

## Becoming Heavenly Minded 8

### I. Review

#### A. The Formative principle of experimental Calvinism

1. **The glory of the Lord God Almighty!** So, the fundamental question posed in Calvinism is not “How can I be saved?”, but “How shall God be glorified?” Let me again quote Warfield:

#### B. The foundational experience of experimental Calvinism

1. It brought to Isaiah first a deep felt awareness of his sinfulness - “woe to me... I am ruined...”!!
2. It brought Isaiah a new sense of Israel’s corruption (v5). When a man has had a sight of the **majesty of God**, he sees not only his own sinfulness, but the sinful state of his own generation - of his own .
3. It brought to Isaiah a deep, personal awareness of **God’s forgiving grace** Nowhere is this more highlighted in our Lord’s encounter with the “sinful woman” in Luke 7:47.
  - a) Is it not true, however, that many of us who call ourselves “Reformed” have lost the “sense” of the sheer wonder of this amazing love? Before sovereign grace is a truth to defend, it is a captivating truth to glory in.
4. It brought Isaiah to yield his life unreservedly to God! “Here am I...”-This is experimental Calvinism!
  - a) The story of William Borden of Yale-“No reserve! No retreat! No regrets!” It is a life of unconditional surrender to the saving lordship of Jesus Christ.

#### C. The Fundamental features of experimental Calvinism

1. The Experiential Calvinist honours **God’s unconditional sovereignty**. How? By consistent prayer. Nothing more honours God’s unconditional sovereignty. Here is Warfield’s description of Calvinism: “**Christianity on its knees**” cf Acts 4:24ff.; Acts 2:42.
  - a) The Experimental Calvinist lives before God’s face - this alone cultivates heart-humility and acknowledges our indebtedness to **God’s unconditional sovereignty**, cf 1 Corinthians 4:7.

## Main Lesson [Features Continued]

- I. The Experimental Calvinist shapes all of live by the revelation of **God's unimpeachable holiness** - "Be holy, for I am holy!" cf Ephesians 1:4; Romans 8:29; Titus 2:14.
  - A. The Experimental Calvinist exercises trustful dependence on God to fulfil all **He has purposed**. It is so easy to take the "lower ground," to resort to unbiblical expediencies in God's work.
    1. This can be seen in 'worship' and 'evangelism', sometimes more influenced by the principles of a fallen culture than by the precepts of God's living Word.
    2. Amidst the struggles with "world, flesh and devil," with a Christian evangelical culture that is drowning itself in shallowness and trivia, the experimental Calvinist draws the sweetest comfort and encouragement from knowing that the unconditional sovereign Lord is fulfilling perfectly - if mysteriously - his perfect, holy, eternal purposes.
      - a) [How would you meditate to arrive at this confidence?]
    3. There must inevitably be a "reserved agnosticism", cf Romans 11:33ff. Here we encounter experimental Calvinism - the doctrines of grace lead him to adoring wonder and worship. Theology's first resting place is doxology!
  - B. The Experimental Calvinist loves God's Law - all-round obedience! Experimental Calvinism seeks to give God's holy Law the place in the believer's and church's life that God's holy Word gives it.
    1. Commenting on the phrase in Galatians 4:5, "to redeem those under law," Calvin says, "We must here observe, the exemption from the law which Christ has procured for us does not imply that we no longer owe any obedience to the doctrine of the law, and may do whatever we please: for the law is the everlasting rule of a good and holy life."
    2. Again, commenting on Galatians 3:25, "Now that faith has come we are no longer under the supervision of the law," Calvin writes: "Is the law so abolished that we have nothing to do with it? I answer, the law, so far as it is a rule of life, a bridle to keep us in the fear of the Lord, a spur to correct the sluggishness of our flesh... is as much in force as ever, and remains untouched."
    3. Calvin is simply echoing the teaching of Christ: John 14:15 cf 1 John 2:3-6.
      - a) How does the law fit with heavenly mindedness?

C. More than ever, we need today to affirm and reaffirm the abiding relation of **God's holy law to God's holy people.**

1. Faced today with incipient antinomianism, the duties and responsibilities of the moral law are seen by many to have no place in the believer's life.
  - a) **Great Argument:** "If the law might be disannulled as to new creatures, then why doth the Spirit of God write it with such legible characters in their hearts? ... Now that which the Spirit engraves upon the heart, would Christ come to deface and abolish?" (Thomas Manton on Psalm 119, 1.5).
  - b) John Coquhoun in his "A Treatise on the Law and the Gospel," endorses Calvin's teaching and expresses what was the mainstream Puritan understanding of the Christian's relationship to the Law of God. "All who are united to Christ, and justified for his righteousness imputed to them, are dead to the law as a covenant; not that they may be without law to God, but that they may be under the law to Christ; not that they may continue in disobedience, but that they may be inclined and enabled to perform sincere obedience in time, and perfect obedience through eternity, to the law as a rule of life. One design of their being delivered from the obligations of the law in its Federal form is that they may be brought under the eternal obligation of it as a rule of duty in the hand of the adorable Mediator" (p. 260).

D. The great question in Calvinism is: "How shall God be glorified?" Listen to Warfield:

1. "It is the **contemplation of God** and zeal for his honour which in it draws out the emotions and absorbs endeavour; and the end of human as of all other existence, of salvation as of all other attainments, is to the glory of the Lord of all... It begins, it centers, it ends with the vision of **God in His glory**: and it sets itself before all things to render to **God His rights in every sphere of life**" (358). - Romans 11:36-12:1-2.