Catechism* #77).

Still, *sanctification unfailingly follows justification*. The *ordo salutis* is a “golden chain” of unbroken links that encompass predestination, effectual call, justification, sanctification (“conformed to the image of His Son”) perseverance and ultimately glorification. (Rom. 8:28-30). It is as certain that the elect will be sanctified as that they will be justified and glorified.

God’s grace instructs us not only that we are forgiven, not only that we are accepted, not only that we are safe and secure, but it also “instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age” (Ti. 2:11, 12). Grace teaches us that. Not law. Grace has everything to do with freedom, not merely from guilt, but from sin’s controlling power. The message of grace cannot be reduced to words of forgiveness and acceptance. Grace instructs and enables us to put sin to death, to mortify the flesh (Rom. 8:12, 13).

The certainty of sanctification is a great encouragement to believers. Our spiritual development may be slow. The fruit of the Spirit may grow slowly. However, we will be sanctified. It cannot but happen. God promises it. Christ ensures it. Grace enables it. It is a special grace of God that delivers us from bondage and enables us to live holy lives.

⁴ P.E. Hughes, “Grace,” in Walter Elwell (ed.) *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Baker House, 1984), 480.

At the same time, the absence of sanctifying graces raises doubts about the authenticity of one's conversion. Thomas Watson (1620-1686), a representative English Puritan divine, expresses the historic Reformed view when he says, "Sanctification is progressive, if it does not grow, it is because it does not live."⁵ The Reformed have always insisted on the role of "signs of grace" (note the title: signs of *grace*) in confirming the authenticity of justifying grace. This is why the warnings of Scripture can be so sharp while still teaching eternal security. Those who are justified by faith alone in Christ alone cannot be separated from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:35-39). However, those who lack sanctifying faith cannot be said to have justifying faith. "Without sanctification there is no evidencing of justification," Watson insists.⁶ Citing 1 Cor. 6:11, he says, "Justification and sanctification go together." Further, "There is no going to heaven without sanctification," he claims, pointing to the warning of Heb. 12:14: "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Again, "without sanctification we can show no sign of our election. 2 Thess. 2:13. Election is the cause of our salvation, sanctification is our evidence. Sanctification is the ear-mark of Christ's elect sheep."⁷

Consequently, the unsanctified must be unjustified. Those who are characterized by habitual patterns of sin are warned. The Apostle John puts it bluntly: "No one who is born of God practices sin" (1 Jn. 3:9). The translators rightly added the word "practices," reflecting the meaning of the Greek present tense. What it literally says is "does not sin." "No one who is born of God sins," he says again. (1 Jn. 5:18). Sanctification is inseparably linked to justification. For this we thank God, praising Him for a salvation that delivers us not only from the "penalty" of sin, but also its "power." It may help at this point to cite the writings of another patron saint of the Reformed faith, J.C. Ryle. His book, *Holiness*, is widely regarded as a classic of Reformed piety. Ryle maintains,

"Where there is no sanctification of life, there is no real faith in Christ. . . .where there is no sanctification in life there is no new birth. . . .where there is no holy living there is no Holy Ghost. . . .where there is not, at least, some appearance of sanctification, we may be quite certain there is no election."⁸

The second of the grace principles is *the unseparable link between faith and good works*.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." (Eph. 2:10).

Salvation is "not according to works" (Eph. 2:9). We are not saved by good works. Yet we are God's "workmanship," united to Christ by faith, "created in Christ Jesus for good works." In justifying a person, Calvin said, good works are not worth "one single straw." Indeed, it is "the one *who does not work*, but *believes* in Him who justifies the ungodly" that is "reckoned as righteous," (Rom. 4:5). Yet good works do flow from true faith. Good works are the fruit of

⁵ Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, (1692; London: The Banner of Truth Trust; 1965), 242.

⁶ Ibid 244.

⁷ Ibid, 244-45

⁸ J. C. Ryle, *Holiness* (London: James Clarke and Co., Ltd., 1956), 17-19.

faith, hence the connection between Ephesians 2:9 and 2:10. The *Westminster Confession of Faith* calls good works, “the fruits and evidence of a true and lively faith” (XVI.2). This is a variation on the previous theme: true conversion results in the fruit of a transformed life. John the Baptist urged his listeners to, “bring forth fruits in keeping with your repentance.” (Luke 3:8). Where there is true faith and its companion repentance, they will be evidenced by the fruit that develops, in truth received, sin forsaken, and righteousness embraced. The Apostle Paul required in his preaching that those who “repent and turn to God” should “perform deeds appropriate to repentance.” (Acts 26:20). Jesus said, “You will know them by their fruits.” (Mt. 7:20). The genuine believer may be distinguished from the counterfeit by the fruit in his or her life. What fruit? The good fruit of holiness, love, obedience, virtue, and the “fruit of the Spirit,” over against the rotten fruit of immorality, idolatry, drunkenness, and other forms of fleshly indulgence. (Gal. 5:19-23).

The connection between faith and works is stated even more directly in the Epistle of James. “Faith, without (the fruit of) works is dead,” that is no faith at all (Jas. 2:17). Why? Because true faith inevitably produces good works. Always. Invariably. True faith can be demonstrated by good works: “I will show you my faith *by my works*.” (Jas. 2:18). A “faith” that does not result in good works is not genuine faith, it is “useless.” (Jas. 2:20). We may even say that good works are *necessary*, but not *meritorious*. The dynamic of grace, the power of grace insures the transformation of life that results in good works. Even Luther, who once stigmatized James as “an epistle of straw,” later wrote, “Faith is a living, restless thing. It cannot be inoperative. We are not saved by works; but if there be no works, there must be something amiss with faith.”⁹ Again, we are both encouraged and challenged: encouraged because good works will flow from true faith. The gospel of grace insures it. Yet we are challenged because the absence of good works calls into question the authenticity of our faith. “In sanctification our own works are of vast importance,” says J.C. Ryle, and “God bids us fight, and watch and pray, and strive, and take pains, and labor.”¹⁰

The third grace principle is that of the *inseparable link between faith and obedience to the moral law of God*. We are not saved by obedience to God’s law. The law requires perfect obedience if we are to be saved. God doesn’t grade on a curve. “Cursed is he who does not abide in *all* things written in the law to perform them,” warns the Apostle Paul. (Gal. 3:10). James similarly warns that “whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles *in one point*, he has become guilty of all.” (Jas. 2:10). The commandments show us our sin and our need of a Redeemer. The law of God leads us to Christ as a schoolmaster would his student (Gal. 3:24). What then? Having brought us to the Savior, Christ then leads us back to His law that we might know our duty. Jesus said, “If you love me you will keep my commandments.” (Jn. 14:15). The Apostle Paul says that the Spirit (who wrote the law and indwells us) leads us into conformity with the law of God. Christ atoned for our sin, says the Apostle, condemning sin in the flesh,

⁹ Cited in Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York: Abington-Cokesbury Press, 1950), 331.

¹⁰ Ryle, *Holiness*, 30.

“so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

Those who are led by the Holy Spirit fulfill the requirements of God’s commandments. Love, Christian love, properly understood, fulfills the law (Rom. 13:8). Reformed Protestants have had a clearer grasp than others of the ongoing role of the law of God in the life of the believer. We have taught the “third use” of the law as a rule of life for the Christian. The law continues to lead, to guide, to correct, to challenge, to warn, to encourage, and to instruct. None of us will ever obey it *perfectly*. We will always need to confess our sins. Yet by the work of the Holy Spirit we will obey it *increasingly*. Our view of God’s law is not that of the Pharisee or of the Judaizer, not that of the libertine or the antinomian, but that of the Psalmist: “O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day.” (Ps. 119:97).

The Counter-Reformation charged the Reformers with encouraging carnality, as we noted. If we are saved by grace alone and not by works, they argued, then the motivation for obedience collapses and the serious pursuit of holiness gives way to carnality. Reformed Protestants have flatly denied this. Grateful love is the believer’s highest motivation for obedience. The idea that believers will obey only if the threat of hell is held over their heads sadly discounts this higher motive.

Beyond this, the accusation of carnality fails to understand the dynamic of grace. Believers are transformed. Their nature is changed. “All things become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17). We are buried with Christ and raised up “in newness of life” or “to live a new life” (NIV). As new people we have new loves, new passions, new desires, new goals, new priorities. Sin no longer masters us. (Rom. 6:1-14). No longer do we see God’s commandments as “burdensome” (1 Jn. 5:3). Ernest Kevan wrote of *The Grace of Law* a few years back, his title saying it all.¹¹ The law itself is a mercy of God. It is “a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.” It makes us wiser than our teachers. It is more to be desired than gold and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. (Ps. 119:105, 97; 19:7-14). These positive uses of God’s law “are not contrary to the grace of the gospel,” says the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, “but do sweetly comply with it.” (XIX. 7) By God’s grace justification is always followed by sanctification. By God’s grace, faith is always followed by good works. By God’s grace law continues as the rule of life in the experience of the believer. “The same Holy Ghost who convinces the believer of sin by the law, and leads him to Christ for justification,” says J. C. Ryle, “Will always lead him to a spiritual use of the law, as a friendly guide, in the pursuit of sanctification.”¹²

Assurance

One of the great gifts of the Reformation is the doctrine of assurance. We can know that we have eternal life, that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, that none shall pluck us from God’s hands (1 Jn. 5:13, Rom. 8:35-39; Jn. 10:27-29). We can know the joy, the peace, the calm of learning that our sins are forgiven, that we’ve been reconciled to God, that

¹¹ Ernest Kevan, *The Grace of Law* (London: Carey Kingsgate, 1964).

¹² Ryle, *Holiness*, 27

eternity is settled. Yet, Reformed Protestants prudently have distinguished between *assurance* and *presumption*.

Those who say, “Lord, Lord” are sadly self-deceived (Mt. 7:24). Those who claim to have “faith” but no works (Jas. 2:17) or who claim to know God but don’t obey the commandments (1 Jn. 2:3-5), or who claim to know God, but don’t love (1 Jn. 4:7), or who are characterized by the deeds of the flesh rather than the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:19-23) are guilty of “false hopes and carnal presumptions,” according to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. (XVIII.I). This is why the same New Testament that teaches eternal security can also extend strong warnings to members of the visible church, to professing believers, who lack the evidence of sanctification, who lack the fruit of good works, and who are not living a life characterized by obedience to God’s commandments. (e.g. 1 Cor. 5,6; 2 Cor. 11:1-15; Gal. 5:13-6:14; Phil. 13, Col. 2:16-23; Jas. 2; 1-3 John; Jude; Rev. 1-3). The Reformed faith never has wavered on this point. If ever there were a Reformed theologian who championed the freeness of grace it was the Scot Thomas Boston (1676-1732). Through the leader of the “Marrow Men” against “neonomians” of the Church of Scotland Boston insisted, “Where there is no changed heart and life, there is no grace,” citing 2 Cor. 5:17. Citing Heb. 12:14 (“Without holiness no man shall see the Lord”) he maintained, “they that live and die unsanctified, shall never see heaven.”¹³

The New Testament issues stern warnings, as must we, that these warnings might be the means of leading the under-converted, false professors and hypocrites to true repentance and faith in Christ. True assurance (as opposed to presumption) flows from sanctification. It is the fruit of sanctification and does not exist properly without it. If Thomas Watson may again serve as our representative of the Reformed tradition, we find an insistence on this connection. “Sanctification is the seed, assurance is the flower which grows out of it,” he maintains. “Assurance is a consequence of sanctification.”¹⁴

At the same time, all those in whom *some* sign of sanctification is present, however dim; in whom *some* evidence of growing fruit is visible, however slight; and in whom *some* progress in obedience is discernible, however slow, can be assured of their salvation. Jesus does not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax (Mt. 12:20). Assurance may not come as easily among Reformed Protestants, as with some people. Yet by God’s grace it does come, and does so in a way that does not give false hope to the self-deceived, even as it gives sound hope to the truly converted.

We have presented historic Reformed Protestant views of grace, faith, justification, sanctification, good works, law, and assurance, and we stand by them. We do the message of grace no favors when we limit it to justification and the *guilt* of sin and fail to see its appreciation to sanctification and the *power* of sin. We do the message of grace no favors when we limit it to *faith* and fail to see its power to transform sinners and produce *good works* in them. We do the message of grace no favors when we sever it from law and fail to see the Christian’s ongoing

¹³ Thomas Boston, “An Illustration of the Doctrines of the Christian Religion,” in *The Composite Works of the late Rev. Thomas Boston*, Vol. 1 (1853, reprint, Wheaton: Richard Owen Roberts, Publishers; 1980), 661.

¹⁴ Watson, *Body of Divinity*, 250.

need for guidance from God's commands or fail to see the vitality of a life of obedience enjoyed by those led by the Holy Spirit. In other words, we do the message of grace no favors when we understand that Christ frees us from the *condemnation of the law*, but fail to see that He then enables *conformity to the law*. Our age and every age needs the whole gospel of the whole Christ, the Savior *and* sanctifier of sinners.

Addendum:

Select paragraphs from The Westminster Confession of Faith

Chapter III - Of God's Eternal Decree.

vi. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power, through faith, unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

Chapter XI - Of Justification.

ii. Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.

Chapter XIII - Of Sanctification.

i. They, who are once effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Chapter XIV - Of Saving Faith.

ii. By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God Himself speaking therein; and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

Chapter XV - Of Repentance Unto Life.

iii. Although repentance be not to be rested in, as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof, which is the act of God's free grace in Christ; yet it is of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it.

Chapter XVI - Of Good Works.

ii. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith: and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the Gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto; that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end eternal life.

Chapter XVII - Of The Perseverance of the Saints.

i. They, whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

Chapter XVIII - Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation.

i. Although hypocrites and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favor of God, and estate of salvation; which hope of theirs shall perish; yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavoring to walk in all good conscience before Him, may, in this life, be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God; which hope shall never make them ashamed.

Chapter XIX - Of the Law of God.

vi. Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of His obedience. It is likewise of use to regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin; and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works: so as a man's doing good, and refraining from evil because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law, and not under grace.

vii. Neither are the formentioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully, which the will of God revealed in the law requireth to be done.

Chapter XX - Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience.

iii. They who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, do practice any sin, or cherish any lust, do thereby destroy the end of Christian liberty; which is, that, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life.

Larger Catechism Question 77: Wherein do justification and sanctification differ?

Answer: Although sanctification be inseparably joined with justification, yet they differ, in that God in justification imputes the righteousness of Christ; in sanctification his Spirit infuses grace, and enables to the exercise thereof; in the former, sin is pardoned; in the other, it is subdued: the one does equally free all believers from the revenging wrath of God, and that perfectly in this life, that they never fall into condemnation; the other is neither equal in all, nor in this life perfect in any, but growing up to perfection.