The Redemptive Purpose in the Perfection of Human Personality

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The divine redemption of the human race is a necessity if mankind is to be saved from ultimate destruction here and hereafter. Such redemptive necessity is attested alike by the multitude of religious systems of the world, and the humanistic utopian dreams of economic, social and political philosophers. The provision of such redemption is no less a necessity to the integrity of the character of God who must satisfy the demands of human intelligence and spiritual aspirations. That divinely provided plan of redemption is clearly revealed in the Christian Scriptures.

An ultimate divine purpose is a prerequisite to the completion and perfection of human redemption. Our English word purpose is especially meaningful when considered in relation to redemption. Webster defines the word as, “That which one sets before himself as an object to be attained... The object or result aimed at.” Closely related to our word purpose, but more philosophical in its content, is the word teleology which derives from two Greek words: namely, telos which means end, and logia which means a doctrine, theory or science. This word is defined by Webster as, “The fact or the character of being directed toward an end or shaped by a purpose... The doctrine or belief that design is apparent, or ends are immanent.” The perfection of human personality through the divine redemptive scheme as the ultimate purpose or end which God has in mind is the thesis of this discussion.

Among the profoundest passages in the Bible that treat of God’s ultimate purpose in human redemption are: Christ’s High Priestly Prayer as recorded in the 17th chapter of the Gospel according to John; Paul’s prayer for the perfection of the Thessalonian Christians as recorded in I Thessalonians 5:23, 24; and the Hebrew Epistle author’s citation of the end result of redemption in Hebrews 12:22-24.

The golden keys that unlock the inner treasures of these profound divine utterances are first, Christ’s words in the following passages from the gospel according to John: “Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17); “That they may be one,
even as we are" (John 17:11); "That they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:22); "That they may be perfected into one" (John 17:23): and second, Paul's prayer for the Thessalonian Christians in I Thessalonians 5:23a, which reads, "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire": and third, the Hebrew Epistle author's climactic declaration as contained in Hebrews 12:22, 23: "But ye are come unto . . . the spirits of just men made perfect."

It immediately becomes evident to the discerning reader that the keynote of this revealed truth is the perfection of human personality through the atoning and sanctifying provisions of the cross of Christ. That this sanctifying provision may be the more clearly understood, let us note first that the sanctification of his disciples, both those present with him and those yet future, was the purpose and the burden of Christ's High Priestly Prayer as recorded in the seventeenth chapter of the gospel according to John. Concerning the word sanctify as that word is used by Christ in this prayer, Dr. Adam Clarke remarks:

This word has two meanings: 1. It signifies to consecrate, to separate from earth and come out, and to devote or dedicate to God and his service. 2. It signifies to make holy or pure. The prayer of Christ may be understood in both of these senses.¹

Thus God's means for the redemption, restoration and ultimate perfection of human personality is Calvary's provision of the reconciliation and sanctification of the soul. Nowhere is this grand purpose more beautifully and lucidly expressed than in the book of Revelation, chapter one and verses five and six, which reads thus:

Unto him that loved us, and loosed us [many authorities, some ancient, read washed]. Compare Heb. 9:14 and Rev. 7:14] from our sins by his blood; and he made us to be a kingdom, and to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever.

In order to grasp adequately the significance of God's ultimate purpose in human redemption, one must consider three important factors, namely: 1. The constitution and nature of human personality, 2. The effect of sin on human personality, and 3. The divine restoration of human personality. Three great questions immediately arise from these considerations: namely, 1. What is man?, 2. What has sin done to man?, and 3. What is God's redemptive

¹ Comment on John 17:17, Adam Clarke, Clarke's Commentary.
purpose for man? The ancient Psalmist voiced one of the most significant queries of the ages when he inquired of God, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?, and the son of man, that thou visitest him." (Psa. 8:4) To a consideration of the problems that arise out of these profound inquiries we shall now devote our interest.

I.

First, a knowledge of the constitution and nature of human personality is basic to an understanding of the ultimate divine redemptive purpose.

Human personality has been variously conceived by the leading thinkers of the ages. While it is beyond the purpose of this study to pursue an extended survey of those varied concepts, a few of the major representative scholars may be profitably noted.

We shall first take cognizance of certain inadequate and erroneous views of personality. Pantheism is perhaps, of this class, the most widely accepted view, when considered in relation to its several variants. The philosophy of Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677) is the classic example of pantheism. His system reduced the universe to a single substance with an infinite number of modes. Personalities were, with Spinoza, but quasi, rather than real, entities and they thus constituted in part the Spinozistic "modes," or modifications of the single substance. No true consciousness, self-consciousness, nor cognition are afforded in this pantheistic view. Ultimately all things are realized as one. The Spinozistic modes of a single universal substance call to mind the highly imaginative story of the earthworm that is supposed to have crawled out of its burrow one bright, fresh spring morning after a warm shower and, projecting several inches of its body upward, looked all about until it sighted another earthworm with an extension of its body projecting from its burrow a short distance away. Stirred by a feeling of romance, the first earthworm addressed itself to the second with a proposal of marriage with a view to establishing a home and raising a family of little earthworms. To the proposal of the first earthworm the second indignantly replied, "Keep quiet and crawl back down in your hole; I am only your other end." Likewise, if the Spinozistic pantheistic view were correct then everything, including all persons, would be but varied aspects of one and the same thing.
But there are also other pantheistic variants that reduce the world view to monism. Significant is the Early Greek hylozoism as held mainly by Thales (625 B.C.), by the Milesians, in a modified form by the Stoics, and later developed with a naturalistic emphasis by the French philosophers of the 18th century. Likewise, Indian Hinduism with its Oriental cognates, inclusive of both Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism, falls in the class of pantheistic monism and brings approximately a fourth of the world's inhabitants either directly or indirectly under a false concept of personality. The primitive animists of Africa, the Dravidian aboriginals of Central India, the Ainu of Hokkaido in Northern Japan, the primitive South Sea Islanders, and the North American Indians and Eskimos all hold a view of the universe which in some sense ultimately reduces all things, including human personality, to a single divine substance. When there is added to these the adherents of such monistic systems as Emersonian pantheistic transcendentalism, Christian Science, and modern theistic evolutionary Christianity the extent of this pantheistic error begins to impress the serious student. This view, in any of its many forms, offers no true view of the personality of either God or man, since it reduces the universe to one impersonal divine substance.

Panpsychism is another influential variety of monism. While it differs in certain essential respects from pantheism, mainly in making impersonal mind rather than God the substance, it is none the less destructive of any true concept of personality. Notable representatives of this erroneous view of reality are the Italian philosopher Bruno (1548-1600), especially in his earlier views; the representatives of German thought including Leibnitz (1646-1716), Fechner (1801-1887), and Lotze (1817-1881); and the American philosopher William James (1842-1910). Spiritism, or spiritualism as it is commonly but erroneously called, both in its ancient and modern forms is panpsychic and consequently affords no true concept of a personal entity. Panpsychism, like pantheism, allows no true concept of personality since individuality is, in the final analysis, lost in the single substance of impersonal mind.

Materialistic naturalism, like panpsychism and pantheism, is monistic and thus reduces mind or personality to a sort of Huxleyan epiphenomenalism, with mind as simply the conscious aspect of matter. So long as materialism dominates the field of modern psychology and mind is denied as an entity after the fashion of
Thorndike and Watson, there can be no adequate concept of the reality and dignity of human personality.

Metaphysical dualism poses two insurmountable problems: namely, two self-subsistent distinct entities, and the apparently unsolvable problem of the interaction of mind and matter. This essential dualism may be best represented in its metaphysical form by the French philosopher Descartes (1596-1650), and in its religious form by Zoroastrianism. Perhaps Descartes has been as successful in solving the problem of interaction between mind and matter as distinct entities as any subsequent thinker, and his unsuccessful attempt is too well known to merit consideration here.

Empiricism as proposed by John Locke (1632-1704) or John Dewey (1859-1952) affords no real personalities since mind, with Locke, is little more than an organization of percepts that abide for a time, and then with insanity or death dissolve and personality becomes extinct; or as with Dewey, mind is little if anything more than momentary conscious experience, changing constantly with the flow of experience.

There is found in John Bunyan's immortal allegory, Pilgrim's Progress, a most interesting encounter between Christian and Apollyon, an incident that seems to quite clearly reflect Bunyan's apprehension of the effect of Locke's new empirical psychology on the Christian belief in the personality and immortality of the soul. It will be noted that John Locke (1632-1704) and John Bunyan (1628-1688) were direct English contemporaries. John Locke had set forth his theory of the mind or soul as a tabula rasa, meaning a blank sheet or tablet, at the outset of life's experiences, and the developed mind as but the record of experience written by the hand of environment upon this tabula rasa. Indeed mind became a sort of organization of these percepts acquired from the stimuli of environment. However, in the end mind would prove to be only temporary and with mental derangement, deterioration or death, disorganization and dissolution would follow and the mind would cease to be, and immortality would become a myth. John Bunyan, while formally unschooled, was exceedingly discerning of the effects that the new Lockian psychology might have on the Christian faith in the personality and consequent immortality of the soul. Bunyan seems to represent the new Lockian empirical psychological threat to Christianity by Apollyon's obstruction of Christian's progress and his threat to destroy Christian on the spot. Bunyan's
account of the incident is most graphic. It is reproduced in part as follows:

Then Apollyon straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, I am devoid of fear in this matter. Prepare thyself to die; for I swear by my infernal den, that thou shalt go no farther; here I will spill thy soul. And with that he threw a flaming dart at his breast: but Christian had a shield in his hand, with which he caught it, and so prevented the danger of that.2

Apollyon’s threat to Christian, expressed in the words “here I will spill thy soul,” seems clearly to indicate that Bunyan understood the inadequacy of the new Lockian psychology to provide for either personality as an entity or afford a personal basis for Christian immortality. As much may be said for any of the monistic views of the universe, whether pantheistic, panpsychist, or materialistic, which have been discussed here.

Second, consideration will be given to the true Christian view of the constitution and nature of human personality. It should be noted that Christ, and Christianity of the first century, were the first to define with clarity the concept of personality. Indeed the Hebrews, and other ancient thinkers, attained fairly definite ideas of the person, but found it difficult to disassociate the individual from the community. In general, human personality was taken for granted, rather than defined, in the Old Testament. It remained for Christ to define and dignify human individuality. His was a higher concept than had ever been attained by preceding world thinkers.

Only a unitary or simple, as opposed to a compound, concept of personality will ultimately accord with the teachings of Christianity concerning man. The synonym individual, so frequently used for person in the English language, is exactly expressive of the fundamental nature of human personality. Individual is a mathematical term and will bear careful analysis in relation to person. Concerning this term Webster remarks: “Not divisible; inseparable . . . . Existing as a distinct entity; particular; opposed to general and universal. Of the character of an individual, or indivisible entity. Having personality . . . . A single or particular being or group of beings; esp.: A person . . . . An indivisible entity or a totality.”

In the light of the recent division of the atom and the inability of science to determine finally the true nature of material reality, beyond the conclusion that it is energy, it seems logical that the

2 Pilgrim’s Progress.
only true atom, or ultimate finite reality, has been discovered when personality is properly understood and defined. The idea which the word atom represents, namely the ultimately real and thus simple and indivisible particle of matter (Gr. a-toma = not cutable or divisible), is no longer of significance since the division of the atom, it remains to seek elsewhere for the true atom. That quest ends in some form of Christian idealism, in which personality is a basic unity with varied possible functions.

Human personality was created in the image, or after the pattern, of the divine personality. Since God is incorporeal, then the divine image borne by man through creation must of necessity be of the divine spiritual personality. Personality as an entity, logically considered, is necessarily characterized by certain essential notes. Dr. Paul Glenn, in his book entitled Dialectics, sets forth these essential notes of human personality as "subsistent, bodily, living, sentient, and rational being."\(^3\) There may be, however, a serious question as to whether body is an essential note of personality. Physical body, as it is presently known, certainly is not an essential element of personality if we are to retain our concept of immortality as an everlasting spiritual existence. Otherwise it seems that there should be no serious objection to Dr. Glenn’s outline of the essential notes of personality.

It should be noted that the aforementioned essential notes are not "parts of personality" but rather "characteristics" of the unitary personal entity. These characteristic essential notes may also be properly regarded as functions of personality. When thus considered, these facts afford a sure foundation for the Christian doctrine of the indestructibility of human personality, either in the life that is or in the life that is to come. The Greek philosopher Plato based, in part at least, his view of the immortality of the human soul on its simplicity. Such a view of the soul cuts away forever any grounds for the spiritual annihilation theory, as held by the Seventh Day Adventists, the Russellites or the materialists, and as well the Nirvana theory of Buddhism.

Likewise, it is logical that we conceive of the divine personality as answering to the essential notes of personality as they have been set forth in relation to human personality. If man was created in the personal image of God, then the essential notes of man’s

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\(^3\) Paul Glenn, Dialectics (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1939, p. 315.)
personality are the essential notes of God's personality. The divine personality cannot be less than human personality. Without objecting to Glenn's catalogue of personal essential notes, except for the inclusion of "bodily," a more satisfactory summary of these essential notes might be as follows: subsistent, spiritual, living, rational, volitional, sentient and emotional being. Such an infinite personal being is God and such a finite personal being is man.

When it is recorded in the Genesis account that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27), it should be understood that it was in conformity to these essential notes of the divine personality that human personality was created. This is not to say that man was made of the essence of God. If such were the case then man would be an emanation of divinity. Such a view would approximate pantheism. Rather, man became a new essence by a divine creative fiat, although patterned after the divine person.

According to the Genesis record the subsistent human soul emerged when "Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Gen. 2:7) Whatever may be the significance of the dust from which God formed the human body, and the breath of life which God breathed into the nostrils of that human form, it appears evident that the human soul as a new living entity emerged at the union of the divine breath with the material form. The "living soul" which man there "became" constituted the human personality which reflected and reflects the divine personal image. Concerning the human likeness to the divine, Dummelow's Commentary observes:

The likeness to God lies in the mental and moral features of man's character, such as reason, personality, free will, the capacity for communion with God. These distinguish man from the animals with which on the physical side he has much in common, and inevitably insures his dominion over them.4

This union of the divine breath and the human physical form, with the resultant personal spiritual emergent, may be likened to the synthesis of the parents through procreation with the resultant emergent of a personal entity in the offspring. It seems evident that Paul has this in mind when he quotes Genesis 2:24 thus: "For this

cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great.” (Eph. 5:31, 32) Certainly Paul does not mean to teach that there is the loss of either the male or female personality through the marriage union. Such a conclusion would be contrary to recognized individual ethical responsibility as well as legal responsibility. Rather the fact of “becoming one flesh” points to the human offspring, as a new personal entity, or a personal emergent as the accomplished unity of the male and female personalities through the procreative process. The parents become one in the child. But while the child represents a synthesis of the elements and characteristics of both parents, he is something different from either or both parents—he is a new spiritual entity, an individual. The child’s personality bears the essential notes that characterize the personalities of the parents, but they are the essential notes of his personality and not of their personalities. So God created man after the pattern of his personality but not of his essence. Through the creative divine fiat man became a new “living soul.”

In summary, as the divine personality is simple (as opposed to compound), subsistent, spiritual, living, rational, volitional, sentient and emotional being, so human personality, while of a different essence, reflects the divine pattern in respect to these essential notes of personality, not as parts but as balanced and harmonious functions of a personal unitary entity.

II.

Second, the effect of sin on human personality must be understood if one is to grasp the significance of the ultimate divine redemptive purpose.

Sin is a condition, an attitude or disposition, and an act foreign to the nature and the will of God. However, it was necessary that sin originate in a moral decision and an act before it could become a condition. Otherwise it would be necessary to posit the origin of sin in something other than the misuse of moral freedom. Wesley’s concept of sin as a wilful act of disobedience against the revealed or known law of God stands well to the test of the divine revelation and human intelligence. The effect of the tragic enactment of sin was to warp, pervert, throw out of balance, and misdirect human personality, but not to destroy, in the sense of annihilation, that personality. Sin depraves thoroughly but not totally
the personality of man. Depravity is indeed *extensively total*, but *not intensively total*. If depravity were *intensively total* the effect would be to destroy entirely the image of God in man and thus obliterate moral cognition and render man incapable of receiving or responding to the divine overtures. In short, man through *intensive total depravity* would lose the divine image entirely and thus he would cease to be a personality and would be reduced to the animal level. In this event, salvation would not be a renewal and restoration of man's moral nature under the influence and operation of the Holy Spirit, but rather it would mean the re-creation of human personality in the image of the divine personality. The theory of *intensive total depravity* logically leads to the doctrine of complete divine predestination of the soul either to eternal life or eternal damnation. They are part and parcel of the same religious philosophy, neither of which will stand up to the teachings of the scriptures, or of sound human reason.

The parable of the lost coin and its recovery, as given in the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel according to Luke, suggests the retention of this divine image in fallen man. It should be observed that though the coin was lost it was possible for the woman to recognize it when she found it by Caesar's inscription which it still bore. As much may be said for the lost son, in the same chapter, concerning whom the father asserted, "This *my son* was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." (Luke 15:24) The marks of personal identification remained, notwithstanding the lost condition. In this connection Paul adds his testimony to the evidence that fallen man retains the essential notes of the divine personality, even though that divine image be hopelessly marred, without the intervention of divine redemption. Having given the most awful and complete portrayal of the moral and spiritual degeneracy and degradation of the Gentiles in the first chapter of the Roman letter, Paul proceeds to say, concerning these same moral and spiritual degenerates, in the second chapter of Romans:

For when the Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them. (Romans 2:14, 15)

Concerning St. Augustine's doctrine of the *intensive total depravity* of man, Dr. Arthur Holmes, professor of psychology and
The Asbury Seminarian

philosophy of religion of Butler University School of Religion, once remarked that St. Augustine went to the altar of the Lord and left there God's most precious gift to man, his free will. Without moral cognition and human volition salvation would be a divine imposition upon fallen man, rather than a human appropriation by faith of that gracious saving provision of the Cross of Christ.

Though perverted and unbalanced by the innovation of this factor of sin, which was not native to nor harmonious with human personality, yet personality by virtue of its very nature, spiritual simplicity, could not be dissolved nor completely destroyed by sin. It could only be perverted. And perversion is the true definition of evil in human experience. With this view of the effect of sin on human personality, the scriptural doctrines of the immortality of the soul of the redeemed or the everlasting damnation of the lost must stand or fall.

Again, sin divides and confuses the motives and aims of personality. It is to this effect of sin that James seems to allude in his epistle when he exhorts, "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded." (James 4:8) And again, when he says, "A doubleminded man [is] unstable in all of his ways." (James 1:8)

The effect of sin in human experience is not to annihilate personality or any of its essential notes, an act possible only by a divine fiat, but rather to weaken, unbalance, pollute, pervert, cloud, distort, and misdirect human personality away from God, righteousness, and moral sanity and render it incapable of attaining unto righteousness of itself, though possibly having righteous aspirations, without the divine enabling through spiritual renewal, restoration and animation. Without divine renewing, unregenerate human personality is destined by its own perversion to a downward and "away from God-ward" course, into deeper and denser outer darkness, time without end.

III.

Third, we shall note God's purpose in the redemption and sanctification of human personality.

In his High Priestly Prayer Christ prayed for his disciples: "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth... that they may be one, even as we are one." (John 17:11b, 22) Says Adam Clarke concerning this prayer:
The union which Christ recommends here and prays for is so complete and glorious as to be fitly represented by that union which subsists between the father and the son.⁵

Again, Alexander Maclaren remarks concerning this prayer of Christ:

The depths of that saying are beyond us, but we can at least see thus far—that the true bond of unity is the name in which all who are one are kept; that the pattern of the true unity of the believers is the ineffable union of father and son, which is oneness of will and nature, along with distinctness of persons; and that therefore this purpose goes far deeper than outward unity of organization.⁶

It is clear that both of these eminent scholars, though representing different theological position, see in this word from Christ’s prayer a far deeper meaning than that ordinarily assigned to it. The sanctification of the human personality is an essential part of human redemption. Says Paul to the Thessalonians: “God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in [through] sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” (II Thess. 2:13b) Again in the Hebrew letter we read: “Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Heb. 12:14) God’s purpose in sanctification is to restore sin-warped human personalities to the original divine pattern: “That they may be one, as we are one,” Christ prayed. This divine unity or oneness referred to in Christ’s prayer defines the nature of the Trinity. The Trinity, as the age-old orthodox Christian concept holds, is one in essence, but three in persons, or, one in essence, but three in personal functions.

First, sanctification has as its primary purpose the elimination of the dividing, distracting and perverting sin nature from the renewed nature of the Christian believer. Perhaps nowhere, apart from Christ’s words in the seventeenth chapter of John, is this purpose made clearer than in Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians, chapter five and verse twenty-three: “And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (I Thess. 5:23) This passage makes clear that the sanctifying agent is “the God of peace himself,” suggesting that man’s inner nature contaminated by sin is divided in motives and in aspirations.

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⁵ Comment on John 17, Adam Clarke, Clarke’s Commentary.

and is in conflict within itself, making the unsanctified soul a spiritual battleground. This “God of peace,” through the blood of his cross, alone is able to destroy and cleanse away the foreign factor of sin that disturbs the inner peace of man's nature, thereby rendering him at peace with God and within himself.

Second, it is evident from this word of Paul to the Thessalonians that sanctification is a work of restoration to wholeness or spiritual perfection. Paul prays: “the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly.” By eliminating the distracting and dividing sin nature, the personality is automatically restored to its normal balance, or wholeness. As if to emphasize this fact, the Apostle continues, “and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire [or in wholeness, completion, perfection, unity, even simplicity], without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Then, lest there should remain any doubt in the minds of these sincere seeking souls, Paul adds the following reassuring word: “Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it.” (I Thess. 5:24) The nature of this call referred to in verse twenty-four is clearly defined in chapter four, verse seven: “For God called us not unto uncleanness, but in sanctification.” To this explanation Paul adds a grave warning to the holiness rejector when he states: “Therefore he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but God, who giveth his Holy Spirit unto you.” (I Thess. 4:8)

Third, God's purpose in sanctification is to restore human personality to normality. Said Paul concerning the new man in Christ Jesus: “Ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him.” (Col. 3:9, 10) Now, it is impossible that the redeemed and sanctified individual should be “renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him” had he not first borne that image of the divine.

In Romans 12:2, Paul writes: “Be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” This “being transformed by the renewing of your mind” to which Paul here refers, again suggests that man originally bore the intellectual image of God but that this image was perverted through the fall, and that provision for its restoration to normality is made in the atonement of Christ.

Again, Paul asserts, in his second letter to Timothy, chapter
one, verse seven, as read in the King James version: "God hath not
given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound
mind."

Whatever else sin may signify in personal and social experi-
ence, it cannot mean less than lack of moral sanity and soundness.
Redemption fully provided in the atonement of Christ, when appro-
priated, restores the individual to personal sanity and to a balanced
personality. The note concerning the Gadarene, out of whom Jesus
cast the demons, is particularly significant at this juncture. Of him
it is said, when he had been delivered from demon possession, that
"he sat clothed and in his right mind."

*Fourth*, the ultimate divine purpose in sanctification is to re-
store the personality of redeemed man to spiritual singleness or
simplicity. It is here that we come to the deeper significance of the
words of Christ in his High Priestly Prayer as recorded by John in
the seventeenth chapter and verses 17, 11, 22, and 23. "Sanctify
them in the truth: thy word is truth. . . . That they may be one,
even as we are. . . . That they may be one, even as we are one. . . .
That they may be perfected into one."

The traditional interpretation of the unity for which Christ
here prayed is that through the sanctification of the souls of the
disciples personal differences might be eliminated and spiritual har-
mony and cooperation be restored among them. Christ's prayer, in
this particular interpretation, is often invoked by the supporters of
the modern ecumenical movement. However, ecclesiastical union
can never take the place of spiritual unity, and it is a foregone con-
clusion that ecclesiastical organic union, in the modern ecumenical
sense, can never be realized until spiritual sanctification has become
a reality in the lives of the believing members of the body of Christ.

This traditional interpretation of Christ's prayer for the unity
of the disciples will not stand in the light of his word, "That they
may be one, as we are one." Here it is clear that Christ is praying
that sanctification may effect in the lives of his disciples that same
unity that characterizes the Godhead. When it is remembered that
the Godhead is *one in essence, but three in persons*, it will be seen
that it is impossible that the disciples of Christ should become one
body in this sense. For them to become so would eliminate their
individualities or personalities and reduce them to a common sub-
stance, and such was never the intent nor purpose of the atoning
provisions of Christ, nor his High Priestly Prayer to the Father. He
does not wish to eliminate our personalities, but to purify and make them whole. The unity for which he here prays is the unity of each personality within itself through the elimination of the discordant element, the sin nature. It was in such unity that God originally created individual man, and it is to this unity that God desires, through the provisions of the atonement, to restore to individual man. As the Godhead is one in essence, that is simple as opposed to compound, though varied in personal function, so man was created simple in spiritual personality, though with varied possible functions; and full redemption makes possible the ultimate restoration of the personality to its original nature.

Finally, sanctification is designed ultimately to complete or perfect personality. A pre-vision of this glorious reality is given to us in the letter to the Hebrews, the 12th chapter, verses 22 and 23, a characterization that reaches beyond the limits of the present existence: “But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.” Thus it becomes evident that God’s final purpose in human redemption is to perfect human personality through the redemptive provision of his Son, Jesus Christ. “Ye are come . . . to the spirits of just men made perfect.” This word of the author to the Hebrews suggests that human personalities are justified from sin through the atonement of Christ, “the spirits of just men.” Again, this word suggests that human personalities are sanctified, purified, restored to normality, made whole, complete, unitary, through the provisions of the atonement of Jesus Christ the Son of God; “the spirits of just men made perfect.”

While the atonement of Christ presently provides for the justification and sanctification of human personality, and through it the personality may be made perfect initially in the Christian sense, both negatively and positively, it is subsequently and progressively perfected in this life and continues in developmental growth in the world to come.