

## C. Excursus I: Does Colossians 2:6 Teach Sanctification by Faith Alone?

A variety of writers and speakers on sanctification<sup>1</sup> have affirmed that Colossians 2:6<sup>2</sup> establishes that the Christian serves the Lord in the same manner as that in which he

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<sup>1</sup> For example, William Boardman wrote:

[K]eep always the very attitude taken when Jesus was accepted. ‘As ye have *received* the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk ye in him—rooted and grounded in him,’ saith the apostle. . . . Even so abide. So walk ye in him. . . . The command is . . . even as ye *received* Christ Jesus, so walk in HIM.’ . . . by faith . . . [not] blind struggles to gain the goal by works. . . . [W]hat shall we tell the young convert about the higher life? . . . Tell him simply to abide in Jesus. As he has received him, so to walk in him. (pgs. 309-310, 329, *The Higher Christian Life*, Boardman)

Likewise, Hannah Whitall Smith wrote:

Christians . . . know that the forgiveness of sins through Jesus might have been preached to them forever, but it would never have become theirs consciously until they believed this preaching, and claimed the forgiveness as their own. But when it comes to living the Christian life, they lose sight of this principle, and think that, having been saved by faith, they are now to live by works and efforts; and instead of continuing to receive, they are now to begin to do. . . . And yet it is plainly declared, that “as we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so we are to walk in Him.” We received Him by faith, and by faith alone; therefore we are to walk in Him by faith, and by faith alone. . . . [The Christian has] nothing to do but lie passive in the potter’s hands. (*The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life*, Hannah Whitall Smith, Chapter 4, “How To Enter In,” & Chapter 1, “Introductory: God’s Side and Man’s Side.”)

Similarly, she preached: “You received Christ by faith at first, how have you walked in Him—by faith or by effort? . . . *As you have received Him, so you are to walk in Him by faith also*” (pgs. 68-69, *Account of the Union Meeting for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness, Held at Oxford, August 29 to September 7, 1874*. Chicago: Revell, 1874. Italics in original.). When the Christian “lie[s] passive in His hands,” then “He saves me fully” (Journal, April 25, 1973, reproduced in the entry for June 28 of *The Christian’s Secret of a Holy Life*, Hannah W. Smith, ed. Dieter). In another book, Mrs. Smith employs Colossians 2:6-7 in this manner while putting in print a rejection of the essential gospel truth of forensic justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ alone in favor of the accursed Catholic and Quaker heresy of justification by imparted or infused righteousness. Hannah W. Smith, commenting on Romans 10:4; 3:19-20, wrote:

He [Christ] is our righteousness. That is, the life of Christ in our souls is a righteous life [an affirmation by which Mrs. Smith denies justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ and thus denies the gospel]. . . . the life of Christ in the soul makes righteousness take possession of us. . . . [N]otice the significance of the ‘as’ and ‘so’ in the verse which says, ‘As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.’ You received Him by simple faith alone, and you must walk in Him by simple faith alone also. (pgs. 193-194, *Every-Day Religion, or The Common-Sense Teaching of the Bible*, Hannah W. Smith. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1893)

Hannah W. Smith published, as sound Quaker teaching, her view that “We not only receive life by faith, but, in just the same way, we must live by faith” in the Quaker *Friends Review* of 1867 (reproduced in the entry for February 18 of *The Christian’s Secret of a Holy Life*, Hannah W. Smith, ed. Dieter; Hannah Smith recognized this view of Colossians 2:6-7 as a Methodist doctrine also; see pgs. 242-243, 245, *The Unselfishness of God*). In misinterpreting Colossians 2:6-7 and denying the doctrine of justification, Hannah was indeed following the Quaker teaching of the premier Quaker theologian Robert Barclay, who taught that “justification consists in [a] subjective change” (*Systematic Theology*, Charles Hodge, vol. 1, pg. 94; cf. Barclay’s *Apology* of 1678). Barclay was Hannah Smith’s predecessor in teaching justification and sanctification were received in the identical manner and in denying the Biblical doctrine of justification:

This most certain doctrine then being received, that there is an evangelical and saving light and grace in all . . . as many as resist not this light, but receive the same, in them is produced an holy, pure, and spiritual birth, bringing forth holiness, righteousness, purity, and all these other blessed fruits which are acceptable to God; by which holy birth (to-wit, Jesus Christ formed within us, and working his works in us) as we are sanctified, so are we justified in the sight of God. (pgs. vii-viii, cf. pgs. 87ff., Proposition 7, “Concerning Justification,” and Proposition 8, “Concerning Perfection,” *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity: being an Explanation and Vindication of the Principles and Doctrines of the People called Quakers*, Robert Barclay)

Note also the chapter below, “Hannah Whitall Smith: Speaker on Sanctification, Developer of the Keswick Theology, Quaker Quietist and Universalist Heretic,” pg. 133, *Account of the Union Meeting for the*

received Christ at the moment of his conversion, that is, by faith alone. Indeed, in the Higher Life and Keswick movement “the text, more than any other, that . . . express[es] what [is] taught and experienced, is . . . Col. ii. 6, 7.”<sup>3</sup> The verse allegedly establishes that one lives the Christian life by faith alone without works, just as one is justified originally by faith alone without works. It is argued that “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him,” establishes that one lives for Christ now in the same manner in which one originally came to Him for mercy. A first act of simple faith received Christ for justification, and the justified Christian must subsequently with an additional or second act of faith receive Christ for sanctification. “As,” or in the same manner that one received Christ, “so,” in the same way, one is to walk in Him.

The word translated “as,” *hos* (ὥς), is a common coordinating conjunction that appears 493 times in the New Testament. There are nine major definitions listed in BDAG, with a variety of subcategories, providing a great variety of potential significations. A study of *hos oun* (ὥς οὖν), the construction found in Colossians 2:6, will be more helpful (and less exhausting) in understanding Colossians 2:6 than an examination of the hundreds of instances of ὥς in a different construction. The ὥς οὖν construction appears seven times in the New Testament:

John 4:1 Ὡς οὖν ἔγνω ὁ Κύριος ὅτι ἤκουσαν οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ὅτι Ἰησοῦς πλείονας μαθητὰς ποιεῖ καὶ βαπτίζει ἢ Ἰωάννης

John 4:1 **When therefore** the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

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*Promotion of Scriptural Holiness, Held at Oxford, August 29 to September 7, 1874.* Chicago: Revell, 1874, etc.

Likewise, Robert “Pearsall Smith in the so-called Oxford-Brighton-Keswick Convention movement . . . augmented Luther’s slogan ‘being righteous by faith alone’ with the following: ‘as well as being completely holy by faith alone’” (pg. 246, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 4, Herman Bavinck; cf. pgs. 121-122, *Account of the Union Meeting for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness, Held at Oxford, August 29 to September 7, 1874.* Chicago: Revell, 1874).

Critiquing the doctrine of sanctification by faith alone, J. C. Ryle wrote: “I never heard of any well-taught Christian who did not hold that faith is the root of holiness, and that until we believe we are not sanctified at all. But [if] . . . a man is sanctified by faith in the same way, and in the same sense, and in the same manner, that he is justified by faith . . . why [does] St. Paul so often sa[y] that we are ‘justified by faith without the deeds of the law’ but never once says that we are ‘sanctified by faith without the deeds of the law’[?]” (pg. 113, “The Brighton Convention and Its Opponents.” *London Quarterly Review*, October 1875).

<sup>2</sup> Colossians 2:6-7 reads: 6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Ὡς οὖν παρελάβετε τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν Κύριον, ἐν αὐτῷ περιπατεῖτε, ἐρριζωμένοι καὶ ἐποικοδομούμενοι ἐν αὐτῷ, καὶ βεβαιούμενοι ἐν τῇ πίστει, καθὼς ἐδιδάχθητε, περισσεύοντες ἐν αὐτῇ ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ.

<sup>3</sup> pg. 320, *Account of the Union Meeting for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness, Held at Oxford, August 29 to September 7, 1874.* Chicago: Revell, 1874.

John 4:40 **ὡς οὖν** ἦλθον πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Σαμαρεῖται, ἠρώτων αὐτὸν μείναι παρ' αὐτοῖς· καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐκεῖ δύο ἡμέρας.

John 4:40 **So when** the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

John 11:6 **ὡς οὖν** ἤκουσεν ὅτι ἀσθενεῖ, τότε μὲν ἔμεινεν ἐν ᾧ ἦν τόπω δύο ἡμέρας.

John 11:6 **When** he had heard **therefore** that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

John 18:6 **ὡς οὖν** εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι Ἐγὼ εἰμι, ἀπῆλθον εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω, καὶ ἔπεσον χαμαί.

John 18:6 **As** soon **then** as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

John 20:11 Μαρία δὲ εἰστήκει πρὸς τὸ μνημεῖον κλαίουσα ἔξω **ὡς οὖν** ἔκλαιε, παρέκυψεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον,

John 20:11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: **and as** she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre,

John 21:9 **ὡς οὖν** ἀπέβησαν εἰς τὴν γῆν, βλέπουσιν ἀνθρακιὰν κειμένην καὶ ὀψάριον ἐπικείμενον, καὶ ἄρτον.

John 21:9 **As** soon **then** as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

Colossians 2:6 **Ὡς οὖν** παρελάβετε τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν Κύριον, ἐν αὐτῷ περιπατεῖτε,

Colossians 2:6 **As** ye have **therefore** received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him:

A study of these texts demonstrates that in each of the instances besides Colossians 2:6, *hos oun* is a temporal marker. This would strongly suggest that it is so in Colossians 2:6 as well, supporting a view that the “as” is not an affirmation that one is to walk in Christ in the same way as one received Him originally for salvation, but a declaration that since or as one received Him in a past time, one is consequently commanded to walk in Him. The idea of “in the same way, then” is impossible as a rendering of the New Testament *hos oun* constructions other than Colossians 2:6. A temporal notion for *hos oun* is also supported by the LXX,<sup>4</sup> the apostolic patristic

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<sup>4</sup> The only text in which *ὡς οὖν* appears is Esther 1:17-18: καὶ γὰρ διηγήσατο αὐτοῖς τὰ ῥήματα τῆς βασιλίσσης καὶ ὡς ἀντεῖπεν τῷ βασιλεῖ **ὡς οὖν** ἀντεῖπεν τῷ βασιλεῖ Ἀρταξέρξη οὕτως σήμερον αἱ τυραννίδες αἱ λοιπαὶ τῶν ἀρχόντων Περσῶν καὶ Μήδων ἀκούσασαι τὰ τῷ βασιλεῖ λεχθέντα ὑπ' αὐτῆς τολμήσουσιν ὁμοίως ἀτιμάσαι τοὺς ἄνδρας αὐτῶν, “for he has told them the words of the queen, and how she disobeyed the king. **As then**, *said he*, she refused *to obey* king Artaxerxes, so this day shall the other ladies of the chiefs of the Persians and Medes, having heard what she said to the king, dare in the same way to dishonour their husbands.” (BLXX). The temporal sense is supported by the “this day.” It is true that the other women would, it is alleged, follow Vashti’s bad example. However, this is not something derived from the *ὡς οὖν*, but from the “in the same way” (ὁμοίως) later in the passage.

literature,<sup>5</sup> generally contemporary pseudepigraphical works,<sup>6</sup> Philo,<sup>7</sup> and Josephus.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, the “in the same way, then” idea is entirely unsupported. The Koiné background makes it clear that the *hos oun* of Colossians 2:6 is a declaration that as the Colossian church received Christ temporally in the past, they were consequently to walk

<sup>5</sup> 2 Clement 8:1 is the sole instance: **Ὡς οὖν** ἐσμὲν ἐπὶ γῆς, μετανοήσωμεν., “So, then, while we are yet on earth, let us repent.” Note that the “while” temporal idea in the English translation is associated with the *ὡς οὖν*; *ἐσμὲν* alone would not provide it.

<sup>6</sup> **ὡς οὖν** εἶδον ὅτι μαινομένη βία κρατεῖ τὰ ἱμάτιά μου, γυμνὸς ἔφυγον . . . **ὡς οὖν** ἤμην ἐν πέδαις, ἢ Αἰγυπτία ἠσθένει ἀπὸ τῆς λύπης, καὶ ἐπηκροᾶτό μου, πῶς ὕμνουν κύριον ὧν ἐν οἴκῳ σκότους, καὶ ἰλαρᾶ φωνῇ χαίρων ἐδόξαζον τὸν θεὸν μου, μόνον ὅτι διὰ προφάσεως ἀπηλλάγην τῆς Αἰγυπτίας.

“When, therefore, I saw that in her madness she was holding fast to my garment, I left it behind, and fled away naked. . . . And when I was in bonds, the Egyptian woman was oppressed with grief, and she came and heard how I gave thanks to the Lord and sang praises in the abode of darkness, and with glad voice rejoiced, glorifying my God that I was delivered from the lustful desire of the Egyptian woman.” (*Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Joseph 8:3, 5)

<sup>7</sup> The only instance is *Allegorical Interpretation* (Legum) 2:82: οὐχ ὀρᾶς ὅτι καὶ ἡ ἄρχουσα σοφία Σάρρα φησὶν “ὃς γὰρ ἂν ἀκούσῃ, συγχαρεῖται μοι;” ἀλλὰ φέρε τινὰ ἰσχύσαι ἀκούσαι, ὅτι τέτοκεν ἢ ἀρετὴ τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν Ἰσαάκ, καὶ εὐθύς συγχαρητικὸν ὕμνον ὕμνησει. **ὡς οὖν** τοῦ ἀκούσαντός ἐστι τὸ συγχαίρειν, οὕτως τοῦ σωφροσύνην καὶ θεὸν ἰδόντος εἰλικρινῶς τὸ μὴ ἀποθνήσκειν. “Do you not see that wisdom when dominant, which is Sarah, says, ‘For whosoever shall hear it shall rejoice with me.’ But suppose that any were able to hear that virtue has brought forth happiness, namely, Isaac, immediately he will sing a congratulatory hymn. As, therefore, it can only be one who has heard the news that can sympathise in one’s joy, so also it can only be he who has clearly seen temperance and God, who is safe from death.”

<sup>8</sup> *Antiquities* 1:252 **Ὡς οὖν** τούτου γενομένου παρήγε τὸν ξένον

As soon then as this was over, she introduced the stranger;

*Antiquities* 2:247 **ὡς οὖν** εἰς τὴν γῆν

As soon . . . as . . . [was come] to the land

*Antiquities* 2:343 **ὡς οὖν** ὁ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων στρατὸς ἅπας ἐντὸς ἦν

As soon, therefore, as ever the whole Egyptian army was within it,

*Antiquities* 4:7 **Ὡς οὖν** ταῦτ’ ἄμεινον αὐτοῖς ἔξειν ἔκριναν καὶ τοῖς πολεμίοις ἐπήλθον

When, therefore, they had come to this resolution, as being best for them, they went against their enemies;

*Antiquities* 5:110 **ὡς οὖν** τῆς ὑμετέρας αὐτῶν σωτηρία

Take therefore such measures in this assembly, as supposing that your own safety,

*Antiquities* 6:110 **ὡς οὖν** ἦκον εἰς τὴν παρεμβολὴν ὁ Ἰωνάθης παρεθάρσυνε τὸν ὀπλοφόρον

As soon, therefore, as they came to the camp, Jonathan encouraged his armor bearer,

*Antiquities* 6:145 **ὡς οὖν** ἀπεῖπεν ὁ θεὸς τῇ τοῦ προφήτου δεήσει

As soon therefore as God had rejected the intercession of the prophet

*Antiquities* 7:296 **ὡς οὖν** ταῦτα παρὰ τῶν προφητῶν ἔμαθεν ἐπιζητεῖν τὸν θεὸν μεταπέμπεται τοὺς Γαβωνίτας

As soon therefore as the king understood that this it was which God sought, he sent for the Gibeonites,

*Antiquities* 8:409 **ὡς οὖν** πλήξαντος αὐτοῦ τὸν Μιχαῖαν μηδὲν συνέβη παθεῖν Ἄχαβος θαρρήσας

So when, upon his smiting Micaiah, no harm happened to him, Ahab took courage,

*Antiquities* 12:303 **ὡς οὖν** ἐν τῷ παρόντι κειμένων ὑμῖν ταύτην τε ἀπολαβεῖν

Since, therefore, you are in such circumstances at present

*Antiquities* 12:311 **ὡς οὖν** ταῦθ’ οὕτως ἔχοντα ἔμαθον οἱ σὺν Γοργία

When, therefore, those that were with Gorgias understood that things were in this posture,

*Life of Josephus* 292 **ὡς οὖν** ἀνεχωρήσαμεν ἐπὶ τὰ ἑαυτῶν οἱ μὲν περὶ τὸν Ἰωνάθην γράφουσι τῷ Ἰωάννῃ

As soon, therefore, as we were gone home, Jonathan and his colleagues wrote to John

in Him. The syntax of the passage does not affirm that Christians are to walk by faith alone now in the same manner in which they received Christ by faith alone; it simply states that they did receive Him in the past, and commands them to walk in Him. No second act of faith where Christ is specifically appropriated for sanctification by the believer is mentioned or hinted at anywhere in the passage. The way believers are to walk in Him is explicated in v. 7, not by the first clause of v. 6. There is nothing in the syntax of Colossians 2:6-7<sup>9</sup> that indicates that a believer is sanctified by faith alone in the same way that he was originally justified by faith.<sup>10</sup> One who preaches this doctrine from

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<sup>9</sup> It is possible that one with a strong English preservation view of the KJV could allege that the italicized “so” in Colossians 2:6 demonstrates that one receives Christ by faith in the same way as one walks in Him. This contention fails, however, because: 1.) The word is in italics. It is not in Greek. One should not build his theology using words that are not in the New Testament but are helpful in translating it into English. Such words need to be interpreted in light of what the Greek words teach that were actually dictated by the Holy Ghost. Words not in Greek cannot be made normative for interpreting words that are in Greek. 2.) The idea of “so” in the English could very easily be “therefore,” “consequently,” “thus,” or some other similar phrase that communicates the idea, “Since you received Christ at a moment in the past, therefore walk ye in Him,” rather than “In the same way that you received Christ in the past, walk in Him now.” As commentators have well said: “The particle ‘so’ is supplied by our translators. . . . No stress should be laid on it, as is often done. The meaning is, simply, ‘Since you have received Christ as your Lord as he was preached to you, hold fast the doctrine which you have received, and do not permit yourselves to be turned aside by any Jewish teachers, or teachers of philosophy.’” (Albert Barnes). “Many persons lay a certain stress on the words *as* and *so*, and make various fine heads of discourses from them; viz. . . . *as* ye received him in a spirit of *faith*, *so* walk in him, &c., &c. This may be all proper in itself; but nothing of the kind was intended by the apostle. His meaning is simply this: Seeing ye have embraced the doctrine of Christ, continue to hold it fast, and do not permit yourselves to be turned aside by sophistical or Judaizing teachers.” (Adam Clarke)

<sup>10</sup> In addition to the body of commentaries, the conclusions above are sustained in other exegetical resources. For example, S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., who is very sympathetic to the doctrinal conclusion erroneously derived from Colossians 2:6, nevertheless noted in the journal *Bibliotheca Sacra*:

*The Pauline exhortation to progress in the life of faith* (2:6–7). The warning against defection through deception is followed by exhortation to advance in the life of faith. The *oun* (AV, “therefore”) marks the transition. We meet with difficulty in this sixth verse, which revolves around the force of the adverb *hōs* (AV, “as”).

(1) Popular expositors have often explained the passages as if Paul were saying: You received Christ by the initial exercise of faith; now, therefore, continue your Christian life by a constant trust in Him. Life begins and proceeds upon the principle of faith. The truth is most certainly a New Testament one, but does Paul have it in mind here?

(2) On the other hand, there is substantial support for a different interpretation, namely, that Paul is exhorting his readers to let their conduct accord with the truths they received. The *hōs* would then refer to the *form* in which they received Christ, i.e., the doctrines. By the first-mentioned view the *hōs* would refer to the *principle* upon which they received Christ, i.e., faith. As Moule points out, by this second view there is a virtual identification of the tradition of the facts about Christ with the believer’s experience of the Lord Himself (cf. 1:7; Eph 4:20–21). This interpretation is supported by the use of *paralambanō* in Paul (AV, “received”), which almost always refers to the reception of truth through transmission (cf. 4:6; 1 Cor 11:23; 15:1, 3; Gal 1:9, 12). The expression in verse seven, “as ye have been taught,” adds further support. But the context is most decisive. The apostle has been warning (vv. 4–5) and will continue (v. 8) to warn against the heretical teaching at Colosse. In the midst of the admonition there very appropriately is placed the exhortation to persist in the genuine teaching. Paul, then, means in verse six: As you Colossians received the Messiah, Jesus the Lord, in the preaching of Epaphras, in accord with the truth of his preaching, and not in

Colossians 2:6-7 is not preaching what the Holy Spirit, the Author of sanctification, intended when He inspired the text. Since the Holy Spirit does not lead men to misinterpret Scripture, one who preaches Colossians 2:6-7 as a proof-text for a doctrine not found in the passage is not being led by the Spirit. Such a one is also not helping Christians to be genuinely sanctified, but is misleading them and hindering their growth in grace.

Not only does Colossians 2:6-7 fail to teach sanctification by faith alone, or that one must take Christ in a second work of grace for sanctification, but such doctrines are absent from the entirety of the Bible, contradicting the affirmations of some theologies of sanctification.<sup>11</sup> If the New Testament were filled with statements such as: “We conclude that a man is sanctified by faith without the deeds of the law,” or “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be sanctified in his sight,” or “Knowing that a man is not sanctified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be sanctified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be sanctified,”

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accord with the enticing words of the heretics, continue your Christian life. The present tense in *peripateite* (AV, “walk”) stresses the permanent character of this walk in the Lord. Keep walking in Him.

The details of the walk are described in the seventh verse. The contrast in the tenses of the participles should be noted. The *erridsōmenoi* (AV, “rooted”) is in the perfect tense and, therefore, stresses the initial rooting of the Colossians’ faith in Christ when the good news was preached to them and the derived and developing life resulting from it. The three following present participles set forth the specific ways in which the life is to continually express itself—in progressively greater stability amid thanksgiving. (pgs. 305-306, “Studies in the Epistle to the Colossians, Part VI: Beware of Philosophy.” *Bib Sac* 119:476 (Oct 62) 302-311)

Colossians 2:6 simply does not affirm that a believer is sanctified by faith alone, just as he is justified by faith alone.

<sup>11</sup> For example, following the theology of Hannah W. Smith, the Keswick movement teaches that a believer “steps into . . . uniform sustained victory over known sin . . . not by . . . laborious effort, but by a deliberate and decisive act of faith. . . . According to Keswick, we are not sanctified by self-effort or by works, but by faith . . . [s]anctification, like justification, is by grace alone. . . . We are asked . . . to accept holiness by faith in the same way that we accept justification by faith. . . . Freedom from the dominion of sin is a blessing we may claim by faith, just as we accept pardon. . . . Deliverance is not attained by struggle and painful effort, by earnest resolutions and self-denial, but . . . is stepped into by simple faith. . . . The Keswick position is that in Scripture sanctification comes by faith, and not in another way. . . . The heart and core of Keswick teaching is its doctrine of sanctification by faith. . . . Sanctification is thus the result, not of attempts at suppression of the flesh, but of faith in the finished work of Calvary” (pgs. 84, 86, 89, 90, 97, 100, 107, *So Great Salvation: The History and Message of the Keswick Convention*, Steven Barabas). Were the Keswick affirmation simply one that believers walk by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7) and do not reject God’s strength to depend upon their own independent efforts, the doctrine would be Biblical. However, the Keswick affirmation goes beyond these truths to deny that faith-based, God-dependent effort and struggle are involved in progressive sanctification, affirming instead that sanctifying faith ceases from working in the same manner that justifying faith does (Romans 4:5). The only passage Barabas ever cites to provide alleged support for this Keswick doctrine of sanctification by faith alone is Romans 6, which says nothing about it. Keswick may affirm that both justification and sanctification are by faith alone, but it cannot prove the latter doctrine from Scripture.

(compare Romans 3:28, 20; Galatians 2:16), the conclusion that Scripture teaches sanctification by faith without works in the same way that justification is by faith without works would be justified. However, there are no such verses in the New Testament.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the Bible contains commands in relation to sanctification such as 2 Peter 1:5-11: “[G]iving 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,” so that these holy character traits “abound” in the believer. Believers are never told that, to advance their justification, they must add virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity, and have these traits of holiness abound in them—but they do advance their sanctification in this manner. Justification is by faith without works, but while faith is absolutely necessary for sanctification (Hebrews 11:6),<sup>13</sup> progressive growth in holiness involves not faith alone, but also effort and works, in a way justification does not.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Acts 26:18, “To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (ἀνοίξαι ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν, τοῦ καὶ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκοτῶν εἰς φῶς καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ Σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν Θεόν, τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, καὶ κληρὸν ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ.), is about the only verse in the Bible that one could attempt to establish a doctrine of progressive sanctification by faith from. The verse teaches that at the moment every believer turns from darkness to light and from Satan to God through repentant faith in Christ, he receives forgiveness of sins and positional sanctification. Since the sanctification mentioned in the verse is the positional sanctification of all believers, which they receive at the same moment that they “receive forgiveness of sins,” the text establishes absolutely nothing in favor of a doctrine of progressive sanctification by faith alone. Furthermore, the sanctification in the verse is the possession of all the regenerate, not of a select minority that have entered into a Higher Life by means of a post-conversion discovery of a doctrine of progressive sanctification by faith alone. Note also that Acts 20:32, which is not only the single other reference to the verb *hagiadzo*, “to sanctify,” in Acts but even shares the same perfect passive substantival participle as Acts 26:18, contains a similar reference to an “inheritance” (κληρὸς/κληρονομία), and is also on the lips of the Apostle Paul, likewise refers to the positional sanctification possessed by all the people of God. Compare the perfect passives in Romans 15:16; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 7:14; Hebrews 10:10; Jude 1.

<sup>13</sup> Anyone who would argue that sanctification must be by faith alone because a verse such as Hebrews 11:6 affirms that it is impossible to please God without faith would likewise have to argue that 1 Corinthians 13 establishes that sanctification is by love alone, since it is impossible to please God without love. Such an argument is a obvious example of a logical converse fallacy.

<sup>14</sup> “A servant of Jesus does the trusting in no other sense than he does the loving, the hoping, the watching, the praying, the striving. To all these the Lord moves him by the joint agency of his Spirit and his Word. The idea of a simple passive trust springing from the human heart, as the God-appointed condition of sanctifying grace from Christ, is foreign to the Word of God” (pg. 127, *Doctrine of the Higher Christian Life Compared With the Teaching of the Holy Scriptures*, by Alvah Hovey).

The fact that neither Colossians 2:6-7, nor any other text in Scripture, teaches that the believer is sanctified by faith alone just as one is justified by faith alone should not be employed to minimize the essential role of living by faith for progressive sanctification. The truth of 2 Corinthians 5:7, “we walk by faith, not by sight,” and the fact that “without faith it is impossible to please . . . God” (Hebrews 11:6) must not be neglected. Believers must live by faith and grow in their faith.<sup>15</sup> They should not misinterpret Colossians 2:6-7 and adopt a doctrine of sanctification by faith alone that is absent from the Bible, and so hinder their growth in holiness, nor react against this misinterpretation of Colossians 2:6-7 to minimize the importance of living by faith, and so hinder their growth in holiness.

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<sup>15</sup> Sometimes those who incorrectly make Colossians 2:6-7 into a proof-text for sanctification by faith alone likewise deny that faith can grow, affirming that Scripture teaches only that one either has faith or that one does not. Such an assertion is false. See the discussion in the chapter “The Just Shall Live By Faith.”