The Doctrine of Sanctification

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Introduction

Overview

In the ten articles published in 1934's *Studies in the Scriptures* on "The Doctrine of Justification,"[1] we contemplated the transcendent[2] grace of God, which provided for His people a Surety[3] Who kept for them perfectly His holy Law and Who also endured the curse that was due to their manifold transgressions against it. In consequence thereof, though in ourselves we are criminals who deserve to be brought to the bar of God's justice and there be sentenced to death, we are, nevertheless, by virtue of the accepted service of our Substitute, not only not condemned, but "justified," that is, *pronounced righteous* in the high courts of heaven. Mercy has rejoiced against judgment, yet not without the governmental righteousness of God, as expressed in His holy Law, having been fully glorified.[4] The Son of God incarnate,[5] as the Federal Head[6] and representative of His people, obeyed it, and also suffered and died under its condemning sentence. The claims of God have been fully met, justice has been magnified, the Law has been made more honorable than if every descendant of Adam had personally fulfilled its requirements.

> *As respects justifying righteousness, therefore, believers have nothing to do with the Law. They are justified "freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom 3:24), that is apart from any personal fulfillment thereof. We could neither fulfill its righteousness nor bear its curse. The claims of the Law were met and ended, once and forever, by the satisfaction of our great Substitute, and as a result we have attained to righteousness without works, that is, without personal obedience of our own. "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom 5:19). There may be indeed, and there are, other relations in which we stand to the Law. It is the principle of our new nature to rejoice in its holiness: "we delight in the law of God after the inner man." We know the comprehensiveness and the blessedness of those first two commandments on which all the Law and the Prophets hang: we know that "love" is the fulfilling of the Law. We do not despise the guiding light of the holy and immutable[7] commandments of God, livingly embodied, as they have been, in the ways and character of Jesus—but we do not seek to obey them with any thought of obtaining justification thereby.*
>
> *That which has been attained, cannot remain to be attained. Nor do we place so great an indignity on "the righteousness of our God and Saviour," as to put the partial and imperfect obedience that we render after we are justified, on a level with that heavenly and perfect righteousness by which we have been justified. After we have been justified, grace may, and does for Christ's sake, accept as well pleasing our imperfect obedience—but this, being a consequence of our perfected justification, cannot be made a ground thereof. Nor can anything that is in the least degree imperfect be presented to God with the view of attaining justification. In respect of this, the courts of God admit nothing that falls short of His own absolute perfectness (B. W. Newton).[8]*

Having, then, dwelt at some length on the basic and blessed truth of justification, it is fitting that we should now consider the closely connected and complementary Doctrine of Sanctification. But what is "sanctification": is it a quality or position? Is sanctification a legal thing or an experimental; that is to say, is it something the believer has in Christ or in himself? Is it absolute or relative, by which we mean, does it admit of degree or no? Is it unchanging or progressive? Are we sanctified at the time we are justified, or is sanctification a later blessing? How is this blessing obtained—by something that is done for us, or by us, or both? How may one be assured he has been sanctified; what are the characteristics, the evidences, the fruits? How are we to distinguish between sanctification by the Father, sanctification by the Son, sanctification by the Spirit, sanctification by faith, sanctification by the Word?

Is there any difference between sanctification and holiness? If so, what? Are sanctification and purification the same thing? Does sanctification relate to the soul or the body, or both? What position does sanctification occupy in the *order* of divine blessings? What is the connection between regeneration and sanctification? What is the relation between justification and sanctification? Wherein does sanctification differ from glorification? Exactly what is the place of sanctification in regard to salvation:

does it precede or follow, or is it an integral part of it? Why is there so much diversity of opinion upon these points, scarcely any two writers treating of this subject in the same manner?

Our purpose here is not simply to multiply questions, but to indicate the many-sidedness of our present theme, and to intimate the various avenues of approach to the study of it.

Diverse indeed have been the answers returned to the above questions. Many who were ill qualified for such a task have undertaken to write upon this weighty and difficult theme, rushing in where wiser men have feared to tread. Others have superficially examined this subject through the colored glasses of creedal[9] attachment. Others, without any painstaking efforts of their own, have merely echoed predecessors who they supposed gave out the truth thereon. Though the present writer has been studying this subject off and on for upwards of 25 years, he has felt himself to be too immature and too unspiritual to write at length thereon; and even now, it is (he trusts) with fear and trembling he essays to do so. May it please the Holy Spirit to so guide [the author's] thoughts that he may be preserved from everything that would pervert the truth, dishonor God, or mislead His people. Brethren, pray for us!

We have in our library discourses on this subject and treatises on this theme by over 50 different men, ancient and modern, ranging from hyper-Calvinists[10] to ultra-Arminians,[11] and a number who would not care to be listed under either. Some speak with pontifical[12] dogmatism, others with reverent caution, a few with humble diffidence. All of them have been carefully digested by us and diligently compared on the leading points. The present writer detests sectarianism (most of all in those who are the worst affected by it, while pretending to be opposed to it), and earnestly desires to be delivered from partisanship. He seeks to be profited from the labors of all, and freely acknowledges his indebtedness to men of various creeds and schools of thought. On some aspects of *this* subject, he has found the Plymouth Brethren[13] much more helpful than the Reformers[14] and the Puritans.[15]

Sanctification Is Important.

The great importance of our present theme is evidenced by the prominence that is given to it in Scripture: the words *holy*, *sanctified*, etc., occurring therein hundreds of times. Its importance also appears from the high value ascribed to it: it is the supreme glory of God, of the unfallen angels, of the Church. In Exodus 15:11 we read that the Lord God is "glorious in holiness"—that is His crowning excellency. In Matthew 25:31 mention is made of the "holy angels," for no higher honor can be ascribed them. In Ephesians 5:26-27 we learn that the Church's glory lies not in pomp and outward adornment, but in holiness. Its importance further appears in that *this* is the aim in all God's dispensations.[16] He elected[17] His people that they should be "holy" (Eph 1:4); Christ died that He might "sanctify" His people (Heb 13:12); chastisements are sent that we might be "partakers of God's holiness" (Heb 12:10).

Whatever sanctification is, it is the great promise of the covenant made to Christ for His people. As Thomas Boston[18] well said,

> *Among the rest of that kind, it shines like the moon among the lesser stars—as the very chief subordinate end of the Covenant of Grace,[19] standing therein next to the glory of God, which is the chief and ultimate end thereof. The promise of preservation, of the Spirit, of quickening[20] the dead soul, of faith,[21] of justification, of reconciliation,[22] of adoption,[23] and of the enjoyment of God as our God, do tend unto it as their common center, and stand related to it as means to their end. They are all accomplished to sinners on design to make them holy.*

This is abundantly clear from, "The oath which He sware to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life" (Luk 1:73-75). In that "oath" or covenant, sworn to Abraham as a type[24] of Christ (our spiritual Father; Heb 2:13), His seed's serving the Lord in holiness, is held forth as the *chief* thing sworn unto the Mediator[25]—the deliverance from their spiritual enemies being a means to that end.

The supreme excellency of sanctification is affirmed in Proverbs 8:11, "For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it." Everyone who has read the Book of Proverbs with any attention must have observed that Solomon means by "wisdom" holiness,[26] and by "folly" sin; by a wise man a saint, and by a fool a sinner. "The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools" (Pro 3:35); who can doubt whether by "the wise" he means saints, and by "fools" sinners! "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Pro 9:10), by which he means to assert that true "wisdom" is true piety or real holiness. Holiness, then, is "better than rubies," and all things that are to be desired are not to be compared with it. It is hard to conceive how the inestimable worth and excellency of holiness could be painted in brighter colours than by comparing it to rubies—the richest and most beautiful objects in nature (N. Emmons).[27]

Sanctification Is Supernatural.

Not only is true sanctification an important, essential, and unspeakably precious thing, it is wholly *supernatural*.

It is our duty to enquire into the nature of evangelical holiness, as it is a fruit or effect in us of the Spirit of sanctification, because it is abstruse[28] and mysterious, and indiscernible unto the eye of carnal reason. We say of it in some sense as Job of wisdom, "whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears. God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof...And unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding" (Job 28:20-23, 28). This is that wisdom whose ways, residence, and paths are so hidden from the natural reason and understandings of men.

No man, I say, by mere sight and conduct, can know and understand aright the true nature of evangelical holiness; and it is, therefore, no wonder if the doctrine of it be despised by many as an enthusiastical fancy.[29] It is of the things of the Spirit of God; yea, it is the principal effect of all His operation in us and towards us. And "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1Co 2:11). It is by Him alone that we are enabled to "know the things that are freely given to us of God" (v. 12) as this is, if ever we receive anything of Him in this world, or shall do so to eternity. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him"—the comprehension of these things is not the work of any of our natural faculties, but "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (1Co 2:9-10).

Believers themselves are oft-times much unacquainted with it, either as to their apprehension of its true nature, causes, and effects, or, at least, as to their own interests[30] and concernment therein. As we know not of ourselves the things that are wrought in us of the Spirit of God, so we seldom attend as we ought unto His instruction of us in them. It may seem strange indeed, that, whereas all believers are sanctified and made holy, that they should not understand nor apprehend what is wrought in them and for them, and what abideth with them. But, alas, how little do we know of ourselves, of what we are, and whence are our powers and faculties even in things natural. Do we know how the members of the body are fashioned in the womb? (John Owen).[31]

Clear proof that true sanctification is wholly supernatural and altogether beyond the understanding of the unregenerate is found in the fact that so many are thoroughly deceived and fatally deluded by fleshly imitations and satanic substitutes of real holiness. It would be outside our present scope to describe in detail the various pretensions which pose as gospel holiness, but the poor Papists,[32] taught to look up to the "saints" canonized[33] by their "church," are by no means the only ones who are mislead in this vital matter. Were it not that God's Word reveals so clearly the power of that darkness which rests on the understanding of all who are not taught by the Spirit, it would be surprising beyond words to see so many intelligent people supposing that holiness consists in abstinence from human comforts, garbing themselves in mean[34] attire, and practicing various austerities that God has never commanded.

Sanctification Is Revealed in the Scriptures.

Spiritual sanctification can only be rightly apprehended from what God has been pleased to reveal thereon *in His holy Word*, and can only be experimentally known by the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit. We can arrive at no accurate conceptions of this blessed subject except as our thoughts are formed by the teaching of Scripture, and we can only experience the power of the same as the Inspirer of those Scriptures is pleased to write them upon our hearts. Nor can we obtain so much as a correct idea of the meaning of the term "sanctification" by limiting our attention to a few verses in which the word is found, or even to a whole class of passages of a similar nature. There must be a painstaking examination of

every occurrence of the term and also of its cognates.[35] Only thus shall we be preserved from the entertaining of a one-sided, inadequate, and misleading view of its fullness and many-sidedness.

Even a superficial examination of the Scriptures will reveal that holiness is *the opposite of sin*, yet the realization of this at once conducts us into the realm of mystery, for how can persons be sinful and holy at one and the same time? This difficulty so deeply exercises the true saints: they perceive in themselves so much carnality, filth, and vileness that they find it almost impossible to believe that *they* are *holy*. Nor is the difficulty solved here, as it was in justification, by saying, "Though we are completely unholy in ourselves, we *are* holy *in Christ*." We must not here anticipate the ground that we hope to cover in future articles, except to say, the Word of God clearly teaches that those who have been sanctified by God *are* holy *in themselves*. May the Lord graciously prepare our hearts for what is to follow.

Its Meaning

Justification and Sanctification

Having dwelt at some length (in the articles on justification) upon the relative or legal change that takes place in the *status* of God's people at justification, it is fitting that we should now proceed to consider the real and experimental[36] change that takes place in their *state*, which change is begun at their sanctification and made perfect in Glory. Though the justification and the sanctification of the believing sinner may be, and should be, contemplated singly and distinctively, yet they are inseparably connected, God never bestowing the one without the other—in fact we have no way or means whatsoever of knowing the former apart from the latter. In seeking to arrive at the meaning of the second, it will therefore be of help to examine its relation to the first. "These individual companions, sanctification and justification, must not be disjoined: under the Law the ablutions and oblations went together, the washings and the sacrifices" (T. Manton).[37]

There are two principal effects that sin produces, which cannot be separated: the filthy defilement it causes, and the awful guilt it entails. Thus, salvation from sin necessarily requires both a cleansing and a clearing of the one who is to be saved. Again, there are two things absolutely indispensable in order for any creature to dwell with God in heaven: a valid title to that inheritance, a personal fitness to enjoy such blessedness—the one is given in justification; the other is commenced in sanctification. The inseparability of the two things is brought out [through these texts]: "In the LORD have I righteousness and strength" (Isa 45:24); "but of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1Co 1:30); "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified" (1Co 6:11); "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1Jo 1:9).

> *These blessings walk hand in hand; and never were, never will be, never can be parted. No more than the delicious scent can be separated from the beautiful bloom of the rose or carnation; let the flower be expanded, and the fragrance transpires. Try, if you can, to separate gravity from the stone, or heat from the fire. If these bodies and their essential properties, if these causes and their necessary effects, are indissolubly connected, so are our justification and our sanctification (James Hervey,[38] 1770).*

> *Like as Adam alone did personally break the first covenant by the all-ruining offense, yet they to whom his guilt is imputed do thereupon become inherently sinful, through the corruption of nature conveyed to them from him; so Christ alone did perform the condition of the second covenant,[39] and those to whom His righteousness is imputed[40] do thereupon become inherently righteous, through inherent grace communicated to them from Him by the Spirit. "For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom 5:17). How did death reign by Adam's offense? Not only in point of guilt, whereby his posterity were bound over to destruction, but also in point of their being dead to all good, dead in trespasses and sins. Therefore, the receivers of the gift of righteousness must thereby be brought to reign in life—not only legally in justification, but also morally in sanctification (T. Boston, 1690).*

Though absolutely inseparable, yet these two great blessings of divine grace are quite distinct. In sanctification, something is actually *imparted* to us, in justification it is only *imputed*. Justification is based entirely upon the work Christ wrought *for* us, sanctification is principally a work wrought *in* us. Justification respects its object in a legal sense, and terminates in a relative change—a deliverance from punishment, a right to the reward. Sanctification regards its object in a moral sense, and terminates in an experimental change both in character and conduct—imparting a love for God, a capacity to worship Him acceptably, and a meetness[41] for heaven. Justification is by a righteousness *without* us;[42] sanctification is by a holiness wrought *in* us. Justification is by Christ as Priest and has regard to the penalty of sin; sanctification is by Christ as King and has regard to the dominion of sin—the former

cancels its damning power, the latter delivers from its reigning power.

They differ, then, in their *order* (not of time, but in their nature): justification preceding, sanctification following; the sinner is pardoned and restored to God's favour before the Spirit is given to renew him after His image. They differ in their *design*: justification removes the obligation unto punishment; sanctification cleanses from pollution. They differ in their *form*: justification is a judicial act by which the sinner is pronounced righteous; sanctification is a moral work by which the sinner is made holy—the one has to do solely with our standing before God; the other chiefly concerns our state. They differ in their *cause*: the one issuing from the merits of Christ's satisfaction, the other proceeding from the efficacy[43] of the same. They differ in their *end*: the one bestowing a title to everlasting Glory, the other being the highway that conducts us there.

Definition of Sanctification

> *"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."—Isaiah 35:8*

The words "holiness" and "sanctification" are used in our English Bible to represent one and the same word in the Hebrew and Greek originals, but they are by no means used with a uniform signification, being employed with quite a varied latitude and scope. Hence it is hardly to be wondered at that theologians have framed so many different definitions of their meaning. Among them we may cite the following, each of which, save the last, having an element of truth in them. "Sanctification is Godlikeness, or being renewed after His image." "Holiness is conformity to the Law of God, in heart and life." "Sanctification is a freedom from the tyranny of sin, into the liberty of righteousness." "Sanctification is that work of the Spirit whereby we are fitted to be worshipers of God." "Holiness is a process of cleansing from the pollution of sin." "It is a moral renovation of our natures whereby they are made more and more like Christ." "Sanctification is the total eradication of the carnal nature, so that sinless perfection is attained in this life." [This definition is patently untrue.]

Another class of writers, held in high repute in certain circles, and whose works now have a wide circulation, have formed a faulty, or at least very inadequate, definition of the word "sanctify," through limiting themselves to a certain class of passages where the term occurs, and making deductions from only one set of facts. For example, not a few have cited verse after verse in the Old Testament where the word "holy" is applied to inanimate objects, like the vessels of the tabernacle, and then have argued that the term itself *cannot* possess a *moral* value. But that is false reasoning; it would be like saying that because we read of the "everlasting hills" (Gen 49:26) and the "everlasting mountains" (Hab 3:6) that therefore *God* cannot be "everlasting"—which is the line of logic(?) employed by many of the Universalists[44] so as to set aside the truth of the everlasting punishment of the wicked.

Words must first be used of *material* objects before we are ready to employ them in a higher and abstract sense. All our ideas[45] are admitted through the medium of physical senses, and consequently refer in the first place to external objects. But as the intellect develops, we apply those names, given to material things, unto those that are immaterial. In the earliest stages of human history, God dealt with His people according to this principle. It is true that God's sanctifying of the Sabbath day teaches us that the first meaning of the word is "to set apart," but to argue from this that the term *never* has a moral force when it is applied to moral agents is not worthy of being called "reasoning"—it is a mere begging of the question: as well argue that since in a majority of passages "baptism" has reference to the immersion of a person in water, it can never have a mystical or spiritual force and value, which is contradicted by Luke 12:50 and 1 Corinthians 12:13.

The outward ceremonies prescribed by God to the Hebrews with regard to their external form of religious service, were all designed to teach corresponding inward duties, and to show the obligation unto moral virtues. But so determined are many of our moderns to empty the word "sanctify" of all moral value, they quote such verses as "for their sakes I sanctify myself" (Joh 17:19) and, inasmuch as there was no sin in the Lord Jesus from which He needed cleansing, have triumphantly concluded that the thought of moral purification *cannot* enter into the meaning of the word when it is applied to His people. This also is a serious error—what the lawyers would call "special pleading."[46] With just as much reason might we insist the word "tempt" can never signify to solicit and incline to evil, because it cannot mean that when used of Christ in Matthew 4:1 and Hebrews 4:15!

Its Meaning in Scripture

The only satisfactory way of ascertaining the meaning or meanings of the word "sanctify" is to carefully examine *every* passage in which it is found in holy Writ, studying its setting, weighing any term with which it is contrasted, observing the objects or persons to which it is applied. This calls for much patience and care, yet only thus do we obey that exhortation "prove all things" (1Th 5:21). That this term denotes more than simply "to separate" or "set apart," is clear from Numbers 6:8, where it is said of the Nazarite, "all the days of his separation he is holy unto the LORD," for according to some that would merely signify "all the days of his separation he is separated unto the Lord," which would be meaningless tautology.[47] So again, of the Lord Jesus we are told that He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb 7:26), which shows that "holy" means something more than "separation."

That the word "sanctify" (or "holy"—the *same* Hebrew or Greek term) is far from being used in a uniform sense is clear from the following passages. In Isaiah 66:17, it is said of certain wicked men, "They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh." In Isaiah 13:3 God said of the Medes, whom He had appointed to overthrow the Babylonian empire, "I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger." When applied to God Himself, the term denotes His ineffable[48] majesty, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy" (Isa 57:15; *see also* Psa 99:3, Hab 3:3). It also includes the thought of adorning and equipping: "thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it" (Exo 29:36; *see also* 40:11); "anointed him, to sanctify him" (Lev 8:12; *see also* v. 30), "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use" (2Ti 2:21).

That the word "holy" or "sanctify" has in many passages a reference to a *moral quality* is clear from such verses as the following: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom 7:12)—each of these predicates are moral qualities. Among the identifying marks of a scriptural bishop are that he must be "a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate" (Ti 1:8)—each of those are moral qualities, and the very connection in which the term "holy" is there found proves conclusively it means much more than an external setting apart. "As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Rom 6:19). Here the word "holiness" is used antithetically to "uncleanness." So again in 1 Corinthians 7:14, "else were your children unclean; but now are they holy," that is, maritally[49] pure.

That sanctification includes *cleansing* is clear from many considerations. It may be seen in the types, "Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes" (Exo 19:10)—the latter being an emblem of the former. As we have seen in Romans 6:19 and 1 Corinthians 7:14, it is the *opposite* of "uncleanness." So also in 2 Timothy 2:21 the servant of God is to *purge* himself from the vessels "to dishonor"[50] (worldly, fleshly, and apostate preachers and churches), if he is to be

"sanctified" and "meet for the Master's use." In Ephesians 5:26 we are told that Christ gave Himself for the Church, "that he might sanctify and cleanse it," and that, in order that He "might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but [in contrast from such blemishes] that it should be holy" (v. 27). "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh" (Heb 9:13)—what could be plainer: ceremonial[51] sanctification under the Law was secured by a process of purification or cleansing!

> *Purification is the first proper notion of internal real sanctification. To be unclean absolutely, and to be holy, are universally opposed. Not to be purged from sin is an expression of an unholy person, as to be cleansed is of him that is holy. This purification is ascribed unto all the causes and means of sanctification. Not that sanctification consists wholly herein, but firstly and necessarily it is required thereunto: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you" (Eze 36:25). That this sprinkling of clean water upon us is the communication of the Spirit unto us for the end designed, I have before evinced.[52] It hath also been declared wherefore He is called "water" or compared thereunto. Verse 27 shows expressly that it is the Spirit of God which is intended: "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." And that which He is thus in the first place promised for, is the cleansing of us from the pollution of sin, which, in order of nature, is proposed unto His enabling us to walk in God's statutes (John Owen).*

To sanctify, then, means in the great majority of instances to appoint, dedicate, or set apart unto God for a holy and special use. Yet that act of separation is not a bare change of situation, so to speak, but is preceded or accompanied by a work that (ceremonially or experimentally) *fits* the person for God. Thus the priests in their sanctification (Lev 8) were sanctified by washing in water (type of regeneration: Titus 3:5), having the blood applied to their persons (type of justification: Romans 5:9), and being anointed with oil (type of receiving the Holy Spirit: 1 John 2:20, 27). As the term is applied to Christians it is used to designate three things, or three parts of one whole. First, the *process* of setting them apart unto God or constituting them holy: Hebrews 13:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:3. Second, the *state* or condition of holy separation into which they are brought: 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 4:24. Third, the personal sanctity or *holy living* that proceeds from the state: Luke 1:75; 1 Peter 1:15.

[We now] revert again to the Old Testament types, which are generally the best interpreters of the doctrinal statements of the New Testament, providing we carefully bear in mind that the antitype[53] is always of a higher order and superior nature to what prefigured it—as the substance must excel the shadow, the inward and spiritual surpassing the merely outward and ceremonial. "Sanctify unto me all the firstborn…it is mine" (Exo 13:2). This comes immediately after the deliverance of the firstborn by the blood of the paschal[54] lamb in the preceding chapter: first justification, and then sanctification as the complementary parts of one whole.

> *Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine (Lev 20:25-26).*

Here we see there was a separation *from* all that is unclean, with an unreserved and exclusive devotement[55]*to* the Lord.

Its Necessity

Its Necessity, Part One

Introduction

It is our earnest desire to write on the doctrine of sanctification, not in a theological or merely abstract way, but in a *practical* manner:[56] in such a way that it may please the Lord to speak through it to our needy hearts and search our benumbed consciences. It is a most important branch of our subject, yet one from which we are prone to shrink, being very unpalatable to the flesh. Having been shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin (Psa 51:5), our hearts *naturally* hate holiness, being opposed to any experimental acquaintance with the same. As the Lord Jesus told the religious leaders of His day, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light" (Joh 3:19), which may justly be paraphrased "men loved sin rather than holiness"—for in Scripture "darkness" is the emblem of sin, the evil one being denominated "the power of darkness" (Luk 22:53), as "light" is the emblem of the ineffably Holy One (1Jo 1:5).

But though by nature man is opposed to the Light, it is written, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb 12:14). To the same effect the Lord Jesus declared, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Mat 5:8). God will not call unto nearness with Himself those who are carnal and corrupt. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amo 3:3). What concord can there be between an unholy soul and the thrice holy God? Our God is "glorious in holiness" (Exo 15:11), and therefore those whom He separates unto Himself must be suited to Himself and be made "partakers of his holiness" (Heb 12:10). The whole of His ways with man exhibit this principle, and His Word continually proclaims that He is "not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee" (Psa 5:4).

By our fall in Adam, we lost not only the favor of God but also the purity of our natures, and therefore we need to be both reconciled[57] to God *and* sanctified in our inner man. There is now a spiritual leprosy spread over all our nature, which makes us loathsome to God and puts us into a state of separation from Him. No matter what pains the sinner takes to be rid of his horrible disease, he does but hide and not cleanse it. Adam concealed neither his nakedness nor the shame of it by his fig-leaf contrivance (Gen 3:1-8); so those who have no covering for their natural filthiness other than the externals of religion rather proclaim than hide it! Make no mistake on this score: neither the outward profession of Christianity nor the doing of a few good works will give us access to the thrice-Holy One. Unless we are washed by the Holy Spirit and in the blood of Christ from our native pollutions,[58] we cannot enter the kingdom of Glory.

Alas, with what forms of godliness, outward appearances, external embellishments are most people satisfied. How they mistake the shadows for the substance, the means for the end itself. How many devout Laodiceans are there who *know not* that they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev 3:17). No preaching affects them; nothing will bring them to exclaim with the prophet, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God" (Ezr 9:6). No, if they do but preserve themselves from the known guilt of such sins as are punishable among men, to all other things their conscience seems dead: they have no inward shame for anything between their souls and God, especially not for the depravity and defilement of their natures—of *that* they know, feel, bewail nothing!

"There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness" (Pro 30:12). Although they had never been cleansed by the Holy Spirit, nor their hearts purified by faith (Act 15:9), yet they esteemed themselves to be pure, and had not the least sense of their foul defilement. Such a generation were the self-righteous Pharisees of Christ's day: they were constantly cleansing their

hands and cups, engaged in an interminable round of ceremonial washings, yet were they thoroughly ignorant of the fact that *within* they were filled with all manner of defilement (Mat 23:25-28). So is a generation of churchgoers today; they are orthodox in their views, reverent in their demeanor, regular in their contributions, but they make no conscience of the state of their hearts.

That sanctification or personal holiness that we here desire to show the absolute necessity of, lies in or consists of three things. *First*, that internal change or renovation of our souls whereby our minds, affections, and wills are brought into harmony with God. *Second*, that impartial compliance with the revealed will of God in all duties of obedience and abstinence from evil, issuing from a principle of faith and love. *Third*, that directing of all our actions unto the glory of God, by Jesus Christ, according to the gospel. This, and nothing short of this, is evangelical[59] and saving sanctification. The heart must be changed so as to be brought into conformity with God's nature and will: its motives, desires, thoughts and actions require to be purified. There must be a spirit of holiness working within so as to sanctify our outward performances if they are to be acceptable unto Him in Whom "there is no darkness at all."

Evangelical holiness consists not only in external works of piety and charity, but in pure thoughts, impulses and affections of the soul, chiefly in that disinterested[60] love from which all good works must flow if they are to receive the approbation[61] of heaven. Not only must there be an abstinence from the execution of sinful lusts, but there must be a loving and delighting to do the will of God in a cheerful manner, obeying Him without repining[62] or grudging against any duty, as if it were a grievous yoke to be borne. Evangelical sanctification is that holiness of heart which causes us to love God supremely, so as to yield ourselves wholly up to His constant service in all things—to His disposal of us as our absolute Lord, whether it be for prosperity or adversity, for life or death—and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

This entire sanctification of our whole inner and outer man is absolutely indispensable. As there must be a change of *state* before there can be of *life*—"make the tree good, and his fruit [will be] good" (Mat 12:33)—so there must be sanctification before there can be glorification.[63] Unless we are purged from the pollution of sin, we can never be fit for communion[64] with God. "And there shall in no wise enter into it [the eternal dwelling place of God and His people] any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination" (Rev 21:27). "To suppose that an unpurged sinner can be brought into the blessed enjoyment of God is to overthrow both the Law and the gospel, and to say that Christ died in vain."[65] Personal holiness is equally imperative as the forgiveness of sins in order to eternal bliss.

Plain and convincing as should be the above statements, there is a class of professing Christians who wish to regard the justification of the believer as constituting almost the whole of his salvation, instead of its being only one aspect thereof. Such people delight to dwell upon the imputed righteousness of Christ, but they evince little or no concern about personal holiness. On the other hand, there are not a few who, in their reaction from a one-sided emphasis upon justification by grace through faith alone, have gone to the opposite extreme, making sanctification the sum and substance of all their thinking and preaching. Let it be solemnly realized that, while a man may learn thoroughly the scriptural doctrine of justification and yet not be *himself* justified before God, so he may be able to detect the crudities and errors of "the Holiness people,"[66] and yet be completely unsanctified himself. But it is chiefly the first of these two errors we now desire to expose, and we cannot do better than quote at length from Walter Marshall, who has most helpfully dealt with it.

If We Are Justified, We Will Desire to Be Sanctified.

[The following is quoted from Walter Marshall.]

> *We are to look upon holiness as a very necessary part of that salvation that is received by faith in Christ. Some are so drenched in a covenant of works that they accuse us of making good works needless to salvation, if we will not acknowledge them to be necessary, either as conditions to procure an interest in Christ, or as preparatives to fit us for receiving Him by faith. And others, when they are*

taught by the Scriptures that we are saved by faith, even by faith without works, do begin to disregard all obedience to the Law as not at all necessary to salvation, and do account themselves obliged to it only in point of gratitude—if it be wholly neglected, they doubt not but free grace will save them nevertheless. Yea, some are given up to such strong Antinomian[67] delusions, that they account it a part of the liberty from bondage of the Law purchased by the blood of Christ, to make no conscience of breaking the Law in their conduct.

One cause of these errors that are so contrary one to the other, is that many are prone to imagine nothing else to be meant by "salvation" but to be delivered from hell and to enjoy heavenly happiness and glory. Hence they conclude that, if good works be a means of glorification, and precedent to it, they must also be precedent means of our whole salvation, and that, if they be not a necessary means of our whole salvation, they are not at all necessary to glorification. But though "salvation" be often taken in Scripture by way of eminency for its perfection in the state of heavenly glory, yet, according to its full and proper signification, we are to understand by it all that freedom from the evil of our natural corrupt state, and all those holy and happy enjoyments that we receive from Christ our Saviour—either in this world by faith or in the world to come by glorification. Thus justification, the gift of the Spirit to dwell in us, [and] the privilege of adoption [deliverance from the reigning power of indwelling sin] are parts of our "salvation" that we partake of in this life. Thus also, the conformity of our hearts to the Law of God, and the fruits of righteousness with which we are filled by Jesus Christ in this life, are necessary parts of our "salvation."

God saveth us from our sinful uncleanness here by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit (Eze 36:29; Ti 3:5), as well as from hell hereafter. Christ was called Jesus, that is, a Saviour, because He saves His people from their sins (Mat 1:21). Therefore, deliverance from our sins is part of our "salvation," which is begun in this life by justification and sanctification, and perfected by glorification in the life to come. Can we rationally doubt whether it be any proper part of our salvation by Christ to be quickened, so as to be enabled to live to God, when we were by nature dead in trespasses and sins; and to have the image of God in holiness and righteousness restored to us, which we lost by the Fall; and to be freed from a vile dishonorable slavery to Satan and our own lusts, and made the servants of God; and to be honoured so highly as to walk by the Spirit, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit? And what is all this but holiness in heart and life?

Conclude we, then, that holiness in this life is absolutely necessary to salvation, not only as a means to the end, but by a nobler kind of necessity: as part of the end itself. Though we are not saved by good works as procuring causes, yet we are saved to good works, as fruits and effects of saving grace "which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10). It is, indeed, one part of our salvation to be delivered from the bondage of the Covenant of Works;[68] but the end of this is not that we may have liberty to sin (which is the worst of slavery), but that we may fulfill the royal law of liberty, and that "we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Rom 7:6). Yea, holiness in this life is such a part of our "salvation" that it is a necessary means to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in heavenly light and glory—for without holiness we can never see God (Heb 12:14), and are as unfit for His glorious presence as swine for the presence-chamber of an earthly king.

The last thing to be noted in this direction is that holiness of heart and life is to be sought for earnestly by faith as a very necessary part of our "salvation." Great multitudes of ignorant people that live under the gospel harden their hearts in sin and ruin their souls forever by trusting on Christ for such an imaginary "salvation" as consisteth not at all in holiness, but only in forgiveness of sin and deliverance from everlasting torments. They would be free from the punishments due to sin, but they love their lusts so well that they hate holiness and desire not to be saved from the service of sin. The way to oppose this pernicious[69] delusion is not to deny, as some do, that trusting on Christ for salvation is a saving act of faith, but rather to show that none do or can trust on Christ for true "salvation" except they trust on Him for holiness. Neither do they heartily desire true salvation if they do not desire to be made holy and righteous in their hearts and lives. If ever God and Christ give you "salvation," holiness will be one part of it. If Christ wash you not from the filth of your sins, you have no part with Him (Joh 13:8).

What a strange kind of salvation do they desire that care not for holiness! They would be saved and yet be altogether dead in sin, aliens from the life of God, bereft of the image of God, deformed by the image of Satan, his slaves and vassals to their own filthy lusts, utterly unmeet for the enjoyment of God in Glory. Such a salvation as that was never purchased by the blood of Christ, and those that seek it abuse the grace of God in Christ and turn it into lasciviousness.[70] They would be saved by Christ and yet be out of Christ in a fleshly state; whereas God doth free none from condemnation but those that are in Christ, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Or else they would divide Christ, and take a part of His salvation and leave out the rest; but Christ is not divided (1Co 1:13). They would have their sins forgiven, not that they may walk with God in love, in time to come, but that they may practice their enmity against Him without any fear of punishment. But let them not be deceived, "God is not mocked" (Gal 6:7). They understand not what true salvation is, neither were they ever yet thoroughly sensible of their lost estate and of the great evil of sin; and that which they trust on Christ for is but an imagination of their own brains—and therefore their trusting is gross presumption.

True gospel-faith maketh us come to Christ with a thirsty appetite that we may drink of living water, even of His sanctifying Spirit (Joh 7:37-38), and cry out earnestly to Him to save us, not only from hell, but from sin, saying, "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good" (Psa 143:10); "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned" (Jer 31:18); "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psa 51:10). This is the way whereby the doctrine of salvation by grace doth necessitate us to holiness of life, by constraining us to seek for it by faith in Christ, as a substantial part of that "salvation" which is freely given to us through Christ (Walter Marshall,[71] 1692).

The above is a much longer quotation than we usually make from others, but we could not abbreviate without losing much of its force. We have given it not only because it is one of the clearest and strongest

statements we have met with, but because it will indicate that the doctrine we are advancing is no novel one of our own, but one that was much insisted upon by the Puritans. Alas, that so few today have any real Scriptural apprehension of what *salvation* really is; alas that many preachers are substituting an imaginary "salvation," which is fatally deceiving the great majority of their hearers. Make no mistake upon this point, dear reader, we beg you: if your heart is yet unsanctified, you are still unsaved; and if you pant not after personal holiness, then you are without any real desire for *God's* salvation.

The salvation that Christ purchased for His people includes both justification and sanctification. The Lord Jesus saves not only from the guilt and penalty of sin, but from the power and pollution of it. Where there is genuine longing to be freed from the love of sin, there is a true desire for *His* salvation; but where there is no practical deliverance from the service of sin, then we are strangers to His saving grace. Christ came here to "Perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; the oath which He sware to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life" (Luk 1:72-75). It is by this we are to test or measure ourselves: are *we* serving Him "in holiness and righteousness"? If we are not, we have not been sanctified; and if we are unsanctified, we are none of His!

Its Necessity, Part Two

In the first part of our treatment of the necessity of sanctification, it was shown that the making of a sinner holy is indispensable unto his salvation;[72] yea, that sanctification is an integral part of salvation itself. One of the most serious defects in modern ministry is the omission of this basic fact. Of only too many present-day "converts" does it have to be said, "Ephraim is a cake not turned" (Hos 7:8)—browned underneath, unbaked on the top. Christ is set forth as a fire escape from hell, but not as the great Physician to deal with the malady[73] of indwelling sin and [to] fit for heaven. Much is said upon how to obtain forgiveness of sins, but little is preached of how to be cleansed from its pollutions. The necessity for His atoning blood is set forth, but not the indispensability of experimental holiness. Consequently, thousands who mentally assent to the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice know nothing about heart purity.

Again, there is a woeful disproportion between the place that is given to faith and the emphasis that the Scriptures give to that obedience which flows from sanctification. It is not only true that "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb 1:6), but it is equally true that without holiness "no man shall see the Lord" (Heb 12:14). Not only are we told "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal 6:15), but it is also written, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God" (1Co 7:19). It is not for nothing that God has told us, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1Ti 4:8). Not only is there in all the promises a particular respect unto personal, vital, and practical "godliness," but it is that very godliness which, pre-eminently, gives the saint an especial interest in those promises.[74]

Alas, how many there are today who imagine that if they have "faith," it is sure to be well with them at the end, even though they are *not* holy. Under the pretense of honoring faith, Satan, as an angel of light, has deceived, and is still deceiving, multitudes of souls (2Co 11:14). But when their "faith" be examined and tested, what is it worth? Nothing at all so far as ensuring an entrance into heaven is concerned; it is a powerless, lifeless, and fruitless thing! It is no better than that faith which the demons have (Jam 2:19). The faith of God's elect is unto "the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness" (Ti 1:1). Saving faith is a "most holy faith" (Jude 20): it is a faith that purifieth the heart (Act 15:9); it is a faith that worketh by love (Gal 5:6); it is a faith that overcometh the world (1Jo 5:4); it is a faith that bringeth forth all manner of good works (Heb 11). Let us now enter into detail, and show more specifically *wherein* lies the necessity for personal holiness.

Wherein Lies the Necessity of Holiness

1. Our personal holiness is required by the very nature of God.

Holiness is the excellence and honour of the divine character. God is called "rich in mercy" (Eph 2:4), but "glorious in holiness" (Exo 15:11); His mercy is His treasure, but holiness is His glory. He swears by this perfection: "Once have I sworn by my holiness" (Psa 89:35). Over thirty times is He called "The Holy One of Israel." This is the superlative[75] perfection for which the angels in heaven and the spirits of just men made perfect do so much admire God, crying "Holy, holy, holy" (Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8). As gold, because it is the most excellent of the metals, is laid over inferior ones, so this divine excellency is laid upon all connected with Him: His Sabbath is "holy" (Exo 16:23), His sanctuary is "holy" (Exo 15:13), His name is "holy" (Psa 99:3), all His works are "holy" (Psa 145:17). Holiness is the perfection of all His glorious attributes: His power is holy power, His mercy is holy mercy, His wisdom is holy wisdom.

Now the ineffable purity of the divine nature is everywhere in the Scriptures made the fundamental reason for the necessity of holiness in us. God makes the holiness of His own nature the ground of His demand for holiness in His people: "For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (Lev 11:44). The same fundamental principle is transferred to the gospel, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1Pe 1:15-16). Thus God plainly lets us know that His nature is such, and unless we be sanctified, there can be no intercourse[76] between Him and us. "For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (Lev 11:45). Without personal holiness, the relationship cannot be maintained that *He* should be *our* God and we should be His people.[77]

God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab 1:13). Such is the infinite purity of His nature that God cannot take any pleasure in lawless rebels, filthy sinners, the workers of iniquity. Joshua told the people plainly that if they continued in their sins, they could not serve the Lord, "for he is an holy God" (24:19). All the service of unholy people toward such a God is utterly lost and thrown away, because it is entirely inconsistent with His nature to accept it. The Apostle Paul reasons in the same manner when he says, "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb 12:28-29). He lays his argument for the necessity of grace and holiness in the worship of God from the consideration of *the holiness of His nature*, which, as a consuming fire, will devour that which is unsuited to and inconsistent with it.

He who resolves not to be holy must seek another god to worship and serve, for with the God of Scripture he will never find acceptance. The heathen of old realized this, and liking not to retain the knowledge of the true God in their hearts and minds (Rom 1:28), and resolving to give up themselves unto all filthiness with greediness, they stifled their notions of the divine Being and invented such "gods" to themselves as were unclean and wicked, that they might freely conform to and serve *them* with satisfaction. God Himself declares that men of corrupt lives have some secret hopes that He is not holy: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee" (Psa 50:21). Others, today, while professing to believe in God's holiness, have such false ideas of His grace and mercy that they suppose He will accept them though they are unholy.

"Be ye holy, for I am holy." Why? Because herein consists our conformity to God. We were originally created in the image and likeness of God, and that, for the substance of it, was *holiness*—therein consisted the privilege, blessedness, pre-eminence of man over all the lower creatures. Wherefore, without this conformity to God, without the impress of His image and likeness upon the soul, we cannot stand in that relation to God that was designed us in our creation. This we lost by the entrance of sin, and if there be not a way for us to acquire it again, we shall forever come short of the glory of God and the end[78] of our creation. Now this is done by our becoming holy, for therein consists the renovation of God's image in us (Eph 4:22-24; *see also* Col 3:10). It is utterly vain for any man to expect an interest in God while he does not earnestly endeavor[79] after conformity to Him.

To be sanctified is just as requisite[80] as to be justified. He that thinks to come to enjoyment of God without holiness, makes Him an unholy God, and puts the highest indignity imaginable upon Him. There is no other alternative: we must leave either our sins or our God. We may as easily reconcile heaven and hell—as easily take away all difference between light and darkness, good and evil—as procure acceptance for unholy persons[81] with God. While it be true that our interest in God is not built upon our holiness, it is equally true that we have none without it. Many have greatly erred in concluding that, because piety and obedience are not meritorious, they can get to heaven without them. The free grace of God towards sinners by Jesus Christ, by no means renders holiness needless and useless. Christ is not the

minister of sin, but the Maintainer of God's glory. He has not purchased for His people security *in* sin, but salvation *from* sin.

According to our growth in likeness unto God, are our approaches unto Glory. Each day both writer and reader are drawing nearer the end of their earthly courses, and we do greatly deceive ourselves if we imagine that we are drawing nearer to heaven while following those courses which lead only to hell. We are woefully deluded if we suppose that we are journeying towards Glory, and yet are not growing in grace. The believer's glory, subsequently considered, will be his likeness to Christ (1Jo 3:2), and it is the very height of folly for any to think that they shall love hereafter what now they hate. There is no other way of growing in the likeness of God *but in holiness*; thereby alone are we "changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2Co 3:18)—that is, from one degree of glorious grace to another, until by one last great change shall issue all grace and holiness in eternal Glory.

But is not God ready to pardon and receive the greatest and vilest sinner who comes unto Him by Christ? Is not His mercy so great and His grace so free that He will do so apart from *any consideration* of worth or righteousness of their own? If so, why insist so much on the indispensability of holiness? This objection, though thousands of years old, is still made. If men must be holy, then carnal reasoners can see no need of grace; and they cannot see how God is gracious if men perish because they are unholy. Nothing seems more reasonable to carnal minds than that we may live in sin because grace has abounded. This is met by the apostle in Romans 6:1, where he subjoins the reasons why—notwithstanding the super-aboundings of grace in Christ—there is an indispensable necessity why all believers should be holy. Without the necessity of holiness in us, grace would be disgraced. Note how when He proclaimed His name "gracious and merciful," the Lord at once added, "and will by no means clear the guilty" (Exo 34:6-7); that is, those who go on in their sins without regard to obedience.

2. Our personal holiness is required by the commands of God.

Not only is this so under the Covenant of Works, but the same is inseparably annexed under the Covenant of Grace.[82] No relaxation unto the duty of holiness is granted by the gospel, nor any indulgence unto the least sin. The gospel is no less holy than the Law, for both proceeded from the Holy One; and though provision be made for the pardon of a multitude of sins for the acceptance of the Christian's imperfect obedience,[83] yet the standard of righteousness is not lowered, for there is no abatement given by the gospel unto any duty of holiness nor any license unto the least sin. The difference between those covenants is twofold: under that of works all the duties of holiness were required as our righteousness before God, that we might be justified thereby (Rom 10:5)—not so under grace; no allowance was made for the least degree of failure (James 2:10)—but, now, through the mediation of Christ, justice and mercy are joined together.

Under the gospel-commands for universal holiness respect is required to three things. First, to the *authority* of Him Who gives them. Authority is that which obligates to obedience: see Malachi 1:6. Now He Who commands us to be holy is our sovereign Lawgiver, with absolute right to prescribe that which He pleases, and therefore a noncompliance is a despising of the divine Legislator. To be under God's command to be holy, and then not to sincerely and earnestly endeavor always and in all things so to be, is to reject His sovereign authority over us, and to live in defiance of Him. No better than *that* is the state of everyone who does not make the pursuit of holiness his daily and chief concern. Forgetfulness of this, or failure to heed it as we ought, is the chief reason of our careless walking. Our great safeguard is to keep our hearts and minds under a sense of the sovereign authority of God in His commands.

Second, we must keep before our minds the *power* of Him Who commands us to be holy. "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy" (Jam 4:12). God's commanding authority is accompanied with such power that He will eternally reward the obedient and eternally punish the disobedient. The commands of God are accompanied with promises of eternal bliss on the one hand, and

of eternal misery on the other; and this will most certainly befall us according as we shall be found holy or unholy. Herein is to be seen a further reason for the indispensable necessity of our being holy: if we are not, then a holy and all-powerful God will damn us. A due respect to God's promises and threatenings is a principal part of spiritual liberty: "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Gen 17:1). The way to walk uprightly is to ever bear in mind that He Who requires it of us is Almighty God, under Whose eyes we are continually. If, then, we value our souls, let us seek grace to act accordingly.

Third, respect is to be had to the infinite *wisdom and goodness* of God. In His commands God not only maintains His sovereign authority over us but also exhibits His righteousness and love. His commands are not the arbitrary edicts of a capricious[84] despot, but the wise decrees of One Who has *our good* at heart. His commands "are not grievous" (1Jo 5:3): they are not tyrannical restraints of our liberty, but are just, wholesome, and highly beneficial. It is to our great advantage to comply with them; it is for our happiness, both now and hereafter, that we obey them. They are a heavy burden only to those who desire to be the slaves of sin and Satan: they are easy and pleasant to all who walk with God. Love for God carries with it a desire to please Him, and from Christ may be obtained that grace which will assist us thereto—but of this, more later, D.V.[85]

3. Our personal holiness is required by the mediation of Christ.

One principal end of the design of God in sending His Son into the world was to recover us unto that state of holiness that we had lost: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1Jo 3:8). Among the principal of the works of the devil was the infecting[86] of our natures and persons with a principle of sin and enmity against God,[87] and that evil work is not destroyed but by the introduction of a principle of holiness and obedience. The image of God in us was defaced by sin; the restoration of that image was one of the main purposes of Christ's mediation. Christ's great and ultimate design was to bring His people unto the enjoyment of God to His eternal Glory, and this can only be by grace and holiness, by which we are made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col 1:12).

Now the exercise of Christ's mediation is discharged under His threefold office. As to His *priestly*, the immediate[88] effects were the making of satisfaction and reconciliation, but the mediate[89] effects are our justification and sanctification: "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Ti 2:14)—no *unholy* people, then, have any sure evidence of an interest in Christ's sacrifice. As to His *prophetic* office, this consists in His revelation to us of God's love and will: to make God known and to bring us into subjection to Him. At the very beginning of His prophetic ministry, we find Christ restoring the Law to its original purity—purging it from the corruptions of the Jews: Matthew 5. As to His *kingly* office, He subdues our lusts and supplies power for obedience. It is by these things we are to test ourselves. To live in known and allowed sin, and yet expect to be saved by Christ, is the master deception of Satan.

From which of Christ's offices do I expect advantage? Is it from His priestly? Then has His blood cleansed me? Have I been made holy thereby?[90] Have I been redeemed out of the world by it? Am I by it dedicated to God and His service? Is it from His prophetic office? Then have I effectually learned of Him to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Ti 2:12)? Has He instructed me unto *sincerity* in all my ways, in all my dealings with God and men? Is it from His kingly office? Then does He *actually* rule in me and over me? Has He delivered me from the power of Satan and caused me to take His [Christ's] yoke upon me? Has His scepter broken the dominion of sin in me? Am I a loyal subject of His kingdom? If not, I have no rightful claim to a personal interest in His sacrifice. Christ died to procure holiness, not to secure an indulgence for unholiness.

4. Our personal holiness is required in order to the glory of Christ.

If we are indeed His disciples, He has bought us with a price, and we are "not our own," but His, and that to glorify Him in soul and body because they are His: 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20. He died for us that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him Who redeemed us at such a fearful cost. How, then, are we to do this? *In our holiness* consists the principal part of that revenue of honor that the Lord Jesus requires and expects from His disciples in this world. Nothing glorifies Him so much as our obedience; nothing is a greater grief and reproach to Him than our disobedience. We are to witness before the world to the holiness of His life, the heavenliness of His doctrine, the preciousness of His death by a daily walk which "shows forth his praises" (1Pe 2:9). This is necessary if we are to glorify Him in this scene of His rejection.

Nothing short of the *life* of Christ is our *example*: this is what the Christian is called to "follow." It is the life of Christ that it is his duty to express in his own, and he who takes up Christianity on any other terms woefully deceives his soul. No more effectual reproach can be cast upon the blessed name of the Lord Jesus than for His professing people to follow the lusts of the flesh, be conformed to this world, and heed the behests of Satan. We can only bear witness for the Savior as we make His doctrine our rule, His glory our concern, His example our practice. Christ is honored not by wordy expressions, but by a holy conversation. Nothing has done more to bring the gospel of Christ into reproach than the wicked lives of those who bear His name. If I am not living a holy and obedient life this shows that I am not *for* Christ, but *against* Him.

(N.B. [91]Much in this chapter is a condensation of John Owen on the same subject, Volume 3 of his works).

Its Problem

The Problem Is with Us, Not with God.

It should hardly be necessary for us to explain that when speaking of the *problem* of sanctification we refer not to such as unto God, but rather as it appears to our feeble perceptions. But in these days it is not wise to take anything for granted, for not only are there some ready to make a man an offender for a word if he fails to express himself to their satisfaction, but there are others who need to have the simplest terms defined to them. No, it would be blasphemy to affirm that sanctification, or anything else, ever presented any problem to the great Jehovah. Omniscience can never be confronted with any difficulty, still less an emergency. But to the Christian's finite understanding, deranged as it has been by sin, the problem of holiness is a very real and actual one; far more perplexing, we may add, than that presented by the subject of justification.

There are various subsidiary difficulties in sanctification, as we intimated in the fourth and fifth paragraphs of the introduction, such as whether sanctification itself be a quality or a position, whether it be legal or experimental, whether it be absolute or progressive—all of which need to be cleared up in any satisfactory treatment of this theme. But far more intricate is the problem itself of how one who is a moral leper can be fit to worship in the Sanctuary of God. Strange to say this problem is the acutest to those who are the most spiritual. Self-righteous Pharisees and self-satisfied Laodiceans[92] are in no wise troubled over the matter. Antinomians cut the knot (instead of untying it) and deny all difficulty by asserting that the holiness of Christ is imputed to us. But those who realize God requires *personal* holiness, yet are conscious of their own filthiness, are deeply concerned thereupon.

Things are now, generally, at such a low ebb, that some of our readers may be surprised to find us making any reference at all to the *problem* of sanctification. In most places today, either the doctrine taught is so inadequate and powerless, or the practice maintained is so defective, that few are likely to be exercised in conscience over the nature of that holiness without which none shall see the Lord. The claims of God are now so whittled down, the exalted standard that Scripture sets forth is so disregarded, *heart purity* (in which vital godliness so largely consists) is so little emphasized, that it is rare to find any concerned about their personal state. If there be some preachers zealously warning against the worthlessness of good works to save where there be no faith in Christ, there are far more who earnestly cry up an empty faith, which is unaccompanied by personal holiness and obedience.

We Need to Be Pure in God's Eyes, and Yet We Are Vile!

Such a low standard of spiritual living now prevails that comparatively few of the Lord's own people have any clear or disturbing conceptions of how far, far short they come of measuring up to the holy model which God has set before us in His Word. Such feeble and faulty ideals of Christian living now prevail that those who are preserved from the grosser evils which even the world condemns, are "at ease in Zion." So little is the fear of God upon souls, so faintly are the majority of professing Christians conscious of the plague of their own hearts, that in most quarters to speak about the *problem* of sanctification would be talking in an unknown tongue. A fearful miasma[93] has settled down upon nine-tenths of Christendom, deadening the senses, blunting spiritual perceptions, paralyzing endeavor after deeper personal piety, till almost anything is regarded as being acceptable to God.

On the other hand there is no doubt that some of us have intensified the problem by creating for ourselves additional and needless difficulties through erroneous ideas of what sanctification is or what it involves in this life. The writer has been personally acquainted with more than one who was in abject despair through failing—after the most earnest and resolute efforts—to attain to a state which false teachers had told them was attainable in this life, and who terminated their mortal wretchedness by committing suicide; and it has long been a wonder to him that thousands more who heed such teachers do not act likewise. There is no need to multiply difficulties: scriptural sanctification is neither the eradication of sin, the purification of the carnal nature, nor even the partial putting to sleep of the "flesh"; still less does it secure an exemption from the attacks and harassments of Satan.

Yet, on the other side, we must not minimize the problem and reduce it to such simple proportions that we suppose a complete solution thereto is provided by merely affirming that Christ is our sanctification, and in himself the believing sinner remains unchanged to the end of his earthly course. If we die unholy in ourselves, then we are most assuredly lost for eternity, for only the "pure in heart" shall ever see God (Mat 5:8). What that purity of heart is, and how it is to be obtained, is the very real problem which sanctification raises. It is at the heart God looks (1Sa 16:7), and it is with the heart we need to be most concerned, for out of it "are the issues of life" (Pro 4:23). The severest woes were pronounced by Christ upon men not because their external conduct was foul, but because *within* they were "full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Mat 23:27).

That personal holiness is absolutely essential for an entrance into heaven was shown at length in our last chapter, and that what men regard as the lesser pollutions of sin just as effectually exclude from the kingdom of God as do the most heinous crimes, is clear from 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10. The question which forces itself upon us is, "How shall men be sanctified so as to suit an infinitely pure God?" That we must be justified before we can stand before a righteous God is no more obvious than that it is necessary we must be sanctified so as to live in the presence of a holy God. But man is utterly without holiness; yea, he is impure, foul, filthy. The testimony of Scripture on this point is plain and full. "They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy" (Psa 14:1-3).

All Men Are Vile.

The testimony of Scripture is that all men are vile and polluted; that they are, root and branch, source and stream, heart and life, not only disobedient, but *unholy*, and therefore *unfit* for God's presence. The Lord Jesus Who knew what was in man, makes this clear enough when, revealing with His own light that loathsome den, the human heart, He says, "Out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mar 7:21-23). Nor must we forget the confession of saints concerning themselves has always corresponded to God's testimony. David says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa 51:5). Job declared, "Behold I am vile" (Job 40:4, 6). Isaiah cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips…for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" (Isa 6:5).

But the most remarkable confession of this absolute vileness is contained in an acknowledgment by the Old Testament church—a sentence which has been taken up by all believers as exactly expressing what they all have to say of their condition by nature: "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa 64:6). Strong language indeed is that, yet not one whit too strong to depict the mud and mire into which the Fall has brought us. If, then, when considering the doctrine of

justification we found it appropriate—in view of man's self-will, lawlessness, and disobedience—to ask, "How shall a man be just with God?" it is no less so now we are contemplating the doctrine of sanctification to enquire—in view of man's uncleanness and filthiness—"Who shall bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" (Job 14:4).

We have no more power to make ourselves holy than we have to unmake or un-being ourselves; we are no more able to cleanse our hearts than we can command or direct the winds. Sin in dominion is the "plague" of the heart (1 Kings 8:38), and as no disease is so deadly as the plague, so there is no plague so deadly as that of the *heart*. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer 13:23). The proud cannot make himself humble; the carnal cannot force himself to become spiritual; the earthly man can no more transform himself into a heavenly man than he can make the sun go backward or the earth fly upward. Sanctification is a work altogether above the powers of human nature: alas that this is so little realized today.

Even among those preachers who desire to be regarded as orthodox, who do not deny the Fall as an historical fact, few among them perceive the dire effects and extent thereof. "*Bruised* by the fall," as one popular hymn puts it, states the truth far too mildly—yea, entirely misstates it. Through the breach of the first covenant all men have lost the image of God,[94] and now bear the image of the devil (Joh 8:44). The whole of their faculties are so depraved that they can neither think (2Co 3:5), speak, nor do anything truly good and acceptable unto God. They are by birth altogether unholy, unclean, loathsome, and abominable, in nature, heart, and life; and it is altogether beyond their power to change themselves. Not only so, but the Curse of the Law lying upon them has severed all spiritual relation between God and them, cutting off all communion and communication with heaven. The driving from the Garden of our first parents and the establishment of the cherubim with the flaming sword at its entrance denoted that in point of justice they were barred from all sanctifying influences reaching them—that being the greatest benefit man is capable of, as assimilating him to God Himself or rendering him like Him. The *curse* has fixed a gulf between God and fallen creatures, so that sanctifying influences cannot pass from Him to them any more than their unholy desires and prayers can pass to Him. It is written, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD" (Pro 15:8). And again, "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD" (v. 26).

The Error of Conforming Only Our Outward Conduct

It has, then, been rightly said that our sanctification "is no less a mystery than our justification" (T. Boston). As the depravity of human nature has always been so manifest that it could not escape notice even in the world, so in all ages men have been seeking to discover a remedy for the same, and have supposed a cure could be achieved by a right use of their rational faculties. But the outcome has always been, at best, but an outward show and semblance of sanctification, going under the name of "moral virtue." But so far is that from meeting the requirements of Him Who is Light that men themselves, once their eyes are (in any measure) anointed with heavenly eye salve, perceive their moral virtue to be as "filthy rags," a menstruous cloth. Until men are regenerate and act from a principle of grace in the heart, all their actions are but imitations of real obedience and piety, as an ape would mimic a man.

It is a common error of those that are unregenerate to seek to reform their conduct without any realization that their *state* must be changed before their lives can possibly be changed from sin to righteousness. The tree itself must be made good before its fruit can possibly be good. As well attempt to make a watch go, whose mainspring is broken, by washing its face and polishing its back, as for one under the curse of God to produce any works acceptable to Him. That was the great mistake Nicodemus labored under: he supposed that *teaching* was all he needed, so that he might adjust his walk to the

acceptance of heaven. But to him the Lord Jesus declared, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (Joh 3:7): that was only another way of saying, Nicodemus, you cannot perform spiritual works before you possess a spiritual nature, and a spiritual nature cannot be had until you are born again.

Multitudes have labored with great earnestness to subdue their evil propensities, and have struggled long and hard to bring their inward thoughts and affections into conformity with the Law of God. They have sought to abstain from all sins, and to perform every known duty. They have been so devout and intent that they have undermined their health, and were so fervent in their zeal that they were ready to kill their bodies with fastings and macerations,[95] if only they might kill their sinful lusts. They were strongly convinced that holiness was absolutely necessary to salvation, and were so deeply affected with the terrors of damnation as to forsake the world and shut themselves up in convents and monasteries—yet all the while ignorant of the *mystery* of sanctification—that *a new state* must precede *a new life.*

It is positively asserted by divine inspiration that, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom 8:8). Alas, how few understand the meaning of those words, "in the flesh"; how many suppose they only signify to be inordinately addicted to the baser passions. Whereas, to be "in the flesh" is to be in a state of nature—fallen, depraved, alienated from the life of God. To be "in the flesh" is not simply being a personal transgressor of God's holy Law, but is *the cause* of all sinfulness and sinning. The "flesh" is the very *nature* of man as corrupted by the Fall of Adam, and propagated from him to us in that corrupt state by natural generation. To be "in the flesh" is also being in complete subjection to the power of the devil, who is the certain conqueror of all who attempt to fight him in their own strength or with his own weapons. The flesh can no more be brought to holiness by man's most vehement endeavors, than he can bring a dead carcass to life by chafing and rubbing it.

Summary

The varied elements which entered into the problem of justification were: God's Law requires from us perfect obedience to its statutes; this we have utterly failed to render; we are therefore under the condemnation and curse of the Law; the Judge Himself is inflexibly just, and will by no means clear the guilty—how, then, can men be shown mercy, without justice being flouted?[96] The elements which enter into the problem of sanctification are: God's Law requires inward as well as outward conformity to it: but we are born into this world with a nature that is totally depraved, and can by no means be brought into subjection to the Law (Rom 8:7). God Himself is ineffably pure, how then can a moral leper be admitted into His presence? We are utterly without holiness, and can no more make ourselves holy than the Ethiopian can change his skin. Even though a holy nature be imparted by regeneration, how can one with the flesh, unchanged within him, draw near as a worshipper unto the heavenly Sanctuary? How can I as a person possibly regard myself as holy, while conscious that I am full of sin? How can I honestly profess to have a "pure heart," while realizing that a sea of corruption still rages within me? If my *state* must be changed before anything in my *life* is acceptable to God, what can I possibly do?—I cannot unmake myself. If *I* know that I am polluted and vile, and utterly unsuited unto the thrice holy God, how much less can *He* regard me as fit for His presence?

Its Solution

Its Solution, Part One

The Mystery for the Unregenerate

In connection with the grand truth of sanctification, there is both a mystery and a problem: the former relates to the unregenerate—the latter is what exercises so deeply the regenerate. That which is hidden from the understanding of the natural man is why his best performances are unacceptable unto God, no matter how earnestly and devoutly they be done. Even though he be informed that the tree must be made good if its fruit is to be wholesome, in other words, that his very *state* and *nature* must first be made acceptable to God before any of his *works* can be so, he has not the remotest idea of how this is to be accomplished. But that which perplexes the spiritual man is, how one who is still full of sin may justly regard his state and nature as being acceptable unto God, and how one who is a mass of corruption within can honestly claim to be holy. As the Lord is pleased to enable we will consider each in turn.

The natural man is quite ignorant of the mystery of sanctification. Though he may—under the spur of conscience, the fear of hell, or from desire to go to heaven—be very diligent in seeking to conquer the activities of indwelling sin and exceedingly zealous in performing every known duty, yet he is quite in the dark as to why his *state* must be changed before his *actions* can be acceptable unto God. That upon which he is unenlightened is that it is not *the matter* which makes a work good and pleasing to God but *the principles* from which that work proceeds. It is true that the conscience of the natural man distinguishes between good and evil, and religious instruction may educate him to do much that is right and avoid much that is wrong. Nevertheless, his actions are not done out of gratitude and in a spirit of loving obedience, but out of fear and from a servile[97] spirit. Therefore, they are like fruit ripened by art[98] and forced in the hothouse, rather than normally by the genial[99] rays of the sun.

"Now the end [design] of the commandment [or, law] is charity [love] out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (1Ti 1:5). Nothing less than this will meet the divine requirements. Only those actions are pleasing to God which have respect to His commandment, which proceed from gratitude to Him for His goodness, and where faith has respect unto His promised acceptance and blessing. No works are approved of heaven except they possess these qualities. A sense of duty must sway the conscience, disinterested affection must move the heart, and faith in exercise must direct the actions. Hence, should I be asked why I do thus and so? The answer should be, "Because God has commanded it." And if it be further enquired, "And why such earnestness and affection?" The answer ought to be, "Because God requires my best, and I desire to honor Him with the same." Obedience respects God's authority; love His kindness; faith His bounty or reward.

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1Co 10:31). This must be our design—the glory of God—if our actions are to meet with His approval. Whether it be the discharge of our temporal duties, the performing of deeds of charity and kindness, or acts of piety and devotion, they must be executed with this aim: that *God* may be honoured by our conformity to His revealed will. The natural man, when in sore straits, will cry fervently unto God, but it is only that *his* wants may be supplied. Many will contribute liberally of their means to the relief of sufferers, but it is "that they may have glory of men" (Mat 6:2). People are religious on the Sabbath and attend public worship, but it is either to satisfy an uneasy conscience or in the hope of earning heaven thereby.

From what has been said above, it should be clear that the best deeds of the unregenerate fall far short of the divine requirements. The actions of the natural man cannot receive the approbation of heaven, because God is neither the beginning nor the end of them: love for Him is not their spring, glorifying Him is not their aim. Instead, they issue from the workings of corrupt self, and they have in view only the

advancement of self. Nor can it be otherwise. Water will not rise above its own level, or flow uphill. A pure stream cannot issue from an impure fountain. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (Joh 3:6), and will never be anything but flesh: educate, refine, religionize the flesh all we may, it can never become spirit. The man himself must be sanctified, before his actions are purified.

But how shall men be sanctified so as to be suited for the presence of an infinitely pure God? By nature they are utterly without holiness: they are corrupt, filthy, an unclean thing. They have no more power to make themselves holy than they have to create a world. We could tame a tiger from the jungle far more easily than we could our lusts. We might empty the ocean more quickly than we could banish pride from our souls. We might melt marble more readily than our hard hearts. We might purge the sea of salt more easily than we could our beings of sin. "For though thou wash thee with nitre,[100] and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD" (Jer 2:22).

> *When we were in our best condition by nature, when we were in the state of original holiness, when we were in Adam vested with the image of God, we preserved it not. How much less likely then, is it, that now, in the state of lapsed and depraved nature, it is in our power to restore ourselves, to reintroduce the image of God into our souls, and that in a far more eminent manner than it was at first created by God? What need of all that contrivance of infinite wisdom and grace for the reparation[101] of our nature by Jesus Christ, if holiness, wherein it doth consist, be in our power, and educed[102] out of the natural faculties of our souls? There can be no more fond imagination befall the minds of men, than that defiled nature is able to cleanse itself, or depraved nature to rectify itself, or we, who have lost that image of God which He created in us, and with us, should create it again in ourselves by our own endeavors (John Owen).*

Yet, let it be pointed out that this impotency to measure up to the requirements of God is no mere innocent infirmity, but a highly culpable[103] thing, which greatly aggravates our vileness and adds to our guilt. Our inability to measure up to the standard of personal piety which God has appointed lies not in a lack of executive power or the needful faculties, but in the want of a willing mind and a ready heart to practice true holiness. If men in a natural state had a hearty love and liking to true holiness, and a fervent and sincere endeavor to practice it, and yet failed in the event, then they might under some pretence plead for this excuse (as many do), that they are compelled to sin by an inevitable necessity. But the fact is that man's impotency lies in his own *obstinacy*—"Ye will not come to me" (Joh 5:40) said the Lord Jesus.

Inability to pay a debt does not excuse a debtor who has recklessly squandered his estate; nor does drunkenness excuse the mad or violent actions of a drunkard, but rather aggravates his crime. God has not lost His right to command, even though man through his wickedness has lost his power to obey. Because the flesh "lusteth against the Spirit" (Gal 5:17), that is far from an extenuation[104] for not being in subjection to Him. Because "everyone that doeth evil hateth the light," that is far from justifying them because they "loved darkness" (Joh 3:19-20); yea, as the Savior there so plainly and solemnly states, it only serves to heighten their criminality—"This is the condemnation." Then "How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?" (Job 15:16) that cannot practice holiness because he will not.

It is because men do not *make a right use of* their faculties that they are justly condemned. The soul in an unsanctified person is not dead, but is a living and acting principle; and therefore it is able to understand, desire, will, reason, and improve its opportunities, or redeem the time. Though the natural man is unable to work grace in his own heart, yet he *is* able to attend and wait upon the means of grace.[105] An unsanctified person may as well go to hear a sermon as attend a theatre: he has the same eyes for reading the Scriptures as the newspaper or a novel: he may as well associate himself with those who fear an oath, as with those who delight to blaspheme that Name at which all should tremble. In the Day of Judgment unsanctified persons will be damned, not for *cannots*, but for *will nots*.

Men complain that they cannot purify themselves, that they cannot cease from sin, that they cannot repent,[106] that they cannot believe in Christ, that they cannot live a holy life. But if only they were honest, if they were duly humbled, if they sincerely grieved over the awful hold which sin has obtained

upon them, they would fly to the Throne of Grace, they would cry unto God day and night for Him to break the chains which bind them, deliver them from the power of Satan and translate them into the kingdom of His dear Son. If they were but sincere in their complaint of inability, they would go to God and beg Him to sprinkle clean water upon them, put His Spirit within them, and give them a new heart, so that they might walk in His statutes and keep His judgments (Eze 36:25-28). And it is just because they will not, that their blood justly lies upon their own heads.

"Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (Jam 4:8). Outward separation from that which is evil and polluting is not sufficient: purity of heart is also indispensable. "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts" (Psa 51:6). The divine Law not only prohibits stealing, but also insists "Thou shalt not covet," which is a lusting of our souls rather than an external act. Holiness *of nature* is required by the Law, for how else shall a man love the Lord his God with all his heart, mind, and strength, and his neighbor as himself? God is essentially holy by nature, and nothing can be so contrary to Him as an unholy nature. Nothing can be so contrary as opposite natures. How can a wolf and a lamb, or a vulture and a dove, dwell together? "What fellowship[107] hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord[108] hath Christ with Belial?"[109] (2Co 6:14-15).

The Solution to the Mystery

How, then, is this mystery cleared up? By what method, or in what way, have the sanctified become blest with a nature that makes them meet for the ineffable presence of God? By what process does the evil tree become good, so that its fruit is wholesome and acceptable? Obviously, we cannot here supply the full answer to these questions, or we should be anticipating too much what we desire to bring out in later chapters. But we will endeavor to now indicate, at least, the direction in which and the lines along which this great mystery is cleared—lines which most assuredly would never have entered our hearts and minds to so much as conceive; but which once they are viewed by anointed eyes, are seen to be divine and satisfying. The Lord graciously assist us to steer clear of the rocks of error and guide us into clear and refreshing waters of the truth.

As we have shown, it was quite impossible—though it was their bounden[110] duty—for those whom God sanctifies to answer personally the requirements of His holy Law: "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (Pro 20:9). Wherefore, for the satisfaction of the Law, which requires absolute purity of nature, it was settled as one of the articles in the Everlasting Covenant, that Christ, the representative of all who would be sanctified, should be a Man of an untainted and perfectly pure nature, which fully met the requirements of the Law: "For such an High Priest became us,[111] who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb 7:26). The meeting of that requirement necessitated two things: first, that the Head of His people should be born with a holy human nature; second, that He should retain that holiness of nature inviolate[112] unto the end. Let us consider, briefly, each of these separately.

There was a holy nature given to Adam as the root of mankind, to be kept by him and transmitted to his posterity by natural generation.[113] Upon that ground, the Law requires all men to be born holy, and pronounces them unclean and "children of wrath" (Eph 2:3) in the contrary. But how can this demand be met by those who are born in sin? They cannot enter again into their mother's womb, and be born a second time without sin. Even so, the Law will not abate its demand. Wherefore it was provided that Christ, the last Adam, should, as the representative and root of His spiritual seed, be born perfectly holy; that whereas they brought a sinful nature into the world with them, He should be born "that holy thing" (Luk 1:35). Consequently, in the reckoning of the Law all believers are born holy in the last Adam. They

are said to be "circumcised" by the circumcision of Christ (Col 2:11), and circumcision necessarily presupposes *birth*!

But more was required. It was necessary that the Second Man should preserve His holy nature free from all spot or defilement, as He passed through this world of sin. The Law not only demands holiness of nature, but also that the purity and integrity of that nature be preserved. Wherefore to satisfy this demand, it was provided that the believers' federal Head should preserve His ineffable purity unstained. "He shall not fail" (Isa 42:4). The first man did fail: the fine gold soon became dim: the holiness of his nature was quickly extinguished by sin. But the Second Man failed not: neither man nor devil could corrupt Him. He preserved the holiness of His nature unstained, even to the end of His life. And so of His sanctified, viewing them in Himself, He declares, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee" (Song 4:7).

The Solution in Christ

But while that completely meets the judicial side, satisfying the demands of the Law, something more was yet required to satisfy the heart of God and meet the experimental needs of His people. In view of their being actually defiled in Adam when he sinned, they are defiled in their own persons so that not only is his guilt imputed to them, but his corruption is imparted to them in the nature they have received from him by generation. Therefore, not only were the elect legally born holy in Christ their Head, but from Him they also receive a holy nature: it is written, "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening[114] Spirit" (1Co 15:45). This is accomplished by that gracious and supernatural working of the third Person in the Godhead, whereby the elect are vitally united to their Head so that "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1Co 6:17).

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2Co 5:17). Our being united to Christ, through the Spirit, by faith, makes us partakers of the same spiritual and holy nature with Him, as really and as actually as Eve (type of the Church) was made of one nature with Adam, being bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh (Gen 2:23). Because believers are united to Christ the Holy One, they are "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1Co 1:2). The believer being one with Christ is made "a new creature," because He is such a stock as changes the graft[115] into its own nature: "If the root be holy, so are the branches" (Rom 11:16). The same Spirit which Christ received "without measure" (John 3:34) is communicated to the members of His body, so that it can be said, "Of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace" (Joh 1:16). Being united to Christ by faith, and through the communication of the quickening Spirit from Christ unto him, the believer is thereupon not only justified and reconciled to God, but sanctified (Act 26:18), made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and made an heir of God.

Its Solution, Part Two

The Problem for the Regenerate

At the beginning of this section, it was pointed out that in connection with the grand truth of sanctification there is both a mystery and a problem: the former relating to the unregenerate, the latter causing concern to the regenerate. That which is hidden from the knowledge of the natural man is why his best works are unacceptable to God. Tell him that *all* his actions—no matter how carefully and conscientiously, diligently and devoutly executed—are rejected by God, and that is something entirely above the reach of his understanding. He knows not that his breaking of the Law in Adam has brought in a breach between himself and God, so that while that breach remains, the favor [of God] cannot flow out of Him, nor his prayers or offerings pass in to God. The Lord will no more receive anything at the hands of the natural man, than He would have respect unto the offering of Cain (Gen 4). And had He left all men in their natural estate, this would have held true of the whole race until the end of time.

Inasmuch as all men were given a holy nature—created into the image and likeness of God—in their representative and root, to be transmitted to them by him, *before* the Law was given to Adam, it follows that the Law requires a holy nature from each of us, and pronounces a curse whenever it finds the opposite. Though we are actually born into this world in a state of corruption and filth (Eze 16:3-6), yet the Law will not abate its just demands upon us. In consequence of the sin which indwells us—which is so much a part and parcel of ourselves that everything we do is defiled thereby—we are thoroughly unable to render unto the Law that obedience which it requires. For while we are alienated from the life of God, it is impossible that any outward acts of compliance with the Law's statutes can proceed from those principles which it alone can approve of, namely, disinterested love and faith unfeigned. Consequently, the state of the natural man, considered in himself, is entirely beyond hope.

The Solution for the Regenerate

The provision made by the manifold wisdom and sovereign grace of God to meet the desperate needs of His people was stipulated for in terms of the Everlasting Covenant. There it was agreed upon by the Eternal Three that the Mediator should be the Son of Man, yet, that His humanity should be not only entirely free from every taint of original sin, but should be purer than that of Adam's even when his Creator pronounced him "very good." This was accomplished by the supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit in the virgin birth, and by the Son of God taking into personal union with Himself "that holy thing" which was to be born of Mary. Inasmuch as Christ, the God-man Mediator, entered this world not as a private Person, but as a public, as the representative and head of God's elect—in the reckoning of the Law they were born holy in their Surety and Sponsor, and so fully measure up to its requirements. Christ and His mystical body have never been viewed apart by the Law.

Our state must be made to accord with our standing.

But this, unspeakably blessed though it be, was not all. A perfect legal standing only met half of the need of God's elect: in addition, their *state* must be made to accord with their standing. This also has been provided for by the measureless love of the God of all grace. He so ordered that, just as the guilt of Adam was imputed to all for whom he acted, so the righteousness of Christ should be imputed to all for whom He transacted: and, that just as spiritual death—with all its corrupting effects—should be transmitted by Adam to all his posterity, so the spiritual life of Christ—with all its gracious influences—should be communicated to all His seed. As they received a sinful and impure nature from

their natural head, so the sanctified receive a sinless and pure nature from their spiritual Head. Consequently, as they have borne the image of the earthly, so shall they bear the image of the heavenly.

Some of our readers may, perhaps, conclude that all difficulty in connection with this aspect of our subject has now been disposed of—but a little reflection on the part of the believer should soon remind him that the most perplexing point of all has yet to be cleared up. Though it be true that every essential requirement of the Law has been met for the sanctified by their glorious Head, so that the Law righteously views them as holy in Him; and though it be true that at regeneration they receive from Christ, by the Spirit, a new and holy nature, like unto His; yet the old nature remains, and remains unchanged, unimproved. Yea, to them it seems that the carnal nature in them is steadily growing worse and worse, and more active and defiling every day they live. They are painfully conscious of the fact that sin not only remains in them, but that it pollutes their desires, thoughts, imaginations, and acts; and they are quite powerless to prevent its uprisings.

This presents to an honest heart and a sensitive conscience a problem that is most acute, for how can those who abhor themselves be pleasing to the thrice-holy One? How can those conscious of their filthiness and vileness possibly be fit to draw near to Him Who is ineffably and infinitely pure? The answer which some have returned to this agonized enquiry—based upon an erroneous deduction from the words of Paul, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom 7:20)—will by no means satisfy them. To say it is not the regenerate person, but only the flesh in him, which sins, is to invent a distinction which repudiates the Christian's responsibility, and which affords no relief to a quickened conscience. Scripture is far too plain on this point to justify a mistake: Old and New Testaments alike insist it is *the person* who sins—"against thee...have I sinned" (Psa 51:4). Paul himself concludes Romans 7 by saying, "O wretched man that I am!"

Where other matters are concerned, men have more sense than to fall back upon such a distinction as some modern theologians are so fond of insisting upon: it never occurs to them to argue thus in connection with temporal things. Imagine one before a judge, who was charged with theft, acknowledging his offense, but disowning all responsibility and culpability on the ground that it was his "evil nature" and *not himself* that did the stealing! Surely, the judge would be in a quandary to decide whether prison or the madhouse was the right place to send him. This reminds us of an incident wherein a "bishop" was guilty of blasphemy in the House of Lords (where all "bishops" have seats). Being rebuked by his manservant, he replied, "It was the 'lord' and not the 'bishop' who cursed." His servant responded, "When the devil gets the 'lord' where will the 'bishop' be!" Beware, my reader, of seeking to clear *yourself* by throwing the blame upon your "nature."

Somewhere else, then, than in any supposed distinction between the sanctified person and his old nature, must the solution to our problem be sought. When one who has been walking with God is tripped up by some temptation and falls into sin, or when indwelling corruption surges up and (for the time being) obtains the mastery over him, he is painfully aware of the fact; and that which exercises him the most is not only that he has sinned against the One Who is nearer and dearer to him than all else, but that his communion with Him is broken, and that he is no longer morally fit[116] to come into His sacred presence. While his knowledge of the gospel may be sufficient to allay any haunting fears of the penal consequences of his sins, yet this does not remove the defilement from his conscience. This is one important respect in which the unregenerate and regenerate differ radically.[117] When the former sins it is the *guilt* (and punishment) that most occupies his thoughts; but, when the latter, it is the *defiling* effect that most exercises his heart.[118]

Criminality and pollution

There are two things in sin inseparably connected and yet clearly distinguishable, namely, its criminality and its pollution. The pollution of sin is that property of it whereby it is directly opposed to

the holiness of God, and which God expresses His holiness to be contrary to. Therefore it is said He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab 1:13)—it is a vile and loathsome sight to Him Who is the Light. Hence does He use that pathetic entreaty, "Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate" (Jer 44:4). It is with respect unto His own holiness that God sets forth sin by the names of everything that is offensive, objectionable, repulsive, abominable. Consequently, when the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, He imparts such a sight and sense of the filth of sin, that the subjects of the same blush, are ashamed, are filled with confusion of face, are abased in their own esteem, and abashed before God.

As we are taught the guilt of sin by our own *fear*, which is the inseparable adjunct of it, so we are taught the filth of sin by our own *shame*, which unavoidably attends it. Under the typical economy[119] God not only appointed sacrifices to make atonement[120] for the guilt of sin, but also gave various ordinances for purification or ceremonial cleansing from the pollution thereof. In various ways, during Old Testament times, God instructed His people concerning the spiritual defilement of sin. The distinction between clean and unclean animals, the different natural distempers which befoul the body, the isolating of the leper, [and] the accidental touching of the dead which rendered people religiously unclean by the Law are cases in point. All of them prefigured internal and spiritual pollution, and hence the whole work of sanctification is expressed by "a fountain opened...for sin and for uncleanness" (Zec 13:1)—that is, for the purging away of them.

So inseparable is moral pollution from sin, and a sense of shame from a consciousness of the pollution, that, whenever a soul is truly convicted of sin, there is always a painful sense of this filthiness, accompanied by personal shame. Only as this is clearly apprehended are we able to understand the true nature of sanctification. The spiritual comeliness of the soul consists in its conformity to God. Grace gives beauty: hence it is said of Christ that He is "Fairer [more beautiful] than the children of men," and that, because grace was poured into His lips (Psa 45:2). Man's original beauty consisted in his being made in the image of God, which constituted the whole harmony and symmetry of his nature, all his faculties and actions having respect to God. Therefore, that which is contrary to the image of God (depravity), [and] contrary to grace (sin), has in it a deformity which mars the soul, destroys its comeliness, disrupts its order, and brings deformity, ugliness, vileness.

Whatever is contrary to holiness or the image of God in the soul is base, unworthy, filthy. Sin dishonors and degrades the soul, filling it with shame. The closer we are permitted to walk with God and the more we see ourselves in His light, the more conscious are we of the deformity of sin and of our baseness. When our eyes were first opened to see our spiritual nakedness, how hideous did we appear to ourselves, and what a sense of our pollution we had! That was but the reflex of God's view, for He abhors, loathes, and esteems as an abominable thing whatever is contrary to His holiness. Those who are made "partakers of the divine nature" (2Pe 1:4), do, according to their measure, but see themselves with *God's* eyes, as wretched, naked, shameful, loathsome, hideous and abominable creatures; and therefore do they, with Job, "abhor" themselves (Job 42:6).

The last four paragraphs are, in part, a condensation from John Owen; and from them we may clearly perceive that it is they who are truly sanctified and holy who are the most deeply sensible of the root of corruption which still remains within them, and which is ever springing up and producing that which defiles them. And therefore do they greatly bewail their pollutions, as that which is most dishonoring to God and most disturbing to their own peace; and earnestly do they endeavor after the mortification[121] of it. A remarkable corroboration is found in the fact that the most godly and holy have been the very ones who most strongly affirmed their sinfulness and most loudly bewailed the same. It was one whom God Himself declared to be a "perfect [sincere] and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil" (Job 1:8) who declared, "Behold, I am vile" (40:4). It was one "greatly beloved" of God (Dan 10:19), who acknowledged "my comeliness was turned in me to corruption" (10:8). It was he who was

caught up to the third heaven and then returned again to earth who mourned, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom 7:24).

From the quotations just made from the personal confessions of some of the most eminent of God's saints, it is perfectly plain to any simple soul that a "pure heart" cannot signify one from which all sin has been removed, nor can their language possibly be made to square with the utopian theory that the carnal nature is eradicated from any believer in this life. Indeed it cannot; and none but they who are completely blinded by Satan would ever affirm such a gross absurdity and palpable[122] lie.

A Pure Heart

But this requires us now to define and describe *what* a pure heart consists of, according to the spiritual meaning thereof. And in our efforts to supply this, we shall have to try and guard against two evils: providing a pillow for empty professors to comfortably rest upon, and stating things in such a way that hope would be killed in the regenerate.

First, a pure heart is one which has experienced "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Ti 3:5). That takes place at the new birth and is maintained by the Spirit throughout the Christian's life. All that this involves we cannot now state at any length. But, negatively, it includes the purifying of the believer's understanding, so that it is no longer fatally blinded by Satan but is supernaturally illumined by the Spirit: in consequence, the vanity of worldly things and the excellency of spiritual things is now perceived. The mind is, in great measure, freed from the pollution of error, and this, by the shining in of the light of God's truth. It includes, negatively, the cleansing of the affections, so that sin is no longer loved but loathed, and God is no longer shrunk from and avoided, but sought after and desired.

From the positive side, there is communicated to the soul at regeneration a nature or principle which contains within itself pure desires, pure intentions, and pure roots of actions. The fear of God is implanted, and the love of God is shed abroad in the heart. In consequence thereof, the soul is made to pant after God, yearn for conformity to His will, and seek to please Him in all things. And hence it is that the greatest grief of the Christian arises from the hindering of his spiritual longings and the thwarting of his spiritual aspirations. A pure heart is one that loathes impurity, and whose heaviest burden is the realization that such an ocean of foul waters still indwells him, constantly casting up its mire and dirt, polluting all he does. A pure heart, therefore, is one which makes conscience of[123] foolish thoughts, vile imaginations, and evil desires. It is one which grieves over pride and discontent, mourns over unbelief and enmity, weeps in secret over unholiness.

Second, a pure heart is one which has been "sprinkled from an evil conscience" (Heb 10:22). An "evil conscience" is one which accuses of guilt and oppresses because of unpardoned sin. Its possessor dreads the prospect of the Day of Judgment and seeks to banish all thoughts of it from his mind. But a conscience to which the Spirit has graciously applied the atoning blood of Christ obtains peace of mind and has confidence to draw near to God: in consequence, superstition, terror, and torment [are] removed, and an aversion to God is displaced by a joy in God.

Hence, also, third, we read, "purifying their hearts by faith" (Act 15:9). As unbelief is a principle which defiles, so faith is a principle which purges, and that, because *of the object which it lays hold of*. Faith looks away from self to Christ and is enabled to realize that His blood "cleanseth us from all sin" (1Jo 1:7).

Every Christian, then, has a pure heart in the particulars given above. But every Christian does not have a "clean" heart (Psa 51:10). That which pollutes the heart of a Christian is *unjudged sin*.[124] Whenever sin is *allowed* by us, communion with God is broken, and pollution can only be removed, and

communion restored, by a genuine repentance—a condemning of ourselves, a mourning over the sin, and unsparing confession of the same, accompanied by a fervent desire and sincere resolution not to be overtaken by it again. The willing allowance and indulgence of any known sin cannot consist with a clean heart. Rightly, then, did John Owen say of repentance: "It is as necessary unto the continuance of spiritual life, as faith itself." After the repentance and confession, there must be a fresh (and constant) recourse to that fountain which has been "opened for sin and for uncleanness," a fresh application by faith of the cleansing blood of Christ, pleading its merits and efficacy before God.

Summary

In this chapter, we have sought to answer the questions at the close of the last chapter. We have met every demand of the Law in the Person of our Surety. We are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light because all the value of Christ's cleansing blood is reckoned to our account. We are capacitated[125] to draw near to God now because the Holy Spirit has communicated to us the very nature of Christ Himself. By faith, we may regard ourselves as holy in Christ. By regeneration, we have received a "pure heart": proof of which is, we hate all impurity, although there is still that in us which delights in nothing else. We are to maintain communion with God by cleansing our own hearts (Psa 73:13), and that through constant mortification and the daily and unsparing judgment of all known sin in and from us.

Its Nature

Its Nature, Part One

Introduction

We have now reached what is, in several respects, the most important aspect of our theme. It is very necessary that we should seek after a clear and comprehensive view of the character of sanctification itself—what it really consists of—or, at best, our thoughts concerning it will be confused. Since holiness is, by general consent, the sum of all moral excellence and the highest and most necessary attainment, it is of the utmost importance that we should well understand its real nature and be able to distinguish it from all counterfeits. How can it be discovered whether or not we have been sanctified, unless we really know what sanctification actually is? How can we truly cultivate holiness, until we have ascertained the real substance or essence of holiness? A right apprehension of the nature of sanctification or holiness is a great aid to the understanding of much in the Scriptures, to the forming of right conceptions of the divine perfections, and to the distinguishing of true religion from all that is false.

We have also now reached what is the most difficult and intricate aspect of our many-sided subject. The task of defining and describing the nature of sanctification is by no means a simple one. This is due, partly, to the many different aspects and angles that have to be borne in mind if anything like a comprehensive conception is to be obtained. Scripture speaks of the believer being sanctified by God the Father; other passages speak of being sanctified in Christ and by His sacrifice; still others of being sanctified by the Spirit, by the Word, by faith, by chastisements. Of course, these do not refer to so many different sanctifications but to the various branches of one complete sanctification, which, nevertheless, need to be kept distinctly in our minds. Some Scriptures present sanctification as an objective thing, others as subjective. Some times sanctification is viewed as complete, at others as incomplete and progressive. These varied phases of our subject will pass under review (Lord willing) in later chapters.

As we have consulted the works of others on this subject, we have been struck by the paucity[126] of their remarks on *the nature* of sanctification. While many writers have treated at length on the meaning of the term itself, the manner in which this gift has been provided for the believer, the work of the Spirit in imparting the same, the varying degrees in which it is manifested in this life, yet few indeed have entered into a clear description of what holiness actually *is*. Where false conceptions have been mercifully avoided, yet, in most cases, only partial and very inadequate views of the truth thereon have been presented. It is our conviction that failure at this point, inattention to this most vital consideration, has been responsible, more than anything else, for the conflicting opinions which prevail so widely among professing Christians. A mistake at this point opens the door for the entrance of all kinds of delusion.

What It Is Not

In order to remove some of the rubbish[127] that may have accumulated in the minds of certain of our readers, and thus prepare the way for their consideration of the truth, let us briefly touch upon the negative side. First, Scriptural sanctification is not a blessing that may be and often is separated from justification by a long interval of time. Those who contend for a "second work of grace" insist that the penitent sinner is justified the moment he believes in Christ, but that he is not sanctified until he completely surrenders to the Lord and then receives the Spirit in His fullness—as though a person might be converted without fully surrendering to Christ, or become a child of God without the Holy Spirit indwelling him. This is a serious mistake. Once we are united to Christ by the Spirit and faith, we

become "joint heirs" with Him, having a valid title to *all* blessing in Him (Rom 8:17). There is no dividing of the Saviour: He is the holiness of His people as well as their righteousness, and when He bestows forgiveness, He also imparts heart purity.

Second, scriptural sanctification is not a protracted process by which the Christian is made meet for heaven. The same work of divine grace which delivers a soul from the wrath to come fits him for the enjoyment of eternal Glory. At what point was the penitent prodigal unsuited to the Father's house? As soon as he came and confessed his sins the best robe was placed upon him, the ring was put on his hand, his feet were shod, and the word went forth, "Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" (Luk 15:23, 24). If a gradual progressive work of the Spirit were necessary in order to fit the soul to dwell on high, then the dying thief was not qualified to enter Paradise the very day he first believed in the Lord Jesus. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus" (1Co 6:11)—those three things cannot be separated. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col 1:12).

Third, scriptural sanctification is not the eradication of the carnal nature. The doctrine of the "Perfectionists" hardens souls in delusion, calling evil good, and allowing themselves in sin. It greatly discourages sincere souls who labor to get holiness in the right way—by faith in Christ—and leads them to think they labor in vain, because they find themselves still sinful and far from perfect, when they have done their best to attain it. It renders meaningless many Scriptural exhortations, such as Romans 6:12, 2 Corinthians 7:1, Ephesians 4:22, and 2 Timothy 2:22—"Flee also youthful lusts," shows plainly they were still present even in the godly Timothy! Were the carnal nature gone from the Christian, he would be quite unfitted for such duties as the confessing of sins (1Jo 1:9), loathing himself for them (Job 40:4), praying earnestly for the pardon of them (Mat 6:12), sorrowing over them with godly sorrow (2Co 7:10), accepting the chastisement of them (Heb 12:5-11), vindicating God for the same (Psa 119:75), and offering Him the sacrifice of a broken and a contrite heart (Psa 51:17).

Fourth, scriptural sanctification is not something wholly objective in Christ, which is not in anywise in ourselves. In their revolt against sinless perfectionism, there have been some who have gone to an opposite extreme: Antinomians argue for a holiness in Christ which produces no radical change for the better in the Christian. This is another deceit of the devil, for a deceit it certainly is for anyone to imagine that the *only* holiness he has is in Christ. There is no such thing in reality as a perfect and inalienable standing in Christ that is divorced from heart purity and a personal walk in righteousness. What a flesh-pleasing dogma[128] is it, that one act of faith in the Lord Jesus secures eternal immunity from condemnation and provides a lifelong license to wallow in sin. My reader, a faith that does not transform character and reform conduct is worthless. Saving faith is only proved to be genuine by bearing the blossoms of experimental[129] godliness and the fruits of personal piety (Jam 2:17-26).

Certain Definite Considerations

In our quest after the actual nature of holiness, certain definite considerations need to be kept steadily before us, as guideposts along the track which we must follow. First, by noting what is holiness in God Himself, for the creature's holiness—be it the angels', Christ's, or the Christian's—must conform to the divine pattern. Though there may be many degrees of holiness, there cannot be more than one *kind* of holiness. Second, by ascertaining what Adam had and lost, and which Christ has regained for His people. While it be blessedly true that the Christian obtains far more in the Second Man than was forfeited by the first man, yet this is a point of considerable importance. Third, by discovering the true nature of sin, holiness is its opposite. Fourth, by remembering that sanctification is an integral and essential part of

salvation itself, and not an extra. Fifth, by following up the clue given us in the threefold meaning of the term itself.

1. What is connoted[130] by the holiness of God?

In seeking an answer to this question very little help is to be obtained from the works of theologians, most of whom contented themselves with *a set of words* which expressed no distinct thing, but left matters wholly in the dark. Most of them say that God's holiness is His purity. If it be enquired, "In what does this purity consist?" the usual reply is, "In that which is opposite to all sin, the greatest impurity." But who is the wiser by this? That, of itself, does not help us to form any positive idea of what God's purity consists of, until we are told *what* sin really *is*. But the nature of sin cannot be experimentally known until we apprehend what holiness is, for we do not fully learn what holiness is by obtaining a right idea of sin; rather must we first know what holiness is in order for a right knowledge of sin.

A number of eminent theologians have attempted to tell us what divine holiness is by saying, "It is not properly a distinct attribute of God, but the beauty and glory of all His moral perfections." But we can get no concrete idea from those words, until we are told what is this "beauty and glory." To say it is "holiness" is to say nothing at all to the point. All that John Gill[131] gives us for a definition of God's holiness is, "Holiness is the purity and rectitude of His nature." Nathanial Emmons, the perfector of the "New England" scheme of theology, tells us, "Holiness is a general term to express that goodness or benevolence which comprises everything that is morally amiable and excellent." Though sound in their substance, such statements are too brief to be of much service to us in seeking to form a definite conception of the divine holiness.

The most helpful description of God's holiness which we have met with is that framed by the Puritan Stephen Charnock,[132] "It is the rectitude or integrity of the divine nature, or that conformity of it in affection and action to the divine will, as to His eternal Law, whereby He works with a becomingness to His own excellency, and whereby He hath a delight and complacency in everything agreeable to His will, and an abhorrency of everything contrary thereto." Here is something definite and tangible, satisfying to the mind; though perhaps it requires another feature to be added to it. Since the Law is "a transcript" of the divine mind and nature, then God's holiness must be His own harmony therewith; to which we may add, God's holiness is His ordering of all things for His own glory, for He can have no higher end than that—this being His own unique excellency and prerogative.

We fully concur with Charnock in making the will of God and the Law of God one and the same thing, and that His holiness lies in the conformity of His affections and actions with the same, adding that the furtherance of His own glory being His design in the whole. Now this concept of the divine holiness—the sum of God's moral excellency—helps us to conceive what holiness is in the Christian. It is far more than a "position" or "standing." It is also and chiefly a moral quality, which produces conformity to the divine will or Law, and which moves its possessor to aim at the glory of God in all things. This, and nothing short of this, could meet the divine requirements; and this is the great gift that God bestows upon His people.

2. What was it that Adam had lost?

What was it which distinguished him from all the lower creatures? Not simply the possession of a soul, but that his soul had stamped upon it *the moral image* and likeness of his Maker. This it was which constituted his blessedness, which capacitated him for communion with the Lord, and which qualified him to live a happy life to His glory. And this it was which he lost at the Fall. And this it is which the Last Adam restores to His people. That is clear from a comparison of Colossians 3:10 and Ephesians 4:23: the "new man," the product of regeneration, is "renewed in knowledge [in the vital and experimental knowledge of God Himself, John 17:3] after the image of Him that created him," that is, after the original likeness bestowed upon Adam; and that "new man" is distinctly said to be "created in

righteousness and true holiness" (Eph 4:24).

Thus what the first Adam lost and what the Last Adam secured for His people was the "image and likeness" of God stamped upon the heart, which "image" consists of "righteousness and holiness." Hence to understand that personal and experimental holiness which the Christian is made partaker of at the new birth, we have to go back to the beginning and ascertain what was the nature or character of that moral "uprightness" (Ecc 7:29) with which God created man at the beginning. Holiness and righteousness was the "nature" with which the first man was endowed: it was the very law of his being, causing him to delight in the Lord, do those things that are pleasing in His sight, and reproduce in his creature measure[133] God's own righteousness and holiness. Here again we discover that holiness is a *moral* quality, which conforms its possessor to the divine Law or will, and moves him to aim only at the glory of God.

3. What is sin?

Ah, what man is capable of supplying an adequate answer: "Who can understand his errors?" (Psa 19:12). A volume might be written thereon and still much be left unsaid. Only the One against Whom it is committed can fully understand its nature or measure its enormity. And yet, from the light that God has furnished us, a partial answer at least can be gathered. For example, in 1 John 3:4 we read, "Sin is the transgression of the law," and that such transgression is not confined to the outward act is clear from, "The thought of foolishness is sin" (Pro 24:9). But what is meant by, "Sin is the transgression of the law"? It means that sin is a trampling upon God's holy commandment. It is an act of defiance against the Lawgiver. The Law, being "holy and just and good" (Rom 7:12), it follows that any breach of it is an evil and enormity which God alone is capable of estimating.

All sin is a breach of the eternal standard of equity. But it is more than that: it reveals an inward enmity[134] that gives rise to the outward transgression. It is the bursting forth of that pride and self-will, which resents restraint, which repudiates control, which refuses to be under authority, which resists rule. Against the righteous restraint of law, Satan opposed a false idea of "liberty" to our first parents—"Ye shall be as gods" (Gen 3:5). And he is still playing the same argument and employing the same bait. The Christian must meet it by asking, "Is the disciple to be above his Master, the servant superior to his Lord?" Christ was "made under the law" (Gal 4:4), and lived in perfect submission thereto, and has left us an example that we should "follow His steps" (1Pe 2:21). Only by loving, fearing, and obeying the Law, shall we be kept from *sinning*.

Sin, then, is an inward state that precedes the evil deeds. It is a state of heart that refuses to be in subjection to God. It is a casting off the divine Law, and setting up self-will and self-pleasing in its stead. Now, since holiness is the opposite of sin, this helps us to determine something more of the nature of sanctification. Sanctification is that work of divine grace in the believer which brings him back into allegiance to God, regulating his affections and actions in harmony with His will, writing His Law on the heart (Heb 10:16), moving him to make God's glory his chief aim and end. That divine work is commenced at regeneration, and completed only at glorification. It may be thought that, in this section, we have contradicted what was said in an earlier paragraph. Not so; in God's light we see light. Only after the principle of holiness has been imparted to us can we discern the real character of sin; but after it has been received, an analysis of sin helps us to determine the nature of sanctification.

4. Sanctification is an integral part of salvation.

As this point was dwelt upon at length in Chapter 2, there is less need for us to say much upon it here. Once it be clearly perceived that God's salvation is not only a rescue from the penalty of sin, but is as well, and chiefly, deliverance from the pollution and power of sin—ultimating[135] in complete freedom from its very presence—there will be no difficulty in seeing that sanctification occupies a central place in the process. Alas that while there are many who think of Christ dying to secure their pardon, so few

today consider Christ dying in order to renew their hearts, heal their souls, bring them unto obedience to God. One is often obliged to wonder if one out of each ten professing Christians is *really* experimentally acquainted with the "so great salvation" (Heb 2:3) of God.

Inasmuch as sanctification is an important branch of salvation, we have another help towards understanding its nature. Salvation is deliverance from sin, an emancipation from the bondage of Satan, a being brought into right relations with God; and sanctification is that which makes this *actual* in the believer's experience—not perfectly so in this life, but truly so, nevertheless…Salvation from the power of sin consists in deliverance from the *love* of sin; and that is effected by the principle of holiness, which loves purity and piety. Again, there can be no fellowship with God, no walking with Him, no delighting ourselves in Him, except as we tread the path of obedience (*see* 1 John 1:5-7); and that is only possible as the principle of holiness is operative within us.

Summary

Let us now combine these four points. What is scriptural sanctification? First, it is a moral quality in the regenerate—the same in its nature as that which belongs to the divine character—which produces harmony with God's will and causes its possessor to aim at His glory in all things. Second, it is the moral image of God—lost by the first Adam, restored by the Last Adam—stamped upon the heart, which image consists of righteousness and holiness. Third, it is the opposite of sin. Inasmuch as all sin is a transgression of the divine Law, true sanctification brings its possessor into a conformity thereto. Fourth, it is an integral and essential part of salvation, being a deliverance from the power and pollution of sin, causing its possessor to love what he once hated, and to hate now what he formerly loved. Thus, it is that which experimentally fits us for fellowship with and the enjoyment of the Holy One Himself.

Its Nature, Part Two

The Threefold Signification of the Term "To Sanctify"

Perhaps the simplest and surest method to pursue in seeking to arrive at a correct understanding of the nature of sanctification is to follow up the meaning of the word itself, for in Scripture the names of things are always in accurate accord with their character. God does not tantalize us with ambiguous or meaningless expressions; the name He gives to a thing is a properly descriptive one. So here, the word "to sanctify" means to consecrate or set apart for a sacred use, to cleanse or purify, to adorn or beautify. Diverse as these meanings may appear, yet as we shall see, they beautifully coalesce[136] into one whole. Using this, then, as our principal key, let us see whether the threefold meaning of the term will open for us the main avenues of our subject.

1. Set apart

Sanctification is, first of all, an act of the Triune God, whereby His people are *set apart* for Himself—for His delight, His glory, His use. To aid our understanding on this point, let it be noted that Jude 1 speaks of those who are "sanctified by God the Father," and that this precedes their being "preserved in Jesus Christ and called." The reference there is to the Father choosing His people for Himself out of the race which He purposed to create, separating the objects of His favor from those whom He passed by. Then in Hebrews 10:10 we read, "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all": His sacrifice has purged His people from every stain of sin, separated them from the world, consecrated them to God, setting them before Him in all the excellency of His offering. In 2 Thessalonians 2:13 we are told, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." This refers to the Spirit's quickening work by which He separates the elect from those who are dead in sin.

2. Cleansing

Sanctification is, in the second place, a *cleansing* of those who are to be devoted to God's use. This cleansing is both a legal and an experimental one. As we prosecute our subject, it needs to be constantly borne in mind that sanctification or holiness is the opposite of *sin*. Now as sin involves both guilt and pollution, its remedy must meet both of those needs and counteract both of those effects. A loathsome leper[137] would no more be a fit subject for heaven, than would one who was still under the curse.[138] The double provision made by divine grace to meet the need of God's guilty and defiled people is seen in the "blood and water" which proceeded from the pierced side of the Saviour (Joh 19:34). Typically, this twofold need was adumbrated[139] of old in the tabernacle furniture: the laver to wash at was as indispensable as the altar for sacrifice (Exo 31:9). Cleansing is as urgent as forgiveness.

That one of the great ends of the death of Christ was the moral purification of His people is clear from many Scriptures. "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2Co 5:15); "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Ti 2:14); "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb 9:14); "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1Pe 2:24). From these passages it is abundantly plain that the purpose of the Savior in all that He did and suffered was not only to deliver His people from the *penal* consequences of their sins, but also to cleanse them from the *pollution* of sin, to free them from its enslaving power, to rectify their moral nature.

It is greatly to be regretted that so many, when thinking or speaking of the salvation which Christ has purchased for His people, attach to it no further idea than deliverance from condemnation. They seem to forget that deliverance from *sin*—the cause of condemnation—is an equally important blessing comprehended in it. "Assuredly it is just as necessary for fallen creatures to be freed from the pollution and moral impotency which they have contracted, as it is to be exempted from the penalties which they have incurred; so that when reinstated in the favor of God, they may at the same time be capable of loving, serving, and enjoying Him forever. And in this respect the remedy which the gospel reveals is fully suited to the exigencies[140] of our sinful state, providing for our *complete* redemption from sin itself, as well as from the penal liabilities it has brought upon us" (T. Crawford[141] on the Atonement). Christ has procured sanctification for His people as well as justification.

That *cleansing* forms an integral element in sanctification is abundantly clear from the types. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh" (Heb 9:13). The blood, the ashes, the sprinkling, were all God's merciful provision for the "unclean" and they sanctified "to the purifying of the flesh"—the references being to Leviticus 16:14, Numbers 19:2, 17-18. The antitype of this is seen in the next verse, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb 9:14). The type availed only for a temporary and ceremonial sanctification, the Antitype for a real and eternal cleansing. Other examples of the same thing are found in, "Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes" (Exo 19:10); "I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to Me in the priest's office" (Exo 29:44)—for the accomplishment of this see Exodus 40:12-15, where we find they were washed with water, anointed with oil, and clothed or adorned with their official vestments.

Now the substitutionary and sacrificial work of Christ has produced for His people a threefold cleansing. The first is judicial—the sins of His people being all blotted out as though they had never existed. Both the guilt and the defilement of their iniquities are completely removed, so that the Church appears before God "as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun" (Song 6:10). The second is personal—at "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Ti 3:5). The third is experimental—when faith appropriates the cleansing blood and the conscience is purged: "purifying their hearts by faith" (Act 15:9), "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb 10:22). Unlike the first two, this last is a repeated and continuous thing: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1Jo 1:9). We hope to amplify these different points considerably when we take up more definitely our sanctification by Christ.

3. Adorning

Sanctification is, in the third place, an *adorning* or beautifying of those whom God cleanses and sets apart to Himself. This is accomplished by the Holy Spirit in His work of morally renovating the soul, whereby the believer is made *inwardly* holy. That which the Spirit communicates is the life of the risen Christ, which is a principle of purity, producing love to God; and love to God implies, of course, subjection to Him. Thus, holiness is an inward conformity to the things which God has commanded, as the pattern (or, sample) corresponds to the piece from which it is taken. "For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1Th 4:2-3); that is to say, your sanctification consists in a conformity to His will. Sanctification causes the heart to make God its chief good and His glory its chief end.

As *His glory* is the end God has in view in all his actions—ordering, disposing, directing everything with this design—so conformity to Him, being holy as He is holy, must consist in setting His glory before us as our ultimate aim. Subjective sanctification is that change wrought in the heart which

produces a steady desire and purpose to please and honour God. This is not in any of us by nature, for self-love rules the unregenerate. Calamities may drive the unsanctified toward God, yet it is only for the relief of *self*. The fear of hell may stir up a man to cry to God for mercy, but it is only that *he* may be delivered. Such actions are only the workings of mere nature—the instinct of self-preservation; there is nothing spiritual or supernatural about them.[142] But at regeneration a man is lifted off his own bottom and put on a new foundation.

A Change of Heart

Subjective sanctification is a change or renovating of the heart so that it is conformed to God—to His will, to His glory. "The work of sanctification is a work framing and casting the heart itself into the Word of God (as metals are cast into a die or mold), so that the heart is made of the same stamp and disposition with the Word" (Thomas Goodwin).[143] "Ye have obeyed from the heart that form [pattern] of doctrine which was delivered you" (Rom 6:17). The arts and sciences deliver to us rules which we must conform unto, but God's miracle of grace within His people conforms them to the rulings of His will, so as to be formed by them; softening their hearts so as to make them capable of receiving the impressions of His precepts. Below we quote again from the excellent remarks of Thomas Goodwin.

> *The substance of his comparison comes to this, that their hearts having been first, in the inward inclinations and dispositions of it, framed and changed into what the Word requires, they then obeyed the same Word from the heart naturally, willingly; and the commandments were not grievous, because the heart was framed and molded thereunto. The heart must be made good ere men can obey from the heart; and to this end he elegantly first compares the doctrine of Law and gospel delivered them, unto a pattern or sampler, which having in their eye, they framed and squared their actings and doings unto it. And he secondly compares the same doctrine unto a mold or matrix, into which metal is being delivered, having the same figure or form left on them which the mold itself had; and this is spoken in respect of their hearts.*

This mighty and marvelous change is not in the substance or faculties of the soul, but in its disposition; for a lump of metal being melted and molded remains the same metal it was before, yet its frame and fashion is greatly altered. When the heart has been made humble and meek, it is enabled to perceive what is that good, perfect, and acceptable will of God, and approves of it as good for him; and thus we are "transformed by the renewing of our mind" (Rom 12:2). As the mold and the thing molded correspond, as the wax has on it the image by which it was impressed, so the heart which before was enmity to every commandment, now delights in the Law of God after the inward man, finding an agreeableness between it and his own disposition. Only as the heart is supernaturally changed and conformed to God is it found that "His commandments are not grievous" (1Jo 5:3).

What has just been said above brings us back to the point reached in the first part of this chapter, namely, that holiness is a moral quality, an inclination, a "new nature," a disposition which delights itself in all that is pure, excellent, benevolent. It is the shedding abroad of God's love in the heart, for only by *love* can His holy Law be fulfilled. Nothing but disinterested love (the opposite of self-love) can produce cheerful obedience. And as Romans 5:5 tells us, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts *by the Holy Spirit*. We are sanctified by the Spirit indwelling us—His producing in and through us the fruits of holiness. And thus it is that we read, "But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for Himself" (Psa 4:3).

Outward Conduct Displays Inward Purity.

In an earlier chapter we asked, "How can it be discovered whether or not we have been sanctified, unless we really know what sanctification actually is?" Now let it be pointed out that our sanctification by the Father and our sanctification by Christ can only be known to us by the sanctification of the Spirit,

and that, in turn, can only be discovered by its *effects*. And this brings us to the ultimate aspect of *the nature* of our sanctification, namely, that holy walk, or course of outward conduct, which makes manifest and is the effect of our inward sanctification by the Spirit. This branch of our subject is what theologians have designated our "practical sanctification." Thus, we distinguish between the act and process by which the Christian is set apart to God, the moral and spiritual state into which that setting apart brings him, and the holy living which proceeds from that state; it is the last we have now reached. As the "setting apart" is both privative[144] and positive—from the service of Satan, to the service of God—so holy living is separation from evil, following after that which is good.

Thomas Manton, than whom none of the Puritans is more simple, succinct, and satisfying, says,

> *Sanctification is threefold. First, meritorious sanctification is Christ's meriting and purchasing for His Church the inward inhabitation of the Spirit, and that grace whereby they may be sanctified: Hebrews 10:10. Second, applicatory sanctification is the inward renovation of the heart of those whom Christ hath sanctified by the Spirit of regeneration, whereby a man is translated from death to life, from the state of nature to the state of grace. This is spoken of in Titus 3:5—this is the daily sanctification, which, with respect to the merit of Christ, is wrought by the Spirit and the ministry of the Word and sacraments.[145] Third, practical sanctification is that by which those for whom Christ did sanctify Himself, and who are renewed by the Holy Spirit, and planted into Christ by faith, do more and more sanctify and cleanse themselves from sin in thought, word, and deed (1Pe 1:15; 1Jo 3:3).*
>
> *As "to sanctify" signifieth to consecrate or dedicate to God, so it signifieth both the fixed inclination or the disposition of the soul towards God as our highest lord and chief good, and accordingly a resignation of our souls to God, to live in the love of His blessed majesty and a thankful obedience to Him. More distinctly (1) it implieth a bent, a tendency, or fixed inclination towards God, which is habitual sanctification. (2) A resignation, or giving up ourselves to God, by which actual holiness is begun; a constant using ourselves to Him, by which it is continued; and the continual exercise of a fervent love, by which it is increased in us more and more, till all be perfected in Glory.*
>
> *As "to sanctify" signifieth to purify and cleanse, so it signifies the purifying of the soul from the love of the world. A man is impure because, when he was made of God, he prefers base trifles of this world before his Maker and everlasting Glory: and so he is not sanctified that doth despise and disobey his Maker. He despiseth Him because he prefers the most contemptible vanity before Him, and chooses the transitory[146] pleasure of sinning before the endless fruition[147] of God. Now, he is sanctified when his worldly love is cured, and he is brought back again to the love and obedience of God. Those that are healed of the over-love of [148] the world are sanctified, as the inclinations of the flesh to worldly things are broken."*

1 Thessalonians 5:23

> *"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

There was probably a threefold reference in the apostle's request. First, he prayed that all the members of the Thessalonian church, the entire assembly, might be sanctified. Second, he prayed that each individual member might be sanctified entirely in his whole man—spirit, soul, and body. Third, he prayed that each and all of them might be sanctified more perfectly, moved to press forward unto complete holiness. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 is almost parallel with Hebrews 13:20-21. The apostle prayed that all the parts and faculties of the Christian might be kept under the influence of efficacious[149] grace, in true and real conformity to God; so influenced by the truth as to be fitted and furnished, in all cases and circumstances, for the performance of every good work. Though this be our bounden duty, yet it lies not absolutely in our own power, but is the work of God in and through us; and thus is to form the subject of earnest and constant prayer.

Two things are clearly implied in the above passage. First, that *the whole nature of the Christian is the subject of the work of sanctification*, and not merely part of it: every disposition and power of the spirit, every faculty of the soul, the body with all its members. The *body* too is sanctified. It has been made a member of Christ (1Co 6:15); it is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Co 6:19). As it is an integral part of the believer's person, and as its inclinations and appetites affect the soul and influence conduct, it must be brought under the control of the spirit and soul, so that "every one of you should know how to

possess his vessel in sanctification and honour" (1Th 4:4), and "as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Rom 6:19).

Second, that *this work of divine grace will be carried on to completion and perfection*, for the apostle immediately adds, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (1Th 5:24). Thus the two verses are parallel with, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phi 1:6). Nothing short of every faculty and member of the Christian being devoted to God is what he is to ever aim at. But the attainment of this is only completely realized at his glorification: "We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him" (1Jo 3:2)—not only inwardly but outwardly: "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Phi 3:21).

Its Nature, Part Three

That which we have labored to show in this book is the fact that the sanctification of the Christian is very much more than a bare setting apart of him unto God: it is also, and chiefly, a work of grace wrought in his soul. God not only *accounts* His people holy, but actually *makes* them so. The various materials and articles used in the tabernacle of old, when dedicated to God, were changed only in their *use*, but when man is dedicated to God he is changed in his *nature*, so that not only is there a vital difference between him and others, but a radical difference between him and himself (1Co 6:11)—between what he was and now is. That change of nature is a real necessity, for the man himself must be made holy before his actions can be so. Grace is planted in the heart, from whence its influence is diffused throughout all departments of his life. Internal holiness is an hatred of sin and a love of that which is good, and external holiness is the avoiding of the one and the pursuing of the other. Wherever there be a change of heart, fruits will appear in the conduct.

Three Aspects

Like salvation itself—according to the use of the term in Scripture (*see* 2 Timothy 1:9, salvation in the past; Philippians 2:12, salvation in the present; Romans 13:11, salvation in the future) and in the actual history of the redeemed—so sanctification must be considered under its three tenses. There is a very real sense in which all of God's elect *have already been* sanctified: Jude 1, Hebrews 10:10, 2 Thessalonians 2:13. There is also a very real sense in which those of God's people on earth are *daily being* sanctified: 2 Corinthians 4:16, 2 Corinthians 7:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:23. And there is also a very real sense in which the Christian's (complete) sanctification is *yet future*: Romans 8:30, Hebrews 12:23, 1 John 3:2. Unless this threefold distinction be carefully borne in mind our thoughts are bound to be confused. Objectively, our sanctification is already an accomplished fact (1Co 1:2), in which one saint shares equally with another. Subjectively, our sanctification is not complete in this life (Phi 3:12) and varies considerably in different Christians, though the promise of Philippians 1:6 belongs alike to all of them.

Though our sanctification be complete in all its parts, yet it is not now perfect in its degrees. As the newborn babe possesses a soul and body, endowed with all their members, yet they are undeveloped and far from a state of maturity. So it is with the Christian, who (in comparison with the life to come) remains throughout this life but a "babe in Christ" (1Pe 2:2). We know but "in part" (1Co 13:12), and we are sanctified but in part, for "there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed" (Jos 13:1). In the most gracious there remains a double principle: the flesh and the spirit, the old man and the new man. We are a mixture and a medley during our present state. There is a conflict between operating principles (sin and grace), so that every act is mixed: there is tin mixed with our silver and dross[150] with our gold. Our best deeds are defiled, and therefore we continue to feed upon the Lamb "with bitter herbs" (Exo 12:8).

Holiness in the heart discovers itself by godly sorrowings and godly aspirations. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Mat 5:4)—mourn because of the swellings of pride, the workings of unbelief, the surgings of discontent; mourn because of the feebleness of their faith, the coldness of their love, their lack of conformity to Christ. There is nothing which more plainly evidences a person to be sanctified than a broken and contrite heart—grieving over that which is contrary to holiness. Rightly did the Puritan John Owen say, "Evangelical repentance is that which carrieth the believing soul through all its failures, infirmities, and sins. He is not able to live one day without the constant exercise of it. *It is as necessary unto the continuance of spiritual life as faith is*.[151] It is that continual, habitual

self-abasement which arises from a sense of the majesty and holiness of God, and the consciousness of our miserable failures." This makes the real Christian so thankful for Romans 7, for he finds it corresponds exactly with his own inward experience.

The sanctified soul, then, is very far from being satisfied with the measure of experimental holiness that is yet his portion. He is painfully conscious of the feebleness of his graces, the leanness of his soul, and the defilements from his inward corruption. But, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Mat 5:6), or "they that are hungering and thirsting" as the Greek reads, being the participle of the present tense; intimating a present disposition of soul. Christ pronounces "blessed" (in contrast from those under "the curse") they who are hungering and thirsting after His righteousness imparted as well as imputed, who thirst after the righteousness of sanctification as well as the righteousness of justification—that is, the Spirit infusing into the soul holy principles, supernatural graces, spiritual qualities, and then strengthening and developing the same. Such has been the experience of the saints in all ages, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" (Psa 42:1-2).

Comparison of Sanctification with Other Blessings

One of the things which prevents so many from obtaining a right view of the nature of sanctification is that scarcely any of the bestowments of the gospel are clearly defined in their minds, all being jumbled up together. While every spiritual privilege the believer enjoys is the fruit of God's electing love and the purchase of Christ's mediation, and so are all parts of one grand whole, yet it is our loss if we fail to definitely distinguish them one from the other. Reconciliation and justification, adoption and forgiveness, regeneration and sanctification, all combine to form the present portion of those whom the Father draws to the Son; nevertheless, each of these terms stands for a specific branch of that "great salvation" to which they were appointed. It makes much for our peace of mind and joy of heart when we are able to apprehend these things severally.[152] We shall therefore devote the remainder of this chapter to a comparison of sanctification with other blessings of the Christian.

1. Regeneration and sanctification

It may appear to some who read critically our articles on "Regeneration," in the 1931 issues of *Studies in the Scriptures*, and who have closely followed what has been said in our discussion of the nature of sanctification, that we have almost, if not quite, obliterated all real difference between what is wrought in us at the new birth and what God works in us at our sanctification. It is not easy to preserve a definite line of distinction between them, because they have a number of things in common; yet the leading points of contrast between them needs to be considered if we are to differentiate them in our minds. We shall therefore occupy the next two or three paragraphs with an examination of this point, wherein we shall endeavor to set forth the relation of the one to the other. Perhaps it will help us the most to consider this by saying that, in one sense, the relation between regeneration and sanctification is that of the infant to the adult.

In likening the connection between regeneration and sanctification to the relation between an infant and an adult, it should be pointed out that we have in mind our practical and progressive sanctification, and not our objective and absolute sanctification. Our absolute sanctification, so far as our state before God is concerned, is simultaneous with our regeneration. The essential thing in our regeneration is the Spirit's quickening of us into newness of life; the essential thing in our sanctification is that thenceforth we are an habitation of God, through the indwelling of the Spirit, and from *that* standpoint all the subsequent progressive advances in the spiritual life are but the effects, fruits, and manifestations of that initial consecration or anointing. The consecration of the tabernacle, and later of the temple, was a single

act, done once and for all; after, there were many evidences of its continuance or perpetuity. But it is with the *experimental* aspect we would here treat.[153]

At regeneration, a principle of holiness is communicated to us; practical sanctification is the exercise of that principle in living unto God. In regeneration, the Spirit imparts saving grace; in His work of sanctification, He strengthens and develops the same. As "original sin," or that indwelling corruption which is in us at our natural birth, contains within it the seeds of all sin, so that grace which is imparted to us at the new birth contains within it the seeds of all spiritual graces—and as the one develops and manifests itself as we grow, so it is with the other. "Sanctification is a constant, progressive renewing of the whole man, whereby the new creature doth daily more and more die unto sin and live unto God. Regeneration is the birth, sanctification is the growth of this babe of grace. In regeneration, the sun of holiness rises; in sanctification, it keepeth its course and shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day (Pro 4:18). The former is a specific change from nature to grace (Eph 5:8); the latter is a gradual change from one degree of grace to another (Psa 84:7), whereby the Christian goeth from strength to strength till he appear before God in Zion" (George Swinnock).[154]

Thus, the foundation of sanctification is laid in regeneration, in that a holy principle is then first formed in us. That holy principle evidences itself in conversion, which is turning away from sin to holiness, from Satan to Christ, from the world to God. It continues to evidence itself under the constant work of mortification and vivification,[155] or the practical putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new—and is completed at glorification. The great difference then between regeneration and experimental and practical sanctification is that the former is a divine *act*, done once and for all—while the latter is a divine *work* of God's grace, wherein He sustains and develops, continues and perfects the work He then began. The one is a birth, the other the growth. The making of us practically holy is the design which God has in view when He quickens us: it is the necessary means to this end, for sanctification is the crown of the whole process of salvation.

One of the chief defects of modern teaching on this subject has been in regarding the new birth as the *summum bonum*[156] of the spiritual life of the believer. Instead of its being the goal, it is but the starting-point. Instead of being the end, it is only a means to the end. Regeneration must be supplemented by sanctification, or otherwise the soul would remain at a standstill—if such a thing were possible: for it seems to be an unchanging law in every realm that where there is no progression, there must be retrogression. That spiritual growth, which is so essential, lies in progressive sanctification, wherein all the faculties of the soul are more and more brought under the purifying and regulating influence of the principle of holiness which is implanted at the new birth, for thus alone do we "grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph 4:15).

2. Justification and sanctification

The relation between justification and sanctification is clearly revealed in Romans 3 to 8, that epistle being the great doctrinal treatise[157] of the New Testament. In the 5th chapter we see the believing sinner declared righteous before God and at peace with Him, given an immutable standing in His favor, reconciled to Him, assured of his preservation, and so rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. Yet, great as are these blessings, something more is required by the quickened conscience, namely, deliverance from the power and pollution of inherited sin. Accordingly, this is dealt with at length in Romans 6 to 8, where various fundamental aspects of sanctification are treated. First, it is demonstrated that the believer has been *judicially* cleansed from sin and the curse of the Law, and that, in order that he may be *practically* delivered from the dominion of sin, so that he may delight in and serve the Law. Union with Christ not only involves identification with His death but participation in His resurrection.

Yet, though sanctification is discussed by the apostle *after* his exposition of justification, it is a serious error to conclude that there may be, and often is, a considerable interval of time between the two

things, or that sanctification is a consequent[158] of justification. Still worse is the teaching of some that, having been justified, we must now seek sanctification, without which we must certainly perish—thus making the security of justification to depend upon a holy walk. No, though the two truths are dealt with singly by the apostle, they are inseparable; though they are to be contemplated alone, they must not be divided. Christ cannot be halved: in Him, the believing sinner has *both* righteousness and holiness. Each department of the gospel needs to be considered distinctly, but not pitted against each other. Let us not draw a false conclusion, then, because justification is treated of in Romans 3 to 5 and sanctification in 6 to 8; the one passage supplements the other—they are two halves of one whole.

The Christian's regeneration is not the cause of his justification, nor is justification the cause of his sanctification—for *Christ* is the cause of all three; yet there is an *order* preserved between them: not an order of time, but of nature. First we are recovered to God's image, then to His favor, and then to His fellowship. So inseparable are justification and sanctification that sometimes the one is presented first and sometimes the other: see Romans 8:1 and 13; 1 John 1:9; then Micah 7:19 and 1 Corinthians 6:11. First, God quickens the dead soul: being made alive spiritually, he is now capacitated[159] to faith in Christ, by which he is (instrumentally) justified.[160] In sanctification, the Spirit carries on and perfects the work in regeneration, and that progressive work is accomplished under the new relation into which the believer is introduced by justification. Having been judicially reconciled to God, the way is now open for an experimental fellowship with Him, and that is maintained as the Spirit carries forward His work of sanctification.

"Though justification and sanctification are both of them blessings of grace, and though they are absolutely inseparable, yet they are so manifestly distinct, that there is in various respects a wide difference between them. Justification respects the person in a legal sense, is a single act of grace, and terminates in a relative change:[161] that is, a freedom from punishment and a right to life. Sanctification regards him in an experimental sense, is a continued work of grace, and terminates in a real change,[162] as to the quality both of habits and actions. The former is by a righteousness without us;[163] the latter is by holiness wrought in us. Justification is by Christ as a priest, and has regard to the guilt of sin; sanctification is by Him as a king, and refers to its dominion. Justification is instantaneous and complete in all its real subjects; but sanctification is progressive" (A. Booth).[164]

3. Purification and sanctification

These two things are not absolutely identical: though inseparable, they are yet distinguishable. We cannot do better than quote from G. Smeaton,[165] "The two words frequently occurring in the ritual of Israel 'sanctify' and 'purify,' are so closely allied in sense, that some regard them as synonymous. But a slight shade of distinction between the two may be discerned as follows. It is assumed that ever-recurring defilements, of a ceremonial kind, called for sacrifices of expiation;[166] and the word 'purify' referred to these rites and sacrifices which removed the stains which excluded the worshipper from the privilege of approach to the sanctuary of God, and from fellowship with His people. The defilement that he contracted excluded him from access. But when this same Israelite was purged by sacrifice, he was readmitted to the full participation of the privilege. He was then *sanctified* or *holy*. Thus the latter is the consequence of the former. We may affirm, then, that the two words in this reference to the old worship are very closely allied—so much so, that the one involves the other. This will throw light upon the use of these two expressions in the New Testament: Ephesians 2:15-16, Hebrews 2:11, Titus 2:14. All these passages represent a man defiled by sin and excluded from God, but readmitted to access and fellowship, and so pronounced holy, as soon as the blood of sacrifice is applied to him." Often the term *purge* or *purify* (especially in Hebrews) includes justification as well.

Objective holiness is the result of a *relationship* with God, He having set apart some thing or person for His own pleasure. But the setting apart of one *unto God* necessarily involves the separating of it from

all that is opposed to Him. All believers were set apart or consecrated to God by the sacrifice of Christ. Subjective holiness is the result of a *work* of God wrought in the soul, setting that person apart for His use. Thus holiness has two fundamental aspects. Growing out of the second is the soul's apprehension of God's claims upon him, and his presentation of himself to God for His exclusive use (Rom 12:1), which is *practical* sanctification. The supreme example of all three is found in Jesus Christ, the Holy One of God. Objectively, He was the One "whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world" (Joh 10:36); subjectively, He "received the Spirit without measure" (Joh 3:34); and practically, He lived for the glory of God, being absolutely devoted to His will—only with this tremendous difference—He needed no inward purification as we do.

Summary

To sum up, holiness, then, is both a relationship and a moral quality. It has both a negative and a positive side: cleansing from impurity, adorning with the grace of the Spirit. Sanctification is, first, a position of honor to which God has appointed His people. Second, it is a state of purity which Christ has purchased for them. Third, it is an enduement[167] given to them by the Holy Spirit. Fourth, it is a course of devoted conduct in keeping therewith. Fifth, it is a standard of moral perfection, at which they are ever to aim (1Pe 1:15). A "saint" is one who was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4), who has been cleansed from the guilt and pollution of sin by the blood of Christ (Heb 13:12), who has been consecrated to God by the indwelling Spirit (2Co 1:21-22), who has been made inwardly holy by the impartation of the principle of grace (Phi 1:6), and whose duty, privilege, and aim is to walk suitably thereto (Eph 4:1).

Its Author
(The Father)

Introduction

God Himself is the alone source and spring of all holiness. There is nothing of it in any creature but what is immediately from the Holy One. When God first created man, He made him in His own image, that is, "in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10). The creature can no more produce holiness of himself than he can create life: for the one he is just as much dependent upon God as he is for the other. How much less, then, can a *fallen* creature, polluted and enslaved by sin, sanctify himself? More easily could the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots, than a moral leper make himself pure. Where any measure of real holiness is found in a human heart its possessor must say with Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1Co 15:10). Sanctification, then, is the immediate work and gift of God Himself.

No greater delusion can seize the minds of men than that defiled nature is able to cleanse itself, that fallen and ruined man may rectify himself, or that those who have lost the image of God which He created in them, should create it again in themselves by their own endeavors. Self-evident as is this truth, yet pride ever seeks to set it aside. Self-complacency assumes that obligation and ability are co-extensive. Not so. It is true that God requires and commands us to be holy for He will not relinquish His rights or lower His standard. Yet His command no more denotes that we have the power to comply, than His setting before us a perfect standard implies we are able to measure up to the same. Rather does the one inform us that we are *without* what God requires, while the other should humble us into the dust because we come so far short of the glory of God.

But so self-sufficient and self-righteous are we by nature it also needs to be pointed out that the very fact God promises to *work in His people* by His grace both indicates and demonstrates that of themselves they are quite unable to meet His demands. Ponder for a moment the following: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer 31:33). "I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me" (Jer 32:39-40). "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes" (Eze 36:26-27). In those blessed assurances, and nowhere else, is contained the *guarantee* of our sanctification: all turns upon *God's* power, grace, and operations. He is the alone accomplisher of His own promises.

The Triune God

The Author of our sanctification is the triune[168] God. We say "the triune God," because in Scripture the title "God," when it stands unqualified, is not used with a uniform signification. Sometimes "God" refers to the first Person in the Trinity, sometimes to the second Person, and sometimes to the third. In other passages, like 1 Corinthians 15:28, for instance, it includes all the three Persons. Each of

the eternal Three has His own distinctive place or part in connection with the sanctification of the Church, and it is necessary for us to clearly perceive this if we are to have definite views thereof. We have now reached that stage in our prosecution[169] of this subject where it behooves us carefully to trace out the particular operations of each divine Person in connection with our sanctification, for only as these are discerned by us will we be prepared to intelligently offer to each One the praise that is His distinctive due.

In saying that the Author of sanctification is the triune God, we do not mean that the Father is the Sanctifier of the Church in precisely the same way or manner as the Son or as the Holy Spirit is. No, rather is it our desire to emphasize the fact that the Christian is equally indebted to each of the three divine Persons, that his sanctification proceeds as truly from the Father as it does from the Holy Spirit, and as actually from the Son as it does from either the Spirit or the Father. Many writers have failed to make this clear. Yet it needs to be pointed out that, in the economy of salvation, there is an *official order* observed and preserved by the holy Three, wherein we are given to see that all is *from* the Father, all is *through* the Son, all is *by* the Holy Spirit. Not that this official order denotes any essential subordination or inferiority of one Person to another, but that each manifests Himself distinctively, each displays His own glory, and each is due the separate adoration of His people.

It is most blessed to observe there is a beautiful *order* adopted and carried on by the Eternal Three through all the departments of divine love to the Church, so that each glorious Person of the Godhead has taken part in every act of grace manifested toward the mystical Body of Christ. Though all Three work conjointly, yet there are distinct personal operations, by which they make way for the honor of each other: the love of the Father for the glory of the Son, and the glory of the Son for the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, it is in connection with the subject now before us. In the Scriptures we read that the Church is "sanctified by God the Father" (Jude 1), and again, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb 13:12), and yet again, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit" (2Th 2:13). Each Person of the Godhead, then, is our Sanctifier, though not in the same manner.

This same co-operation by the holy Three is observable in many other things. It was so in the creation of the world: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth" (Act 17:24), where the reference is plainly to the Father; of the Son it is affirmed, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made" (Joh 1:3); while in Job 26:13 we are told, "By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens." So with the production of the sacred humanity of our Redeemer, the supernatural impregnation of the virgin was the immediate effect of the Spirit's agency (Luk 1:35), yet the human nature was voluntarily and actively assumed by Christ Himself. He "took upon him the form of a servant" (Phi 2:7; *see also* "took part," Heb 2:14), while in Hebrews 10:5 we hear the Son saying to the Father, "A body hast thou prepared me."

Our present existence is derived from the joint operation of the divine agency of the blessed Three. "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" (Mal 2:10). Of the Son it is said, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth" (Col 1:16), while in Job 33:4 we read, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." In like manner, the "eternal life" of believers is indiscriminately ascribed to each of the divine Persons. In Romans 6:23 it is attributed to the bounty of the Father. 1 John 5:11 expressly assures us that it "is in the Son," while in Galatians 6:8 we read, "He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." By the Father we are justified (Rom 8:33); by Christ we are justified (Isa 53:11); by the Spirit we are justified (1Co 6:11). By the Father we are preserved (1Pe 1:5); by the Son we are preserved (Joh 10:28); by the Spirit we are preserved (Eph 4:30). By the Father we shall be raised (2Co 1:9); by the Son (Joh 5:28); by the Spirit (Rom 8:11).

The actions of the Persons in the Godhead are not unlike to the beautiful colors of the rainbow. Those colors are perfectly blended together in one, yet each is quite distinct. So it is in connection with the several operations of the holy Three concerning our sanctification. While it be blessedly true that the Triune God is the Author of this wondrous work, yet, if we are to observe the distinctions which the holy Scriptures make in the unfolding of this theme, they require us to recognize that, in the economy of salvation, God the Father is, in a special manner, the *Originator* of this unspeakable blessing. In connection with the whole scheme of redemption God the Father is to be viewed as the Fountain of grace, all spiritual blessings originating in His goodness and being bestowed according to the good pleasure of His sovereign will. This is clear from Ephesians 1:3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

God the Father

That the Father is the Sanctifier of the Church is obvious from 1 Thessalonians 5:23. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here He is acknowledged as such, by prayer being made to Him for the perfecting of this gift and grace. So again in Hebrews 13:20-21 we find the apostle addressing Him as follows: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ." It is the furthering of this work within His people for which the apostle supplicates God. In both passages it is the Father Who is sought unto. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10). Here the sanctification of the Church is traced back to the sovereign will of God as the supreme originating cause thereof, the reference again being to the eternal gracious purpose of the Father, which Christ came here to accomplish.

Further proof that the first Person in the divine Trinity is the immediate Author of our sanctification is found in Jude 1: "To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." Note it is not simply "them that are sanctified by God," but, more specifically, "by God the Father." Before attempting to give the meaning of this remarkable text, it needs to be pointed out that it is closely connected with those words of Christ's in John 10:36, "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" Our Lord was there referring to Himself not as the second Person of the Godhead absolutely considered, but as the God-man Mediator, for only as such was He "sent" by the Father. His being "sanctified" before He was "sent," has reference to a transaction in heaven ere He became incarnate. Before the foundation of the world, the Father set apart Christ and ordained that He should be both the Head and Savior of His Church, and that He should be plenteously endowed by the Spirit for His vast undertaking.

Reverting to Jude 1, we would note particularly *the order* of its statements: the "sanctified by God the Father" *comes before* "preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." This initial aspect of our sanctification antedates[170] our regeneration or effectual call from darkness to light, and therefore takes us back to the eternal counsels of God. There are three things in our verse, taking them in their inverse order. There is first our "calling," when we were brought from death unto life; that was preceded by our being "preserved in Jesus Christ," that is, preserved from physical death in the womb, in the days of our infancy, during the recklessness of youth; and that also preceded by our being "sanctified" by the Father, that is, our names being enrolled in the Lamb's book of life (Rev 21:27). We are given to Christ to be loved by Him with an everlasting love and made joint-heirs with Him forever and ever (Rom 8:17).

Our sanctification by the Father was *His eternal election[171] of us*, with all that the term connotes

and involves. Election was far more than a bare choice of persons. It included our being predestinated[172] unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself (Eph 1:5). It included our being made "vessels unto honour" and being "afore prepared to glory" (Rom 9:21, 23). It included being appointed "to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Th 5:9). It included our being separated for God's pleasure, God's use, and "that we should be to the praise of his glory" (Eph 1:12). It included our being made "holy and without blame before him" (Eph 1:4). This eternal sanctification by God the Father is also mentioned in 2 Timothy 1:9, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

As we pointed out in the last paragraph of the preceding chapter, "Sanctification is, first, a position of honour to which God hath appointed His people." That position of honor was their being "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4), when they were constituted members of His mystical Body (Eph 5:30) by the eternal purpose of God. Oh, what an amazing honor was that, a place in Glory higher than that of the angels being granted them! Our poor minds are staggered before such wondrous grace. Here, then, is the link of connection between John 10:36 and Jude 1. Christ was not alone in the mind of the Father when He "sanctified" Him. By the divine decree Christ was separated and consecrated as the Head of a sanctified people. In the sanctification of Christ, all who are "called saints" were, in Him, eternally set apart to be partakers of His own holy standing before the Father! This was an act of pure sovereignty on the Father's part.

As it is not possible that anything can add to God's *essential* blessedness[173] (Job 22:2-3; 35:7), so nothing whatever outside of God can possibly be a motive unto Him for any of His actions. If He be pleased to bring creatures into existence, His own supreme and sovereign will must be the sole cause, as His own *manifestative[174]* glory is His ultimate end and design. This is plainly asserted in the Scriptures: "The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Pro 16:4). "Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev 4:11). "Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom 11:35-36). So it is in the ordaining of some of His creatures unto honor and glory, and appointing them to salvation in bringing them to that glory. Nothing but God's sovereign will was the cause; nothing but His own manifestative glory is the end.

As we have shown, to "sanctify" signifies to consecrate or set apart for a sacred use, to cleanse or purify, to adorn or beautify. Which of these meanings has the term in Jude 1? We believe the words "sanctified by God the Father" include all three of those definitions. First, in that eternal purpose of His, the elect were *separated* from all other creatures and predestinated to the adoption of sons. Second, in God's foreviews[175] of His elect falling in Adam, the corrupting of their natures and the defilement which their personal acts of sin would entail, He ordained that the Mediator should make a full atonement for them and by His blood *cleanse* them from all sin. Third, by choosing them in Christ, the elect were *united toHim* and so made one with Him that all His worthiness and perfection becomes theirs too; and thus they were *adorned*. God never views them apart from Christ.

"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph 1:6). The Greek word for "accepted" is *charitoo*, and Young's Concordance gives as its meaning "to make gracious." It occurs (as a passive participle, rather than in its active form, as in Ephesians 1:6) again only in Luke 1:28, where the angel said to the virgin, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured," which Young defines as "to give grace, to treat graciously," and, in his index, "graciously accepted or much graced." This, we believe, is the exact force of it in Ephesians 1:6—"according as He hath much graced us in the Beloved." A careful reading of the immediate context will show that this was before the foundation of the world, which is confirmed by the fact that the elect's being "much graced in the Beloved" comes before

“redemption” and “forgiveness of sins” in verse 7! Note too the “hath” in verses 3, 4, 6 and the change to “have” in verse 7.

Here, then, is the ultimate reference in “sanctified by God the Father” (Jude 1). As we have so often pointed out, “sanctification” is not a bare act of simply setting apart, but involves or includes the adorning and beautifying of the object or person thus set apart, so *fitting it for God’s use*. Thus, it was in God’s eternal purpose. He not only made an election from the mass of creatures to be created—He not only separated those elect ones from the others—but He chose them “in Christ” and “much graced them in the Beloved!” The elect were made the mystical[176] Body and Bride of Christ, so united to Him that whatever grace[177] Christ has, by virtue of their union with Him, His people have; and therefore did He declare, “Thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (Joh 17:23). Oh, that it may please the Holy Spirit to so shine upon our feeble understandings that we may be enabled to lay hold of this wondrous, glorious, and transcendent fact—“Sanctified by God the Father”, set apart by Him to be Body and Bride of Christ, “much graced” in Him, possessing His own holy standing before the Throne of Heaven.

Its Procurer
(The Son)

Its Procurer, Part One

We have now reached what is to our mind the most important and certainly the most blessed aspect of our many-sided subject, yet that which is the least understood in not a few circles of Christendom. It is the *objective* side of sanctification that we now turn to—that perfect and unforfeitable holiness which every believer has in Christ. We are not now going to write upon sanctification as a moral quality or attribute, nor of that which is a manner of experience or attainment by us. Rather shall we contemplate something entirely *outside ourselves*, namely, that which is a fundamental part of our standing and state in Christ. That which we are about to consider is one of those "spiritual blessings" which God has blest us with "in the heavenlies in Christ" (Eph 1:3). It is an immediate consequence of His blood shedding, and results from our actual union with Him as the Holy One of God. It is that which His perfect offering has sanctified us *unto*, as well as what it has sanctified us *from.*

Among all the terrible effects and fruits which sin produces, the two chief are alienation from God and condemnation by God. Sin necessarily excludes from His sanctuary and brings the sinner before the judgment-seat of His Law. Contrariwise, among all the blessed fruits and effects which Christ's sacrifice procures, the two chief ones are justification and sanctification. It cannot be otherwise. Inasmuch as Christ's sacrifice has "put away" (Heb 9:26) and "made an end" of (Dan 9:24) the sins of His people, they are not only freed from all condemnation, but they are also given the right and the meetness to draw near to God as purged worshipers. Sin not only entails guilt, it *defiles*; and the blood of Christ has not only secured pardon, it *cleanses*. Yet simple, clear, and conclusive as is this dual fact, Christians find it much harder to apprehend the second part of it than they do the first.

When we first believed in Christ and the burden of our sins rolled away, we supposed that (as one hymn expresses it) we would be "happy all the day." Assured of God's forgiveness that we had entered His family by the new birth, and that an eternity with Christ in unclouded bliss was our certain inheritance, what could possibly dampen our joy? Ah, but it was not long before we discovered that we were still *sinners*, living in a world of sin. Yea, as time went on, we were made more and more conscious of the sink of iniquity that indwells us, ever sending forth its foul streams, polluting our thoughts, words, and actions. This forced from us the agonized inquiry, "How can such vile creatures as we see, feel, and know ourselves to be, either pray to, serve, or worship the thrice holy God?" Only in His own blessed Word can be found a sufficient and a satisfying answer to this burning question.

Christ in Hebrews

The Epistle to the Romans is, as is well known, that part of Scripture in which the question of justification is most fully treated. There, especially, we are taught to think of God as a Judge presiding in the Courts of His holy judgment. Accordingly, the expressions employed throughout that epistle are "forensic" or "judicial." They refer to our relation to God, or His relation to us, in His judicial Courts—the great question there being: how criminals can be brought into such a relation to Him, as to have not criminality, but righteousness imputed to them.

But if, in the Epistle to the Romans, we see God in the Courts of His judgment, equally in the Epistle to the Hebrews we see Him in the Temple of His worship. "Sanctified" is a word that has the same prominence in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that "justified" has in the Epistle to the Romans. It is a Temple-word, descriptive of our relation to God in the Courts of His worship, just as "justified" is a forensic word, descriptive of our relation to God in the Courts of His judgment. Before there can be any question about serving or worshipping God acceptably, the necessity of His holiness requires that the claims both of the Courts of His judgment, and also of the Courts of His worship, should be fully met. He who is regarded in the judicial Courts of God as an unpardoned criminal, or who, in relation to the Temple of God, is regarded as having the stains of his guilt upon him, cannot be allowed to take his stand among God's servants. No leper that was not thoroughly cleansed could serve in the Tabernacle. The existence of one stain not adequately covered by compensatory[178] atonement shuts out from the presence of God.

We must stand "uncharged" in relation to the judicial Courts of God and imputatively[179] "spotless" in relation to the Courts of His worship: in other words, we must be perfectly "justified" and perfectly "sanctified" before we can attempt to worship or serve

Him. "Sanctification," therefore, when used in this sense, is not to be contrasted with justification, as if the latter were complete, but the former incomplete and progressive. Both are complete to the believer. The same moment that brings the complete "justification" of the fifth chapter of Romans, brings the equally complete "sanctification" of the tenth of Hebrews—both being equally needed in order that God, as respects the claims of His holiness, might be "appeased" or "placated" toward us; and therefore equally needed as pre-requisites to our entrance on the worship and service of God in His heavenly Temple—for until wrath is effectually appeased there can be no entrance there.

The complete and finished sanctification of believers by the blood of Jesus, is the great subject of the ninth and tenth chapters of Hebrews. "The blood of bulls and goats" gave to them who were sprinkled therewith a title to enter into the courts of the typical tabernacle, but that title was not an abiding title. It was no sooner gained than it was lost by the first recurring taint. Repetition therefore of offering, and repetition of sprinkling was needed again and again. The same circle was endlessly trodden and retrodden; and yet never was perpetuity of acceptance obtained. The tabernacle and its services were but shadows; but they teach us that, as "the blood of bulls and goats" gave to them who were sprinkled therewith a temporary title to enter into that typical tabernacle; so the blood of Christ, once offered, gives to all those who are once sprinkled therewith (and all believers are sprinkled) a title, not temporary, but abiding, to enter into God's presence as those who are sanctified for heaven (B. W. Newton).

"We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb 10:10, 14). These blessed declarations have no reference whatsoever to anything that the Spirit does in the Christian, but relate exclusively to what Christ has secured *for* them. They speak of that which results from our *identification* with Christ.[180] They affirm that by virtue of the sacrifice of Calvary every believer is not only counted righteous in the courts of God's judgment, but is perfectly hallowed[181] for the courts of His worship. The precious blood of the Lamb not only delivers from hell, but it also fits us for heaven.

By the redemptive work of Christ, the entire Church has been set apart, consecrated unto and accepted by God. The grand truth is that the feeble and most uninstructed believer was as *completely sanctified before God* the first moment that he trusted in Christ, as he will be when he dwells in heaven in his glorified state. True, both his sphere and his circumstances will then be quite different from what they now are: nevertheless, his title to heaven, his meetness for the immediate presence of the thrice Holy One, will be no better than it is today. It is *his relation to Christ* (and that alone) which qualifies him to enter the Father's House; and it is his relation to Christ (and that alone) which gives him the right to draw near within the veil *now*. True, the believer still carries around with him "this body of death" (a depraved nature), but that affects not his perfect standing, his completeness in Christ, his acceptance, his justification, and sanctification before God.

But, as we said earlier, the Christian finds it much easier to believe in or grasp the truth of justification, than he does of his present perfect sanctification in Christ. For this reason, we deem it advisable to proceed slowly and enter rather fully into this aspect of our subject. Let us begin with our Lord's own words in John 17:19, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." To what did Christ allude when He spoke there of sanctifying Himself? Certainly, He could not possibly be referring to anything subjective or experimental, for in His own Person He was "the Holy One of God," and, as such, He could not increase in holiness or become more holy. His language then must have respect to what was *objective*, relating to the exercise of His mediatorial office.

When Christ said, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," He denoted that He was then on the very point of dedicating Himself to the full and final execution of the work of making Himself a sacrifice for sin, to satisfy all the demands of God's Law and justice. Christ, then, was therein expressing His readiness to present Himself before the Father as the Surety of His People, to place Himself on the altar as a vicarious propitiation for His Church. It was for the sake of others that He sanctified Himself—for the sake of His eleven apostles, who are there to be regarded as the representatives of the entire Election of Grace. It is on their behalf, for their express benefit, that He set Himself apart unto the full discharge of His mediatorial office that the fruit thereof might redound to them. Christ unreservedly devoted Himself to God, that His people might reap the full advantages thereof.

The particular end here mentioned of Christ's sanctifying Himself was "that they also might be

sanctified through the truth," which is a very faulty rendering of the original, the Greek preposition being "in" and not "through," and there is no article before "truth." The marginal rendering, therefore, is much to be preferred: "that they might be truly sanctified." (*Bagster Interlinear* and the R.V.[182] give "sanctified in truth.") The meaning is "that they might be actually, really, verily sanctified," in contrast from the typical and ceremonial sanctification which obtained under the Mosaic dispensation (*compare* Joh 4:24; Col 1:6; 1Jo 3:18 for "in truth"). As the result of Christ's sanctifying Himself—devoting Himself as a whole burnt offering to God—His people are perfectly sanctified. Their sins are put away; their persons are cleansed from all defilement; and not only so, but the excellency of His infinitely meritorious work is imputed to them, so that they are perfectly acceptable to God, meet for His presence, fitted for His worship.

"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb 10:14)—not by anything which the Spirit works in them, but solely by what Christ's sanctifying of Himself has wrought for them. It is this sanctification in and through Christ that gives Christians their *priestly* character, the title to draw near unto God within the veil as purged worshipers. Access to God, or the worship of a people made nigh by blood, was central in the divinely appointed system of Judaism (Heb 9:13). The antitype, the substance, the blessed reality of this, is what Christ has secured for His Church. Believers are already perfectly sanctified *objectively*, as the immediate fruit of the Saviour's sacrifice. Priestly nearness is now their blessed portion in consequence of Christ's priestly offering of Himself. This it is, and nothing else, which gives us "boldness to enter into the Holiest" (Heb 10:19).

Christ in 1 Corinthians 1:30

Many Christians, who are quite clear that they must look alone to Christ for their justification before God, often fail to view Him as their complete sanctification before God. But this ought not to be, for Scripture is just as clear on the one point as on the other; yea, the two are therein inseparably joined together. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1Co 1:30). And here we must dissent from the exposition of this verse given by Charles Hodge[183] (in his commentary) and others of his school, who interpret "sanctification" here as Christ's Spirit indwelling His people as the Spirit of holiness, transforming them unto His likeness. But this verse is speaking of that sanctification which *Christ is made unto us*, and not that which *we aremade by Christ.* The distinction is real and vital, and to ignore or confound it is inexcusable in a theologian.

Christ crucified (*see* the context of 1 Corinthians 1:30—vv. 17-18, 23), "of God is made unto us" four things; and this in precisely the same way that God "made him [Christ] to be sin for us" (2Co 5:21), namely, objectively and imputatively. First, Christ is "made unto us wisdom," objectively, for He is the One in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid. It is true that by the Spirit we are made wise unto salvation, nevertheless, we are far from being as wise as we ought to be (*see* 1Co 8:2). But all the wisdom God requires of us is found in Christ, and as the Wisdom of the book of Proverbs He is ours. Second, Christ is "made unto us righteousness," objectively, as He is Himself "the LORD our righteousness" (Jer 23:6); and therefore does the believer exclaim, "In the LORD have I righteousness and strength" (Isa 45:24). As the Law raises its accusing voice against me, I point to Christ as the One Who has, by His active and passive obedience, met its every demand on my behalf.

Third, Christ is "made unto us sanctification," objectively. In Him, we have an absolute purity, and, by the imputation to us of the efficacy and merits of His cross work, we who were excluded from God on account of sin are now given access to Him. If Israel became a holy people when sprinkled with the blood of bulls and goats so that they were readmitted to Jehovah's worship, how much more has the

infinitely valuable blood of Christ sanctified us, that we may approach God as acceptable worshipers? This sanctification is not something that we have in our own persons but was ours in Christ as soon as we laid hold of Him by faith. Fourth, Christ is "made unto us redemption," objectively. He is in His own Person both our Redeemer and redemption—"in whom we have redemption" (Eph 1:7). Christ is "made unto us redemption" not by enabling us to redeem ourselves, but by Himself paying the price.

1 Corinthians 1:30, then, affirms that we are *complete* in Christ—that whatever the Law demands of us it has received on our account in the Surety. If we are considered as what we are in ourselves, not as we stand in Christ (as one with Him), then a thousand things may be laid to our charge. It may be laid to our charge that we are woefully ignorant of many parts of the divine Word. But the sufficient answer is, "Christ is our Wisdom." It may be laid to our charge that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. But the sufficient answer is that Christ is our Righteousness. It may be laid to our charge that we do many things and fail to do many others that unfit us for the presence of a holy God. But the sufficient answer is that Christ is our sanctification. It may be laid to our charge that we are largely in bondage to the flesh. But the sufficient answer is, "Christ is our Redemption."

1 Corinthians 1:30, then, is a *unit.* We cannot define the wisdom and the sanctification as what the Spirit works in us, and the righteousness and the redemption as what Christ has wrought for us. All four are either objective or subjective. Christ is here said to be sanctification unto us, just as He is our righteousness and redemption. To suppose that the sanctification here spoken of is that which is wrought in us would oblige me to explain the righteousness and redemption here spoken of as that which we had in ourselves, but such a thought Mr. Hodge would rightly have rejected with abhorrence. The righteousness which Christ is "made unto us" is most certainly not the righteousness which He works in us (the Romanist heresy), but the righteousness which He wrought out *for* us. So it is with the sanctification that Christ is "made unto us." It is not in ourselves, but in Him. It is not an incomplete and progressive thing, but a perfect and eternal one.

God has made Christ to be sanctification unto us by imputing to us the infinite purity and excellency of His sacrifice. We are made near to God by Christ's blood (Eph 2:13) *before* we are brought near to Him by the effectual call of the Spirit (1Pe 2:9), the former being the necessary foundation of the latter. In the types, the oil could only be placed upon the blood. And it is on this account we "are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (1Co 1:2). How vastly different is this from—how immeasurably superior to—what the advocates of the "higher life" or the "victorious life" set before their hearers and readers! It is not merely that Christ is able to do this, or willing to do that, for us, but every Christian *is already* "sanctified in Christ Jesus." My ignorance of this does not alter the blessed fact; neither does my failure to clearly understand nor the weakness of my faith to firmly grasp it in anywise impair it. Nor have my feelings or experience anything whatever to do with it. God says it, God has done it, and nothing can alter it.

Its Procurer, Part Two

The Believer's Sanctification from Several Points of View

It has been pointed out that the Scriptures present the believer's sanctification from several distinct points of view, the chief of which is, first, our sanctification in the eternal purpose of God, when in His decree He chose us in Christ "that we should be holy and without blame before Him" (Eph 1:4). That is what is referred to at the beginning of Hebrews 10:10, "By the which will we are sanctified." This is our sanctification by God the Father (Jude 1), which was considered in Chapter 8, under the Author of our sanctification. Second, there is the *fulfilling* of that will of God, the accomplishing of His eternal purpose by our actual sanctification through the sacrifice of Christ. That is what is referred to in, "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb 13:12). This is our sanctification by God the Son and is what we are now considering. Third, there is the *application* of this sanctification to the individual by the Holy Spirit, when He separates him from those who are dead in sins by quickening him and by the new birth imparting to him a new nature. This is our sanctification by God the Spirit.

Fourth, there is the *fruit* of these in the Christian's character and conduct whereby he is separated in his life and walk from the world which lies in the wicked one; and this is by the Holy Spirit's working in him and applying the Word to him, so that he is in measure (for now we see "through a glass, darkly," 1Co 13:12) enabled to apprehend by faith his separation to God by the precious blood of Christ. Yet both his inward and outward life is far from being perfect, for though possessing a new and spiritual nature the flesh remains in him unchanged to the end of his earthly pilgrimage. Those around him know little or nothing of the inward conflict of which he is the subject. They see his outward failures, but hear not his secret groanings before God. It is not yet made manifest what he shall be; but, though very imperfect at present through indwelling sin, yet the promise is sure, "When he shall appear, we shall be like him" (1Jo 3:2).

Now, though in this fourth sense our *practical* sanctification is incomplete, this in no wise alters the fact, nor to the slightest degree invalidates it, that our sanctification in the first three senses mentioned above is entire and eternal—that "by one offering Christ hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb 10:14). Though these three phases of the believer's sanctification are quite distinct as to their development or manifestation, yet they are blessedly combined together and form our one complete acceptance before God. That which we are here considering has to do with the *objective* side of our subject, by which we mean that it is something entirely *outside of ourselves*, resulting from what Christ has done for us. It is that which we have in Christ and by Christ, and therefore it can be received and enjoyed by *faith alone*. Oh, what a difference it makes to the peace and joy of the soul once the child of God firmly grasps the blessed truth that a perfect sanctification is his present and inalienable portion, that God has made Christ to be unto him sanctification as well as righteousness.

Every real Christian has already been sanctified or set apart *as holy unto God* by the precious blood of the Lamb. But though many believers are consciously and confessedly "justified by his blood" (Rom 5:9), yet not a few of them are unwittingly dishonoring that blood by striving (in their desires after holiness of life) to *offer God* "entire consecration" or "full surrender" (as they call it) in order to *get sanctified*—so much "living sacrifice" they present to God for so much sanctification. They have been beguiled into the attempt to lay *self* on some imaginary "altar" so that their sinful nature might be "consumed by the fire of the Spirit." Alas, they neither enter into *God's* estimate of Christ's blood, nor will they accept the fact that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer 17:9).

They neither realize that God has "made Christ to be sanctification unto them" nor that "the carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom 8:7).

It is greatly to be regretted that many theologians have confined their views far too exclusively to the *legal* aspect of the atonement, whereas both the Old Testament types and the New Testament testimony, with equal clearness, exhibit its efficacy in *all* our relations to God. Because we are in Christ, *all* that He is for us must be ours. "The blood of Christ cleanses us from *all sin*, and the believer does not more truly take his place in Christ before the justice of God as one against whom there is *no charge*, than he takes his place in Christ before the holiness of God as one upon whom there is *no stain*" (James Inglis[184] in *Waymarks in the Wilderness*, to whom we are indebted for much in this and the preceding chapter). Not only is the believer "justified by his blood" (Rom 5:9), but we are "sanctified [set apart, consecrated unto God, fitted and adorned for His presence] through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10). It is this blessed aspect of sanctification that the denominational Creeds and writings of the Puritans almost totally ignored.

The Westminster Larger Catechism

In the *Larger Catechism* of the Westminster Assembly the question is asked, "What is sanctification?" To which the following answer is returned.

> *Sanctification is a work of God's grace, whereby, they whom God has before the foundation of the world chosen to be holy, are in time through the powerful operation of His Spirit, applying the death and resurrection of Christ unto them, renewed in their whole man after the image of God; having the seeds of repentance unto life and all other saving graces, put into their hearts, and those graces so stirred up, increased, and strengthened, as that they more and more die unto sin and rise unto newness of life.*

Now far be it from us to sit in judgment upon such an excellent and helpful production as this Catechism, which God has richly blest to thousands of His people, or that we should make any harsh criticisms against men whose shoes we are certainly not worthy to unloose. Nevertheless, we are assured that were its compilers on earth today, they would be the last of all to lay claim to any infallibility, nor do we believe they would offer any objection against their statements being brought to the bar of holy Scripture. The best of men are but men at the best, and therefore we must call no man "father." A deep veneration for servants of God and a high regard for their spiritual learning must not deter us from complying with "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1Th 5:21). The Bereans were commended for testing the teachings even of the Apostle Paul, "And searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so" (Act 17:11). It is in this spirit that we beg to offer two observations on the above quotation.

First, the definition or description of sanctification of the Westminster divines is altogether inadequate, for it entirely omits the most important aspect and fundamental element in the believer's sanctification: it says nothing about our sanctification by Christ (Heb 10:10; 13:12), but confines itself to the work of the Spirit, which is founded upon that of the Son. This is truly a serious loss, and affords another illustration that God has not granted light on all His Word to any one man or body of men. A fuller and better answer to the question of, "What is sanctification?" would be, "Sanctification is, first, that act of God whereby He set the elect apart in Christ before the foundation of the world that they should be holy. Second, it is that perfect holiness that the Church has in Christ and that excellent purity which she has before God by virtue of Christ's cleansing blood. Third, it is that work of God's Spirit which, by His quickening operation, sets them apart from those who are dead in sins, conveying to them a holy life or nature, etc."

Thus, we cannot but regard this particular definition of the *Larger Catechism* as being defective, for it commences at the middle instead of starting at the beginning. Instead of placing before the believer that complete and perfect sanctification which God has made Christ to be unto him, it occupies him with the

incomplete and progressive work of the Spirit. Instead of moving the Christian to look away from himself with all his sinful failures, unto Christ in Whom he is complete (Col 2:10), it encourages him to look within, where he will often search in vain for the fine gold of the new creation amid all the dross and mire of the old creation. This is to leave him without the joyous assurance of knowing that he has been perfected forever by the one offering of Christ (Heb 10:14); and if he be destitute of *that*, then doubts and fears must constantly assail him and the full assurance of faith allude every striving after it.

Our second observation upon this definition is that its wording is faulty and misleading. Let the young believer be credibly assured that he will "more and more die unto sin and rise unto newness of life," and what will be the inevitable outcome? As he proceeds on his way, the devil assaulting him more and more fiercely, the inward conflict between the flesh and the spirit becoming more and more distressing, increasing light from God's Word more and more exposing his sinful failures, until the cry is forced from him, "I am vile; O wretched man that I am!" What conclusion must he draw? Why this: if the Catechism definition be correct then I was sadly mistaken, *I have never been sanctified at all*. So far from the "more and more die unto sin" agreeing with his experience, he discovers that sin is more active within and that he is more alive to sin now, than he was 10 years ago!

If any venture to deny what we have just pointed out above, then we would ask the most mature and godly reader, "Dare you solemnly affirm, as in the presence of God, that *you* have more and more died to sin?" If you answer, "Yes," the writer, for one, would not believe you. But we do not believe for a moment that you would utter such an untruth. Rather do we think we can hear you saying, "Such has been my deep *desire*, such has been my sincere *design* in using the means of grace, such is still my daily *prayer*; but alas, alas! I find as truly and as frequently today as I ever did in the past that, when I would do good, evil is present with me; for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do" (Rom 7:19, 21). Ah, there is a vast difference between what ought to be, and that which actually obtains[185] in our experience.

The Baptist Confession of Faith

That we may not be charged with partiality, we quote from the *Confession of Faith* adopted by the Baptist Association that met in Philadelphia in 1742, giving the first two sections of their brief chapter on sanctification:

> *They who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit in them through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are also (a) further sanctified, really and personally, through the same virtue, (b) by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them; (c) the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, (d) and the several lusts thereof more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. 2. This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war. (Italics ours.)*

Like the previous one, this description of sanctification by the Baptists leaves something to be desired, for it makes no clear and direct statement upon the all-important and flawless holiness that every believer has *in Christ*, and that spotless and impeccable purity which is upon him by God's imputation of the cleansing efficacy of His Son's sacrifice. Such a serious omission is too vital for us to ignore. In the second place, the words which we have placed in italics not only perpetuate the faulty wording of the *Westminster Catechism*, but also convey a misleading conception of the present condition of the Christian. To speak of "some remnants of corruption" still remaining in the believer, necessarily implies that by far the greater part of his original corruption has been removed, and that only a trifling portion of the same now remains. But something vastly different from that is what every true Christian discovers to his daily grief and humiliation.

Contrast, dear reader, with the "some remnants of corruption" remaining in the Christian (an

expression frequently found in the writings of the Puritans) the honest confession of the heavenly-minded Jonathan Edwards: "When I look into my heart and take a view of its wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell. And it appears to me that, were it not for free grace, exalted and raised up to the infinite height of all the fullness of the great Jehovah, and the arm of His grace stretched forth in all the majesty of His power and in all the glory of His sovereignty, I should appear sunk down in my sins below hell itself. It is affecting to think how ignorant I was when a young Christian, of the bottomless depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy, and filth left in my heart." The closer we walk with God, the more *conscious* will we be of our utter depravity.

The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England

Among the *Thirty-nine Articles* (of the Church of England and Episcopal Church), there is none treating of the important doctrine of sanctification! We believe that all the Reformation "standards" (creeds, confessions, and catechisms) will be searched in vain for any clear statement upon the perfect holiness which the Church has in Christ or of God's making Him to be, imputatively, sanctification unto His people. In consequence of this, most theological systems have taught that while justification is accomplished the moment the sinner truly believes in Christ, yet is his sanctification only then begun, and is a protracted process to be carried on throughout the remainder of this life by means of the Word and ordinances, seconded by the discipline of trial and affliction. But if this be the case, then there must be a time in the history of every believer when he is "justified from all things" and yet *unfit* to appear in the presence of God; and before he *can* appear there, the process must be completed—he must attain what is called "entire sanctification" and be able to say "I have no sin," which, according to 1 John 1:8, would be the proof of self-deception.

Here, then, is a real dilemma: if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves (1Jo 1:8); and yet, according to the doctrine of "progressive sanctification," until we *can* say [it] (though it be inarticulately in the moment of death), we are not meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. What an awful thought it is that Christ may come any hour to those who realize that the process of sanctification within them is *incomplete*. But more: not only are those who have no complete sanctification unfit for eternal glory, but it would be daring presumption for them to boldly enter the Holiest now—the "new and living way" is not yet available for them, they cannot draw near "with a true heart in full assurance of faith." What wonder, then, that those who believe this doctrine are plunged into perplexity that such a cloud rests over their acceptance with God. But, thank God, many triumph over their creed: their hearts are better than their heads, otherwise their communion with God and their approach to the throne of His grace would be impossible.

The Word of God

Now in blessed contrast from this inadequate doctrine of theology, the glorious gospel of God reveals to us a *perfect* Saviour. It exhibits One Who has not only made complete satisfaction to the righteous Ruler and Judge, providing for His people a perfect righteousness before Him, but Whose sacrifice has also fitted us to worship and serve a holy God acceptably, and to approach the Father with full confidence and filial[186] love. Knowledge of the truth of justification is not sufficient to thus assure the heart: there must be something more than a realization that the curse of the Law is removed. If the conscience be still defiled, if the eye of God rests upon us as unpurged and unclean, then confidence before Him is impossible, for we feel utterly unfit for His ineffable presence. But forever blessed be His name, the precious gospel of God announces that the blood of Christ freely meets this exigency also.

"Now where remission of these [sins] is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb 10:18-19). The same sacrifice that has procured the remission of our sins provides the right for us to draw near to God as acceptable worshipers. "By his own blood he entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb 9:12). Now that which gives the One Who took our place the right to enter heaven itself, also gives *us* the right to take *the same place*. That which entitled Christ to enter heaven was His own blood, and that which entitles the feeblest believer to approach the very throne of God with boldness, is the blood of Jesus. Our title to enter heaven now, in spirit, is precisely the same as Christ's was!

The same precious blood that appeased the wrath of God, covers every stain of sin's guilt and defilement; and not only so, but in the very place of that which it covers and cleanses, it leaves its own excellency—so that because of its infinite purity and merit, the Christian is regarded not only as guiltless and unreproveable, but also as *spotless and holy*. Oh, to realize by faith that we are assured of the same welcome by God now as His beloved Son received when He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. God views us *in Christ* His "Holy One," as possessing a holiness as perfect as is the righteousness in which we are accepted, both of them being as perfect as Christ Himself. "In us, as we present ourselves before Him through Christ, God *sees no sin*! He looks on us in the face of His Anointed, and there He sees us purer than the heavens" (Alexander Carson).[187]

(It is only fair we should point out that on this aspect of our subject, namely, the believer's perfect sanctification in and by Christ, the writings of those known as Plymouth Brethren are much to be preferred above others.)

Its Procurer, Part Three

"Dying to Sin"

There is a perfect sanctification in Christ that became ours the moment we first believed in Him—little though we *realized* it at the time. There will also be perfect *conformity* to this *in us,* an actual making good thereof, when we shall be glorified and enter that blessed realm where sin is unknown. In between these two things is the believer's present life on earth, which consists of a painful and bewildering commingling[188] of lights and shadows, joys and sorrows, victories and defeats—the latter *seeming* to be greatly preponderant[189] in the cases of many, especially so the longer they live. There is an unceasing warfare between the flesh and the spirit, each bringing forth "after its own kind," so that groans ever mingle with the Christian's songs. The believer finds himself alternating between thanking God for deliverance from temptation and contritely confessing his deplorable yielding to temptation. Often is he made to cry, "O wretched man that I am!" (Rom 7:24). Such has been for upwards of 25 years the experience of the writer, and it is still so.

Now just as in the commercial world there are a multitude of medical charlatans announcing sure remedies for the most incurable diseases, and filling their pockets at the expense of those who are foolish enough to believe their fairy tales; so there are numerous quacks in the religious world, claiming to have a cure for indwelling sin. Such a paragraph as we have just written above would be eagerly seized by these charlatans, who, casting up hands and eyes of holy horror, would loudly express their pity for such "a needless tragedy." They would at once affirm that such an experience, so largely filled with defeat, was because the poor man has never been "sanctified," and would insist that what he needed to do was to lay his all on the altar and "receive the second blessing," the "baptism of the Spirit," or, as some call it, "enter into the victorious life" by fully trusting Christ for victory.

There are some perverters of the gospel who, in effect, represent Christ as only *aiding* sinners to work out a righteousness of their own: they bring in Christ as a mere makeweight,[190] to supply their deficiency, or they throw the mantle of His mercy over their failures. Some of the religious quacks we have referred to above would be loud in their outcry against such a travesty of the grace of God in Christ, insisting that we can be justified by nothing but His blood. And yet they have nothing better to set before their dupes[191] when it comes to "perfect sanctification" or "full salvation through fully trusting Jesus." Christ they say will *aid* us in accomplishing what we have vainly attempted in our own strength, and by fully trusting Him we now shall find easy what before we found so arduous. But God's Word supplies no warrant to expect sinless perfection in this life, and such teaching can only tend to fatal deception or bitter disappointment.

Those we have referred to above generally separate justification and sanctification both in fact and in time. Yea, they hold that a man may pass through the former and yet be devoid of the latter, and represent them as being attained by two distinct acts of the soul, divided, it may be, by an interval of years. They exhort Christians to seek sanctification very much as they exhort sinners to seek justification. Those who attain to this "sanctification" they speak of as being inducted into a superior grade of Christians, having now entered upon "the higher life." Some refer to this experience as "the second blessing": by the first, forgiveness of sins is received through faith in the atonement; by the second, we receive deliverance from the power (some add the presence) of sin by trusting in the efficacy of Christ's Name—a dying Savior rescues from hell, an ever-living Savior now delivers from Satan.

The question may be asked, "But ought not the Christian to 'present his body a living sacrifice unto God'?" Most assuredly, yet not for the purpose of *obtaining* sanctification, nor yet for the improving or

purifying of "the flesh," the sinful nature, the "old man." The exhortation of Romans 12:1 (as its "therefore" plainly shows—the "mercies of God" pointing back to 5:1-2; 6:5-6; 8:30) is a call for us to live in the power of what *is* ours in Christ. The presenting of our bodies "a living sacrifice to God" is the practical recognition that we *have been* sanctified or consecrated to Him, and we are to do so not in order to *get* our bodies sanctified, but in the gracious assurance that they *are already* holy.

The Christian cannot obtain a right view of the truth of sanctification so long as he separates that blessing from justification, or while he confines his thoughts to a progressive work of grace being wrought within him by the Holy Spirit. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1Co 6:11): observe that we are sanctified just as we are justified—in the name of Another! "That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith" (Act 26:18): when we receive the forgiveness of our sins, we also receive "an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith." The prayer of Christ "Sanctify them through thy truth: Thy word is truth" (Joh 17:17), is fulfilled as we obtain a spiritual knowledge of the truth by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is not by self-efforts,[192] by any consecration of our own, by attempts to "lay our all on the altar" that we enter into what Christ has procured for His people, but *by faith's appropriation* of what God's Word sets before us.

In Christ, and in Him alone, does the believer possess a perfect purity. Christ has consecrated us to God by the offering of Himself unto Him for us. His sacrifice has delivered us from defilement and the ensuing estrangement, and restored us to the favor and fellowship of God. The Father Himself views the Christian as identified with and united to His "Holy One." There are no degrees and can be no "progress" in *this* [aspect of] sanctification: an unconverted person is absolutely unholy, and a converted person is absolutely holy. God's standard of holiness is not what the Christian becomes by virtue of the Spirit's work in us here, but what Christ is as seated at His own right hand. Every passage in the New Testament that addresses believers as "saints"—holy ones—refutes the idea that the believer is not yet sanctified and will not be so until the moment of death.

Nor does the idea of a progressive sanctification, by which the Christian "more and more dies unto sin," agree with the recorded experience of the most mature saints. The godly John Newton,[193] when speaking of the expectations which he cherished at the outset of his Christian life, wrote, "But alas! These my golden expectations have been like South Sea dreams. I have lived hitherto a poor sinner and I believe I shall die one. Have I, then, gained nothing? Yes, I have gained that which I once would rather have been without—such accumulated proof of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of my heart as I hope by the Lord's blessing has, in some measure, taught me to know what I mean when I say, 'Behold I am vile!' I was ashamed of myself when I began to serve Him; I am more ashamed of myself now, and I expect to be most ashamed of myself when He comes to receive me to Himself. But, oh! I rejoice in Him, that He is not ashamed of me!" Ah, as the Christian grows in grace, he grows more and more *out of love with himself.*

Exodus 28:36-38

> *And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD (Exo 28:36-38).*

These verses set before us one of the most precious typical pictures to be found in the Old Testament. Aaron, the high priest, was dedicated and devoted exclusively to the Lord. He served in that office on the behalf of others, as their mediator. He stood before God as the representative of Israel, bearing their names on his shoulders and on his heart (Exo 28:12, 29). Israel, the people of God, were both represented

by and accepted in Aaron.

That which was set forth in Exodus 28:36-38 was not a type of "the way of salvation" but had to do entirely with the approach unto the thrice holy God of His own sinning and failing people. Though the sacrifices offered on the annual Day of Atonement delivered them from the curse of the Law, godly individuals in the nation must have been painfully conscious that sin marred their very obedience and defiled their prayers and praises. But through the high priest their service and worship was acceptable to God. The inscription worn on his forehead, "Holiness to the Lord," was a solemn appointment by which Israel was impressively taught that holiness became the House of God, and that none who are unholy can possibly draw near unto Him. In Leviticus 8:9 the golden plate bearing the inscription is designated "the holy crown," for it was set over and above all the vestments of Aaron.

Now Aaron foreshadowed Christ as the great High Priest Who is "over the House of God" (Heb 10:21). Believers are both represented by and accepted in Him. The "Holiness to the Lord," which was *always* upon Aaron's head, pointed to the essential holiness of Christ, Who "ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb 7:25). Because of our legal and vital union with Christ, *His* holiness is *ours*: the perfection of the great High Priest is the measure of our acceptance with God. Christ has also "borne the iniquity of our holy things" (made satisfaction for the defects of our worship), so that they are not laid to our charge—the sweet incense of His merits (Rev 8:3) rendering our worship acceptable to God. By Him not only were our sins put away and our persons made acceptable, but our service and worship is rendered pleasing too: "To offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1Pe 2:5).

Christ Is Our Perfect Holiness.

Here, then, is the answer to the pressing question, "How can a moral leper be fitted for the presence of God?" We need a perfect holiness as well as a perfect righteousness, in order to have access to Him. The Holy One cannot look upon sin, and were we to approach Him in a way wherein He could not look upon us as being perfectly holy, we could not draw near to Him at all. *Christ* is the all-sufficient answer to our every problem, the One Who meets our every need. The precious blood of Jesus has separated the believer from all evil, removed all defilement, and made him near to God in all the acceptableness of His Son. How vastly different is this from that conception which limits sanctification to our experiences and attainments! How infinitely better is God's way to man's way, and how far are His thoughts on this above ours!

Now it is in the New Testament epistles that we are shown most fully the reality and substance of what was typed out[194] under Judaism. First, we read, "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one" (Heb 2:11). Christ is both our sanctification and our sanctifier. He is our sanctifier, first, by His blood putting away our sins and cleansing us from all defilement. Second, by the operations of the Holy Spirit, for whatever [the Spirit] doth, He does it as "the Spirit of Christ"[195] who procured Him (Psa 68:18; Act 2:33) for His people. Third, by communicating a holy life unto us (Joh 10:10): the whole stock of grace and holiness is in His hands, He communicating the same to His people (Joh 1:16). Fourth, by appearing in heaven as our representative: He being "Holiness to the Lord" (Exo 28:36) for us. Fifth, by applying and blessing His Word to His people, so that they are washed thereby (Eph 5:26). He is our sanctification because the holiness of His nature, as well as His obedience, is imputed to us (1Co 1:30).

"We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10). The Christian will never have right thoughts on this subject until he perceives that his sanctification *before God* was accomplished at Calvary. As we read, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to

present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in His sight" (Col 1:21-22). By His work at the cross, Christ presents the Church unto God in all the excellency of His perfect sacrifice. In these passages, it is not at all a question of any work that is wrought *in* us, but of what Christ's oblation[196] has secured *for* us. By virtue of His sacrifice, believers have been set apart unto God in all Christ's purity and merits, a sure title being accorded[197] them for heaven. God accounts us holy according to the holiness of Christ's sacrifice, the full value of which rests upon the least instructed, the feeblest, and most tried Christian on earth.

So infinitely sufficient is Christ's oblation for us that, "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb 10:14). As we read again, "Ye are complete in him" (Col 2:10), and this, because His work was complete. *All* true believers are in the everlasting purpose of God, and in the actual accomplishment of that purpose by the Lord Jesus, perfectly justified and perfectly sanctified. But all believers are not *aware* of that blessed fact; far from it. Many are confused and bewildered on this subject. One reason for that is that so many are looking almost entirely to human teachers for instructions, instead of relying upon the Holy Spirit to guide them into the truth, and searching the Scriptures for a knowledge of the same. The religious world today is a veritable Babel of tongues, and all certainty is at an end if we turn away from the Word (failing to make it our *chief* study) and lean upon preachers. Alas, how many in professing Protestantism are little better off than the poor Papists, who receive unquestioningly what the "priest" tells them.

It is only as we read God's Word, mixing faith therewith (Heb 4:2) and appropriating the same unto ourselves, that the Christian can enter into God's thoughts concerning him. In the sacred Scriptures, and nowhere else, can the believer discover what God has made Christ to be unto him and what He has made him to be in Christ. So too it is in the Scriptures, and nowhere else, that we can learn the truth about ourselves, that in the flesh (what we are by nature as the depraved descendants of fallen Adam) there "dwelleth no good thing" (Rom 7:18). Until we learn to distinguish (as God does!) between the "I" and the "sin which dwelleth in me" (Rom 7:20), there can be no settled peace. Scripture knows nothing of the sanctification of "the old man," and, as long as we are hoping for any improvement in him, we are certain to meet with disappointment. If we are to "worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus," we must learn to have "no confidence in the flesh" (Phi 3:3).

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb 13:12). The precious blood of Christ has done more than simply make expiation for our sins: it has also set us apart to God as His people. It is that which has brought us *into fellowship* with the Father Himself. By the shedding of His blood for us, Christ made it consistent with the honor and holiness of God to take us as His peculiar people; it also procured the Holy Spirit[198] Who has (by regeneration) fitted us for the privileges and duties of our high calling. Thus, Christ has sanctified His people both objectively and subjectively. We are "sanctified with His own blood," first, as it was an *oblation* to God; second, as its *merits* are imputed to us; third, as its *efficacy* is applied to us.

Christ's blood "cleanseth us from all sin" (1Jo 1:7) in a threefold way. First, Godwards, by blotting out our sins and removing our defilement from His view (as Judge). Second, by procuring the Holy Spirit, by Whom we receive "the washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5). Third, by our consciences being "purged" as faith lays hold of these blessed facts, and thus we are fitted to "serve the living God"! (Heb 9:14). Herein we may perceive how God puts the fullest honor on His beloved Son, by making Him not only the Repairer of our ruin and the triumphant Undoer of the serpent's work (1Jo 3:8), but also giving us His own perfect standing before God and communicating His own holy nature unto His people—for a branch cannot be in the true Vine without partaking of its life.

In the Person of Christ God beholds a holiness that abides His closest scrutiny, yea, that rejoices and satisfies His heart; and whatever Christ is before God, He is for His people—"whither the forerunner is

for us entered" (Heb 6:20), "now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb 9:24)! In Christ's holiness we are meet for that place into which divine grace has exalted us, so that we are "made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:6). This is not accomplished by any experience, separated by a long process from our justification, but is a blessed fact since the moment we first believed on Christ. We are in Christ, and how can any one be *in Him*, and yet not be perfectly sanctified? From the first moment we were "joined to the Lord" (1Co 6:17), we were "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb 3:1). *This* is what the Christian's faith needs to lay hold of and rest on—upon the authority of Him that cannot lie. Nevertheless, the best taught, the most spiritual and mature Christian, apprehends the truth but feebly and inadequately, for now "we see through a glass darkly" (1Co 13:12).

True, there *is* such a thing as a growth *in the knowledge of* our sanctification that is, providing our thoughts are formed by the Word of God. There is an experimental entering into the practical enjoyment of what God has made Christ to be unto us, so that by faith therein our thoughts and habits, affections and associations are affected thereby. There is such a thing as our apprehending the glorious standing and state which divine grace has given us in the Beloved, and exhibiting the influence of the same upon our character and conduct. But that is not what we are here treating of. That which we are now considering is the wondrous and glorious fact that the Christian was as completely sanctified in God's view the first moment he laid hold of Christ by faith, as he will be when every vestige of sin has disappeared from his person, and he stands before Him glorified in spirit and soul and body.

But the question may be asked, "What provision has God made to meet the needs of His people sinning *after* they are sanctified?" This falls not within the compass of the present aspect of our subject. Yet briefly, the answer is: "The ministry of Christ on high as our great High Priest (Heb 7:25) and Advocate (1Jo 2:1), and their penitently confessing their sins, which secures their forgiveness[199] and cleansing (1Jo 1:9)." The sins of the Christian mar his communion with God and hinder his enjoyment of His salvation, but they affect not his standing and state in Christ. If I judge not myself for my sinful failures and falls, the chastening rod will descend upon me, yet, wielded not by an angry God, but by my loving Father (Heb 12:5-11).

We are not unmindful of the fact that there is not a little in this article that worldly-minded professors may easily pervert to their own ruin. What truth of Scripture is not capable of being wrested?[200] But that is no reason why God's people should be deprived of one of the choicest and most nourishing portions of the Bread of Life! Other chapters are thoroughly calculated to "preserve the balance of truth."

Its Securer
(The Holy Spirit)

Its Securer, Part One

Each Person of the Trinity Has His Role.

The Christian has been sanctified by the triune Jehovah: infinite wisdom and fathomless grace so ordered it that he is indebted to each of the Eternal Three. The Lord God designed that all the Persons in the blessed Trinity should be honored in the making holy of His people, so that each of Them might be distinctively praised by us. First, the Father sanctified His people by an eternal decree, choosing them in Christ before the foundation of the world and predestinating them unto the adoption of children. Second, the Son sanctified His people by procuring for them a perfect and inalienable standing before the Judge of all, the infinite merits of His finished work being reckoned to their account. Third, God the Spirit makes good the Father's decree and imparts to them what the work of Christ procured for them: the Spirit is the actual Securer of sanctification, *applying it* to their persons. Thus the believer has abundant cause to adore and glorify the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

It is very remarkable to observe the perfect harmony there is between the different operations of the Eternal Three in connection with the making holy of the elect, and the threefold signification of the term "sanctification." In an earlier chapter, we furnished proof that the word "to sanctify" has a threefold meaning, namely, to separate, to cleanse, to adorn. First, in Scripture a person or thing is said to be sanctified when it is consecrated or set apart from a common to a sacred use. So in the eternal decree of the Father, the elect were separated in the divine mind from the countless millions of our race that were to be created, and set apart for His own delight and glory. Second, where those persons and things are unclean, they must be purified, so as to *fit* them for God's pleasure and use. That was the specific work assigned to the Son: His precious blood has provided the means of our purification. Third, the persons or things sanctified need to beautified and adorned for God's service: this is accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

It is also striking and blessed to note the relation and order of the several acts of the holy Three in connection with our sanctification. The *source* of it is "the eternal purpose" or decree of God: "by the which will we are sanctified" (Heb 10:10). The *substance* of it was brought forth by Christ, when He fully accomplished God's will on our behalf: "that he might sanctify the people with his own blood" (Heb 13:12). The *securer* of it is the Holy Spirit, Who by His work of grace within applies to the individual the sanctification that the Church has in its Head, "being sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Rom 15:16). It is not until the Comforter takes up His abode in the heart that the Father's will begins to be actualized and the Son's work evidences its efficacy toward us. This glorious gift, then, is let down to us from the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit.

If we consider the nature of Christ's work for His people and the perfection of their standing in Him before God, it could not for a moment be supposed that this having been accomplished by the grace, wisdom, and power of God, that their *state* should be left unaffected—that their *position* should be so gloriously changed, yet their *condition* remain as sinful as ever; that they should be left in their sins to take comfort from their immunity to divine wrath. The degradation, pollution, and utter ruin of our nature; our estrangement from God, spiritual death, and our whole heritage of woe, are the immediate consequences of *sin*. And what would forgiveness, justification, and redemption in Christ mean, if *deliverance from* all those consequences did not directly and necessarily follow? Our being made the righteousness of God in Christ (2Co 5:21) would be but an empty name, if it did not imply and entail recovery from all that sin had forfeited and deliverance from all that sin had incurred. Thank God, that, in the end (when we are glorified), will be perfectly effected.

It is true that when Christ first seeks out His people He finds them entirely destitute of holiness, yea, of even desire after it—but He does not leave them in that awful state. No, such would neither honor Him nor fulfill the Father's will. Glorious as is the triumph of divine grace in the justification of a sinner, through the work of Christ as Surety, yet even that must be regarded as a means to an end. See how this is brought out in every Scriptural statement of the purpose of grace concerning the redeemed, or the design of the mission and sufferings of the Redeemer: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (Joh 10:10); "Who gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Ti 2:14); "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Pe 1:4); "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1Jo 3:1).

Since we are made the righteousness of God in Christ, the result of this in the Christian, must, ultimately, correspond with that perfection. In other words, nothing short of perfect fellowship with the Father and with His Son can answer to His having died on account of our sins and risen again on account of our justification; and, having risen, become the Head and Source of an entirely new life to all who believe on Him. The aim of the Father's love and of the Son's grace was not only that we might have restored to us the life which we lost in Adam, but that we should have "life more abundantly"; that we should be brought back not merely to the position of servants—which was the status of unfallen Adam—but be given the wondrous place of *sons*; that we should be fitted not simply for an earthly paradise, but for an eternity of joy in the immediate presence of God in heaven.

Now it is on the ground of what Christ did and earned for His people, and with a view to the realization of the Father's purpose of their glorification, that the Holy Spirit is given to the elect. Their obtaining a clear and comprehensive view of His work within them makes much for His praise and for their peace; nor can this be secured by a hurried or superficial study of the subject. As our cover-page articles in *Studies in the Scriptures* for the last three years indicate,[201] His operations are very varied and manifold—yet all proceeding from one foundation and all advancing toward one grand end. That which we are now to consider is the "sanctification of the Spirit," an expression which is found both in 2 Thessalonians 2:13 and 1 Peter 1:2. The connection in which the expression occurs in the two passages just mentioned clearly intimates that the sanctification of the Spirit is an integral part of our salvation, that it is closely associated with our "belief of the truth," and that it precedes our practical obedience.

Sanctification by the Spirit

John Owen's definition of the Spirit's sanctification, based on 1 Thessalonians 5:23, is as follows. "Sanctification is an immediate work of the Spirit of God on the souls of believers, purifying and cleansing of their natures from the pollution and uncleanness of sin, renewing in them the image of God, and thereby enabling them from a spiritual and habitual principle of grace, to yield obedience unto God, according unto the tenor and terms of the new covenant, by virtue of the life and death of Jesus Christ. Or more briefly: it is the universal renovation of our natures by the Holy Spirit, into the image of God, through Jesus Christ." Full and clear though this definition be, we humbly conceive it is both inadequate and inaccurate: inadequate, because it leaves out several essential elements; inaccurate, because it confounds the effects with the cause. Later, he says, "In the sanctification of believers, the Holy Spirit doth work in them, in their whole souls—their minds, wills, and affections—a gracious supernatural habit, principle, and disposition of living unto God, wherein the substance or essence, the life and being, of holiness doth consist."

In an article thereon (published in *Studies*, May 1930), S. E. Pierce[202] said,

Sanctification, or gospel-holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, comprehends the whole work of the Spirit of God within and upon us, from our regeneration to our eternal glorification. It is the fruit and blessed consequence of His indwelling us, and the continued effect of spiritual regeneration: that is, in begetting within us a nature suited to take in spiritual things, and be properly affected by them. Regeneration is the root, and sanctification is the bud, blossom, and fruit which it produces. In our regeneration by the Holy Spirit we are made alive to God, and this is manifested by our faith in Christ Jesus. Our lusts are mortified because we are quickened together with Christ. And what we style[203] the sanctification of the Spirit, which follows after regeneration has taken place within us, consists in drawing forth that spiritual life which is conveyed to our souls in our new birth, into acts and exercise on Christ and spiritual things, in quickening our graces, and in leading us to walk in the paths of holiness, by which proof is given that we are alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This, we believe, is preferable to Owen's, yet still leaving something to be desired.

Exactly what is the sanctification of the Spirit? Personally we very much doubt whether that question can be satisfactorily answered in a single sentence, for in framing one, account needs to be taken of the change which is produced in the believing sinner's relationship to God, his relationship to Christ as the Head of the Church, his relationship to the unregenerate, and his relationship to the divine Law. *Positionally*, our sanctification by the Spirit results from our being vitally united to Christ—for the moment we are livingly joined to Him, His holiness becomes ours, and our standing before God is the same as His. *Relatively*, our sanctification of the Spirit issues from our being renewed by Him—for the moment He quickens us we are set apart from those who are dead in sins. *Personally*, we are consecrated unto God by the Spirit's indwelling us, making our bodies His temples. *Experimentally*, our sanctification of the Spirit consists in the impartation to us of a principle (nature) of holiness, whereby we become conformed to the divine Law. Let us consider each of these viewpoints separately.

United to Christ by the Spirit

Our *union to Christ* is the grand hinge on which everything turns. Divorced from Him, we have nothing spiritually. Describing our unregenerate condition, the apostle says, "at that time ye were without Christ," and being without Him, it necessarily follows, "being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12). But the moment the Holy Spirit makes us livingly one with Christ, all that He has becomes ours, we are then "joint-heirs with Him." Just as a woman obtains the right to share all that a man has once she is wedded to him, so a poor sinner becomes holy before God the moment he is vitally united to the Holy One. Everything which God requires from us, everything which is needed by us, is treasured up for us in Christ.

By our union with Christ we receive a new and holy nature, whereby we are capacitated for holy living, which holy living is determined and regulated by our practical and experimental fellowship with Him. By virtue of our federal union with the first Adam we not only had imputed to us the guilt of his disobedience, but we also received from him the sinful nature which has vitiated[204] our souls, powerfully influencing all our faculties. In like manner, by virtue of our federal union with the last Adam, the elect not only have imputed to them the righteousness of His obedience, but they also receive from Him (by the Spirit) a holy nature, which renews all the faculties of their souls and powerfully affects their actions. Once we become united to the Vine, the life and holy virtue which is in Him flows into us, and brings forth spiritual fruit. Thus, the moment the Spirit unites us *to* Christ, we are "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1Co 1:2).

It is axiomatic that those whom God separates unto Himself must be suited to Himself, that is, they must be holy. Equally clear is it from the Scriptures that whatsoever God does He is determined that the crown of honor for it should rest upon the head of Christ, for He is the grand Center of all the divine counsels. Now both of these fundamental considerations are secured by God's making us partakers of His own holiness, through creating us anew in Christ Jesus. God will neither receive nor own anyone who

has the least taint of sin's defilement upon him, and it is only as we are made new creatures in Christ that we can fully measure up to the unalterable requirements of God. Our *state* must be holy as well as our *standing*. As we showed in the last chapter, Christ Himself is our sanctification, so now we seek to point out that we are *actually* sanctified in Christ—personally and vitally.

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus" (1Co 1:30)—"of him" by the power and quickening operation of the Spirit. Christians are supernaturally and livingly incorporated with Christ. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:10): that new creation is accomplished in our union with His Person. This is our spiritual *state*: a new man has been "created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph 4:24), and this we are exhorted to put on or make manifest. This is not at all a matter of *progress* or *attainment*, but is true of every Christian the moment he is born again. The terms "created in righteousness" (our justification) and "true holiness" (our sanctification) describe what the new man is in Christ.[205] It is not simply something which we are to pursue—though that is true, and is intimated in the "put ye on"—but it is what all Christians actually *are*: their sanctification in Christ is an accomplished fact. It is just because Christians *are* saints they are to lead saintly lives.

The believer *begins* his Christian life by having been perfectly sanctified in Christ. Just as both our standing and state were radically affected by virtue of our union with the first Adam, so *both* our standing and state are completely changed by virtue of our union with the last Adam. As the believer has a perfect standing in holiness before God because of his federal union with Christ, so his state is perfect before God, because he is now vitally united to Christ. He is in Christ, and Christ is in him. By the regenerating operation of the Spirit we are "joined unto the Lord" (1Co 6:17). The moment they were born again, *all* Christians were sanctified in Christ with a sanctification to which no growth in grace, no attainments in holy living, can add one iota. Their sanctification, like their justification, is "complete in him" (Col 2:10). Christ Himself is their life, and He becomes such by a personal union to Himself which nothing can dissolve. From the moment of his new birth every child of God is a "saint in Christ Jesus" (Rom 1:7), one of the "holy brethren" (Heb 3:1); and it is just because they are such, they are called upon to live holy lives. Oh, what cause we have to adore the grace, the wisdom, and the power of God!

When one of God's elect is quickened into newness of life, a great change is made *relatively*, that is, in connection with his relation to his fellowmen. Previously, he too was both in the world and of it, being numbered with the ungodly and enjoying their fellowship. But at regeneration he is born into a new family, even the living family of God, and henceforth his standing is no longer among those who are "without Christ": "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col 1:13). Thus, when one is made alive in Christ by the Holy Spirit, he at once becomes *separated* from those who are dead in trespasses and sins and therefore this is another aspect of the "sanctification of the Spirit." This was typed out of old. When the Lord was revealed unto Abraham, the word to him was "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred" (Gen 12:1). So again it was with Israel: no sooner were they delivered from the Angel of Death by the blood of the lamb, than they were required to leave Egypt behind them.

Personally, we are sanctified or consecrated to God by the Spirit's indwelling us and making our bodies His temples. As He came upon Christ Himself ("without measure"), so, in due time, He is given to each of His members: "Ye have an unction [the Spirit] from the Holy One" (Christ); "The anointing [the Spirit] which ye have received of Him [Christ] abideth in you" (1Jo 2:20, 27). It is from this very fact we receive our name, for "Christian" means "an anointed one," the term being taken from the type in Psalm 133:2. It is the *indwellingpresence* of the Holy Spirit that constitutes a believer a holy person. That which made Canaan the holy land, Jerusalem the holy city, the temple the holy place, was the presence and appearing of the Holy One there! And that which makes any man "holy" is the perpetual abiding of the Spirit within him. Needless to say, His indwelling of us necessarily produces fruits of holiness in heart

and life—this will come before us in the sequel.

Amazing, blessed, and glorious fact, the Holy Spirit *indwells* the regenerate so that their bodies become the temples of the living God.

> *The Holy Spirit descends on them and enters within them, in consequence of their union with Christ. He comes from heaven to make known this union between Christ and them. He is the divine Manifester of it. He dwells in us as a well of water springing up into everlasting life. He abides with us as our divine Comforter, and will be our Guide even unto death, and continue His life-giving influences in us and dwell in us, filling us with all the fullness of God in heaven forever (S. E. Pierce).*

This indwelling of the Spirit is, in the order of God, subsequent to and in consequence of our being sanctified by the blood of Jesus—for it is obvious that God could not "dwell" in those who were standing under the imputation of their guilt. The Holy Spirit, therefore, from the very fact of making our bodies His temples, attests and evidences the completeness and perpetuity of the sanctification that is ours by the sacrifice of Christ. He comes to us not to procure blessings which Christ has already purchased for us, but to make them known to us: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1Co 2:12). He comes to sustain those in whom the life of Christ now is.

Its Securer, Part Two

"Sanctification of the Spirit" (2Th 2:13) is a comprehensive expression which has a fourfold significance at least. First, it points to that supernatural operation of the Spirit whereby a sinner is "created in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:10), made vitally one with Him, and thereby a partaker of His holiness. Second, it tells of the vital change that this produces in his relation to the ungodly: having been quickened into newness of life, he is at once separated from those who are dead in sins, so that both as to his standing and state he is no longer with them common to Satan, sin, and the world. Third, it speaks of the Spirit Himself taking up His abode in the quickened soul, thereby rendering him personally holy. Fourth, it refers to His bringing the heart into conformity with the divine Law, with all that that connotes. Before taking up this last point, we will offer a few more remarks upon the third.

The coming of this divine and glorious Person to indwell one who is depraved and sinful is both a marvel and a mystery: a marvel that He *should*, a mystery that He *would*. How is it possible for Him Who is ineffably holy to dwell within those who are so unholy? Not a few have said it is impossible, and were it not for the plain declarations of Scripture thereon, probably all of us would come to the same conclusion. But God's ways are very different from ours, and His love and grace have achieved that which our poor hearts had never conceived of. This has been clearly recognized in connection with the amazing birth, and still more amazing death, of Christ, but it has not been so definitely perceived in connection with the descent of the Spirit to indwell believers.

Parallel between the Advents of Christ and the Holy Spirit

There is a striking analogy between the advent to this earth of the second Person of the Trinity and the advent of the third Person, and the marvel and mystery of the one should prepare us for the other. Had the same not become an historical fact, who among us had ever supposed that the Father had suffered His beloved Son to enter such depths of degradation as He did? Who among us had ever imagined that the Lord of Glory would lie in a manger? But He *did*! In view of that, why should we be so staggered at the concept of the Holy Spirit's entering our poor hearts? As the Father was pleased to allow the glory of the Son to be eclipsed for a season by the degradation into which He descended, so in a very real sense He suffers the glory of the Spirit to be hid for a season by the humiliation of His tabernacling in our bodies.

It is on the ground of Christ's work that the Spirit comes to us.

> *Whatever we receive here is but the result of the fullness given to us in Christ. If the Spirit comes to dwell in us as the Spirit of Peace, it is because Jesus by His blood, once offered, hath secured for us that peace. If the Spirit comes as the Spirit of Glory, it is because Jesus has entered into and secured glory for us. If the Spirit comes as the Spirit of Sonship, it is because Jesus has returned for us to the bosom of the Father and brought us into the nearness of the same love. If the Spirit comes to us as the Spirit of Life, it is because of the life hidden for us in Christ with God. The indwelling of the Spirit therefore being a result and evidence of the abiding relation to God into which the resurrection and ascension of our Lord has brought us, must of necessity be an abiding presence. Consequently, the sanctification that results from the fact of His presence in us and from the fact of the new man being created in us, must be a complete and abiding sanctification—as complete and as abiding as the relation that Christ holds to us in redemption as the Representative and Head of His mystical body (B. W. Newton).*

Yet let it be pointed out that the blessed Spirit does not allow our hearts to remain in the awful condition in which He first finds them; and this brings us to our fourth point. In Titus 3:5 we read, "According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit." All that is comprehended in this "washing" we may not be able to say, but it certainly includes the casting of all idols out of our hearts, to such an extent that God now occupies the throne of it. By this "washing of regeneration," the soul is so cleansed from its native pollution that sin is no longer loved, but loathed; the divine Law is no longer hated, but delighted in; and the affections are raised from things

below unto things above. We are well aware of the fact that this is the particular point that most exercises honest consciences; yet, God does not intend that our difficulties should be so cleared up in this life that all exercise of heart should be at an end.

Though it be true that the flesh remains unaltered in the Christian, and that at times its activities are such that our evidences of regeneration are clouded over, yet it remains that a great change was wrought in us at the new birth, the effects of which abide. Though it be true that a sea of corruption still dwells within, and that at times sin rages violently, and so prevails that it seems a mockery to conclude that we have been delivered from its dominion—yet this does not alter the fact that a *miracle of grace* has been wrought within us. Though the Christian is conscious of so much filth within, he has experienced the "washing of regeneration" (Ti 3:5). Before the new birth he saw no beauty in Christ that he should desire Him, but now he views Him as "the Fairest among ten thousand" (Song 5:10). Before he loved those like himself, but now he loves the brethren (1Jo 3:14). Moreover, his understanding has been cleansed from many polluting errors and heresies. Finally, it is a fact that the main stream of his desires runs out after God.

But the "washing of regeneration" is only the *negative* side; *positively* there is "the renewing of the Holy Spirit." Though this "renewing" falls far short of what will take place in the saint at his glorification, yet it is a very real and radical experience. A great change and renovation is made in the soul, which has a beneficial effect upon all its faculties. This "renewing of the Holy Spirit" has in it a transforming power, so that the heart and mind are brought into an obedient frame toward God. The soul is now able to discern that God's will is the most "good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom 12:2) of all, and there is a deep desire and a sincere effort made to become conformed thereto. But let it be carefully noted that the present and not the past tense is employed in Titus 3:5—not ye *were* washed and renewed, but a "washing" and "renewing": it is a *continual* work of the Spirit.

Ere proceeding to show further the nature of the Spirit's work in the soul of His sanctifying operations, let it be pointed out that what our hearts most need to lay hold of and rest on is that which has been before us in the last few chapters. The believer has already been perfectly sanctified in the decree and purpose of the Father. Christ has wrought out for him that which, when reckoned to his account, perfectly fits him for the courts of God's temple above. The moment he is quickened by the Spirit he is "created in Christ" (Eph 2:10), and therefore "sanctified in Christ." Thus both his standing and state are holy in God's sight. Furthermore, the Spirit's indwelling him, making his body His temple, constitutes him perfectly holy—just as the presence of God in the temple made Canaan the "holy land" and Jerusalem the "holy city."

It is of the very first importance that the Christian should be thoroughly clear upon this point. We do not become saints by holy actions—that is the fundamental error of all false religions. No, we must first be saints before there can be any holy actions, as the fountain must be pure before its stream can be; the tree must be good if its fruit is to be wholesome. The order of Scripture is, "Let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints" (Eph 5:3), and, "But now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Eph 5:8); "In behaviour as becometh holiness" (Ti 2:3). God first sets our hearts at rest before He bids our hands engage in His service. He gives life, that we may be capacitated to render love. He creates in us a sanctified nature, that there may be sanctified conduct. God presents us spotless in the Holiest of all according to the blood of sprinkling, that, coming forth with a conscience purged from dead works, we may seek to please and glorify Him.

The Creating of the Holy Nature within Us

It is the creating of this holy nature within us that we must next consider. "It is something that is *holy*,

both in its principle, and in its actions; and is superior to any thing that can come from man, or be performed by himself.

What this holy nature is not

It does not lie in a conformity to the *light of nature* and the dictates of it; nor is it what may go by the name of *moral virtue*, which was exercised by some of the heathen philosophers to a very great degree, and yet they had not a grain of holiness in them but were full of the lusts of envy, pride, revenge, etc. Nor does it lie in a bare, *external conformity* to the Law of God, or in an *outward reformation* of life and manners. This appeared in the Pharisees to a great degree, who were pure in their own eyes, and thought themselves holier than others, and disdained them, and yet their hearts were full of all manner of impurity.

> *Nor is it what is called restraining grace: persons may be restrained by the injunction of parents and masters, by the laws of magistrates, and by the ministry of the Word, from the grosser sins of life—and be preserved, by the providence of God,[206] from the pollutions of the world—and yet not be sanctified. Nor are gifts, ordinary or extraordinary, sanctifying grace: Judas Iscariot no doubt had both, the ordinary gifts of a preacher, and the extraordinary gifts of an apostle; yet he was not a holy man. Gifts are not graces: a man may have all gifts and all knowledge, and speak with the tongue of men, and angels, and not have grace; there may be a silver tongue where there is an unsanctified heart. Nor is sanctification a restoration of the lost image of Adam, or an amendment of that image marred by the sin of man; or a new vamping up[207] of the old principles of nature (John Gill).*

What this holy nature is

Having seen what this holy nature, imparted by the Spirit, is not, let us endeavor to define what it is. It is something entirely new: a new creation, a new heart, a new spirit, a new man, the conforming of us to another image, even to that of the last Adam, the Son of God. It is the impartation of a holy principle, implanted in the midst of corruption, like a lovely rosebush growing out of a dung-heap. It is the carrying forward of that "good work" begun in us at regeneration (Phi 1:6). It is called by many names, such as "the inward man" (2Co 4:16) and "the hidden man of the heart" (1Pe 3:4), not only because it has its residence in the soul, but because our fellows can see it not. It is designated "seed" (1Jo 3:9) and "spirit" (Joh 3:6) because it is wrought in us by the Spirit of God. It is likened to a "root" (Job 19:28), to "good treasure of the heart" (Mat 12:35), to "oil in the vessel" (Mat 25:4)—by "oil" there is meant grace, so called for its illuminating nature in giving discernment to the understanding, and for its suppling[208] and softening nature, taking off the hardness from the heart and the stubbornness from the will.[209]

It is in this aspect of our sanctification that we arrive at the third meaning of the term. The blessed Spirit not only separates us from the common herd of the unregenerate, cleanses our hearts from the pollution of sin, but He suitably *adorns the temple in which He now dwells*. This He does by making us partakers of "the divine nature" (2Pe 1:4), which is a positive thing—the communication of a holy principle, whereby we are renewed after the image of God (Col 3:10). When the Levites were to minister in the holy place, not only were they required to wash themselves, but to put on their priestly attire and ornaments, which were comely and beautiful. In like manner, believers are a holy and royal priesthood (1Pe 2:5), for they have not only been washed from the filth of sin, but are "all glorious within" (Psa 45:13). They have not only had the robe of imputed righteousness put upon them (Isa 61:10), but the beautifying grace of the Spirit has been implanted in them.

It is by the reception of this holy principle or nature that the believer is freed from the dominion of sin and brought into the liberty of righteousness, though not until death is he delivered from the plague and presence of sin. At their justification believers obtain a relative or judicial sanctification, which provides for them a perfect standing before God, by which they receive proof of their covenant relationship with Him that they are His peculiar people, His "treasure," His "portion." But more, they are also inherently sanctified in their persons by a gracious work of the Spirit within their souls. They are "renewed" throughout the whole of their beings, for, as the poison of sin was diffused throughout the entire man, so is grace. It helps not a little to perceive that, as Thomas Boston pointed out long ago (in his *Man's*

Fourfold State), "Holiness is not one grace only, but *all* the graces of the Spirit: it is a constellation of graces; it is all the graces in their seed and root."

Yet let it be pointed out that, though the whole of the Christian's person is renewed by the Spirit, and all the faculties of his soul are renovated, nevertheless, there is no operation of grace upon his old nature, so that its evil is expelled: the "flesh" or principle of indwelling sin is neither eradicated, nor purified, nor made good. Our "old man" (which must be distinguished from the soul and its faculties) is "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph 4:22), and remains so till the end of our earthly pilgrimage, ever striving against the "spirit," or principle, of holiness, or "new man." As the soul at the very first moment of its union with the body (in the womb) became sinful, so it is not until the moment of its dissolution from the body that the soul becomes inherently sinless. As an old divine quaintly said, "Sin brought death into the world, and God, in a way of holy resentment, makes use of death to put an end to the very being of sin in His saints."

Many readers will realize that we are here engaged in grappling with a difficult and intricate point. No man is competent to give such a clear and comprehensive description of our inward sanctification that all difficulty is cleared up: the most he can do is to point out what it is not, and then seek to indicate the *direction* in which its real nature is to be sought.

As a further effort toward this, it may be said that this principle of holiness which the Spirit imparts to the believer consists of spiritual *light*, whereby the heart is (partly) delivered from the darkness in which the Fall enveloped it. It is such an opening of the eyes of our understandings that we are enabled to see spiritual things and discern their excellency, for before we are sanctified by the Spirit we are totally blind to their reality and beauty. Such passages as John 1:5; Acts 26:18; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 5:8; Colossians 1:13; 1 Peter 2:9 make this clear. (Read them!)

Further, that principle of holiness, which the Spirit imparts to the believer, consists of spiritual *life*. Previous to its reception, the soul is in a state of spiritual death, that is, it is alienated from and incapacitated toward God. At our renewing by the Spirit, we receive a vital principle of spiritual life (Joh 5:24; 10:11, 28; Rom 8:2; Eph 2:1). It is by this new life we are capacitated for communion with and obedience to God.

Once more, that principle of holiness consists of spiritual *love*. The natural man is in a state of enmity with God, but at regeneration there is implanted that which delights in and cleaves to God (Deu 30:6; Rom 5:5; Gal 5:24).

As light, this principle of holiness affects the *understanding*; as life it influences and moves the *will*; as love it directs and molds the *affections*. Thus, also it partakes of the very nature of Him Who is Light, Life, and Love. "Let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us" (Psa 90:17) signifies, "Let this principle of holiness (as light, life, and love) be healthy within and made manifest through and by us."

Conformity to the Divine Law

But we must now turn to the most important aspect of all, of the nature of this principle of holiness, whereby the Spirit sanctified us inherently. Our experimental sanctification consists in *our hearts being conformed to the divine Law*. This should be so obvious that no labored argument is required to establish the fact. As all sin is a transgression of the Law (1Jo 3:4), so all holiness must be a fulfilling of the Law. The natural man is not subject to the Law, neither indeed can he be (Rom 8:7). Why? Because he is devoid of that principle from which acceptable obedience to the Law can proceed. The great requirement of the Law is *love*: love to God, and love to our neighbor. But regarding the unregenerate it is written, "Ye have not the love of God in you" (Joh 5:42). Hence it is that God's promise to His elect is, "The LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all

thine heart" (Deu 30:6), for "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom 13:10).

This is the grand promise of the Covenant. "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts" (Heb 8:10). And again, "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes" (Eze 36:27). As we said in the preceding section, when Christ comes to His people He finds them entirely destitute of holiness and of every desire after it; but He does not leave them in that awful condition. No, He sends forth the Holy Spirit, communicates to them a sincere love for God, and imparts to them a principle or "nature" which delights in His ways. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom 8:8). Why? Because any work to be pleasing to Him must proceed from a right *principle* (love to Him), be performed by a right *rule* (His Law, or revealed will), and have a right *end* in view (His glory); and this is only made possible by the sanctification of the Spirit (*see* Rom 8:5-27).

Experimental holiness is conformity of heart and life to the divine Law. The Law of God is "holy, just and good" (Rom 7:12), and therefore does it require inward righteousness or conformity as well as outward; and this requirement is fully met by the wondrous and gracious provision which God has made for His people. Here again we may behold the striking and blessed co-operation between the Eternal Three. The Father, as the King and Judge of all, gave the Law. The Son, as our Surety, fulfilled the Law. The Spirit is given to work in us conformity to the Law: first, by imparting a nature which loves it; second, by instructing and giving us a knowledge of its extensive requirements; third, by producing in us strivings after obedience to its precepts. Not only is the perfect obedience of Christ *imputed* to His people, but a nature which delights in the Law is *imparted* to them. But because of the opposition from indwelling sin, perfect obedience to the Law is not possible in this life; yet, for Christ's sake, God accepts their sincere but imperfect obedience.

We must distinguish between the Holy Spirit and the principle of holiness that He implants at regeneration: the Creator and the nature He creates must not be confounded. It is by His indwelling the Christian that He sustains and develops, continues and perfects, this good work that He has begun in us. He takes possession of the soul to strengthen and direct its faculties. It is from the principle of holiness that He has communicated to us that there proceed the fruits of holiness—sanctified desires, actions, and works. Yet that new principle or nature has no strength of its own. Only as it is daily renewed, empowered, controlled, and directed by its Giver do we act "as becometh holiness" (Ti 2:3). His *continued* work of sanctification within us proceeds in the twofold process of the mortification (subduing) of the old man and the vivification (quickening) of the new man.

Summary

The fruit of the Spirit's sanctification of us experimentally appears in our separation from evil and the world. But, because of the flesh within, our walk is not perfect. Oftentimes there is little for the eye or sense to distinguish in those in whom the Spirit dwells from the moral and respectable worldlings—yea, often they put us to shame. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be" (1Jo 3:2). "The world knoweth us not" (1Jo 3:1). But the heart is washed from the prevailing love of sin by the tears of repentance[210] that the Christian is moved to shed frequently. Every new act of faith upon the cleansing blood of Christ carries forward the work of experimental sanctification to a further degree. As Naaman was required to dip in the Jordan again and again, yea, seven times, till he was wholly purged of his bodily leprosy (2Ki 5), so the soul of the Christian—conscious of so much of the filth of sin still defiling him—continues to dip in that "fountain opened…for sin and for uncleanness" (Zec 13:1). Thank God, one day Christ will "present…to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph 5:27).

Its Rule

Its Rule, Part One

The Divine Law Reflects God's Holiness.

Having considered the distinct acts of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the sanctification of the Church, we must now carefully enquire as to the Rule by which all true holiness is determined, the Standard by which it is weighed and to which it must be conformed. This is also of deep importance, for if we mistake the line and plummet[211] of holiness, then all our efforts after it will be wide of the mark.[212] On this aspect of our subject, there also prevails widespread ignorance and confusion today, so that we are obliged to proceed slowly and enter rather lengthily into it. If one class of our readers sorely needed—for the strengthening of their faith and comfort of their hearts—a somewhat full setting forth of the perfect sanctification which believers have in Christ, another class of our readers certainly require—for the illumination of their minds and the searching of their conscience—a setting forth in detail of the divinely provided Rule.

In previous chapters, we have shown that holiness is the antithesis of sin, and therefore, as "sin is the transgression [a deviation from or violation of] the law" (1Jo 3:4), holiness must be a *conformity to the Law*. As "sin" is a general term to connote all that is evil, foul, and morally loathsome, so "holiness" is a general term to signify all that is good, pure, and morally lovely. Holiness, like sin, has its root in the heart: external actions are virtuous or vicious, praiseworthy or blameworthy, as they express the desires, designs, and choices of the heart. As all sin is a species of *self-love* (self-will, self-pleasing, self-gratification), so all holiness consists of *disinterested* or *unselfish love*, to God and our neighbor. 1 Corinthians 13 supplies a full and beautiful delineation of the nature of holiness: substitute the term "holiness" for "charity" (or love) all through the chapter. As sin is the transgressing of the Law, so love is the fulfilling of the Law (Rom 13:10).

The spirituality and religion of man in his original state consisted in a perfect conformity to the divine Law, which was the law of his nature (for he was created in the image and likeness of God), with the addition of positive precepts.[213] But, when man lost his innocence and became guilty and depraved, he fell, not only under the wrath of God, but also under the dominion of sin. Consequently, he now needs both a Redeemer *and* a Sanctifier—and in the gospel, both are provided. Alas that so often today only a half gospel, a mutilated gospel, is being preached—whereby sinners are made "twofold more the children of hell" than they were before they heard it! In the gospel, a way is revealed for our obtaining both pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace. The gospel presents Christ not only as a Deliverer from the wrath to come (1Th 1:10), but also as the Sanctifier of His Church (Eph 5:26).

In His work of sanctifying the Church, Christ restores His people to conformity to the Law. Before supplying proof of this statement, let us carefully observe what it is which the Law requires of us. "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Mat 22:37-40). Christ here summed up the Ten Commandments in these two, and every duty enjoined by the Law and inculcated by the Prophets is but a deduction or amplification of these two, in which all are radically contained. Here is, first, the duty required—love to God and our neighbor; second, the ground or reason of this duty—because He is the Lord *our* God; third, the measure of this duty—with all the heart.

The grand reason why God, the alone Governor of the world, ever made the Law, requiring us to love with all our hearts, was because it is, in its own nature, infinitely just and fitting. The Law is an external and unalterable Rule of Righteousness, which cannot be abrogated or altered in the least iota, for it is an

unchanging expression of God's immutable moral character. To suppose that He would ever repeal or even abate the Law—when the grounds and reasons of God's first making it remain as forcible as ever, when that which it requires is as just and meet as ever, and which it becomes Him as the moral Ruler of the universe to require as much as ever—casts the highest reproach upon all His glorious perfections. Such a horrible insinuation could have originated nowhere else than in the foul mind of the Fiend, the archenemy of God, and is to be rejected by us with the utmost abhorrence.

To imagine God repealing the Moral Law,[214] which is the rule of all holiness and the condemner of all sin, would be supposing Him to release His creatures from giving unto Him the full glory that is His due, and allowing them to hold back a part of it at least. It supposes Him releasing His creatures from that which is right and allowing them to do that which is wrong. Yea, such a vile supposition reflects upon God's very goodness, for, so far from it being a boon and benefit to His creatures, the repealing or altering the Law, which is so perfectly suited to their highest happiness, would be one of the sorest calamities that could happen. If God had rather that heaven and earth should pass away than that the least jot or tittle of the Law should fail (Mat 5:18), how steadfastly should we resist every effort of Satan's to rob us of this divine Rule, weaken its authority over our hearts, or prejudice us against it.

How Could the Law Be Repealed?

In the light of what has been pointed out, how unspeakably horrible, what vile blasphemy, to imagine that the Son Himself should come from heaven, become incarnate, and die the death of the cross, with the purpose of securing His people a rescinding or abating of the Law, and obtain for them a lawless liberty. What! Had He so little regard for *His Father's* interests and glory, for the honor of His Law, that He shed His precious blood so as to persuade the great Governor of the world to slacken the reins of His government and obtain for His people an impious license?[215] Perish the thought! Let all who love the Lord rise up in righteous indignation against such an atrocious slur upon His holy character and loathe it as a satanic slander—no matter by whom propagated. Any Spirit-taught reader must surely see that such a wicked idea as the affirming that Christ is the One Who has made an end of the Law is to make Him the friend of sin and the enemy of God!

Pause for a moment and weigh carefully the implications. How could God possibly vindicate the honor of His great name were He to either repeal or abate that Law which requires love to Him with all our hearts? Would not this be clearly tantamount to saying that He had previously required more than was His due? Or, to put it in another form: does He not now desire so much for His creatures as He formerly did? Or, to state the issue yet more boldly, should God (since the cross) relinquish His *rights* and freely allow His creatures to despise Him and sin with impunity? Look at it another way: to what purpose should Christ die in order to secure an abatement from that Law? What need was there for it? Or what good could it do? If the Law *really* demanded too much, then justice required God to make the abatement; in such case, the death of Christ was needless. Or if the Law required what was *right*, then God could not in justice make any abatement, and so Christ died in vain.[216]

The Fulfilling of the Law

But so far from Christ coming into this world with any such evil design, He expressly declared,

> *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Mat 5:17-19).*

This is the very thing He condemned the Pharisees for all through this chapter. They, in effect, taught this very doctrine, that the Law was abated, that its exacting demands were relaxed. They affirmed that though the Law did forbid some external and gross acts of sin, yet it did not reprehend the first stirrings of corruption in the heart or lesser iniquities.

For instance, the Pharisees taught that murder must not be committed, but there was no harm in being angry, speaking reproachfully, or harboring a secret grudge in the heart (Mat 5:21-26). That adultery must not be committed, yet there was no evil in having lascivious thoughts (vv. 27-30). That we must not be guilty of perjury, yet there was no harm in petty oaths in common conversation (vv. 33-37). That friends must not be hated, yet it was quite permissible to hate enemies (vv. 43-47). These, and such like allowances, they taught were made in the Law, and therefore were not sinful. But such doctrine our Saviour condemned as erroneous and damning, insisting that the Law requires us to be as perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect (v. 48), and declaring that if our righteousness exceeded not that of the Scribes and Pharisees we could not enter the kingdom of heaven (v. 20). How far, then, was our holy Lord from abating God's Law or lessening our obligations to perfect conformity to it!

The fact of the matter is (and here we will proceed to adduce[217] some of the proofs for our [earlier] statement [that in His work of sanctifying the Church Christ restores His people to conformity to the Law]) that Christ came into the world for the express purpose of giving a practical demonstration, in the most public manner, that God is worthy of all that love, honor, and obedience which the Law requires, and that sin is as great an evil as the punishment of the Law implies, and thereby declared God's righteousness and hatred of sin to the end that God might be just and yet the Justifier of every sincere believer. This Christ did by obeying the precepts and suffering the death penalty of the Law in the stead of His people. The great design of the incarnation, life, and death of our blessed Lord was to maintain and magnify the divine government and secure the salvation of His people in a way that placed supreme honor upon the Law.

The chief object before the beloved Son in taking upon Him the form of a servant was *to meet the demands* of the Law. His work here had a prime respect to the Law of God, so that sinners should be justified and sanctified without setting aside its requirements or without showing the least disregard to it. First, He was "made under the Law" (Gal 4:4)—amazing place for the Lord of Glory to take! Second, He declared, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psa 40:7, 8)—enshrined in his affections. Third, He flawlessly obeyed the commands of the Law in thought, word, and deed: as a child, He was subject to His parents (Luk 2:51); as Man He honored the Sabbath (Luk 4:16), and refused to worship or serve any but the Lord His God (Luk 4:8). Fourth, when John demurred at baptizing Him, He answered, "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" (Mat 3:15). What a proof of His love for the Lawgiver in submitting to His ordinance! What proof of His love for His people in taking His place alongside of them in that which spoke of death!

The truth is that it was God's own infinite aversion to the repeal of the Law, as a thing utterly unfit and wrong, which was the very thing which made the death of Christ needful. If the Law might have been repealed, then sinners could have been saved without any more ado; but if it must not be repealed, then the demands of it must be answered by some other means, or every sinner would be eternally damned. It was because of this that Christ willingly interposed, and "magnified the law and made it honourable" (Isa 42:21), so securing the honor of God's holiness and justice, so establishing His Law and government, that a way has been opened for Him to pardon the very chief of sinners without compromising Himself to the slightest degree. "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse...Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal 3:10, 13).

Christ loved His Father's honor far too much to revoke His Law, or bring His people into a state of

insubordination to His authority; and He loved them too well to turn them adrift from "the perfect Law of liberty." Read carefully the inspired record of His life upon earth, and you will not discover a single word falling from His lips that expresses the slightest disrespect for the Law. Instead, we find that He bade His disciples do unto men whatsoever we would that they should do unto us because "this is the law and the prophets" (Mat 7:12). In like manner Christ's apostles urged the performance of moral duties by the authority of the Law: "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" (Rom 13:8); "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise" (Eph 6:1-2). The Apostle John exhorted believers to love one another as "an old commandment which ye had from the beginning" (1Jo 2:7). And, as we shall yet show at length, the Law is the great means that the Spirit uses in sanctifying us.

Summary

Here, then, is a threefold cord that cannot be broken, a threefold consideration that settles the matter for all who submit to the authority of Holy Scripture. First, *God the Father* honored the Law by refusing to rescind it in order that His people might be saved at less cost, declining to abate its demands even when His own blessed Son cried, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." *God the Son* honored the Law by being made under it, by perfectly obeying its precepts, and by personally enduring its awful penalty. *God the Spirit* honors the Law by making quickened sinners see, feel, and own that it is "holy, and just, and good" (Rom 7:12), even though it condemns them—and that before ever He reveals the mercy of God through Jesus Christ unto them—so that the Law is magnified, sin is embittered, the sinner is humbled, and grace is glorified all at once!

There are some who will go with us this far, agreeing that Christ came here to meet the demands of the Law, yet who insist that the Law being satisfied, believers are now entirely freed from its claims. But this is the most inconsistent, illogical, absurd position of all. Shall Christ go to so much pain to magnify the Law in order that it might now be dishonored by us! Did He pour out His love to God on the cross that we might be relieved from loving Him! It is true that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth" (Rom 10:4)—for "righteousness" (for our justification), yes, but not for our sanctification. Is it not written that "he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1Jo 2:6), and did not Christ walk according to the rule of the Law? The great object in Christ's coming here was to conform His people to the Law and not to make them independent of it. Christ sends the Spirit to write the Law in their hearts (Heb 8:10), and not to set at naught its holy and high demands.

The truth is that God's sending His Son into the world to die for the redemption of His people, instead of freeing them from their obligations to keep the Law, binds them the more strongly to do so. This is so obvious that it ought not to require arguing. Reflect for a moment, Christian reader, upon God's dealings with us. We had rebelled against the Lord, lost all esteem for Him, cast off His authority, and practically bid defiance to both His justice and His power. What wonder, then, had He immediately doomed our apostate world to the blackness of darkness forever? Instead, He sent forth His own dear Son, His only Begotten, as an Ambassador of peace, with a message of good news, even that of a free and full forgiveness of sins to all who threw down the weapons of their warfare against Him and who took His easy yoke upon them.

But more, when God's Son was despised and rejected of men, He did not recall Him to heaven, but allowed Him to complete His mission of mercy, by laying down His life as a ransom for all who should believe on Him. And now He sends forth His messengers to proclaim the gospel to the ends of the earth, inviting His enemies to cease their rebellion, acknowledge the Law by which they stand condemned to be

holy, just, and good, and to look to Him through Jesus Christ for pardon as *a free gift*, and to yield themselves to Him entirely, to love Him and delight themselves in Him forever. Is not this fathomless love, infinite mercy, amazing grace, which should melt our hearts and cause us to "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," which is indeed "our reasonable service" (Rom 12:1)?

Oh, my Christian reader, that God out of His own mere good pleasure, according to His eternal purpose, should have stopped you in your mad career to hell, made you see and feel your awful sin and guilt, own the sentence just by which you were condemned, and bring you on your knees to look for free grace through Jesus Christ for pardon, and through Him give up yourself to God forever. And that now He should receive you to His favor, put you among His children, become your Father and your God by an Everlasting Covenant; undertake to teach and guide, nourish and strengthen, correct and comfort, protect and preserve; and while in this world supply all your needs and make all things work together for your good; and finally bring you into everlasting Glory and blessedness. Does not *this* lay you under infinitely deeper obligations to *love* the Lord your God with all thy heart? Does not *this* have the greatest tendency to animate[218] you to obedience to His righteous Law? Does not *this* engage you, does not His love constrain you, to seek to please, honor, and glorify Him?

Its Rule, Part Two

We trust it has now been clearly proved to the satisfaction of every truth-loving reader that the great object in Christ's coming here was to magnify the Law and satisfy its righteous demands. In His fulfilling of the Law and by His enduring its penalty, the Lord Jesus laid the foundation for the conforming of His people to it. This is plainly taught us in,

> *For what the law could not do [namely, justify and sanctify fallen sinners—neither remit the penalty, nor deliver from the power of sin], in that it was weak through the flesh [unable to produce holiness in a fallen creature, as a master musician cannot produce harmony and melody from an instrument that is all out of tune], God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that [in order that] the righteousness of the law [its just requirements] might be fulfilled in us (Rom 8:3-4).*

This was the design of God sending His Son here. "That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him [be in subjection to Him] without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luk 1:74-75). "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Ti 2:14). "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1Pe 2:24). These and similar passages are so many different ways of saying that Christ "became obedient unto death" in order that His people might be recovered to obedience to God, that they might be made personally holy, that they might be conformed to God's Law, both in heart and life. Nothing less than this would or could meet the requirements of the divine government, satisfy God's own nature, or glorify the Redeemer by a triumphant issue[219] of His costly work.

Nor should it surprise any to hear that nothing short of heart-conformity to the Law could satisfy the thrice-Holy One. "The LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1Sa 16:7). We have read the Old Testament Scriptures in vain if we have failed to note what a prominent place this basic and searching truth occupies: any one who has access to a complete Hebrew-English concordance can see at a glance how many hundreds of times the term *heart* is used there. The great God could never be imposed upon or satisfied with mere external performances from His creatures. Alas, alas, that heart religion is rapidly disappearing from the earth, to the eternal undoing of all who are strangers to it. God has never required less than the hearts of His creatures: "My son, give me thine heart" (Pro 23:26).

"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life" (Deu 4:9). "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked" (Deu 10:16; *see also* Jer 9:25-26). "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Pro 4:23). "Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for He is gracious and merciful" (Joe 2:12-13). The regenerate in Israel clearly recognized the high and holy demands which the Law of God made upon them: "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts" (Psa 51:6)—and therefore did they pray, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psa 139:23-24).

Now as we pointed out in the last chapter, the Lord Jesus affirmed that the full requirements of the Law from us are summed up in, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind…Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself "(Mat 22:37, 39). It was to restore His people to this that Christ lived and died: to recover them to God, to bring them back into subjection to Him (from which they fell in Adam), to recover them to the Lawgiver. Christ is the Mediator between

God and men, and by Christ is the believing sinner brought to God. When He sends His ministers to preach the gospel it is "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Act 26:18). "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ" (2Co 5:18). To the saints Paul wrote, "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1Th 1:9). Of Christ it is written "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him" (Heb 7:25); and again, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1Pe 3:18)—to the God of the Old Testament, the Lawgiver!

How God Recovers His People unto a Conformity to the Law

Let us consider how Christ recovers His people to a conformity to the Law, and how He restores them to the Lawgiver.

1. The knowledge of God

Since that which the Law requires is that we love the Lord our God with all our hearts, it is evident, in the first place, that we must have a true knowledge of God Himself: this is both requisite to and implied in the having our affections set upon Him. If our apprehensions of God be wrong, if they agree not with the Scriptures, then it is obvious that we have but a false image of Him framed by our own fancy.[220] By a true knowledge of God (Joh 17:3) we mean far more than a correct theoretical notion of His perfections: the demons have that, yet they have no love for Him. Before God can be loved there must be a spiritual knowledge of Him, a heartfelt[221] realization of His personal loveliness, moral excellency, ineffable glory.

By nature, none of us possessed one particle of genuine love for God: so far from it, we *hated* Him, though we may not have realized the awful fact, and had we done so, would not have acknowledged it. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom 8:7): those are equivalents, convertible[222] terms. Where there is enmity toward God, there is no subjection to His Law; contrariwise, where there is love for God, there is submission to His Law. The reason why there is no love for God in the unregenerate is because they have no real knowledge of Him: this is just as true of those in Christendom as it is of those in heathendom—to the highly privileged and well-instructed Jews Christ said, "Ye neither know me, nor my Father" (Joh 8:19). A miracle of grace has to take place in order to this: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2Co 4:6); "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true" (1Jo 5:20).

This true knowledge of God consists in our spiritually perceiving Him (in our measure) to be just such a One as He actually is. We see Him to be not only Love itself, the God of all grace, and the Father of mercies, but also supreme, infinitely exalted above all creatures; sovereign, doing as He pleases, asking no one's permission and giving no account of His actions; immutable, with Whom there is no variableness or shadow in turning; ineffably holy, being of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look on iniquity; inflexibly just, so that He will by no means clear the guilty; omniscient, so that no secret can be concealed from Him; omnipotent, so that no creature can successfully resist Him; the Judge of all, Who will banish from His presence into everlasting woe and torment every impenitent[223] rebel. This is the character of the true God. Do you love *Him*, my reader?

2. A high esteem for God

Second, a high esteem for God is both requisite *to* and is implied *in* loving Him. This high esteem consists of exalted thoughts and a lofty valuation of Him, from the sight and sense we have of His own intrinsic worthiness and excellency. To the unregenerate He says, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether

such an one as thyself " (Psa 50:21), for their concepts of God are mean,[224] low, derogatory. But when the Spirit quickens us and shines upon our understandings, we discern the beauty of the Lord, and admire and adore Him. We join with the celestial hosts in exclaiming, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts" (Isa 6:3). As we behold, as in a glass, His glory (2Co 3:18), we see how infinitely exalted He is above all creatures, and cry, "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exo 15:11), yea, we confess, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee" (Psa 73:25).

Now this high estimate of God not only disposes or inclines the heart to acquiesce[225] but to *exult* in His high prerogatives. From a consciousness of His own infinite excellency, His entire right thereto, and His absolute authority over all, occupying the throne of the universe, He presents Himself as the Most High God, supreme Lord, sovereign Governor of all worlds, and demands that all creatures shall be in a perfect subjection to Him, deeming those who refuse Him this as worthy of eternal damnation. He declares, "I am the LORD, and beside me there is no God: my glory will I not give to another: thus and thus shall ye do, because I am the LORD" (Isa 44:6; 42:8). As it would be the utmost wickedness for the highest angel in heaven to assume any of this honor to himself, yet it perfectly becomes the Almighty so to do; yea, so far above all is He, that God is worthy of and entitled to infinitely more honor and homage than all creatures together can possibly pay to Him.

When the eyes of our hearts are open to see something of God's sovereign majesty, infinite dignity, supernal[226] glory, and we begin to rightly esteem Him, then we perceive how thoroughly right and just it is that such an One should be held in the utmost reverence, and esteemed far above all others, and exulted in: "Sing unto the LORD all the earth" (Psa 96:1). A spiritual sight and sense of the supreme excellency and infinite glory of the Triune Jehovah will not only rejoice our hearts to know that He *is* King of kings, the Governor of all worlds, but we are also thankful and glad that *we* live under His government and are His subjects and servants. We shall then perceive the grounds and reasons of His Law: how infinitely right and fit it is that we should love Him with all our hearts and obey Him in everything, how infinitely unfit and wrong the least sin is, and how just the threatened punishment. We shall then also perceive that all the nations of the earth are but as a drop in the bucket before Him, and that we ourselves are less than nothing in His sight.

3. A deep desire for God's glory

Third, a deep and lasting desire for God's glory is both requisite to and is implied in our loving Him. When we are acquainted with a person who appears very excellent in our eyes and we highly esteem him, then we heartily wish him well and are ready at all times to do whatever we can to promote his welfare. It is thus that love to God will make us feel and act toward *His* honor and interests in this world. When God is spiritually beheld in His infinite excellency as the sovereign Governor of the whole world, and a sense of His infinite worthiness is alive in our hearts, a holy benevolence is kindled, the spontaneous language of which is, "Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name" (Psa 96:7-8). "Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth" (Psa 57:5). As self-love naturally causes us to seek the promotion of our *own* interests and self-aggrandizement, so a true love to God moves us to put *Him* first and seek His glory.

This holy disposition expresses itself in earnest longings that God would glorify Himself and honor His great name by bringing more of our fellow creatures into an entire subjection to Himself. The natural longing and language of true spiritual love is, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Mat 6:9-10). When God is about to bring to pass great and glorious things to the magnifying of Himself, it causes great rejoicing: "Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad...He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with

his truth" (Psa 96:11, 13). So too when God permits anything which, as it seems to us, tends to bring reproach and dishonor upon His cause, it occasions acute anguish and distress: as when the Lord threatened to destroy Israel for their stiffneckedness, Moses exclaimed, "What will become of thy great name? What will the Egyptians say!" (Exo 32:12; *see also* Jos 7:9).

From this disinterested affection arises a free and genuine disposition to give ourselves entirely to the Lord forever, to walk in His ways and keep all His commandments. For if we really desire that God may be glorified, we shall be disposed to *seek* His glory. A spiritual sight and sense of the infinite greatness, majesty, and excellency of the Lord of lords, makes it appear to us supremely fit that we should be wholly devoted to Him, and that it is utterly wrong for us to live to ourselves and make our own interests our last end. The same desire which makes the godly earnestly long to have God glorify Himself, strongly prompts them to live unto Him. If we love God with all our hearts, we shall serve Him with all our strength. If God be the highest in our esteem, then His honor and glory will be our chief concern. To love God so as to *serve Him* is what the Law requires; to love self so as to *serve it* is rebellion against the Majesty of heaven.

4. Delighting ourselves in God

Fourth, delighting ourselves in God is both requisite to and is implied in our loving Him. If there be a heartfelt realization of God's personal loveliness and ineffable glory, then the whole soul must and will be attracted to Him. A spiritual sight and sense of the perfections of the divine character draw out the heart in fervent adoration. When we "delight in" a fellow-creature, we find pleasure and satisfaction in his company and conversation; we long to see him when absent, rejoice in his presence, and the enjoyment of him makes us happy. So it is when a holy soul beholds God in the grandeur of His being, loves Him above all else, and is devoted to Him entirely—*now* he delights in Him supremely. His delight and complacency is as great as his esteem, arising from the same sense of God's moral excellency.

From this delight in God springs longings after a fuller acquaintance and closer communion with Him: "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory...because thy lovingkindness is better than life...my soul followeth hard after thee" (Psa 63:1-3, 8). There is at times a holy rejoicing in God which nothing can dim: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Hab 3:17-18). From this delight in God arises a holy disposition to renounce all others and to live wholly upon Him, finding our satisfaction in Him alone: "O LORD our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name" (Isa 26:13). "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phi 3:8). As the proud man seeks contentment in creature honors, the worldling in riches, the Pharisee in his round of duties, so the true lover of God finds his contentment in God Himself.

That these four things are a true representation of the nature of that love which is required in the first and great commandment of the Law, upon which chiefly hang all the Law and the Prophets, is manifest, not only from the reason of things, but from this: that such a love lays a sure and firm foundation for all holy *obedience*. Only that love to God is of the right kind that effectually influences us to keep His commandments: "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (1Jo 2:3-5). But it is evident from the very nature of things that such a love as this will effectually influence us so to do. As self-love naturally moves us to set up self and its interests, so this love will move us to set up God and

His interests. The only difference between the love of saints in heaven and of saints on earth is one of degree.

How Christ Conforms to the Law

Having shown that the great object in Christ's coming to earth was to magnify the Law (by obeying its precepts and suffering its penalty), and that by so doing He laid a foundation for the recovering of His people to the Lawgiver, it now remains for us to consider more specifically *how* He conforms them to the Law. This, as we have just seen, must consist in His bringing them to lay down the weapons of their warfare against God, and by causing them to love God with all their heart. This He accomplishes by *the sending forth of His blessed Spirit to renew them*, for "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" (Rom 5:5). It is the special and supernatural work of the Spirit in the soul that distinguishes the regenerate from the unregenerate.

In the cover-page articles of the 1934 issues of *Studies in the Scriptures*,[227] we showed at length that the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Spirit is an orderly and progressive one, conducting the soul step by step in the due method of the gospel: quickening, illuminating, convicting, drawing to Christ, and cleansing. That order can be best perceived by us *inversely*, according as is realized in our conscious experience, tracing it backward from effect to cause. (5) Without the Spirit bringing us to Christ there can be no cleansing from His blood. (4) Without the Spirit working in us an evangelical repentance there can be no saving faith or coming to Christ. (3) Without divine conviction of sin there can be no godly sorrow for it. (2) Without the Spirit's special illumination there can be no sight or sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, wherein it consists—opposition to God, expressed in self-pleasing. (1) Without His quickening us we can neither see nor feel our dreadful state before God: spiritual life must be imparted before we are capable of discerning or being affected by divine things.

It is by the Spirit we are brought from death unto life, given spiritual perception to realize our utter lack of conformity to the divine Law, enabled to discern its spirituality[228] and just requirements, brought to mourn over our fearful transgressions against it and to acknowledge the justice of its condemning sentence upon us. It is by the Spirit we receive a new nature that loves God and delights in His Law, which brings our hearts into conformity to it.

The *extent* of this conformity in the *present* life, and the harassing difficulty presented to the Christian by the realization that there is still so much in him which is *opposed* to the Law, will be considered next.

Its Rule, Part Three

The Extent of This Sanctifying Work in the Present Life

It has been pointed out in earlier chapters that our practical sanctification by the Spirit is but His continuing and completing of the work that He began in us at regeneration and conversion. Now saving conversion consists in our being delivered from our depravity and sinfulness to the moral image of God, or, which is the same thing, to a real conformity unto the moral Law. And a conformity to the moral Law (as we showed in the last section), consists in a *disposition* to love God supremely, live to Him ultimately, and delight in Him superlatively—and to love our neighbors as ourselves, with a *practice* agreeing thereto. Therefore, a saving conversion consists in our being recovered from what we are by nature to such a disposition and practice.

In order to this blessed recovery of us to God, Christ by His Spirit applies the Law in power to the sinner's understanding and heart, for, "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul" (Psa 19:7). That effectual application of the Law causes the sinner to see clearly and to feel acutely how he had lived—in utter defiance of it; what he is—a foul leper; what he deserves—eternal punishment; and how he is in the hands of a sovereign God, entirely at His disposal (*see* Romans 9:18). This experience is unerringly described in Romans 7:8-9:

> *For without [the Spirit's application of] the law sin was dead [we had no perception or feeling of its heinousness]. I was alive once without the law [deeming myself as good as anyone else, and able to win God's approval by my religious performances], but when the commandment came [in power to my conscience], sin revived [became a fearful reality as I discovered the plague of my heart], and I died [to my self-righteousness].*

It is then for the first time that the soul perceives "the law is spiritual" (Rom 7:14), that it requires not only outward works of piety, but holy thoughts and godly affections, from whence all good works must proceed, or else they are unacceptable to God. The Law is "exceeding broad" (Psa 119:96), taking notice not only of our outward conduct but also of our inward state. *Love* is its demand, and that is essentially a thing of the *heart*. As the Law requires love, and nothing but love (to God and our neighbor), so all sin consists in that which is contrary to what the Law requires, and therefore every exercise of the heart which is not agreeable to the Law, which is not prompted by holy love, is opposed to it and is sinful. Therefore did Christ plainly declare, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Mat 5:28).

God requires far more than a correct outward deportment: "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts" (Psa 51:6). The Law takes cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart, saying, "Thou shalt not covet," which is an act of the soul rather than of the body. When a sinner is brought to realize what the high and holy demands of the Law really are, and how utterly he has failed to meet them, he begins to perceive something of the new awfulness[229] of his condition, for, "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom 3:20). Now it is that the awakened sinner realizes how justly the Law condemns and curses him as an inveterate[230] and excuse-less transgressor of it. Now it is that he has a lively sense in his own soul of the dreadfulness of eternal damnation. Now it is he discovers that he is *lost*, utterly and hopelessly lost, so far as any self-help is concerned.

This it is which prepares him to see his dire need of Christ, for they that are whole (in their self-complacency and self-righteousness) betake not themselves to the great Physician. Thus, the Law (in the hands of the Spirit) is the handmaid of the gospel. Was not this the divine order even at Sinai? The moral Law was given first, and then the ceremonial Law, with its priesthood and sacrifices: the one to convict of Israel's need of a Savior, the other setting forth the Savior under various types and figures! It is not

until sin "abounds" in the stricken conscience of the Spirit-convicted transgressor that grace will "much more abound" in the estimation and appreciation of his Scripture-opened heart. In exact proportion as we really perceive the justice, dignity, and excellency of the Law, will be our realization of the infinite evil of sin; and in exact proportion to our sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin will be our wonderment at the riches of divine grace.

Then it is that "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2Co 4:6). As an experimental sense of the glory of God's *righteousness* in the Law and of His *grace* in the gospel is imparted to the soul by the Spirit, the sinner is moved to return home to God, through the Mediator, to venture his soul and its eternal concerns upon His free grace, and to give up himself to be *His* forever—to love Him supremely, live to Him entirely, and delight in Him superlatively. Hereby his heart begins to be habitually framed[231] to love his neighbor as himself, with a disinterested impartiality; and thus an effectual foundation is laid in his heart for universal external obedience, for nothing but a spontaneous and cheerful obedience can be acceptable to God, an obedience that flows from love and gratitude, an obedience that is rendered without repining[232] or grudging, as though it were a grievous burden to us. [233]

It is *thus* that Christ, by His Spirit, conforms us to God's Law. First, by enlightening our understanding, so that we perceive the spirituality of the Law in its high and meet[234] demands upon our hearts. Second, by bringing us to perceive the holiness and justice of its requirements. Third, by convicting us of our lifelong trampling of the Law beneath our feet. Fourth, by causing us to mourn over our wicked defiance of its authority. And fifth, by imparting to us a new nature or principle of holiness. Now it is that the Lord puts His laws into our minds and writes them in our hearts (Heb 8:10). Thus, so far from the grace of the gospel "making void the law," it "establishes" it (Rom 3:31) in our consciences and affections. A spiritual and universal obedience is what the Law demands.

The principal duties of love to God above all, and to our neighbors for His sake, are not only required by the sovereign will of God, but are in their own nature "holy, just and good" (Rom 7:12), and therefore meet for us to perform. These are the two main roots from which issue all other spiritual fruits; and apart from them, there can be no *holiness* of heart and life. And the powerful and effectual means by which this end is attained is the grand work of the Spirit in *sanctifying* us, for by that our hearts and lives are conformed to the Law. He must bestow upon us an inclination and disposition of heart to the duties of the Law, so as to fit and enable us unto the practice of them. For these duties are of such a nature as cannot possibly be performed while we have a disinclination from them.

As the divine life is thus begun, so it is *carried on* in the soul much after the same order. The Spirit of God shows the believer, more and more, what a sinful, worthless, hell-deserving wretch he is in himself, and so makes him increasingly sensible of his imperative need of free grace through Jesus Christ, to pardon and sanctify him. He has an ever-deepening sense of those two things all his days, and thereby his heart is kept humble, and Christ and free grace made increasingly precious. The Spirit of God shows the believer more and more the infinite glory and excellency of God, whereby he is influenced to love Him, live to Him, and delight in Him with all his heart—and thereby his heart is framed more and more to love his neighbor as himself. Thus, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Pro 4:18).

The last paragraph needs the following qualifications: the Spirit's operations *after* conversion are attended with two differences, arising from two causes. First, *the different state* the subject is in. The believer, being no longer under the Law as a covenant,[235] is not, by the Spirit, filled with those *legal terrors* arising from the fears of hell, as he formerly was (Rom 8:15); rather is he now made increasingly sensible of his *corruptions*, of the sinfulness of sin, of his base ingratitude against such a gracious God;

and hereby the heart is broken. Second, from *the different nature* of the subject wrought upon. The believer, no longer being under the full power of sin nor completely at enmity against God, does not resist the Spirit's operation as he once did, but has a genuine disposition to join with Him against sin in himself; saying, "Lord, correct, chasten me, do with me as Thou wilt, only subdue my iniquities and conform me more and more unto Thy image."

The Relation of the Gospel to the Law

A few words now upon the relation of the gospel: first, the grace of the gospel is not granted to counterbalance the rigor of the Law, or to render God's plan of government justifiable so as to sweeten the minds of His embittered enemies. The Law is "holy, just and good" in itself, and was so before Christ became incarnate. God is not a tyrant, nor did His Son die a sacrifice to tyranny, to recover His injured people from the severity of a cruel Law. It is utterly impossible that the Son of God should die to answer the demands of an unrighteous Law.

Second, the Law, as it is applied by the Spirit, prepares the heart for the gospel; the one giving me a real knowledge of sin, the other revealing how I may obtain deliverance from its guilt and power.

Third, the Law, and not the gospel, is the rule of our sanctification:[236] the one makes known what it is that God requires from me, the other supplies means and motives for complying therewith.

Fourth, the Law and the gospel are not in opposition, but in apposition,[237] the one being the handmaid of the other: they exist and work simultaneously and harmoniously in the experience of the believer.

Fifth, the high and holy demands of the [moral] law are not modified to the slightest degree by the gospel: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Mat 5:48); "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1Pe 1:15), is the standard set before us.

Sixth, thus the Christian's rule of righteousness is the Law, but in the hands of the Mediator: "Being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ" (1Co 9:21)—beautifully typed out[238] in the Law being given to Israel at Sinai after their redemption from Egypt, through Moses the typical mediator (Gal 3:19).

Seventh, herein we may see the seriousness of the God-dishonoring error of all those who repudiate the moral Law as the Christian's rule of life.

> *The holy Law of God and the gospel of His grace reflect the divine glory, the one upon the other reciprocally, and both will shine forth with joint glory eternally in heaven. The Law setting forth, in the brightest light, the beauty of holiness, and the vileness and fearful demerit of sin, will show the abounding grace that hath brought the children of wrath thither, with the infinite luster and glory; and grace will do honour to the Law, by showing in sinners, formerly very vile and polluted, the purity and holiness of the Law fully exemplified in their present sanctification; and Christ, the Lamb that was slain, by Whom the interests of the Law and of grace have been happily reconciled and inseparably united, will be glorified in His saints and admired by them who believe (James Fraser,[239]The Scriptural Doctrine of Sanctification, 1760).*

It is, then, by the regenerating and sanctifying work of His Spirit that Christ brings His people to conformity to the Law and to a compliance with the gospel. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2Co 3:18). The "glory of the Lord" is beheld by us, first, as it shines in the glass[240]*of the Law*—the glory of His justice and holiness, the glory of His governmental majesty and authority, the glory of His goodness in framing such a Law, which requires that we love Him with all our hearts, and, for His sake, as His creatures, our neighbors as ourselves. The "glory of the Lord" is beheld by us, second, as it shines forth in the glass *of the gospel*—the glory of His redeeming love, the glory of His amazing grace, the glory of His abounding mercy. And, as renewed creatures, beholding this, we are

"changed [the Greek word is the same as Christ being "transfigured," Mat 17:2] into the same image, from glory to glory [progressively, from one degree of it to another]…by the Spirit of the Lord" (2Co 3:18)—that is, into a real conformity to the Law, and a real compliance with the gospel.

The gospel calls upon us to *repent*, but there can be no genuine repentance until we see and feel[241] ourselves to be guilty transgressors of the Law, and until we are brought by the Spirit to realize that *we* are *wholly* to blame for not having lived in perfect conformity to it. Then it is we clearly realize that we thoroughly deserve to be damned, and that, notwithstanding all our doings and religious performances. Yea, then it is that we perceive that all our previous religious performances were done not from any love for God, or with any real concern for His glory, but formally and hypocritically, out of self-love, from fear of hell, and with a mercenary[242] hope of gaining heaven thereby. Then it is that our mouth is stopped, all excuses and extenuations silenced, and the curse of the Law upon us is acknowledged as just. Then it is that seeing God to be so lovely and glorious a Being, we are stricken to the heart for our vile enmity against Him, and condemn ourselves as incorrigible[243] wretches. *Such* are *some* of the elements of *genuine* repentance.

The gospel calls upon us to *believe*, to receive upon divine authority its amazing good news: that a grievously insulted God has designs of mercy upon His enemies; that the Governor of the world, Whose Law has been so flagrantly, persistently, and awfully trampled upon by us has, in His infinite wisdom, devised a way whereby we can be pardoned, without His holy Law being dishonored or its righteous claims set aside—that such is His wondrous love for us that He gave His only begotten Son to be made under the Law, to personally and perfectly keep its precepts, and then endure its awful penalty and die beneath its fearful curse. But when a sinner has been awakened and quickened by the Holy Spirit, such a revelation of pure grace seems "too good to be true." To him it appears that his case is utterly hopeless, that he has transgressed beyond the reach of mercy, that he has committed the unpardonable sin.[244] One in this state (and we sincerely pity the reader if he or she has never passed through it) can no more receive the gospel into his heart than he can create a world. Only the Holy Spirit can bestow saving faith.

The gospel calls upon us to *obey,* to surrender ourselves fully to the Lordship of Christ, to take His yoke upon us, to walk even as He walked. Now the yoke that Christ wore was unreserved submission to the will of God, and the rule by which He walked was: being regulated in all things by the divine Law. Therefore does Christ declare, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mat 16:24), for He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. It is their refusal to comply with this demand of the gospel that seals the doom of all who disregard its claims. As it is written, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel" (2Th 1:7-8); and again, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1Pe 4:17). But such obedience as the gospel requires can only be rendered by the sanctifying operations of the gracious Holy Spirit.

Summary

Marvelous indeed is the change that the poor sinner passes through under the regenerating and converting operations of the Spirit in his soul: he is made a new creature in Christ, and is brought into quite new circumstances. Perhaps the closest analogy to it may be found in the experience of orphan children, left without any guardian or guide, running wild and indulging themselves in all folly and riot, then being taken into the family of a wise and good man and adopted as his children. These lawless waifs[245] are brought into new surroundings and influences: love's care for them wins their hearts, new principles are instilled into their minds, a new temper is theirs, and a new discipline regulates them—old

things have passed away, all things have become new to them (2Co 5:17). So it is with the Christian: from being without God and hope in the world, from running to eternal ruin, they are delivered from the power of darkness and brought into the kingdom of Christ. A new nature has been communicated to them, the Spirit Himself indwells them, and a reconciled God now bestows upon them a Father's care—feeding, guiding, protecting them, and ultimately conducting them into everlasting Glory.

Its Rule, Part Four

The unchanging moral Law of God, which requires us to love Him with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves, is the believer's rule of life, the standard of holiness to which his character and conduct must be conformed, the line and plummet by which his internal desires and thoughts as well as outward deeds are measured. And, as has been shown, we are conformed to that Law by the sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit. This He does by making us see and feel the heinousness of all sin, by delivering us from its reigning power, and by communicating to us an inclination and disposition of heart *unto* the requirements of the Law, so that we are thereby fitted and enabled to the practice of obedience. While enmity against God reigns within—as it does in every unregenerate soul—it is impossible to give that obedience which the Law demands.

We concluded the last section by showing something of the marvelous and radical change that a sinner passes through when he is truly converted to God. One who has really surrendered to the claims of God *approves* of His Law. "I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way" (Psa 119:127-128). And why do not the unregenerate do likewise? Because they have no love for a holy God. But believers, loving a holy God in Christ, must love the Law also, since in it the image of His holiness is displayed. The converted have a real inclination of heart unto *the whole* Law. "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver...all thy commandments are faithful" (Psa 119:72, 86). There is in the regenerate a fixed principle that lies the same way as the holy Law, bending away from what the Law forbids and toward what it enjoins.

The converted habitually *endeavor to conform* their outward conduct to the whole Law. "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments" (Psa 119:5-6). They desire a *fuller knowledge* of and *obedience* to the Law. "Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight" (Psa 119:33-35). Should any object that these quotations are all made from the Old Testament (waiving now the fact that such an objection is quite pointless, for regeneration and its effects, conversion and its fruits, are the same in all ages), we would point out that the Apostle Paul described his own experience in identically the same terms. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man...with the mind I myself serve the law of God" (Rom 7:22, 25). Thus, Christ conforms His people to the Law by causing His Spirit to work in them an inclination toward it, a love for it, and an obedience to it.

The Inner Conflict

But at this point, a very real and serious difficulty is presented to the believer, for a genuine Christian has an *honest* heart, and detests lies and hypocrisy. That difficulty may be stated thus: "If conversion consists in a real conformity to the holiness of God's Law, with submission and obedience to its authority, accompanied by a sincere and constant purpose of heart, with habitual endeavor in actual practice, then I dare not regard myself as one who is genuinely converted, for I cannot honestly say that such is *my* experience; nay, I have to sorrowfully and shamefacedly lament that very much in my case is the exact reverse. So far from the reigning power of sin being broken in me, I find my corruptions and lusts raging more fiercely than ever, while my heart is a cage of all unclean things."

The above language will accurately express the feelings of many a trembling heart. As the preceding

chapters upon the rule of our sanctification have been thoughtfully pondered, not a few, we doubt not, are seriously disturbed in their minds. On the one hand, they cannot gainsay[246] what has been written, for they both see and feel that it is according to the truth—but, on the other hand, it *condemns* them, it makes them realize how far, far short they come of measuring up to such a standard. It plainly appears to them that they do not in any sense or to any degree measure up to it at all. Conscious of so much in them that is opposed to the Law, conscious of their lack of conformity to it, both inwards and outwards, they bitterly bewail themselves, and cry, "O wretched man that I am!" (Rom 7:24).

1. Evidence of conversion

Our first reply is, "*Thank God for such an honest confession, for it supplies clear evidence that you are truly converted.*" No hypocrite—except it be in the hour of death—ever cries, "O wretched man that I am!"[247] No unregenerate soul ever mourns over his lack of conformity to God's Law! Such godly sorrow, dear Christian reader, will enable you to appropriate at least one verse of Scripture to your own case: "My tears have been my meat day and night" (Psa 42:3). And those words proceeded not from the bitter remorse of a Judas, but were the utterance of one who had exclaimed, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God" (v. 1). Alas that so many today are ignorant of what constitutes the actual experience of a Christian—defeat as well as victory, grief as well as joy.

While it is a fact that at regeneration a new nature is imparted to us by the Holy Spirit, a nature that is inclined toward and loves the Law, it is also a fact that the old nature is *not* removed, nor its opposition to and hatred of the Law changed. While it is a fact that a supernatural principle of holiness is communicated to us by the Spirit, it is also a fact that the principle and root of indwelling sin remains, being neither eradicated nor sublimated.[248] The Christian has in him two opposite and opposing principles, which produce in him a state of constant warfare. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal 5:17). That "cannot" looks *both* ways. Because of the restraining presence of the Spirit the flesh is prevented from fully gratifying its evil desires, and because of the hindering presence of the flesh the Spirit is unable to fully realize its aspirations.

It is the presence of and the warfare between these two natures, the flesh and the Spirit, the principles of sin and holiness, which explains the bewildering state and conflicting experience of the real Christian. And it is only as he traces more fully the teaching of Holy Scripture and carefully compares himself therewith that light is cast upon what is so puzzling and staggering in his experience. Particularly it is in the seventh chapter of Romans that we have the clearest and most complete description of the dual history of a converted soul. Therein we find the Apostle Paul, as moved by the Spirit, portraying most vividly and intimately his own spiritual biography. There are few chapters in the New Testament that the devil hates more than Romans 7, and strenuously and subtly does he strive to rob the Christian of its comforting and establishing message.

As we have shown above, the Christian approves of the Law and owns it to be "holy, and just, and good" (Rom 7:12). He does so, even though the Law *condemns* many things in him—yea, condemns all in him which is unholy or ungodly. But more, the Christian *condemns himself*: "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I" (Rom 7:15). So far from sin affording him satisfaction, it is the Christian's greatest grief. The more he perceives the excellency of God and what He is entitled to from His creatures, and the more he realizes what a debtor he is to divine grace and the loving obedience he ought to render out of gratitude, the more acute is the Christian's sorrow for his sad and continual failures to be what he ought to be and to live as he should.

2. Corruptions clearly seen

Our second answer to one who is deeply distressed over the raging of his lusts and fears that he has never been soundly converted, is this: the fact is that the more holy a person is, and the more his heart is

truly sanctified, *the more clearly does he perceive his corruptions* and the more painfully does he feel the plague of his heart, while he utters his complaints in strong expressions and with bitterness of soul. In God's light we see light! It is not that sin has greater control of us than formerly, but that we now have *eyes to see* its fearful workings, and our consciences are *more sensitive* to feel its guilt. An unregenerate person is like a sow[249] wallowing in the mire: his impurities and iniquities afford him satisfaction, and give him little or no concern, no, not even the unholiness of his outward practice, much less the unholiness of his heart.

There is a notable difference between the sensibilities and expressions of the unconverted and converted. An unregenerate person, who indulges freely in a course of evil practice, will nevertheless give a *favorable* account of himself: he will boast of his good-heartedness, his kindness, his generosity, his praiseworthy qualities and good deeds. On the other hand, persons truly holy, even when kept pure in their outward behavior, yet conscious of their indwelling corruptions, will *condemn* themselves in unsparing language. The unholy fix their attention on anything good they can find in themselves, and this renders them easy[250] in an evil course. But a truly sanctified person is ready to overlook his spiritual attainments and fruits, and fixes his attention, with painful consciousness, on those respects in which he *lacks* conformity to Christ.

A Christian will say, "I thought I had tasted that the Lord is gracious and that my heart had undergone a happy change, with a powerful determination toward God and holiness. I concluded I had some sound evidence of true conversion and of a heart that was really regenerated. Yet I knew the effect should be to grow in grace, to advance in holiness, and to be more delivered from sin. But alas, I find it quite otherwise. If there is grace in me, it is becoming weaker, and even though my outward conduct be regulated by the precepts of the Law, yet in my heart sin is becoming stronger and stronger—evil lusts, carnal affections, worldly desires, and disorderly passions, are daily stirring, often with great vehemence, defiling my spirit. Alas, after all, I fear my past experience was only a delusion, and the dread of the final outcome often strikes terror throughout my whole soul."

Dear friend, it is true that there is much in every Christian that affords great cause for self-judgment and deep humbling of ourselves before God, yet this is a very different matter from sin obtaining fuller dominion over us. Where sin gains power there is always a corresponding *hardening* of heart and spiritual *insensibility*. Sin is served *willingly* by the wicked, and is sweet and pleasant to them. But if you sorrow over sin, sincerely and vigorously oppose it, condemn yourself for it, then old things have passed away and all is become new (1Co 5:17).

> *Christians may be assured that a growing sensibility of conscience and heart-sorrow for sin are among the chief evidences of growth in grace and of good advances in holiness that they are likely to have on this side of heaven. For the more pure and holy the heart is, it will naturally have the more quick[251] feeling of whatever sin remaineth in it (James Fraser, 1760).*

The *dual* experience of the Christian is plainly intimated in Paul's statement: "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom 7:25). But someone may reply, "The opening verse of the next chapter says, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.'" Ah, note the minute accuracy of Scripture: had it said, "who *act* not according to the flesh" we might well despair, and conclude for a certainty we were not Christians at all. But "walking" is a *deliberate* course, in which a man proceeds *freely*, without force or struggle; it is the reverse of being dragged or driven. But when the believer follows the dictates of the flesh, it is *against* the holy desires of his heart, and with reluctance to the new nature! But does not Romans 8:4 affirm that Christ died in order that "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us?" Again, we answer, admire the marvelous accuracy of Scripture, it does not say, the righteousness of the Law is *now* fulfilled in us. It is not so, perfectly, in this life, but it will be so at our glorification.

Perhaps the reader is inclined to ask, “But *why* does God suffer the sinful nature to remain in the Christian: He could easily remove it.” Beware, my friend, of calling into question God’s infinite wisdom: He knows what is best, and His thoughts and ways are often the opposite of ours (Isa 55:8). But let me ask, “Which magnifies God’s *power* the more: to preserve in this wicked world one who still has within him a corrupt nature, or one that has been made as sinless as the holy angels?” Can there be any doubt as to the answer! But why does God not *subdue* my lusts: would it not be more for His glory if He did? Again, we say, “Beware of measuring God with your mind. He knows which is most for His glory.” But answer this question: “If your lusts *were* greatly subdued and you sinned far less than you do, would you appreciate and adore His *grace* as you now do?”

3. Tests

Our third answer to the deeply exercised soul who calls into question the genuineness of his conversion, is this: Honestly apply to yourself the following tests.

First, in seasons of retirement from the noise and business of the world, or during the sacred hours of the Sabbath, or in your secret devotions, *what are your thoughts—what is the real temper of your mind*? Do you know God, commune with, and delight in Him? Is His Word precious? Is prayer a welcome exercise? Do you delight in God’s perfections and esteem Him for His absolute supremacy and sovereignty? Do you feel and lament your remaining blindness and ignorance? Do you mourn over your lack of conformity to God’s Law and your natural contrariety to it, and hate yourself for it? Do you watch and pray and fight against the corruptions of your heart? Not indeed as you *should*, but do you really and sincerely do so at all?

Second, *what are the grounds of your love to God*? From what motives are you influenced to love Him? Because you believe He loves you? Or because He appears infinitely great and glorious in Himself? Are you glad that He *is* infinitely holy, that He knows and sees all things, that He possesses all power? Does it suit your heart that God governs the world, and requires that all creatures should bow in the dust before Him, that He alone may be exalted? Does it appear perfectly reasonable that you should love God with all your heart, and do you loathe and resist everything contrary to Him? Do you feel yourself to be wholly to blame for not being altogether such as the Law requires?

Third, *is there being formed within you a disposition to love your neighbor as yourself* (Mat 22:39), so that you wish and seek only his good? And do you hate and mourn over any contrary spirit within you? Honest answers to these questions should enable you to ascertain your real spiritual state.

Continued Conflict

The holiness that the gospel requires will not be maintained in either the hearts or lives of men *without a continual conflict*, warring, contending; and that with all diligence, watchfulness, and perseverance therein. It is our *warfare*—and the Scripture abounds in the discovery of the adversaries we have to conflict withal, their power and subtlety, as also in directions and encouragements unto their resistance. To suppose that gospel obedience will be kept in our hearts and lives without a continual management of a vigorous warfare against its enemies, is to deny the Scripture and the experience of all that believe and obey God in sincerity. Satan, sin, and the world are continually assaulting of it,[252] and seeking to ruin its interest[253] in us. The devil will not be resisted, which is our duty to do (1Pe 5:8-9), without a sharp contest; in the management whereof we are commanded to “take unto ourselves the whole armour of God” (Eph 6:13). Fleshly lusts do continually war against our souls (1Pe 2:11), and, if we maintain not a warfare unto the end against them, they will be our ruin. Nor will the power of the world be any otherwise avoided than by a victory over it (1Jo 5:4), which will not be carried without

contending.[254]

> *But I suppose it needs no great confirmation unto any who know what it is to serve and obey God in temptations, that the life of faith and race of holiness will not be persevered in without a severe striving, labouring, contending, with diligence and persistence; so that I shall take it as a principle (notionally[255] at least) agreed upon by the generality of Christians. If we like not to be holy on these terms, we must let it alone, for on any other we shall never be so. If we faint in this course, if we give it over, if we think what we aim at herein not to be worth the obtaining or persevering by such a severe contention all our days, we must be content to be without it. Nothing so promotes the interest of hell and destruction in the world as a presumption that a lazy slothful performance of some duties, and an abstinence from some sins, is that which God will accept as our obedience. Crucifying of sin, mortifying our inordinate affections, contesting against the whole interest of the flesh, Satan, and the world—and that in inward actings of grace and all instances of outward duties, and that always while we live in this world—are required of us hereunto (John Owen, 1660).*

Summary

From all that has been said it should be evident that the Christian needs to exercise the greatest possible care, *daily*, over the inward purity of his heart, earnestly opposing *thefirst motions* of every fleshly lust, inordinate affection, evil imagination, and unholy passion. The *heart* is the real seat of holiness. Heart-holiness is the chief part of our conformity to the spiritual Law of God. Nor is any outward work considered as holy by Him if the heart be not right with Him—desiring and seeking after obedience to Him—for He sees and tries *the heart*. Holiness of heart is absolutely necessary to peace of mind and joy of soul, for only a cleansed heart can commune with the thrice holy God (Psa 66:18): then "keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Pro 4:23).

In the last paragraph we have said nothing which in anywise clashes with our remarks in the body of this book—rather have we emphasized once more another aspect of our subject, namely, the pressing duty which lies upon the Christian to bring his heart and life into fuller conformity with the Law. It would be a grievous sin on the part of the writer were he to lower the standard which God has set before us to the level of our present attainments. Vast indeed is the difference between what we *ought to be* and what we actually *are* in our character and conduct, and deep should be our sorrow over this. Nevertheless, if the root of the matter be in us, there will be a longing after, a praying for, and a pressing forward unto increased personal and practical holiness.

N.B.[256] – This aspect of our theme has been purposely developed by us somewhat disproportionately. The supreme importance of it required fullness of detail. The prevailing ignorance called for a lengthy treatment of the subject. Unless we know *what* the Rule of Sanctification is, and seek to conform thereto, all our efforts after holiness will and must be wide of the mark. Nothing is more honoring to God, and nothing makes more for our own true happiness than His Law to be revered, loved, and obeyed by us.

Its Instrument
(Faith)

Its Instrument, Part One

Paul was sent to the Gentiles "to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me [Jesus]" (Act 26:18). Two extremes are to be guarded against in connection with the precise relation that *faith* sustains to the various aspects of salvation: disparaging it, and making too much of it. There are those who expressly deny that faith has any actual part or place in the securing of salvation, declaring that it simply obtains a knowledge and enjoyment of the same. On the other hand, there are some who virtually make a savior out of faith, ascribing to it what belongs alone to Christ. But if we adhere closely to Scripture and observe *all* that is said thereon (instead of restricting our attention to a few passages), there is no excuse for falling into either error. We shall therefore make a few remarks with the object of refuting each of them.

Avoid Two Extremes about Faith.

"But without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb 11:6). We are saved by faith (Luk 7:50). We are justified by faith (Rom 5:1). We live by faith (Gal 2:20). We stand by faith (2Co 1:24). We walk by faith (2Co 5:7). We obey by faith (Rom 1:5). Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph 3:17). We overcome the world by faith (1Jo 5:4). The heart is purified by faith (Act 15:9). All duties, for their right motive and end, depend upon it. No trials and afflictions can be patiently or profitably borne unless faith be in exercise. Our whole warfare can only be carried on and finished victoriously by faith (1Ti 6:12). All the gifts and graces of God are presented in the promises, and they can only be received and enjoyed by us in a way of believing. It is high worship to be strong in faith giving glory to God. In view of all this, we need not be surprised to read that we are "*sanctified by faith*."

But *in what way* does faith sanctify us? To answer this question properly we must carefully bear in mind the principal aspects of our subject, which have already been considered by us previously.

First, faith has nothing to do with the Father's setting of us apart and blessing us with all spiritual blessings in Christ before the foundation of the world. It is one of the God-dishonoring and creature-exalting errors of Arminianism to affirm that Christians were elected on the ground that God foresaw they would believe.

Second, our faith was in no sense a moving cause to Christ's becoming the Surety of His people and working out for them a perfect holiness before God.

Third, faith has no influence in causing the Holy Spirit to separate the elect from the reprobate, for at the moment He does this they are dead in trespasses and sins, and therefore totally incapable of performing any spiritual acts.

Fourth, faith will not contribute anything unto the Christian's glorification, for that is solely the work of God—the subject of it being entirely passive therein.

Thus faith, important though it be, plays only a secondary and subordinate part in sanctification. It is neither the originating,[257] the meritorious,[258] nor the efficient cause of it, but only the *instrument*.[259] Yet faith *is necessary* in order to a saving union with Christ, and until that be effected none of the blessings and benefits that are in Him can be received by us. It seems strange that any who are well versed in the Scriptures and who profess to be subject to their teachings, should question what has just been affirmed. Take such a declaration as "them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb 10:39). True, we are not saved *for* our believing, yet equally true is it that there is no salvation for any sinner *without* his believing. Every blessing we receive from Christ is in consequence of our being united to Him, and

therefore we cannot receive the holiness there is in Him until we are "sanctified by faith." Furthermore, faith is necessary in order to the reception of the purifying truth, in order to practical deliverance from the power of sin, and in order to growth or progress in personal holiness.

More than Intellectual Assent

Before proceeding further let it be pointed out that the faith which the gospel requires, the faith which savingly unites a sinner to Christ, the faith which issues in sanctification, is very much more than the bare assent to the mind to what is recorded in the Scriptures concerning the Lord Jesus—it is something far different from the mere adoption of certain evangelical opinions regarding the way of salvation. The Day to come will reveal the solemn fact that thousands went down to hell with their heads filled with orthodox beliefs—which many of them contended for earnestly and propagated zealously, just as the Mohammedan does with the tenets and principles of his religion. Saving faith,[260] my reader, is the soul's surrender to and reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ as a living, loving, all-sufficient Saviour, and that upon the alone but sure testimony of God Himself. When we say "an all-sufficient Saviour" we mean One in Whom there is a spotless holiness as well as perfect righteousness for those who come to Him.

Faith lays hold of Christ as He is offered to sinners in the gospel, and He is there presented not only for justification but also for the sanctification of all who truly believe on Him. The glorious gospel of grace not only heralds One Who delivers from the wrath to come, but as giving title to approach now unto the thrice-holy God. Moreover, faith accepts a *whole* Christ, not only as Priest to atone for us, but as King to reign over us. Faith, then, is the *instrument* of our sanctification. Faith is the eye that perceives the gracious provisions that God has made for His people. Faith is the hand that appropriates[261] those provisions. Faith is the mouth that receives all the good that God has stored up for us in Christ. Without faith, it is impossible to please God; and without the *exercise* of faith, it is impossible to make any real progress in the spiritual life.

Do Not Confound with Fruits.

Many of the Lord's people rob themselves of much of their peace and joy by confounding faith with its fruits—they fail to distinguish between the Word of God believed and what follows from believing it aright. Fruit grows on trees, and the tree must exist before there can be fruit. True obedience, acceptable worship, growth in grace, assurance of salvation are what faith produces, and not what faith itself *is*. They are the effects of faith working, and not definitions of the nature of faith. Faith derives its being from the Word of God, and all its fruits are the result of believing. What God has spoken in His Word demands belief from all to whom the Word comes. Faith and the Word of God, then, are related as the effect and the cause, because "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10:17). When faith comes by the *inward* "hearing," then we assent to what God has said, and we rely upon His faithfulness to make good what He has promised; until that has been effected there can be no fruits of faith.

Faith Defined

It is, then, of much importance to correctly define what faith is, for a mistake at this point is not only dishonouring to God, but injurious to the soul and harmful to its peace. Faith is a child-like taking God at His Word and a resting on what He has said. It is a depending on Christ to bestow those blessings and graces that He has promised to those who believe. How is a sin-defiled soul to become a partaker of the cleansing efficacy of the blood of the Lamb? Only by *faith*. The purifying virtue of Christ's blood and the administration of the Spirit, for the application to make it effectual unto our souls and consciences, is exhibited in the promises of the gospel—and the only way to be made a partaker of the good things presented in the promises is by faith. God Himself ordained this instrumental efficacy[262] unto faith in

the Everlasting Covenant,[263] and nothing is more honoring to Him than the exercise of real faith.

How Does God Use Our Faith to Sanctify Us?

Returning to our earlier question, in what way does faith sanctify us? We answer, first, *by uniting us to Christ*, the Holy One. Oneness with Christ is the foundation of all the blessings of the Christian, but it is not until he is actually united to Christ by faith that those blessings are really made over to him. Then it is that Christ is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1Co 1:30). It is faith which receives Christ's atonement, for God hath set forth Christ "a propitiation through faith in his blood" (Rom 3:25), and His infinitely meritorious blood not only justifies but sanctifies too. Thus there is no intrinsic virtue in faith itself—its value lies wholly in its being the hand which lays hold of Him Who possesses infinite virtue. For this very reason faith excludes all boasting (Rom 3:27), and therefore any "believing" which produces self-gratification or results in self-satisfaction is most certainly not the faith of the gospel.

Second, faith sanctifies the believer by enabling him *to enjoy now* what is his in Christ and what will be his in himself *inheaven*. Faith sets to its seal that the testimony of God is true when He declares, "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10). Faith assures its possessor that though he is still a fallen creature in himself, and as such, a sinner to the end of his earthly course, yet in Christ he is perfectly holy, having the same immaculate standing before God as does his Head and Surety—for "as he is, so are we in this world" (1Jo 4:17). Thus faith is "the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11:1) by the natural eye, nor felt by the natural senses. Faith projects us out of this scene entirely and carries the heart into heaven itself—not a natural faith, not a preacher-produced faith, but gospel faith, imparted by the Holy Spirit.

But let us not be mistaken at this point. The faith of which we are here treating is not blind fanaticism.[264] It does not ignore the presence of indwelling sin. It does not close its eyes to the constant activities of the flesh. It refuses to tone down the vile fruits that the flesh produces, by terming them peccadillos, ignorances, mistakes, etc. No, faith has clear vision and perceives the infinite enormity of all that is opposed to God. Faith is honest and scorns the hypocrisy of calling darkness light. But faith not only sees the total depravity of natural self and the horrible filth which fouls every part of it, but it also views the precious blood which has satisfied every claim of God upon those for whom it was shed, and which cleanses from all sin those who put their trust in it. It is neither fanaticism nor presumption for faith to receive at its face value what God has declared concerning the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice.

Third, faith sanctifies as it *derives grace* from the fullness that there is in Christ. God has constituted the Mediator the Source of all spiritual influences and faith is the instrument by which they are derived from Him. Christ is not only a Head of authority to His Church, but also a Head of influence.[265] "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph 4:15-16). That "effectual working in the measure of every part" is by supplies of grace being received from Christ, and that grace flows through the appointed channel of *faith.* As the Lord Jesus declared unto the father of the demon-tormented son, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mar 9:23); and to the two blind beggars who cried unto Him for mercy, "According to your faith be it unto you" (Mat 9:29). How earnest and importunate[266] should we be in begging the Lord to graciously strengthen and increase our faith.

It is by faith laying hold upon a full Christ that the empty soul is replenished. All that we need for time as well as eternity is to be found in Him; but the hand of faith must be extended, even though it

grasp but the hem of His garment, if virtue is to flow forth from Him into us (Luk 8:43-48). As Samson's strength was in his locks, so the Christian's strength is in his Head. This Satan knows full well, and therefore does he labor so hard to keep us from Christ, causing the clouds of unbelief to hide from our view the radiant face of the Sun of righteousness (Mal 4:2), and getting us so occupied with our miserable selves that we forget the great Physician. As it is by the sap derived from the root that makes the branches fruitful, so it is by the virtue which faith draws from Christ that the believer is made to abound in holiness. Hence the exhortation, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2Ti 2:1).

Fourth, faith sanctifies because *it cleanses the soul.* "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Act 15:8-9). It is by faith the heart is "sprinkled from an evil conscience" by the blood of Christ (Heb 10:22). It is by faith the affections are lifted unto things above, and thereby disentangled from the defiling objects of the world (Col 3:1-2). It is by the exercise of faith that the "inward parts" (Psa 51:6) are conformed in some measure unto the rule of righteousness and holiness, for "faith…worketh by love" (Gal 5:6), and "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom 13:10). It is to be duly noted that in Acts 15:9 the apostle did not say, "Their hearts were purified by faith"—instead, he used the present tense "purifying," for it is a *continuous process* which lasts as long as the believer is here upon earth. This aspect of our sanctification is not complete until we are released from this world.

Fifth, faith sanctifies because it is by this we *hold communion with Christ*, and communion with Him cannot but nourish the principle of holiness within the regenerate. Thus, faith is sanctifying in its own nature, for it is exercised upon spiritual objects. "But we all, with open face beholding [by faith] as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2Co 3:18). Faith is a transforming grace because it causes the soul to cleave unto the divine Transformer. As it was faith that made us to first lay hold of Christ, so it impels us to *continue* coming unto Him; and if the woman who touched the hem of His garment by faith secured the healing of her body, shall not those who cleave to Christ continue obtaining from Him the healing of their spiritual maladies!

Sixth, faith sanctifies because it *appropriates the commandments* of God and produces obedience. We are sanctified "by the truth" (Joh 17:17), yet the Word works not without an act on *our* part as well as of God's. It is nothing but blind enthusiasm that supposes that the Scriptures work in us like some magical charm. How solemn is that passage "but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Heb 4:2). The Word avails us nothing if it be not received into a trustful heart and faith be acted upon it. Therefore do we read, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit" (1Pe 1:22); it is only as the truth is received upon the authority of God, given a place in our affections, and yielded to by the will, that our souls are "purified" by it. The more faith causes us to run in the way of God's commandments, the more is the soul delivered from the defiling effects of self-pleasing.

Seventh, faith sanctifies because it *responds to the various motives* that God has proposed to His people—motives to stir them up unto their utmost endeavors and diligence in using those ways and means that He has appointed for preventing the defilements of sin, and for cleansing the conscience when defilement has been contracted. As faith receives the Word *as God's*, its divine authority awes the soul, subdues enmity, and produces submission. The effects of faith are that the soul trembles at the divine threatenings, yields obedience to the divine precepts, and gladly embraces the divine promises. Herein, and in no other way, do we obtain unfailing evidence of the reality and genuineness of our faith. As the specie of a tree is identified by the nature of the fruit that it bears, so the kind of faith we have may be ascertained by the character of the effects that it produces. Some of those effects we have sought to

describe in the last few paragraphs.

Its Instrument, Part Two

Consolation to Burdened Believers

Having presented an outline in our last chapter, of the part which *faith* plays in sanctification, we shall now endeavor, under God, to offer consolation unto some of our sin-burdened, doubt-harassed, Satan-tormented brethren and sisters in Christ. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God" (Isa 40:1). And why? Because God's children are *the most deeply distressed* people on the face of the earth! Though at times they experience a peace which passeth all understanding, revel in that love which passeth knowledge, and rejoice with joy unspeakable, yet for the most part their souls are much cast down—and fears, bondage, groans, constitute a large part of their experience. They may for a brief season be regaled by the wells and palm trees of Elim,[267] but most of their lives are lived in the "great howling wilderness" (Deu 32:10), so that they are often constrained to say, "O that I had wings like a dove! For then I would fly away, and be at rest" (Psa 55:6).

Such a distressful experience causes many of the regenerate to doubt very seriously whether they are real Christians. They cannot harmonize their gloom with the light-heartedness they behold in religious professors all round them. No, and they need not wish to. The superficial and apostate religion of our day is producing nothing but a generation of flighty and frothy characters, who scorn anything sober, serious, and solemn, and who sneer at that which searches, strips, and abases into the dust. God's Isaacs must not expect to be understood and still less appreciated by the mocking Ishmaels (Gen 21:9), for though these dwell for a while in Abraham's household, yet a different mother has borne them. Unless the sin-distressed and fear-tormented believer is "as a sparrow alone upon the house top" (Psa 102:7), then he will have to say "mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird, the birds round about are against me" (Jer 12:9)—there is no oneness, no fellowship.

Psalm 73:2-8

Many of God's dear children are like Asaph:

> *But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily (Psa 73:2-8).*

As Asaph beheld the prosperity of these people, he was staggered, supposing that God was with them and had deserted him.

The *spiritual counterpart* of this is found in modern Laodicea. There is a generation of professing Christians who appear to enjoy great religious "prosperity." They have considerable knowledge of the letter of Scripture; they are experts in "rightly dividing the word"; they have great light upon the mysteries of prophecy, and are most successful as "soul winners." They have no ups and downs in their experience, no painful twistings and turnings, but go on in a straight course with light hearts and beaming countenances. Providence smiles upon them, and they never have a doubt as to their acceptance in Christ. Satan does not trouble them, nor is indwelling sin a daily plague to them. And the poor Christian, conscious of his weakness, his ignorance, his poverty, his vileness, is sorely tempted to be "envious" of them, for they seem to have "more than heart could wish," while the longings of *his* heart are denied him, and that which he pursues so eagerly continues to elude his grasp.

Ah, but note well some of the other characteristics of this prosperous company. "Pride compasseth them about as a chain" (Psa 73:6). Yes, they are utter strangers to humility and lowliness. They are pleased with their peacock feathers, knowing not that God views the same as filthy rags. "Concerning oppression: they speak loftily" (v. 8). God's children *are* oppressed, sorely oppressed, by their corruptions, by their innumerable failures, by the hidings of the Lord's face, by the accusations of Satan. They are oppressed over the workings of unbelief, over the coldness of their hearts, over the insincerity of their prayers, over their vain imaginations. But these Laodiceans, "speak loftily," ridiculing such things, and prate of *their* peace, joy, and victory. "Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them" (v. 10), for, as *real* Christians listen to the "testimonies" of the "higher life" people, they conclude that it would be the height of presumption to regard themselves as Christians at all.

"Behold, these are the ungodly," continues Asaph, "who prosper in the world; they increase in riches" (Psa 73:12). And as he was occupied with them, contrasting his own sad lot, a spirit of discontent and petulance[268] took possession of him. "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain" (v. 13). "What are all my past diligence and efforts worth? I am not prosperous like these professors. I do not have their graces or attainments; I do not enjoy the peace, assurance, and victory they have. Far from it: 'For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning'" (v. 14). Ah, *that* was holy Asaph's experience. My reader, is it *yours*? If so, you are in godly company, much as the present-day Pharisees may despise you.

Then the Psalmist was checked and realized his wrong in giving way to such wicked sentiments. "If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children" (v. 15). Yes, the generation of God's children will be offended when they hear one of their brethren saying it is vain to use the appointed means of grace because those have not issued in deliverance from indwelling sin. "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I *theirend*. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction" (vv. 16-18). How unspeakably solemn! Instead of these prosperous Laodiceans having a spiritual experience high above those whose hearts plague them "all the day long," they were total strangers to real spirituality. Instead of being among the chief favorites of God, they had been set by Him in the "slippery places" of error and false religion, to be eventually "cast down into destruction."

What a warning is this, my sin-harassed brethren, *not to envy* those who are strangers to the plague of their own hearts, who groan not "being burdened" (2Co 5:4) and who cry not, "O wretched man that I am" (Rom 7:24). Envy not the proud Laodiceans, who are "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" and know not that they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev 3:17). Instead, be thankful if God has made you "poor in spirit" (Mat 5:3)—feeling that you are *destitute* of every spiritual grace and fruit; and to "mourn" over your barrenness and waywardness (Mat 5:4); for none other than Christ pronounces such characters "blessed." And why should you think it strange if you are among that little company who are *the most distressed people* on earth? Have you not been called into fellowship with Christ, and was He not the *Man of sorrows* (Isa 53:3) while He tabernacled in this world? If He sorrowed and suffered so much in enduring the penalty of sin, will you complain because God is now making you groan daily under the felt workings of the power of sin?

The fact of the matter is that very much of that which now passes for sanctification is nothing but a species of Pharisaism, which causes its deluded votaries[269] to thank God that they are not like other men (Luk 18:11)—and sad it is to find many of the Lord's people adding to their miseries by grieving over how far *they* come behind the lofty attainments which they imagine these boasters have reached unto. A true and God-honoring "Christian testimony," my reader, does not consist in magnifying *self*, by telling of attainments and excellencies which, with apparent humility, are ascribed to divine enabling. No indeed, very far from it. That "witness" which is most honoring to the Lord is one which acknowledges

His amazing grace and which magnifies His infinite patience in continuing to bear with such an ungrateful, hard-hearted, and unresponsive wretch.

The Error of Comparing Personalities

The great mistake made by most of the Lord's people is in hoping to discover *in themselves* that which is to be found in Christ alone. It is this, really, which causes them to become so envious and discontented when they behold the spurious holiness of some and the carnal attractiveness of others. There is such a thing as "the goodliness" of the flesh, which is "as the flower of the field" (Isa 40:6), yet as the very next verse tells us "the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it." But so easily are the simple deceived today, they often mistake such "goodliness" for *godliness*. Why, my reader, a man (or woman) in his personal make-up may be as meek and tractable[270] as a lamb, he may be constitutionally as kind and grateful as a spaniel, and he may be temperamentally as cheerful as a lark—yet there is not a grain of *grace* in these natural qualities. On the other hand, the Christian, in his natural temperament, is likely to be as gloomy as an owl or as wild as a tiger—yet that does not *disprove* grace within him.[271]

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not [non-entities, ciphers], to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence" (1Co 1:26-29). If this passage were *really* received at its face value, many of God's sin-afflicted and doubting children would find the key that unlocks much which is bewildering and grievous in their experience.

In His determination to magnify His sovereign grace, God has selected many of the *very worst* of Adam's fallen race to be the everlasting monuments of His fathomless mercy—those whom Luther[272] was wont[273] to designate "the devil's riff-raffs." This is very evident too from, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind" (Luk 14:21)—the most *unlikely* ones as guests for a royal feast, the waifs and strays of society! There are thousands of moral, upright, amiable people who are never effectually called by the Spirit; whereas moral perverts, thieves, and awful-tempered ones are regenerated. When such are born again they still have vile inclinations, horrible dispositions, fiery tempers which are very hard to control, and are subject to temptations that many of the unregenerate have no first-hand acquaintance with.

Hundreds more of God's children, whose animal spirits are much quieter by nature and whose temperament is more even and placid, are plagued by a spirit of pride and self-righteousness, which is just as hateful in the sight of God as moral degeneracy is to respectable worldlings. Now unless the thoughts of such are formed from the Scriptures, they are sure to entertain erroneous conceptions which will destroy their peace and fill them with doubts and fears, for upon a fuller discovery and clearer sight of the sea of corruption within, they will conclude they have never passed from death unto life. But to call into question our regeneration because we fail to obtain deliverance from the power of indwelling sin is a great mistake—the new birth neither removes nor refines the flesh, but is the reception of a nature that feels sin to be an intolerable burden, and that yearns after holiness above everything else.

Christ Our Sanctification

If I have really come to Christ as a leprous and bankrupt sinner, utterly despairing of self-help, and have put my trust in the sufficiency of His sacrifice, then Scripture affirms that God has made Christ to be *sanctification to me* (1Co 1:30) and that I have received a spirit of holiness from Him. Now *faith*

accepts this blessed fact notwithstanding an ocean of corruption and the continued raging of sin within. My peace of mind will, then, very largely depend upon *faith's continued apprehension* of the perfect salvation which God has provided for His people in Christ, and which in heaven they shall enjoy in their own persons. After the sinner has come to Christ savingly, the Holy Spirit gives him a much fuller discovery of his vileness, and makes him a hundredfold more conscious of how much there is in his heart that is opposed to God than ever he realized previously; and unless *faith* be daily in exercise, the activities of the flesh will slay his assurance—instead, they ought to drive him closer and closer to Christ.

A Call for the exercise of faith

Oh, my Christian reader, what a difference it would make were you to steadily realize the truth that every temptation you encounter, every defeat you suffer, every distressing experience you pass through, is a call and a challenge for the exercise of *faith*. You complain that you are still the subject of sin, that it cleaves to you as the flesh does to your bones, that it mixes with your duties and defiles every act you perform. You often feel that you are nothing but sin. When you attempt to walk with God, inward evil rises up and stops you. When you read His Word or endeavor to pray, unbelieving thoughts, carnal imaginations, worldly lusts, seek to possess your soul. You strive against them, but in vain. Instead of improvement, things grow worse. You beg of God for humility, and pride rises higher; you cry to Him for more patience, but apparently His ear is closed. Ah, you are now learning the painful truth that in your flesh "dwelleth no good thing" (Rom 7:18).

Yes, but what is a poor soul to do in such a harrowing case? How is it possible for him to preserve *any* peace in his conscience? When the believer is so sorely attacked by sin and Satan, how is he to defend himself? Nothing but *faith* in the sure Word of God can keep him from sinking into abject despair. This is the very time for him to maintain his trust in the sufficiency of Christ's blood and the excellency of His imputed righteousness. His faith is now being tried by the fire that it may come forth as gold. It is by such experiences the *genuineness* of his faith is put to the proof. The believer is cast into the furnace that faith may conflict with unbelief, and though he will be hard put to it, yet victory is sure. The proof of his victory is faith's perseverance (amid a thousand waverings) unto the end. Remember, my reader, that the test of perseverance is not how we act in the face of success, but how we conduct ourselves under a long series of defeats. "For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again" (Pro 24:16).

Let it not be overlooked that we can no more take our place before God now as accepted worshippers without a perfect holiness, than we can enter heaven without it; but that perfect heaven is to be found *in Christ* alone—the practical holiness of the Christian is, at present, but a very, very faint reflection of it. The more I feel my utter unworthiness and total unfitness to approach unto God and call upon Him in my *own* name, the more thankful I should be for the Mediator, and the unspeakable privilege of calling upon God in *Christ's* name. And it is faith that counts the glorious fact that the thrice-holy God *can* exercise His grace and goodness toward one so vile as I, and that, consistently with His majesty and justice—Christ has honored the Law infinitely more than my sins dishonor it. One who feels that, as a Christian, he is an utter failure, and who is conscious of his continued abuse of God's mercies, can only draw near to God with confidence as he *exercises faith* in the infinite merits of Christ.

Warning about sinless perfection

As we stated at the beginning, our principal object in writing this chapter is, under God, to comfort His sin-distressed, doubt-harassed, Satan-tormented people. We are not unmindful that among the ranks of nominal Christians there are, on the one hand, many "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof…ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2Ti 3:5, 7), who will regard as highly dangerous much of what we have said; while on the other hand, there are "ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness" (Jude 4), who are likely to abuse the same by

adopting it as an intellectual opinion, from which they may derive peace in their defiance of God. Yet notwithstanding these likely eventualities, we shall not withhold a needful portion of the children's bread.

Those who claim to have received the "second blessing" and to be "entirely sanctified" in themselves, have never seen their hearts in the light of God. Those who boast of their sinless perfection are deceived by Satan, and "the truth is not in them" (1Jo 1:8). Two things ever go together in the experience of a genuine believer—a growing discovery of the vileness of self, and a deepening appreciation of the preciousness of Christ. There is no solid ground for the believer to rest upon until he sees that Christ has *fully* answered to God for him. In exact proportion to his *faith* will be his peace and joy. "Ye are complete in him" (Col 2:10): believers now possess a perfect holiness in their Covenant-Head, but at present, they are far from being perfect in the grace that flows to them from Him. God honors and rewards the faith that is exercised upon our holiness in Christ: not necessarily by subduing sin or granting victory over it,[274] but by enabling its possessor to continue cleaving to Christ as his only hope.

Summary

Oh, my Christian reader, be content to be *nothing in yourself*, that *Christ* may be your *all*. Oh, to truly say, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Joh 3:30). Growth in grace is being brought more and more off from self-complacency and self-dependency, to an entire reliance upon Christ and the free grace of God through Him. This temper is begun in the believer at regeneration, and like the tiny mustard seed, it at last develops into a large tree (Luk 13:19). As the Christian grows in grace, he finds himself to be increasingly full of wants,[275] and further off than ever from being worthy to receive the supply of them. More and more the spirit of a beggar possesses him. As the Spirit grants more light, he has a growing realization of the beauty of holiness, of what Christ is entitled to from him—and there is a corresponding self-loathing and grief because he is so unholy in himself and fails so miserably to render unto Christ His due.

Fellowship with God and walking in the light as He is in the light, so far from filling the Christian with self-satisfaction, causes him to groan because of his darkness and filthiness—the clearer light now making manifest what before was unperceived. Nothing is more perilous to the soul than that we should be occupied with *our* achievements, victories, enjoyments. If Paul was in danger of being exalted by the abundance of the revelations vouchsafed him,[276] can the danger be less of *our* being puffed up with thoughts of spiritual progress, spiritual conquests, spiritual excellencies? And yet the cherishing of *such* thoughts is the very thing that is now being increasingly encouraged by the religious quacks of the day. No matter what fellowship with Christ be enjoyed, what growth in grace be made, it will ever remain true that "we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened" (2Co 5:4).

So far from what we have said in this chapter encouraging a real Christian to entertain low views of sin, it is only in the vital and experimental knowledge of the same that a life of holiness begins. Nothing will cause a renewed soul to hate sin so much as a realization of God's *grace*—nothing will move him to mourn so genuinely over his sins as a sense of Christ's dying love. It is *that* which breaks his heart: the realization that there is so much in him that is opposed to Christ. But a life of holiness is a life of faith (the heart turning daily to Christ), and the fruits of faith are genuine repentance, true humility, praising God for His infinite patience and mercy, pantings after conformity to Christ, praying to be made more obedient, and continually confessing our disobedience. Day dreaming about complete deliverance from indwelling sin [and] seeking to persuade ourselves that the flesh is becoming less active cannot counterbalance the humbling reality of our present state, but our corruptions should not quench a true gospel hope.

We have no design to lower the standard of the Christian life, or to speak peace to deluded souls who

“profess that they know God; but in works they deny him” (Ti 1:16). Some indeed may charge us with encouraging light views of the sinfulness of sin, yet it must be remembered that the grand truth of divine *grace* has ever appeared dangerous to mere human wisdom. A worldly moralist must think it [subversive] of the very foundations of virtue to proclaim to men, *without regard* to what they have done, and *without stipulation* as to what they are to do, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved” (Act 16:31). If I believed *that*, says the unrenewed man, I would take my fill of sin, without fear or remorse. Ah, but a saving faith from God is always [accompanied] by a principle which hates sin and loves holiness; and the greatest grief of its possessor is that its aspirations are so often thwarted. But those very thwartings are *the testings of faith*, and should daily drive us back to Christ for fresh cleansings. Lord, increase our faith.

Its Means

Its Means, Part One

Introduction

One of the principal reasons why so many of the Lord's people have such vague and faulty conceptions of what the believer's sanctification really consists of, is because few of those who write or preach thereon take the trouble to deal with the subject in an adequate and systematic way. Important distinctions are ignored, diverse aspects are jumbled together, terms are not explained, and because little more than superficial generalizations are presented, nothing is definitely defined in the mind of the reader or hearer—or, only a single branch of the subject is understood by him. On the other hand, in our endeavor to present an orderly unfolding of this great truth, there is danger of confusing the reader's mind by the numerous divisions adopted. He is apt to conclude that the subject is too complex for him to grasp, or bewilder himself by supposing there are several different kinds of sanctification. Yet this ought not to be.

Such mistaken ideas will be avoided if our friends exercise due patience—a rare quality today!—and devote themselves to *studying* the subject with that diligence to which it is surely entitled, and with which their own peace and spiritual prosperity is so closely bound up. Anything in this life that is of value can only be obtained by painstaking effort. That which is worth something is rarely acquired without labor, perseverance, and expense. Why then begrudge the putting forth of these where the securing of a better knowledge of Scripture is concerned? Truth has to be bought (Pro 23:23): it is obtained only by those who are willing to pay the price. And it is for *their* help that we write, and not for those who value their souls so lightly that they are too lazy to *study*.

Now, as we have sought to show in previous chapters, sanctification as a whole needs to be viewed from two chief viewpoints: the divine and the human, the divine in-working and the human outworking. We have also stressed the importance of distinguishing between its two principal aspects: the *positional* and the *practical*—[the positional,] the place and state into which the mysterious work of Christ has brought the believer before God, and [the practical,] *the response* this calls for from him, namely, the conduct which becomes him as a saint. But often the divine and human elements are so closely interwoven that, when developing certain phases of our subject, it is scarcely possible to draw a sharp line between them. Take that aspect which was last before us, the *instrument* of our sanctification, namely, faith. Now faith is both something that is divinely inwrought and humanly outworked. It is a divine gift, yet it has to be exercised by its recipient. Believing is *my* act, though it is through the Spirit I am *enabled* therein. In like manner, it is not always practicable to separate between positional and practical holiness when tracing out certain phases of our theme.

In taking up the *means* of sanctification, it is the *practical* holiness of the believer that is to be in view. Were we to cast this article into the form of a sermon, our text would be, "Sanctify them through thy truth" (Joh 17:17). A superficial reading of that verse would cause us to draw the inference that the apostles were not then sanctified, or why should Christ pray for them *to be* sanctified? Yet a little reflection will show that such an inference is a false one, for the Eleven had separated from the world when they responded to the call of Christ; and as real believers in Him, they were most certainly "sanctified by faith." Then the question arises, "Since they were already sanctified why did their great High Priest pray the Father to sanctify them?" We raise this question for the purpose of impressing the reader with the fact that sanctification has various phases or aspects, and that we must carefully distinguish between the same if we are either to understand the teaching of Scripture on the subject or our own experience in the light of that teaching.

What the Lord Jesus prayed for in John 17:17 was that the Spirit would *draw out* what He had already wrought in them, that He would graciously call into exercise and act the principle of holiness which He had communicated to them at their regeneration (2Co 5:17). It is quite clear from the previous verse that the apostles *were already* sanctified, and, as holy persons, Christ now prayed that they might be kept in the way of holiness, preserved in the practice of it, and that the fruits thereof might abound in them. Thus, it was not for their initial sanctification that Christ supplicated the Father, nor for any further and fresh sanctification, but for the drawing out and manifestation of what was already theirs. And in connection therewith, *means* were to be employed: "Sanctify them through thy truth: Thy word is truth" (Joh 17:17). This, then, should make quite clear the *place* that means have (a subordinate one) and at *what stage* they enter into our sanctification (only in connection with the drawing forth of what has already been wrought in us).

At the time that our Lord here prayed, the apostles knew and believed the truth, yet—as it is with us today—it was in a poor manner and low degree. Their apprehensions of spiritual things were very imperfect and often quite erroneous; they were dull scholars, slow to learn, and slower still to unlearn, as the gospel records abundantly testify. Like we, they had need to pray, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mar 9:24). But they were yet to be filled with the Spirit and guided into all truth (Joh 16:13). And thus it is in measure with the Christian, for, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Pro 4:18). Little by little, the believer's heart is brought increasingly under the influence of the truth, and thereby is he raised to closer experimental communion with Christ. The result of this is that he has an ever-deepening desire to keep himself unspotted from the world, be brought into complete and cheerful submission to the whole will of God, and walk before Him unto all pleasing.

1. The Word as the Primary Means of Sanctification

It was not the sanctification of the apostles' *persons* that Christ prayed for, nor the sanctification of their *nature*, but rather of their *walk*. As to their persons, God had set them apart in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4); as to their nature, that had been sanctified when (at the new birth) a principle of holiness had been communicated to them; and neither the one nor the other admitted of any improvement. Now in connection with the sanctification of the walk—a term which includes much more than outward conduct—*the Word is the great means employed by God*, working effectually with and by it on the hearts of His people. By the Scriptures, the Spirit continues to enlighten the understanding, convict the conscience, inflame the affections, and move the will. By them, He conveys to us a fuller and clearer knowledge of the amazing grace of God and love of Christ toward us, and how it becomes us to act in return. Not that our hearts then become more sanctified, but they are more *influenced* by divine things and exercised before God.

Many and varied are the Scriptures that treat of this particular branch of our subject, the place that the written Word has in the practical sanctification of the believer. From them we select the following: "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever" (Psa 19:7-9). "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word" (Psa 119:9). "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Joh 8:31-32). "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (Joh 15:3). "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Act 20:32). "Christ also loved the church, and gave

himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph 5:25-26). "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1Pe 2:1-2). But let us enter more into detail and show *wherein* the believer is sanctified by the truth.

How we are sanctified by the Word

First, *by imparting to us a knowledge of God's will.* That which He requires of us can be ascertained in no other way than through an acquaintance with the teachings of holy Writ. It is for that reason God has given to us His Word: to set before us *His* standard of conduct, to make known to us what He hates and what He loves, to expose the sophistries[277] of Satan and the vanities of the world—in short, to provide us with a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa 8:20). The believer is sanctified experimentally just to the extent that he is brought under the illuminating and commanding influences of the Word of truth. Personal holiness is our conformity to its requirements. Practical holiness is separation and abstention from evil, and association with and performance of that which is good; and only from the Scriptures can we fully discover what is evil and what is good.

From what has just been pointed out, it necessarily follows that all *human* rules and regulations for godly living are worthless, and the Christian must steadfastly refuse to be brought into bondage by them. Men have devised a great variety of prohibitions and observances in which *they* suppose holiness to consist, and by attending to the same have appeared to themselves and to others to have attained a very high degree of sanctity. The Pharisees were guilty of this, adding to the commandments of God their own traditions, such as the ceremonial washing of their hands and vessels in order to avoid moral defilement. The Romanists[278] have followed in the same track, by inducing many of their deluded victims to retire entirely from the world to the "holy" solitude of monasteries and convents, binding themselves to devote most of their time to the repetition of prayers and other "sacred" exercises.

There always has been an element in Protestantism, those temperamentally disposed toward asceticism and mysticism, who have pursued this same will o' the wisp.[279] Supposing that the same would produce a greater deliverance from sin and secure a closer walking with God, they have submitted themselves to frequent fastings and other penances, taking upon them vows of poverty and celibacy, depriving themselves of the ordinary comforts and innocent recreations of life, and having sought to exist on the sparsest possible diet. The same principle is exemplified by the Seventh Day Adventists[280] and modern "Holiness" cults who denounce all intoxicants as evil and the use of tobacco in any form as filthy. But, as the Holy Spirit tells us in Colossians 2:20-23, these ordinances of "touch not, taste not, handle not" are but "the commandments and doctrines *of men*, which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body," but, as it is added, "not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh."

The aesthetical[281] austerities advocated in varying degrees by Keswick[282] and other "Victorious Life" platforms, are little better than those of the poor Romanists, and we may say of the one what Luther said of the other, "They are nothing else than spiritual sorceries." How thankful should we be, then, that God Himself has placed in our hands a *perfect* and *complete* revelation of His will, an unerring standard by which we may measure all the plausible theorizings of "nice" and "good" men!

> *As we cannot serve God by doing what He has not commanded and still less by doing what He has forbidden [bringing ourselves into bondage to modern Pharisees—A.W.P.] so it is presumptuous to expect God's blessing upon means, which, being introduced as supplementary to His ordinances, very plainly import that in this respect man is wiser than He is (John Dick).[283]*

We have dwelt longer upon our first division because we were most anxious the reader should clearly perceive that the written Word is the chief means used by God in the practical sanctification of His people, for it—and it alone—imparts to us a knowledge of His will, discovering the things to be shunned

and revealing the things which are to be followed. Just so far as we, in our quest after piety, substitute for the teachings of holy Writ the sophistical[284] reasonings and dictatorial edicts of men, shall we forsake the substance and vainly pursue the shadows. On the other hand, just so far as we abstain from what God has forbidden and perform what He has enjoined, are we really treading the highway of holiness. How it behooves us, then, to test our views and ideas by the Word of truth!

Second, *by its influential considerations.* The Word of truth not only defines our duties, but it also presents many considerations that are calculated to work powerfully upon our affections and wills. The Scriptures do more than set before us bare precepts—they exhibit them in all the loveliness *of example*, in the history of saints, and particularly in the life of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the precepts are accompanied by encouraging promises (2Co 7:1), the value of which is realized only so far as we are conscious of our weakness. When called upon to "purify our hearts" (Jam 4:8), we are ready to exclaim, "How is it possible *for me* to cleanse myself from the pollutions of indwelling sin?" In this state of despondency, the Scriptures afford relief by assuring of supernatural grace (Jam 1:5; 4:6; 2Co 12:9). When bidden to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, we are informed, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phi 2:12-13).

Third, *by strengthening faith*, for the Word is its appointed food: "nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine" (1Ti 4:6). There are many of God's dear children who long after and pray for an increase of their faith, but it is idle to do so while they continue to neglect the means provided for its nourishment. Trust in God will only be developed by feeding on His Word: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer 15:16). When the devil challenged the faith of Christ, He set His people an abiding example by replying, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mat 4:4). Faith is strengthened by clearer apprehensions of the truth. Hope brightens at the glorious prospect of life and immortality that the gospel displays. Love grows warmer as the love of God is better known. All the graces of the Christian thrive under the beneficent influences of the truth.

Fourth, *by making us better acquainted with Christ.* The more our minds are opened to take in the truth concerning the Person and work of the Redeemer, the more is the soul perfumed therewith, and the more are its faculties influenced thereby. A deeper experimental knowledge of Christ enables us to rest upon Him more simply for the whole of our salvation. It is through the truth that we become more firmly persuaded of the Father's love to us in His Son, whereby is "the heart established in grace" (Heb 13:9). As our first believing of the gospel had a most powerful effect upon the heart, so our continued apprehensions of other portions of the truth produce beneficial results in the soul. It is because we shall have a perfect knowledge of Christ in heaven that there we shall be perfectly holy (1Jo 3:2).

Fifth, *by its sacred awe upon the soul.* "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner [critic] of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb 4:12). There is a pungency[285] to the Holy Scriptures possessed by no other writings; often the wicked are conscious of this and therefore refuse to read them. But far more are the regenerate aware of it: to them their utterances are the voice of God Himself, and they "tremble at his word" (Isa 66:2). Its denunciations of sin, the exposure of its infinite enormity, the announcement of its eternal punishment, the exhibition which the Scriptures give of the Son of God dying upon the cross in order to make an atonement for it, cause the believer to walk more and more softly before God, while the character of God as revealed in His Word—His majesty, His power, His holiness, His wrath—exerts both a restraining and constraining influence upon its readers.

It is this very quality of the Scriptures—to sanctify—which supplies the Christian with the surest witness of their divine origin. "When ye received the word of God...which effectually worketh also in

you that believe" (1Th 2:13). Ah, it is not the testimony of the Church nor the witness of Christians, but *a personal acquaintance with [the Scriptures'] sanctifying power* that conveys certainty to the soul. It is well to heed the testimony of the Lord's people first, just as we take a medicine on the recommendation of others who have found it helpful; but we must not rest there. "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the holy Spirit, and in much assurance" (1Th 1:5). This is what supplies convincing proof, as it was with the Samaritans who came to Christ because of the testimony of the woman at the well, saying to her, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves" (Joh 4:42).

Alas, the great majority in Christendom receive the Scriptures on no better ground that the Turks believe the Alcoran[286]—because it is the tradition of their fathers. Oh, labor, my reader, for something better than that, and "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1Pe 3:15). In order for that, the Scriptures must be read, searched, studied, meditated upon, and, above all, received by faith. Note how "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2Th 2:13) are linked together. The truth has no power in us further than it is *believed* by us. The Word works not without an act on our part as well as God's. Solemn is that warning, "The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Heb 4:2). Where faith is active, the precepts awe and the promises cheer. When tempted to evil, faith says, "Shall I thus requite[287] Christ for dying in my stead?"

It is at this very point that we may perceive the great and vital difference that exists between social respectability and real piety or practical sanctification. The one is produced by moral education, according to *natural* principles, without any spiritual knowledge or heart desire to please God. Many are upright, truthful, honest in commercial transactions, obedient to civil laws and restrained from outward wickedness, who yet have no true grace. But all real practical sanctification is inclined and regulated by the Scriptures. Only that is personal holiness when we submit and conform ourselves in heart and life to the will of God as it is revealed in His Word. "He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (Joh 3:21). He tests himself by this rule and measures his conduct by this standard.

Its Means, Part Two

Truth versus error

Because truth exerts a sanctifying influence upon the soul, it necessarily follows that *error corrupts*. This is not so clearly recognized as it ought to be, or God's children would exercise more caution and care whom they heard and what they read. It is not more true that God's Word cleanses than that Satan's lies defile. False teachers are represented as "evil men and seducers" (2Ti 3:13), as "filthy dreamers [who] defile the flesh" (Jude 8), as "the servants of corruption" (2Pe 2:19). Idolatry is expressed in Scripture as "whoredom" (Hos 4:12-13). It is a most serious thing to sit under error, for the more the mind is deceived by falsehood, the less will the awe of God be upon the heart. False doctrine has the same effect upon the soul as poison does upon the body, and unless God mercifully intervenes the result is fatal.

We feel it a bounden duty to once more sound an alarm and warn our readers against disregarding that exhortation of the Lord's: "Take heed what ye hear" (Mar 4:24). No matter what may be your motive, nor how well you personally be established in the faith, it is at your peril that you disregard such a word. "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1Co 15:33). It is the chief aim of Satan to deceive, and often his agents are sent forth in the garb of orthodoxy. There is many a pulpit today which "stands for" the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, the deity of Christ, and salvation by grace, which is, nevertheless, retailing that which is erroneous and corrupting—yet because of its seeming orthodoxy and fundamentalism, thousands are being deluded to their eternal undoing. It is therefore the duty of the watchmen on Zion's walls to warn the unwary.

We are divinely commanded to "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jer 6:16). Yes, the "old paths" and not the new ones of the "dispensationalists." But let us be more specific. Does the insisting upon the vital necessity of practical sanctification occupy a prominent place in the preaching you hear? Is *personal holiness* emphasized as freely and frequently as divine grace? Is your responsibility stressed as much as your inability? What effect do the sermons have upon you? Do they produce self-pity or self-loathing? Is your conscience pierced, or is there nothing more than intellectual information? My reader, you had far, far better stay at home and read God's Word and go nowhere than sit under preaching that does not search, strip, and humble you—preaching that makes you feel your utter sinfulness and cry out for sanctifying grace.[288]

Supplementary to our previous remarks on the believer being sanctified practically through the Word, it needs to be pointed out that he is so only as the truth is accomplished and applied to him *by the Spirit*. The Bible is not a magical charm that mechanically produces spiritual effects. It is a divinely provided means that has to be *used* by us, yet the blessing we derive therefrom is dependent upon the gracious operations of its Author. The One Who inspired the Scriptures must open our hearts to receive them and incline our wills to respond thereto. Even the apostles knew not the truth so much by receiving it from the lips of Christ as by the inward illumination of the Spirit.[289] The Lord Jesus had brought the gospel to them from the bosom of the Father, and had taught them by an external ministry, but the Comforter was to bring it into their hearts and guide them into all truth (Joh 16:13).

Looked at apart, the Scriptures instruct intellectually, but they purge not effectually; they impart a notional knowledge, but they give no experimental acquaintance with their contents; they make an impression, yet it is a weak one, that moves not the will. There is a vast difference between seeing things by the light of reason, and discerning them in the light of the Spirit. By the latter, we perceive in Christ another manner of beauty than we saw before, and become conscious of the utter vanity of worldly

delights in a way and degree we did not previously. Alas, the great majority of professing Christians content themselves with a superficial belief and have nothing better than human knowledge of divine things—a natural understanding of spiritual verities—and therefore their souls are not carried out to actual holiness in the exercise of godly fear, unfeigned love, and true obedience. This brings us to consider, next, *prayer* as a means of practical sanctification.

2. Prayer as a Means of Sanctification

It is by means of prayer that the soul may have access unto the Holy One, and, the more we cultivate communion with Him in the secret place, the more will His realized presence exert a purifying influence upon us. God alone can impart holiness to us. Ministers may exhort unto holiness, parents may pray for their children to be made holy, husbands and wives supplicate [for] it on behalf of each other—but none of them can *communicate* holiness to their nearest and dearest relatives. God only is the Author and Giver of holiness. To bestow holiness is a work too high for angels and too hard for humans; only a holy God can infuse holiness into the soul and thus make the desert to bloom as the rose. God alone can melt the heart, purge the conscience, elevate the affections, move the will, and bring the life into a gracious frame and pious temper. And for this, He must be earnestly *sought unto.*

It is not sufficient to search the Scriptures diligently and meditate upon them frequently; we must also beg their Author to grant us spiritual understanding and experimental acquaintance with them. "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!...Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes, and I will keep it unto the end...Make me to go in the path of thy commandments...Incline my heart unto thy testimonies" (Psa 119:5, 33, 35-36). "Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God: Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness. Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake" (Psa 143:10-11). "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God" (2Th 3:5). What those souls longed for was not [merely] information, but spiritual quickening, not instructions to their duty, but an effectual moving of them to the performance of the same. Ah, my reader, it is not those who have the most light in their heads who are the holiest, but those who have God's laws most written on their hearts. It is not those who can quote Scriptures so readily and glibly who are the most pious but those whose characters are molded and conduct regulated by the divine precepts, and for that God requires to be sought unto!

Private prayer is essential unto practical sanctification. In addition to its indirect tendency to impress the soul with an awesome sense of divine things, to deepen our reverence and esteem of God, to increase our desires for the blessings sought, and to deepen our abhorrence of the things from which we implore deliverance, prayer has for its direct object the obtaining of supplies of supernatural grace. True prayer is the approach to God of a sinful creature, conscious of deep needs, pouring out its heart before Him, applying to One Who is all powerful and infinitely merciful. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:16). "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" (Isa 40:30-31; *see also* Luk 11:13).

But those blessings are not obtained by coldly and mechanically performing a religious duty. Real prayer is fervent, definite, persistent. It calls into exercise all the faculties of the soul, and all the graces of the Spirit. It is the agonized cry of one who is in deep distress. It is the pantings of a soul that longs for deliverance from its deadly foes. It is the pouring forth of holy desires that seek their realization. It is the appointed channel through which faith is chiefly to exert itself to the utmost and perform its whole work. It is essentially *heart work*. Lip labor and bodily gestures are worthless unless the heart be stirred. Only when the heart is *pained* by the wounds that sin has made do we betake ourselves to the great Physician in reality. It is distress of soul, and not flowery language, which moves the Lord to hear His children. The

greater our agonies, the more earnestly should we pray! "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luk 22:44).

Yet something more than a consciousness of our wretchedness and a deep sense of need is required if we are to prevail with God. Diligent effort must be made to bring the heart into a holy frame when approaching Him. There must be a real attempt to overcome the disorder of soul which is produced by a sense of guilt and fear (Psa 55:22). There must be a sincere endeavor to work up the heart unto a godly sorrow and a holy horror of our sins (Psa 38:18), for this is one chief part of prayer as the lamentations show. Then pleading must be added to petitions as we learn from John 17. Further, praise and thanksgiving to God for the mercies of the new covenant is not only an obligation, but an aid to the strengthening of faith and performance of duty. Finally, fail not to present your supplications to God in the name of Christ, your Mediator and Surety, urging His infinite merits, the efficacy of His blood, and the fullness which God has placed in Him for us to draw from.

3. Self-examination as a Means of Sanctification

Another means to be used diligently for promoting the life of faith and the progress of practical sanctification is *self-examination*. An honest scrutiny of our state and a careful measuring of our ways by the Word is calculated to produce beneficial effects. As it is wise to take our temperature when we feel feverish, and as it is prudent for the merchant to take an inventory of his stock, so it is well for the Christian to "commune with his own heart" (Psa 4:4) and "consider his ways" (Hag 1:5). By so doing we are more apt to discover what it is which most needs remedying, what it is we have most cause to bewail before God, and what it is we have particular occasion to thank Him for. If self-examination be properly conducted it will produce humbling, evoke prayer, and stimulate effort to increased diligence.

In prosecuting this examination, you must be willing to know the worst of yourself as well as the best, and the best as well as the worst. It is quite consistent with humility to take notice of the workings of grace. If we do not, how shall we own and give thanks for the fruit of the Spirit? But remember that inherent[290] grace is not to be tried by its degree, but by its nature. Are there *any* sparks of grace amid an ocean of corruption, *any* lustings of the spirit against the flesh? You must not deny yourself to be a babe in Christ because you find the old man is so much bigger than the new. The more the Christian perceives his defects in holiness, the more should he labor after holiness: "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments" (Psa 119:59-60).

4. Exercise of Grace as a Means of Sanctification

The actual *exercise of indwelling grace* is another help to the increase of practical sanctification. If I am to attain unto higher degrees of holiness, then I must set in motion and act out that holiness which I already have. Inactive limbs become stiff and useless; clothes laid up are devoured by moths; silver and gold that is hoarded will tarnish; and the non-exercise of holiness brings upon the soul a decay of holiness. Wells are the sweeter for the drawing, and holiness is healthiest when called into action. It was for this reason that Paul called upon Timothy to "stir up the gift of God which is in thee" (2Ti 1:6). There is an allusion in those words to the sacred fire in the temple, which was always to be kept burning. Just as fire is preserved by blowing, so holiness is maintained by being steadily stirred up in the soul.

It is sad to find some of the Lord's people paralyzed by a sense of their corruptions. Instead of bemoaning their lack of holiness, they need to use that holiness which they already possess. The yachtsman does not refuse to unfurl his sails because only a very little breeze is blowing, but is thankful

that there is not a dead calm, no wind at all. As the frequent actings of sin is the strengthening of sin, so the frequent actings of holiness is the strengthening of the same. Holiness thrives, increases, advances, by its actings. "Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have" (Luk 8:18)—"hath" it in reality, making manifest the grace imparted to him, as faith proves itself by its works.

5. The Dispensations of Providence as Means of Sanctification

The dispensations of Providence are another great means for accomplishing our practical sanctification. This is an important branch of the subject that has received scant attention from most of those who have written thereon, much to the loss of the saints' comfort—for herein is to be found the key which opens to us much that is so mysterious and trying in our lives. In the government of this world and in the regulation of the affairs of His people, God has in view their sanctification. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous" (Psa 34:19). But why should they be? "We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God" (Act 14:22). But wherein lies the needs be for it? "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2Ti 3:12). But why should they? The answer is, "That their personal holiness may be promoted!" Ah, my reader, how else the explanation of those crosses and curses, those trials and troubles? God has in view *the refreshing* of your soul, and therefore may you say with Job, "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10).

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28). Though to outward sight many things appear to be working *against* your good, though to carnal reason much seems to be accomplishing your ill, yet, in reality, it is far otherwise. As it is the harmonization of different voices which issues in the lovely melody of a choir, as it is the combination of various ingredients that produces the health-restoring medicine, so it is the working together of diverse elements that contributes to the blessing of the believer. The various factors that enter into his life not only operate, but co-operate, acting in perfect concert. There is such a divine regulation of them that they are made to promote our spiritual interests. How wondrous the wisdom and the power of Him Who renders subservient to His gracious designs things which have a tendency to evil, which are so in themselves, and which would be so to us, did not God ordain otherwise.

How we should marvel at this! What a frightful amount of evil is in continual activity in this world! What an incalculable number of opposing self-interests are at work! What a vast army of rebels daily fighting against God! What hosts of super-human creatures are opposing the Lord and seeking to destroy His people! Yet high above all is the Almighty, in undisturbed calm, complete Master of the situation, having such perfect control that none may touch a hair of our heads without His permission. But more, they are made *to serve our interests* and contribute to our good. The divine Alchemist[291] brings good out of evil, making the power and malice of Satan tributary[292] to His beneficent[293] purpose. It is because of this that "we know that all things work together for good." Yes, *all* the complicated occurrences of our lives, with their disappointments and sorrows, are forwarding our practical sanctification.

How God uses afflictions in the sanctification of His people

That afflictions are one of the means that God uses for the cleansing of His people is clear from Scripture: "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have tested thee in the furnace of affliction" (Isa 48:10). "He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness" (Mal 3:2-3).

First, by means of affliction we obtain fresh views of the vileness of sin. Though the divine

chastenings proceed from the Father's love, yet they have in them some tokens of His displeasure against sin, for "correction" always respects faults. If we are duly "exercised" by them (Heb 12:11), then we are reminded anew of our ill deserts and should loathe ourselves and be ashamed. And that is the first step toward our purifying. As self-pleasing is the worst element in our pollution, so when we abhor ourselves for it we are at least near unto the remedy.

Second, afflictions *wean us from material comforts*. So prone are our hearts unto idolatry that the affections are allured by the very creatures of God, which are good in themselves, but are turned into evils when we cleave unto them inordinately. Yes, we are often guilty of abusing God's blessings, perverting His mercies, and giving to the creature that to which the Creator alone is entitled. Then it is that God blows upon the "goodliness" of the flesh, makes to wither those flowers of this world on which we set so much store, and discovers to us their emptiness and insufficiency to give relief. When health is shattered, loved ones snatched away, or the soul bowed down by a sense of the foulness and gravity of our sins, what are the pleasures, honors, and riches of the world worth then? Alas, that suffering and sorrow are necessary to expose to us their vanity.

Third, afflictions *curb the vigor of our lusts*. There is nothing like grief of heart and pain of body to take off the edge of those affections whereby the lusts of the mind and the flesh bring about all our defilements. A wounded spirit or diseased body effectually curbs those affections that are ever ready to be pressed into the service of our lusts, and which often carry the soul into the pursuits of sin as the horse rushes into battle—with reckless abandon and fury. It is into these fond dotings[294] that concupiscence[295] empties itself and overflows into numberless evils. But by affliction, God renders those affections unserviceable unto our corruptions, and thereby prepares the soul to become a partaker of His holiness.

Fourth, by afflictions *our graces are drawn forth.* The soul, being no longer able to support or relieve itself, turns to God for succor[296] and comfort. It is then that faith, hope, patience, love, meekness, are called into exercise. "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Rom 5:3-4). "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word" (Psa 119:67). Some medicines are not only most unpalatable but they cause much pain, yet their ultimate effect is beneficial. So under afflictions God designs the health of His people. Yet let it be pointed out that their efficacy arises not from their own fitness to that end but from the gracious operation of the Spirit blessing them to us. Apart from that, they occasion either rebellion or abject despair. How we need, then, to pray to the Spirit to sanctify them to us. It is only as we are duly "exercised thereby" that they yield the "peaceable fruits of righteousness."

Its Process

Its Process, Part One

A Twofold Process

By the process of sanctification, we mean the principal *actings* of those who have already been manifestatively set apart by God unto Himself and for Himself. To speak of the actings of sanctification necessarily presupposes a previous principle of holiness from which they arise. Sanctification, as we have pointed out in previous chapters, begins with and continues as a consequent of regeneration. Viewed from the experimental and practical side, sanctification is not a divine act, but a work of God's grace, [297] wherein He sustains and develops, continues and perfects, that which He imparted at the new birth. Thus considered, sanctification is a growth, under the supporting and fructifying[298] influences of the indwelling Holy Spirit: a growth from spiritual infancy to childhood, from childhood to youth, from youth to spiritual maturity. This growth follows a two-fold process: the mortification[299] of the old nature, and the vivification[300] of the new nature.

Throughout that twofold process there is a concurrence[301] between the Spirit and the believer, and this because holiness is both a *privilege* and a *duty,* a divine gift and a human attainment. To our last statement some are likely to take exception, for the balance of truth has been well-nigh lost on this subject. Antinomians insist that sanctification is solely the work of God and that the believer has no part or hand in it. Pelagians[302] virtually affirm that it is entirely the product of human industry. From one viewpoint, sanctification is indeed the work of God, but from another it is the work of man assisted by supernatural grace. As a *privilege,* sanctification is the subject of promise and prayer: *see* Ezekiel 36:25-27, John 17:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:23. But as a *duty,* sanctification is the subject of exhortation: *see* Ezekiel 18:31, 2 Corinthians 7:1, 1 Peter 1:15.

Those who are so insistent upon affirming that sanctification is entirely the work of God, and that man has no part in it, overlook God's general *method of working.* Behold His handiwork in nature. God does not create trees fully-grown nor even plants with flowers fully developed. Instead, they first exist as tiny seeds, and then they develop gradually unto maturity, and their growth is made dependent on the outworking of natural laws—supplies of rain and sunshine, and, often, of human cultivation. So it is spiritually. In the realm of grace, God works by means and according to the sequences of law.

> *Although the strength with which we believe is wholly and entirely from the Spirit, and put into the soul by Him Who is said to "strengthen us in the inner man" (Eph 3:16), yet He useth apt and suitable motives, by and with which He conveys it, and conveys it answerable to the fitness and force that is in such motives to work upon an intelligent creature (Thomas Goodwin, Vol. 8, p. 108).*

Sanctification is *our* work, *not* as though we could change our own hearts from the love of sin to the love of God, nor even when they are changed to carry forward that change to perfection or completion—no, it is only as we are enabled from on High, for of ourselves we can do nothing (Joh 15:5). It is our work as we diligently *use* the appointed means and *trust* God to make them effectual. It is God's work as the Spirit employs powerful motives to influence us to action. For instance, He impresses us with the fact that God's eye is ever upon us, and this causes us to walk softly before Him. Or, He applies to our hearts the solemn warnings of Scripture, so that we are afraid to sport with sin or give heed to Satan's allurements. Or again, He fills the heart with a sense of Christ's dying love for us, so that the springs of gratitude are set in motion, and we endeavor to please and glorify Him. By various considerations the Holy Spirit stirs up the believer to resist sin and cultivate holiness.

The process of our sanctification, then, is both a divine and a human one. Having dwelt so much upon the divine side in the earlier chapters, we now continue our consideration of the human. This process is a protracted one, so that the believer gradually becomes more and more out of love with sin and in love

with holiness. Now, as we have said above, this spiritual growth follows the twofold process of mortification and vivification. Yet those two actings are not so distinct that the one can go on independently or at a distinct time from the other, for the one necessarily accompanies the other. Nevertheless, in explaining that process of experimental and practical sanctification, they need to be separately expounded, and a little reflection will show the *order* in which they need to be contemplated. We have to die to sin before we can live to God.

Mortification

Mortification defined and described

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection…" (Col 3:5). This means, put to death those fleshly lusts which are set upon earthly objects, and thus prevent their evil fruits of fornication, etc. With this expression, "your members which are upon the earth," compare "the body of sin" (Rom 6:6), which does not mean our physical body, though sin acts through it. The term "mortify" is not used in Scripture absolutely to kill and destroy, so as that which is mortified no longer has any being, but, rather, that it should be rendered impotent and useless, unable to produce its wicked works. In proof of this assertion, let it be carefully noted that the same Greek word which is translated "mortify" in Colossians 3:5 is rendered "and being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now *dead,* when he was about a hundred years old" (Rom 14:19). Now the body of Abraham was not absolutely dead, but the natural force and vigor of it were considerably abated.

Mortification's object: indwelling sin

The object of this duty of mortification is *indwelling sin*, which may be viewed in a threefold manner: its root or principle, its disposition and powers, and its effects or fruits. The root of indwelling sin is that depraved habit or principle which inclines fallen man unto all that is evil: it is the "flesh" or our "old man." The disposition or powers of indwelling sin are designated as "affections and lusts" (Gal 5:24), "deceitful lusts" (Eph 4:22), "secret [hidden, inward] faults" (Psa 19:12). Its effects or fruits are its open transgressions against God's Law. Now to mortify sin is a continual act or work, whereby we are to strive against sin, sap its power, rendering it impotent to beget evil works. The same duty (with relation to the death of Christ as the meritorious and efficient cause of it) is expressed by *crucifying* the flesh (Gal 5:24) —a form of death which is a painful and lingering one.

Mortification consists of a deliberate and diligent opposition to the solicitations of sin. It is the exercise and working of that hatred of sin which the Spirit communicated to the heart at the new birth. It is taking sides with the new nature against the flesh. It is the acting out of the grace received at regeneration unto a continual endeavor in the subjugating of the old nature, so that we may be able to truthfully say with the apostle, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection" (1Co 9:27). It is the putting forth of our utmost endeavors to resist our corruptions by all those methods prescribed in the gospel. It is the "putting off of the old man" (Eph 4:22), a displacing it from its former throne in the heart so as no longer to yield obedience to its lusts or walk according to its dictates.

Two masters

There are but two masters that divide the world between them—sin and God. Every man serves one of them, but no man can serve *both*. Every man serves either sin or righteousness, God or Satan, for there is no middle or neutral state. Either their time and strength are spent in the service of the flesh or the service of God. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit" (Rom 8:5). "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal 6:8). How it concerns us, then, to consider what or who it is that employs our souls! The faculties of the soul and the

energies of the body cannot be inactive; they must be employed one way or the other—heavenwards or hellwards.

Both of these services are entered *by consent*: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom 6:16). It is true there are degrees in this, some yielding up themselves more completely and entirely than others; nevertheless, the service which the unregenerate render to sin and the service which the regenerate render to righteousness is quite voluntary. Of the one we read, "The heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecc 8:11), and again, "Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness,[303] to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Eph 4:19). Of the other it is written, "But first gave their own selves to the Lord" (2Co 8:5). No excuses, no quibblings, no reasonings can neutralize the plain testimony of these Scriptures. Each man freely follows the bent of his own heart and pursues that which he is most in love with. The great difference between the regenerate and the unregenerate is this: the one *denies* self, the other *gratifies* it.

Self-denial

> *Self-denial lies in a man's renouncing, foregoing, and postponing all his pleasures, profits, relations, interest, and whatever he enjoys which may be in competition with Christ, from love to Him, and to be given up at His command. A self-denying person seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and leaves all other things with God, to bestow upon him as He thinks fit; and what He has given him he is ready at His command to bring all he has and place it at His feet, as the first Christians brought all they had and laid it at the apostles' feet. This is self-denial (John Gill, 1697-1771).*

The great motive to this is the example left us by the Son of God Himself. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phi 2:5-8).

Mortification consists in the application to the heart and life of the principle of the cross. It does not denote the abolition[304] of sin in the believer or the present destruction of its being: our corruptions are not put off until we leave this world. Nor is the work of mortification to be understood in the literal and natural sense of the term, by the starving or scourging of the body: many deluded souls mistake the mortification of the *body* for the mortification of *sin.* Nor does it consist in the suppressing of the external acts of sin only, for sin may reign over the heart where the outward conduct is highly esteemed among men. Nor should it be supposed that the mortification of sin has taken place because some particular inclination which formerly predominated is now weakened, for the effects of illness or the advances of old age often produce this consequence.

No, mortification is the purging of the soul, the freeing of it from that slavery of the flesh that detained it from God and disabled it from the duties of a holy and heavenly life. It is the resisting and denying of our corrupt inclinations. It is founded in a hatred of them, and not simply in fear of their consequences. It is not a bare abstinence from acts of evil, but an abhorrence for them *from a regard to the authority of God* in His Law, which forbids them. This is most important to note, for there is much abstaining from outward acts of sin where there is not a grain of holiness in the heart. There are various prudential considerations that deter many from crime, such as the fear of human punishment, the loss of reputation among men, the jeopardizing of a lucrative position, or concern for their health. But evangelical mortification proceeds from an abhorrence of evil and has respect to the will of Him Who forbids its exercise.

Inward as well as outward mortification

Evangelical mortification rises from the principle of grace in the renewed soul, for that principle heartily approves both the precepts and prohibitions of the Law. And herein lies the imperative need of self-examination, observing our hearts and ascertaining *from what* views and motives we act, otherwise

there will be little or no real holiness, even though our outward conduct be such as raises it above the censure of those who know us best. We have no warrant whatever to deem ourselves any more holy than as we act under the influence of *spiritual* considerations: that is, doing what we do out of love to God, with a respect unto His authority, seeking His glory. It is a very dangerous mistake to suppose that all opposition to sin is genuine mortification, and therefore we need to examine carefully the *design and ends* of our actions.

Mortification of sin is one of the chief duties and should be the daily business of every Christian. Some who seem much mortified to bodily lusts are yet greatly captivated by *intellectual* lusts. They do not wallow in the mire of immorality, drunkenness, and other fleshly gratifications, but they are full of pride, envy, covetousness, malice, contempt of others—which lusts are just as vile in themselves and as hateful to God as the others. True grace opposes lusts of *every* kind, for it will not connive[305] at any evil. The new nature is just as much antagonistic to internal eruptions of sin as to the outward acts: necessarily so, for without this there is no purity of heart and nothing of that holiness which is indispensably requisite for eternal happiness. Many appear to think otherwise, and therefore so long as their lusts break not forth into outward acts of sin they are well pleased with themselves.

Alas, what multitudes are fatally deceived at this very point! The externals of religion and the outward acts of morality are all that concern them. But God is to be worshipped "in spirit and in truth" if He is to be worshipped acceptably (Joh 4:24); and none but the pure in heart are admitted into heaven (Mat 5:8). Oh, how few make conscience of evil thoughts or the first motions of the affections after that which is prohibited. The "plague of his own heart" (1Ki 8:38) occasions them no concern, which is sure proof that they are not indwelt by the Holy Spirit. God requires the *heart* (Pro 23:26), and if we give not *that* to Him, then He receives nothing which He values in the slightest degree. Such was the case with the Pharisees—and they have numerous successors today—whom our Lord compared to whited sepulchres which are beautiful without but within are full of putridity[306] (Mat 23:27).

Here is the great difference between faith and presumption: the one hates sin, is plagued by its presence, and mourns over its activities; the other is bold in sinning, persuades itself of security in Christ, lightly passes over its commission, having little remorse when guilty of it. Evangelical mortification of sin, then, respects not only the behavior but the heart, for there it begins. Its aim is to produce *spirituality of mind,* for "to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom 8:6). Abhorrence of evil, love of God, and a delight in conformity to His will is the root of it, and, where these be not in some measure, there is *nothing* of that mortification which God requires. Indwelling sin must not be spared, but attacked, for there is no other way of being freed from bondage to it but by constantly opposing it, root and branch.[307]

The effects with and without mortification

Every unmortified sin will *weaken the soul*, so as to deprive it of its strength Godwards; and it will *darken the soul*, so as to deprive it of its peace and comfort. Observe what an unmortified lust in the heart did for David: "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer" (Psa 32:3-4). So too, unmortified lust spreads a cloud over the soul, so that the beams of God's favour are intercepted. "Your sins have hid his face from you" (Isa 59:2). Nothing is so destructive of communion with God as the allowance of sin. Nothing is so opposed to our best interests as the indulgence of fleshly lusts. Nothing presents so serious a stumbling block to babes in Christ's family as to behold the older members of it trifling with that which caused His crucifixion. If He died *for* sin, surely we must die *to* sin.

On the other hand, there is a *blessedness* that results from mortification that should set every Christian to be more diligent and earnest in the prosecution of it. There is a double comfort in mortification: one in the nature of the work itself, as it is a God-appointed duty; the other as it respects

Christ, affording evidence of our union with Him. God will be no man's debtor, and He richly rewards those who set themselves to the work He has assigned. What a blessed tranquility of conscience and joy of heart is ours when we have faithfully repelled temptations and successfully resisted our corruptions! What recompense is found in the smile of God! There is then a heaven within—whereas the wicked have a taste of hell, in their gripes[308] of conscience and terrors of the wrath to come. Moreover, mortification evidences our interest in Christ (Gal 5:24). Those endeavors of mortification, sincere yet feeble, plainly show that the Holy Spirit is in me; and what joy such assurance brings!

Further, the daily mortification of indwelling sin not only has much to do with the comforts enjoyed by our souls, but it is instrumental in *fitting us to be used by Christ*, in whatever humble capacity He is pleased to employ us. "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2Ti 2:21). What is the blessedness of life but in being of some use in the Lord's vineyard? Only so far as we live a fruitful life unto God do we answer the end of our being. But let a proud, a carnal, or a worldly heart be employed in any service to the Lord, and such an heart is certain to spoil the work by managing it for some self end. Sin is a disease, a consumption upon the inner man; and, so far as it prevails, unfits us to be used by Christ. When the Lord employed Isaiah He first purged his iniquity (Isa 6:7-8)!

Summary

Temptations can only be resisted in proportion as we devote ourselves to the work of mortification. It is the condition of our heart that determines whether or not we respond to Satan's allurements. So too afflictions are unsupportable without mortification. My reader, you live in a mutable world, where Providence rings[309] the changes in all its affairs. You that have husband or wife may be left desolate tomorrow. You that have riches or children may be bereft of both before you are aware. Sickness treads upon the heels of health, and death as surely follows life as the night does the day. Consider well with yourself: are you able to bear the loss of your sweetest enjoyments with patience? Oh, get the heart mortified to all these things, and you will bless a *taking* as well as a *giving* God.

Its Process, Part Two

Mortification must be continual.

Notwithstanding the *judicial* death of the Christian's old man and all his sins in the death of Christ (Rom 6:6; 1Pe 2:24), and notwithstanding that a real foundation of universal mortification is laid in the believer's first conversion—by conviction of sin, humiliation for it, and the forsaking of it—yet his indwelling corruptions so remain and work in the best of Christians that the constant mortification of sin is, all their days, incumbent upon them. Mortification, then, is a life-long continuance of our initial repentance, which included hatred of sin, sorrow for sin, confession of sin, and turning away therefrom[310]—and, if these were really sincere, then a *continued opposition* to all the solicitations of the flesh, the devil, and the world must ensue. "Mortify" means put to death. To slay an enemy is to destroy the principle of all his vigour and power, so that he cannot exert or put forth any actings of his own.

The subjugation of indwelling sin so that it may not have power to bring forth the works of the flesh is the constant duty of the believer. The health and comfort of his spiritual life depends thereon: he must be daily killing sin, or it will kill him.[311] "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom 8:13). "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1Co 9:27). The solemn alternatives presented in these passages are too plain to be misunderstood. Nor is their point to be dulled by pitting against them the truth of the final preservation of the believer. These passages are to be taken at their face value, for there is no conflict between them and any others. *Believers* are preserved in the paths of righteousness, and God has nowhere promised to secure any soul which sports[312] with sin.

Mortification is very difficult.

This work of mortification is a *very difficult one,* especially considering the prevalence of corruption and the multitude of temptations we are exposed to: the subtlety and watchfulness of Satan, who goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1Pe 5:8); the treachery of our own hearts that are so prone to depart from God; the instability of our resolutions and the fickleness of our affections; the ceaseless efforts made by our corruptions to gain the advantage over us. Oh, the deceitfulness and wickedness of our hearts, to call evil good and good evil (Isa 5:20), to represent such things as harmless and not displeasing to God, when really they are most injurious to us and offensive to Him. Oh, the blindness of our sin-darkened understandings, to lead us into mistakes both as to the matter of sin and duty, and to persuade us those things will issue well that prove bitterness in the end. Oh, the perversity of our wills, in walking contrary to God.

Now it is *this* which renders it so essential that we make a right use of those methods which God has prescribed for the mortification of sin, the chief of which is the denying of self and the taking up of our cross. And that is to be done *daily* (Luk 9:23). We would advise those who have access to the complete works of Bunyan[313] to read the piece *Instruction for the Ignorant*, and especially the section on "Self-denial." It is in the form of questions and answers. We give a brief excerpt.

> *Question: If a man carrieth himself well outwardly, so that he doth not dishonor the gospel before men, may not this be counted self-denial? Answer: No, if he be not right at heart (1Sa 16:7). He that makes not daily conscience of self-denial is very unlikely to abide a disciple in times of persecution.*
>
> *Question: Who are they that indulge their lusts? Answer: They that make provision for them, either in apparel, diet, or otherwise (Rom 13:12-14; Isa 3:6-21; Amo 6:3-6).*
>
> *Question: Who else do? Answer: They that heap to themselves such teachers as favour their lusts.*
>
> *Question: Who else indulge their sins? Answer: They that choose rather to walk by the imperfect lives of professors, rather than by*

the holy Word of God; or those what make the miscarriages of some good men an encouragement unto themselves to forbear to be exact in self-denial. Self-denial is one of the distinguishing marks by which Christians are manifested from the feigned ones; for those that are feigned flatter God with their mouths, but their hearts seek Him not; but the sincere, for the love that he hath to Christ, forsaketh all that he hath which is opposed to Him (Psa 78:36-37; Eze 33:31-32).

It is because of the extreme difficulty of the work of mortification that Christ bids those contemplating discipleship to "sit down first and count the cost" (Luk 14:28). Nevertheless, we must settle it in our minds that either we must fight sin or be eternally lost.

Mortification is necessary.

Mortification, then, is not optional, but an imperative necessity. Sin indwells us to the end and it is ever lusting and laboring to bring forth the deeds of the flesh. Therefore, no indulgence is to be shown it: the axe must be laid to the root of the tree. Dangerous enemies are to be grappled with promptly and no quarter shown them. One reason why God has given His children a new nature is that they may have within them a principle that is opposed to sin, and *not to employ it* in resisting sin is to neglect that excellent succour which God has granted us against our greatest foe. "Not to be daily mortifying sin, is to sin against the goodness, kindness, wisdom, grace, and love of God, Who has furnished us with a principle of defying it" (John Owen).

Mortification is rare.

But, alas, we are living in a day when mortification has well-nigh disappeared among those who bear the name of Christ. Carnal ease rather than striving against sin, self-gratification instead of self-denial, is the order of our perverse generation. Preachers and professing Christians generally now hold such a perverted concept of God's grace and mercy that they are able to digest sin without any bitterness of soul, which shows they are rotten at heart. Rightly has it been said that, "To use the blood of Christ, which is given to cleanse us; the exaltation of Christ, which is to give us repentance (Act 5:31); the doctrine of grace, which teaches us to deny all ungodliness (Ti 2:11-12) to *countenance sin*, is a rebellion that in the issue will break the bones" (John Owen).

It is not without good reason that God has expressed this duty of opposing sin and curbing its power by mortification, or putting to death. There is something peculiar therein beyond any other duty. There is intimated a great contest of sin for the preservation of its life. Every creature will do its utmost to preserve its being, and sin is no exception. Sin cannot be vanquished, my reader, by gentle taps or half-hearted efforts to subdue it. The subjugation of indwelling sin is also likened unto crucifixion (Gal 5:24), and that is a most painful process. Note that in Galatians 5:24 the apostle does not say, "They that believe Christ was crucified for them are His," but only they who experience the efficacy of His sufferings in subduing their evil lusts.[314] This duty is also likened to a cutting off of right hands and plucking out of right eyes (Mat 5:29-30). It is the difficulties and severities of mortification which constitute the narrowness of that "way, which leadeth unto life" (Mat 7:14), for it shuts out the unbridled indulgence of sinful affections.

If they that be Christ's have crucified the flesh, then the number of real Christians is very small. It is true, if all that seem to be meek, humble, and heavenly, might pass for Christians, the number would be great; but, if no more must be accounted Christians than those who crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, oh, how small is the number! For, oh, how many there be under the Christian name that pamper and indulge their lusts, that secretly hate all who faithfully reprove them, and really love none but such as feed their lusts by praising and admiring them. How many that make provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts, who cannot endure to have their corruptions crossed. How many are there that seem very meek and humble until an occasion be given them to stir up their passion, and then you shall see in what degree they are mortified. The flint is a cold stone till it be struck, and then it is all fiery. I know the best of Christians are mortified but in part, and strong corruptions are oftentimes found in the most eminent; but they love them not so well as to defend and countenance them, nor dare they secretly hate such as faithfully reprove them—as many thousands that go under the name of Christians do (John Flavel,[315] 1650).

Mortification is by the Spirit working in and through us.

But difficult as this work may be, and few as there are that set themselves to it, real Christians are not left to themselves therein: "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities" (Rom 8:26); and therefore do we read,

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (8:13). How clearly that shows the inseparable connection (of means and end)[316] there is between mortification and life. Let it also be remarked that the term "body" in the second clause corresponds to "the flesh" in the first, and "deeds" here are the same as "works" in Galatians 5:19, some of which are internal, others external.

But let it be carefully noted that it does not say, "If the deeds of the flesh be mortified in you through the Spirit," but "if ye through the Spirit do mortify"!

> *We must not dream of a mortification to be wrought in us without our consent or endeavours, as well whilst we are asleep as when we are waking, as if it were wrought in our cradles or whilst we were passing our days in childhood's play and pastime; or shall be done in our ripe age without any careful watch over our works and thoughts; or it may be by a sluggish wish or slothful prayer, as if this would mortify sin. No, all renewed ones must address themselves to the work; the flesh must be mortified, and mortified it must be by us, through the Spirit, if we would cherish the hope of life. The Spirit alone giveth victory, but we must be active in it, for His grace and powerful work do not license us to be idle, but calleth for an assiduous,[317] diligent, and faithful use of means (Thomas Manton, 1620–1677).*

To the same effect wrote another renowned Puritan, when treating of mortification under the figure of "purging" used by Christ in John 15:2-3.

> *In this work of mortification, considered thus in the progress of it, we are not mere passives—as at that final finishing of it and carrying away all sin at death we are, and are at that first beginning of it in the new birth—but therein we are "workers together with God" [2Co 6:1]: we being purged from sin as the body is by physic[318] from poisons; though the physic work, yet nature joins with the physic, being quickened and helped by it to cast out the poisons; for give a dead man physic, and it carries not any poisons away. So as those means whereby God purgeth us are not to be imagined to do it as mere physical agents, like as the pruning-hook cuts off branches from a tree, or as when a surgeon cuts out dead flesh; but these means do it by stirring up our graces, and by setting our thoughts, faith, and affections a-work; and so God, assisting with the power of Christ's death, He doth purge us daily. It is certain that unless our thoughts work upon the means, as well as the means work upon us, and so do mingle themselves with those means—that unless faith and Christ's death be mingled in the heart—it purgeth not. And therefore it is said that we "purge ourselves" (2Ti 2:21; 1Jo 3:3) (Thomas Goodwin, 1600-1680).*

The influence of the blessed Spirit upon the principle of grace in the believer is absolutely necessary unto the mortification of sin. The flesh needs no external influence to excite it to action; it is at all times capable of exerting itself without assistance from without. But not so with indwelling grace: it is entirely dependent on God to strengthen, and move it. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God" (2Co 3:5). It is the Spirit Who maintains in the believer a realization of the sinfulness of sin, without which we would never be in earnest in opposing it. It is the Spirit Who suggests to the mind considerations and motives unto watchfulness against Satan's encroachments, and rouses us to endeavors against our evil lusts. He it is Who makes us sensible of temptations, warns us against them, and often grants strength to resist them. He causes us to meditate upon the sufferings of Christ for our sins, and stirs us up to strive against them.

Mortification is not complete in this life.

Though the utter destruction of sin in him is to be the believer's aim, so that it shall no more hold any residence in his heart, yet in this life such success is never fully accomplished. It was the apostle's consuming desire to be "made conformable unto Christ's death, if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection from the dead" (Phi 3:10-11), that is, so deny the lust of the flesh as to perfectly and wholly walk in newness of life. But he at once added, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect" (v. 12), which at once gives the lie to all claiming "sinless perfection" in this life. Nevertheless, he continued, "But I follow after": he still earnestly pursued his quest; and, as his "if by any means" indicates, exerted all his faculties and followed out all the methods God has appointed for our fighting against sin. This brings us to speak more definitely on the means and methods of mortification.

The means and methods of mortification

If indwelling sin is to be subdued by the Christian, if temptations are to be successfully resisted, then he must, first, make a real effort daily to maintain in his mind a constant sense of the heinousness of sin,

as being that abominable thing which God hates. The believer will never put forth his utmost endeavors against it while he regards sin lightly.

Second, he must strive to keep his conscience under the awe of God, for this is the great preventative against sin, without which all other external rules and helps signify nothing, for "by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil" (Pro 16:6).

Third, there must be a diligent watching against the occasions of sin, against those things that excite our corruptions and tempt us to wrongdoing. Let those who are really concerned…ponder the following passages: "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?" (Job 31:1). "I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity" (Psa 18:23). "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" (Pro 4:14-15). "Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house" (Pro 5:8). "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1Th 5:22). "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23). It is our disobedience to these precepts which accounts for much of our failure.

Fourth, see to it that you do not give sin an advantage by making provision for its lusts. How diligent we are in this respect over the body: if there be any constitutional weakness,[319] how carefully we guard against it—shame on us that we are less diligent about our souls.

Fifth, form the habit of nipping sin in the bud,[320] resisting its first risings. That is more than half the battle—to *promptly* heed the convictions from the Spirit.

Sixth, train the mind to dwell upon the enormity of sin: the fearfulness of its guilt, the horribleness of its defilement, and think of what it cost Christ to make atonement for it.

Seventh, let there be frequent self-examination, as to our motives and ends, and to discover what most absorbs our hearts.

Eighth, deep humility for past sins begets hatred of sin and caution against it. "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (2Co 7:11).

Ninth, spare no pains to nourish and develop those graces that are the opposites of your besetting sins: pride is weakened by cultivating humility, uncleanness by purity of mind and conscience, love of the world by heavenly mindedness.

Tenth, make yourself willing to be reproved for your faults; "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil" (Psa 141:5).

Eleventh, meditate often upon the vanity of the creature and the transitoriness[321] of all earthly pleasures; the sweetest enjoyments this world has to offer are but fading flowers and withering grass.

Twelfth, cry mightily unto God for restraining grace; "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins" (Psa 19:13). Appropriate such promises as [these:] "He will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Mic 7:19); and, "Sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom 6:14). Plead the blood of Christ for victory.

Thirteenth, seek to get chastisements and afflictions sanctified unto your souls (Isa 27:9; Heb 12:11).

Finally, beg the Spirit to teach you to "put on the whole armour of God" (Eph 6:10-18). We have covered much ground in these fourteen points and they need to be carefully pondered if they are to be made real helps in this work.

The evidences of mortification

In bringing this chapter to a close we offer a few suggestions on the evidences of a mortified heart, for that is a matter of deep concern to renewed souls, to whom it frequently appears that sin completely fills and dominates their hearts, and who feel that if their resistance to indwelling corruption is anything

more than a mere pretence, it is certainly unavailing and a total failure. Satan will frequently tell the Christian that he might as well seek to subdue the wind or reverse the action of the tides, as expect to overcome the evil inclinations of the flesh. Satan will taunt him with his defeats, assure him he is waging a losing battle, and bid him give up the hopeless fight. But *success* is not the true criterion. Sincerity, genuine desires, and faithful efforts are the determining factors as to whether or not we are really engaged in this protracted and painful work.

First, genuine tenderness of conscience as to all known sins is a sign that sin does not have dominion in the soul. It is a great mercy to have a heart that smites us for things which others do not regard as sinful, to have a heart that admonishes us for secret faults is proof that sin is loathed by us: "What I hate, that do I" (Rom 7:15).

Second,

> *The sincere and earnest desires of our souls to God in prayer for heart-purging and sin-mortifying grace is a good sign our souls have no love for sin. Canst thou say, poor believer, in the truth of thy heart, that if God would give thee thy choice, it would please thee better to have sin cast out, than to have the world cast in; that thy heart is not so earnest with God for daily bread, as it is for heart-purging grace? (John Flavel, 1628-1691).*

Third, honest efforts to guard against the occasions of sin and a daily attempt to preserve the heart from Satan's incursions[322] argue a purpose to mortify sin.

Fourth, thankfulness to God when His providences cross our worldly and evil desires, blocks the actual commission of sin, manifests that sin is hated and not loved. Such was the case with David (1Sa 25:33).

Fifth, bitter grief over failure, mourning when sin has overcome you, is clear evidence of a mortified heart.

Sixth, the holding of earthly things lightly and valuing them cheaply is another mark of a mortified heart. The unregenerate set a high price on worldly possessions and carnal pleasures, for their hearts are completely wedded to material and outward things; but the regenerate set their affections on spiritual and heavenly objects.

Seventh, contentment with the position and portion God has allotted in this life, is another fruit of mortification, for such an one can genuinely pray, "Give me neither poverty nor riches" (Pro 30:8).

Summary

That aspect of our subject which we are now dealing with is of great practical importance and value, for the more thorough be the mortification of our lusts, and the clearer the evidence of the same, then the stronger and brighter the assurance of our interest in and union with Christ. Note how the Spirit has joined the two things together in Galatians 5:24! "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." The proof that we are Christ's is that we have crucified the flesh. This does *not* mean that the flesh is now dead, or that it has improved any, but that we are engaged in seeking to put it to death. Among further evidences of this process we name the following. The degree of our mortification may be ascertained by 1) the extent of our self-denial; 2) a deeper insight into spiritual corruptions; 3) a striving against them; 4) a spiritual appetite for the Word, not an intellectual curiosity; [and] 5) shame over our previous performances and attainments, that is, over wasted opportunities and half-hearted efforts.

Its Process, Part Three

At the beginning of this chapter, we pointed out that by the *process* of sanctification we mean the principal actings of those who have already been manifestatively set apart by God unto Himself and for Himself. It is with the experimental and practical side of the subject that we are now treating, with that which is the sequel to regeneration, namely, God's sustaining and developing the nature or principle communicated at the new birth, and the believer's co-operation with Him therein. In other words, it is the spiritual growth of the babe in Christ we are here concerned with, more especially as that growth follows the twofold process of mortification and vivification—the mortifying of the old nature and the vivifying of the new. Having devoted the last sections to the former, we now turn to a consideration of the latter.

Vivification

It has already been pointed out that the two different actings of the Christian in mortification and vivification are not so distinct that the one can go on independently of or at a distinct time from the other, for the one necessarily accompanies the other. Nevertheless, in explaining that twofold process of the believer's experimental sanctification or spiritual growth, they need to be separately expounded. The *order* in which we should consider them is obvious: we must die to sin (relatively speaking) before we can (in any measure) live to God. The privative[323] must precede the positive; disease must be subdued before health can be enjoyed; the lamp must be cleansed before its light can shine forth clearly; rags must be discarded before new apparel is put on. This order is uniformly insisted on throughout the Scriptures; let the following passages be taken as examples.

"Cease to do evil" comes before "learn to do well" (Isa 1:16-17). "Hate the evil, and love the good" (Amo 5:15). The latter is impossible without the former. Self must be denied before Christ can be followed (Mat 16:24). "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God" (Rom 6:13). "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them" (2Co 5:15). We have to cease living unto self ere[324] we can live unto Christ; yea, we must be "crucified with Christ" before we can live by faith (Gal 2:20). The putting off of the old man precedes the putting on of the new (Eph 4:22-24). We have to be made conformable to Christ's death ere we can attain unto spiritual resurrection (Phi 3:10-11). Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts comes before living soberly and righteously (Ti 2:12). Weights must be laid aside before we can run the race set before us (Heb 12:1).

Vivification defined

As the term is used theologically, "vivification" means a *living unto God.* It is not enough that the believer should die to sin; he must also walk in newness of life. Recess[325] from the world is worthless unless it issues in access to God. Practical holiness consists not so much in a mere abstinence from a sensual life, but principally in living unto God—delighting in Him, desiring after Him, carefulness to please Him, loathness[326] to offend Him. God has imparted grace to the regenerate not simply that they may *have* it, but that they *use* the same to His glory: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal 5:25). The grace God has given His people is to be exercised by them in a course of hearty obedience to Him, according to the directions that He has given in His Word.

God has predestinated His people to be conformed to the image of His Son. Now, Christ died to sin (Rom 6:l0); so must we. Christ lives unto God; so must we. In mortification, there is a likeness to Christ's death, and in vivification (or living unto God) there is a likeness to His resurrection; the latter is the inseparable adjunct[327] of the former. Christ cannot be divided; those who partake with Him in the

one act, partake with Him in the other. God will not leave His work in us half done. If He makes us to hate and forsake the evil, then He also causes us to love and seek after the good. In Psalm 1 the godly man is not only described as walking not in the counsel of the ungodly, standing not in the way of sinners, and sitting not in the seat of the scornful, but also as delighting in the Law of the Lord, meditating therein day and night, and then bringing forth his fruits in his season. God subdues sin in us to make way for a life of righteousness.

Vivification primarily described

From the experimental side, sanctification is the acting out of that holy principle received at the new birth. At regeneration a new nature is bestowed, which re-capacitates the soul Godwards, so that the heart is now inclined toward Him, delights in Him, pants after Him. But let us be more specific and describe something of this new disposition of mind.

First, there is now *a holy reverence* for God, on account of His Person, His perfections, His works. Of the unsanctified it is said, "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom 3:18); but where a principle of grace and holiness has been infused the fear of God quickly appears, for it is "the beginning of wisdom" (Pro 9:10). The regenerate man cannot now do the things which he did before and that others do; "But so did not I, because of the fear of God" (Neh 5:15).

It is this heart-awe for God, this godly reverence, this filial fear, which is one of the roots from which springs spiritual obedience, for such reverence necessarily yields submission to the revealed will of God. When Israel avowed at Sinai, "All that the Lord hath said, we will do," He answered, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" (Deu 5:29). The fear of God, then, precedes the keeping of His commandments. It is this principle of godly reverence that the Lord is pledged to give unto His people according to the terms of the new covenant: "I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever" (Jer 32:39). That fear is the same as the new spirit (Eze 11:19) and as the writing of His Law on our hearts (Heb 8:10). This same spiritual grace is also called fearing the LORD: not His judgments, but His *goodness* (Hos 3:5).

Second, accompanying this filial awe is a sincere and holy *love* for God, from which springs acceptable obedience to Him.[328] That love consists in the heart's being drawn out to God and delighting itself in Him. It is a disposition and inclination of soul unto communion with Him, with complacency, so that its language now is, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee" (Psa 73:25). An unregenerate man cannot love God nor take any delight in His perfections, ways, or worship, for, "The carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom 8:7). The unsanctified desire to depart from Him and dismiss Him from their thoughts. Job says of the hypocrite, "Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?" (27:10). No, he will not. But in regeneration, the Lord circumcises the heart, or renews and sanctifies it *to* love Him with all the soul, and that sincerely and cordially.

Third, vivification manifests itself in a complete *submission* to the will of God in all things, not only to His perceptive will, but to His disposing will[329] also, even to the most adverse dispensations of providence. Instances of this may be seen in the cases of Aaron, Eli, David, and others, who rebelled not nor murmured, but were quiet and silent, resigned to the divine will under the most severe rebukes and the most painful trials (Lev 10:3, 1Sa 3:18; 2Sa 15:25-26). Much of sanctification lies in the conformity of our wills to the will of God. As the saintly Ussher[330] said, "Sanctification is nothing less than for a man to be brought to an entire resignation of his will to the will of God, and to live in the offering up of his soul continually in the flames of love as a whole burnt offering."

Fourth, vivification is expressed by being *spiritually minded.* "To be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom 8:6); that is, the bent and inclination of a renewed mind is unto spiritual things, for it is that

whereby we live to God and enjoy peace with Him. By nature we care only for the things of the flesh, minding earthly concerns (Phi 3:19)—our corrupt hearts are set upon them, disposed towards them, eager after whatever leads to the enjoyment of them. But the regenerate mind thinks of things above, and in vivification its affections are drawn out after and fixed upon them (Col 3:3). It was by virtue of this that David declared his soul followed hard after God (Psa 63:8), or inclined earnestly unto all those ways whereby he might live unto Him, and come unto the enjoyment of Him. This same fervour and diligence is seen in the case of the Apostle Paul (Phi 3:13-14). None but God can satisfy the sanctified.

Fifth, vivification is seen in *religious exercises* or acts of devotion to God, particularly in the actings of grace in them. Here too there is a radical difference between the unregenerate and the regenerate. The former engages in religious exercises formally, as a matter of duty, but the latter (when in a healthy state) takes delight therein. The ministry of the Word is attended with affection, and prayer is engaged in with fervour, for prayer is the very breath of a sanctified soul toward God. It is not so much in the outward performance that the believer differs from the unbeliever, as in the holy actings of his *heart*—such as eager desires after communion with God therein. The sanctified soul cannot be satisfied with using the means of grace unless he meets with God in them. A sanctified soul seeks the glory of God in all that he does.

Vivification further described

In whomsoever the new nature or principle of grace is, it disposes the whole soul unto the acts and duties of holiness, and that *universally* or *impartially.* There is no duty of holiness but what there is a disposition to it in the sanctified heart. There is a respect unto *all* of God's commandments. Some of them may be more contrary to our natural inclinations than others, some may more cross with our present secular interests, some are attended with more difficulties and disadvantages than others, and some of them may be rendered very dangerous by the peculiar circumstances of particular seasons. Nevertheless, if there be a gracious principle in our hearts, it will equally incline and dispose us to every one of them in their proper place and time. The reason for this is that the new nature equally inclines unto all that pertains to it, as all acts of holy obedience do.

Again, the new nature disposes the heart unto duties of holiness *constantly and evenly.* He in whom the principle of grace resides fears the Lord always, though often the godless flesh gains the upper hand in him. Nevertheless, so far as that new nature itself is concerned, in all instances and on all occasions it equally inclines the mind to acts of holy obedience. It is true that the actings of grace which proceed from it are in us sometimes more vigorous and intense than at others. It is also true that we are ourselves sometimes more watchful and careful in acting grace, whether in our general course or in solemn duties. There are times when the flesh rages in us, and when Satan opposes more fiercely—when grace is obstructed; but that does not clash with what we first said. That living principle of holiness is like a fountain of water ever springing up (Joh 4:14). Though as its stream passes on in its course it meets with opposition and hindrance, yet its waters continue to press on.

Once more, the new nature disposes the heart *permanently* thus. It will never cease inclining the soul unto the duties of holiness until it comes to the end of them all in the final enjoyment of God. This holy principle is an incorruptible seed, abiding in the believer forever, and constantly acts according to its own constitution. True, it is our duty to make use of all the appointed means to preserve and cherish the principle itself and its actings. We are to "show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end" (Heb 6:11). It is also true that sometimes, and in some persons, upon fierce temptations, with the violence and deceitfulness of lusts, the principle of grace may seem for a season to be utterly stifled, and thus this property of *permanency* be destroyed—as it appeared to have been the case with David under his sad fall and decay. Yet such is its nature, that it is immortal, everlasting, and shall never absolutely die, which is owing solely to the faithfulness, power, and grace of God.

Were we to stop at this point, the Christian reader would indeed have occasion to lay down the book in despair, feeling that it has quite cut him off, that he has "neither part nor lot in this matter" (Act 8:21). Let it be duly pointed out, then, that in the regenerate and sanctified there are yet inclinations and dispositions *to sin,* proceeding from the contrary principle of the flesh (that vicious, corrupt, depravity of our nature, disposing the soul unto all that is evil). This still continues in us, then, working constantly in varying degrees of power. This it is which occasions such a strange paradox[331] and puzzle to the sincere believer: that in him are such *contrary* inclinations, opposing one another, acting adversely about the same objects and ends. While sin has received a fatal wound, it is far from being dead; and though the believer be most diligent and faithful in prosecuting the work of mortification, yet the task of vivification will be frequently, yea, hourly, opposed and retarded. The qualities pertaining to the principle of holiness (which we have described) pertain unto itself, but the qualities of sin ever resist them. But to return to our immediate subject.

Vivification: An objection

The thoughtful reader will, no doubt, be ready to ask, "If the principle of holiness communicated at regeneration possesses such characteristics as reverence for and love to God, and if it also constantly inclines the soul unto all duties of obedience, then why do we find the Psalmist praying, 'Unite my heart to fear thy name' (86:11), and, 'Incline my heart unto thy testimonies' (119:36)? Do not such petitions seem to contradict our assertions that the new nature itself disposes the heart toward God and is the root from which all acceptable obedience to Him springs?" No, but they do show that, notwithstanding the spirituality of the new nature, yet it is entirely *dependent on* the operations of the Holy Spirit for its actual exercise on all occasions. Only as He strengthens us with might in the inner man, renews us day by day, leads us in the paths of righteousness, are we enabled to render unto God that which He requires. The new nature is what makes the soul meet[332] for good works, but the Spirit must supply the necessary *power.*

This it is which explains the prayers of the Psalmist. Take, again, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; quicken thou me in thy way" (119:37). Note, first, the *order* is the same here as in all the passages quoted in the third paragraph, mortification preceding vivification. The first clause is an asking God to remove the impediment to obedience, "vanity" being a general term to include all carnal and worldly things. The second clause is asking God for additional grace, to make our affections lively toward spiritual and heavenly things. "Quicken" is the actuation[333] of the spiritual life, grace to perform all duties with cheerfulness and zeal. Our original quickening was at regeneration (Eph 2:1), when grace or spiritual life was first infused; but we stand in need, constantly, of further renewing, so that the life of grace may be invigorated—just as a person, even a healthy one, requires to have his physical strength renewed each day.

Vivification: Comfort and enlivening

The nature of this need for renewal may be summed in two words: comfort and enlivening. By nature, our hearts are prone to sink when trouble comes upon us; unless grace be renewed in our hearts, the soul faints. When left to ourselves, we become so occupied with our trials, and so distrustful of God to undertake for us, that we are overwhelmed, so as to have no spirit or courage left. Then it is that the Spirit helpeth our infirmities: "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me" (Psa 119:50). God has raised up the heart above the trouble, increasing faith and strengthening patience. Again, by nature, we are slothful unto the performance of all duties of holiness, and when left to ourselves a spirit of lethargy[334] seizes us, creeping over the soul until its faculties are paralyzed unto all spiritual endeavor. It is then that the Spirit helps our infirmities by re-animating us, calling into exercise the new nature.

When the believer grows slack in using the appointed means of grace or is slothful in pursuing the

business of the spiritual life, deadness soon falls upon the soul. A key never turned will rust in the lock, and grace not used quickly becomes lukewarm. "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting,[335] and drunkenness, and cares of this life" (Luk 21:34). Such "quickening" of the believer, then, is absolutely essential for his well-being. Without it he cannot pray with any spiritual vigor. "Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name" (Psa 80:18). Without it he cannot hear the Word to profit. "For this people's heart is waxed gross,[336] and their ears are dull of hearing" (Mat 13:15). "I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness" (Psa 119:40). Without it he cannot obey. "Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth" (Psa 119:88).

Summary

But let it not be forgotten that throughout the entire process of mortification and vivification there is a concurrence between the believer and the Spirit. Those who are born again should show the reality of that miracle of grace by being as earnest in the pursuit of holiness as they were formerly in seeking the pleasures of sin. *Living unto God* does not connote a single act done once for all (at a "consecration meeting"), but is what must mark the general course of our conduct. The Christian is required to put forth his best endeavors: "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Phi 3:11-13). Alas, how often God has cause to say, "There is none that calleth upon my name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of me" (Isa 64:7). Oh, that we may "stir up the gift of God, which is in us" (2Ti 1:6).

Its Process, Part Four

Vivification in Romans 6

When the young believer first realizes the dying love of Christ for him and the amazing grace of God unto him, his heart cries out, "What can I do for Him Who has done so much for me?" The answer is, "Live to Him and for Him." "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead" (Rom 6:13). "The believer is to give himself up to God without any reservation. He is to employ both body and mind in every work that God, by His Word, requires of him. He must decline no labour that God sets before him, no trial to which He calls him, no cross which He lays upon him. He is not to count his life dear to himself, if God demands it of him" (Robert Haldane).[337] We are not our own, but bought with a price (1Co 6:19-20). The faculties of our souls and the members of our bodies, which previously were used only for self and to serve sin, are now to be used only for Him.

"Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead." An adequate development of the truth of vivification and a proper exposition of Romans 6:13 really calls for a detailed consideration of the whole of Romans 6—one of the most important chapters in the New Testament. In the first part of the chapter (vv. 1-10), the apostle dwells upon the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as God's provision in grace for lost sinners—His way of meeting the dire need of His people and securing their salvation. The death of Christ exhausted the penalty of sin on the elect, and His resurrection secured their present title and future position of eternal glory. The Son of God incarnate was the Surety of God's people, making Himself responsible for their debts, undertaking to fulfill all righteousness on their behalf, and putting away their sins by the sacrifice of Himself.

On the cross, Christ met all the demands of divine justice in reference to the iniquities of His people. In rising again from the dead, "after the power of an endless life" (Heb 7:16), Christ secured their full discharge, and in that endless life He "liveth unto God" (Rom 6:10)—fulfilling all of God's will in reference to us, performing all God's pleasure concerning us, securing all God's purpose of grace toward us, becoming the Author of eternal salvation to all that obey Him. By revealing to us these wondrous and blessed facts the Holy Spirit has transferred from self all ground of confidence and hope, fixing them upon Christ, and on Him alone. And because of this we are exhorted, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 6:11). Account yourselves to be so identified with Christ, so legally one with Him, that *His* death was your death, His resurrection *your* resurrection.

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is a divine command, equally binding on *all* believers, at *all* times, in every phase of their experience, and under every circumstance. To "reckon" means to act faith on the same, to accept unquestioningly God's testimony thereto. It is not to be a mere passing influence on the mind when we are undisturbed by active temptations, no mere happy frame of spirit when under a refreshing from the presence of the Lord, but an abiding conviction and assurance.

But someone will at once object, "Alas, I have the daily evidence that I am *not* dead unto sin, and to ask me to believe that I am is an impossibility." Ah, God does not ask us to reckon or regard ourselves as being dead unto sin practically, but *judicially* so—dead to its guilt, dead to its condemnation, dead to its penalty, because Christ received the wages of sin on our behalf.

See how God has anticipated and met this very objection here in Romans 6:11. Observe well the word we place in italics: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." In verse 10 the apostle had affirmed that Christ Himself "died unto

sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God"; and now the command is, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead…" *Like as* Christ died unto sin, so the Christian is (by faith in what God has declared) to reckon himself also "to be dead indeed unto sin"; and, *like as* Christ lives unto God, so is the Christian to consider himself as being alive to God. Now *how* did Christ die to sin? You say that you cannot believe yourself *to be* dead to sin while the presence and pollution of it plagues your daily experience. My reader, Christ did *not* die to sin in *that* sense. No, He *never* had the coldness, hardness, inconsistency, and failures you complain of—for He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb 7:26). Christ died as suffering the penalty of it; He died to expiate it, to blot it out of God's sight by His precious blood, and to so blot *you* out of God's sight as one against whom not a single sin can ever be charged.

The general subject of the first half of Romans 6 is the believer's justification, or deliverance from the *guilt* of sin; the subject of the second half is the believer's sanctification, or his deliverance from the *power* of sin. The dividing line is verse 11, where we are exhorted to set to our seal that God is true and acts faithfully in our federal union with Christ in His death and resurrection. On *that* foundation we are then bidden, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof " (v. 12). You have been *judicially* freed from sin; see to it, then, that you are *practically* delivered from its domination. Watch unto prayer lest ye enter into temptation, for, though the spirit be willing, yet the flesh is weak (Mat 26:41). Settle it in your minds that, unless sin be mortified daily in your hearts, it will assert itself and more or less obtain the mastery over your members. Sin is still in you, and, if permitted, will reign over you. But remember also, there are resources in Christ to help in every difficulty, strength enough to overcome in you, grace enough in Him to be sufficient for you.

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom 6:13). This is the practical response that the believer is required to make to the amazing grace that God has exercised toward him through Christ. Having been judicially delivered from death when his Surety rose again, having been quickened by the Spirit, he is to act to conduct himself as one who is spiritually alive—he is to *yield himself unto God.* It is very striking to observe the variation of language in the two clauses: "Neither yield ye your members...but yield yourselves...and your members." The apostle does *not* say, "Neither yield ye yourselves as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin," for, thank God, *that* is no longer possible. Christ standing at God's right hand prevents the believer yielding *himself* to the service of that from which He has redeemed him. But he can "yield his members unto sin"—his thoughts, his impulses, his eyes, his hands, etc. To prevent that, he is to yield himself unto God, that is, unreservedly consecrate himself to His service.

"Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." The general dedication is the ground of the particular outworking of the same. I am God's, and then I use my time and strength for Him. We are to give up ourselves to Him not in part, but in whole—to serve Him with all our hearts and might. We are to give up ourselves to Him in order to be governed and disposed by Him—to be what He would have us be and to do what He would have us do, to subject ourselves to His disposing will and submit ourselves to His commanding will. "Let him [the Lord] do unto me as seemeth good unto him" (2Sa 15:26) is to be the Christian's attitude. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Act 9:6) is to be our readiness to obey. God has given Himself to us in the Person of His Son; the least we can do in return is to give ourselves up to Him—spirit and soul and body.

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom 6:22). This order is unchangeable: mortification, vivification, fruitfulness. There is a direct antithesis from what has been said in verses 20-21: "For when ye were the

servants of sin...what fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death." In the service of sin is nothing to be had but shame and death; but in the service of God the fruit is holiness, and the issue everlasting life. The more we serve God the more holy shall we be, and the larger will be our capacity for happiness in the life to come. Here, then, is the secret and essence of practical sanctification. The measure in which we really yield ourselves to God is the measure in which we shall be fruitful and pleasing to Him. Obedience carries its own reward in itself, for holiness is the same in the soul as health is in the body.

Vivification: A continual devotedness unto God

Vivification, or living unto God, is a miraculous change of the heart by divine grace, and then the acting out of that grace which was received at regeneration. They that have received grace are not to sit down in idle contentment, but see to it [that] what remains of their earthly existence be entirely yielded up to God. As the first act of faith is a surrendering of ourselves unto God in Christ (2Co 8:5), so a life of faith consists in a continued devotedness unto God. We began by receiving Christ as Lord (Col 2:6), and we are to continue in the exercise of entire dependence on Him in all His offices—His prophetic to enlighten us, His priestly to intercede for us, His kingly to rule over us. God's Law is our rule, and we delight in it after the inward man. Experimental sanctification is a deliverance from the tyranny of sin into a life of righteousness—begun at regeneration, continued by mortification and vivification, completed at glorification.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom 12:1). Under the Law, those beasts which were offered to God were first separated from a common use—singled out from the flock or herd for this specific purpose. So the Christian has been called out from the world and is no more to live unto himself. "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles" (1Pe 4:3). Then those animals were solemnly offered to God in sacrifice. In like manner, the Christian is to dedicate himself to the service of the Lord—to love, live unto, and glorify Him. "As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Rom 6:19). The Christian is to walk in newness of life, delighting himself in God, seeking to please Him in all things, being completely submissive to His will.

Vivification: Requires obedience

Vivification, or living unto God, was by many of the older writers called, "new obedience," in reference to that obedience which God requires from His people according to the tenor of the new covenant. The rule of our *performance* of this obedience is the revealed will of God, but the rule of its *acceptance* is its sincerity and impartiality. Because God does not yet (in this life) renew us *perfectly* to His image—leaving in us a contrary principle—He accepts an imperfect obedience, namely, an obedience which is rendered to Him in all known instances of duty, and sincere in the manner of its performance. It is not that a lower and inferior righteousness answers the ends of God's glory under the new covenant than was the case under the old, but that our evangelical obedience does not hold the same *place* which obedience did under the (Adamic) Covenant of Works. Under the former our obedience would have been our righteousness, absolutely, before God, whereby we should have been justified in His sight—but that place is now filled by the obedience of Christ, our Mediator.

God has appointed this evangelical obedience (which is required by the new covenant) as the means whereby we show our subjection to Him, our dependence upon Him, our fruitfulness and thankfulness unto Him, and as the only way[338] of converse and intercourse[339] with Him. It is by our submission, service, and devotedness unto God, that we improve[340] the effects of His love unto us, the benefits of Christ's mediation, and whereby we glorify Him in this world. Vivification, then, is the living of a holy

life unto God, constrained by the love of Christ, regulated by the divine commands. In the *outworking* of vivification, the Christian is no longer greedy to catch at every opportunity of pleasure and profit in worldly concerns, caring not *how* he obtains them—but is occupied with God's will for him, and is careful to follow it out, so that he may be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Phi 1:11).

The title which God has unto unreserved and hearty obedience from His people is an indubitable[341] one, and it is one which He presses upon us in His Word again and again. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's" (1Co 6:19-20). We belong to God first of all by predestination: He chose us for Himself, as His portion and heritage, and therefore it should be our chief concern to give Him pleasure. Second, we belong to God by creation: we are the work of His hands, and therefore it should be our deepest desire to be vessels unto His honor. Third, we belong to God by redemption: we are His purchased property—the right of personal ownership is His, and our responsibility is to be used in His service. Fourth, we belong to Him by regeneration, whereby He has made us His children, and the Father has an unqualified right to demand loving obedience from His offspring. Finally, we belong to Him by consecration: this is a voluntary act whereby we have dedicated ourselves to Him.

Vivification: Its benefits

There is nothing so pleasant, honorable, or profitable, as living unto God, having communion with Him in the path of obedience. Pleasant it certainly is to the renewed soul, for just so far as we are subject to God's will are we in harmony with Him. Nothing so breeds serenity of mind, peace of conscience, assurance of God's favor, as when we are engaged in those things which are pleasing in His sight. All the unhappiness there is in the world is the outcome of sin, and, therefore, the further we keep from sin, the more shall we discover the secret of true happiness. "The work [fruit] of righteousness [right-doing] shall be peace" (Isa 32:17). When our animal spirits[342] keep their due proportion and temperature, cheerfulness and health of body ensues—and when the faculties of the soul are regulated by holiness, spiritual health is secured. Wisdom's ways are "ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Pro 3:17).

Nothing is more *honorable* than to be a dutiful servant of God. "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour" (Pro 12:26). The judgment of the unregenerate is darkened by sin and blinded by Satan, and therefore they suppose it to be a weak and mean[343] thing to be godly, and, on the contrary, imagine it is a sort of excellency to be free from the restraints of piety, and to live a life of pomp and ease, without any care of the life to come. The deluded worldling has no esteem for a pious man and prizes only that which is carnal and transient. But the things which are highly esteemed among men are abominations in the sight of God (Luk 16:15), whereas the things they despise He regards as of great price (1Pe 3:4). Since God is the sum of all excellency, they are most excellent who approximate the closest to His likeness. If honor be derived from the real fount of honor, then those who are the most godlike are the most honourable, the "excellent" of the earth (Psa 16:3).

Nothing is more *profitable* than to live in subjection to God, for it gains His favor and fellowship[344] for the present, and makes way for an everlasting fruition[345] of Him in Glory. What an unprofitable drudgery is the life of an unsanctified worldling in comparison with that of a holy man who waits upon God and has access of welcome unto Him. "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes" (Psa 118:9). The princes of earth are very uncertain and fickle, but God changes not. The poorest Christian is never denied an audience at the Throne of Grace, never upbraided[346] for seeking mercy, never reproached for the frequency of his appeals. What can bring greater blessing to the soul than daily attendance upon the King of kings: the heart engaged in loving Him, the tongue in praising Him, the life in serving Him! This is to secure a foretaste of the pleasures and joys that await us

on high. It is heaven begun on earth; it is to enjoy the smiles and approbation of Him Who delights in the righteous.

Summary

What considerations are these to stir us up unto vivification! How they should persuade us to make our devotedness to God more evident! First, by manifesting the change itself: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2Co 5:17); and then by our increase in the same: "Ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more" (1Th 4:1). It is not an indifferent thing whether we be eminent[347] in obedience or not. God makes a great matter of it, as appears from His injunctions: "Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently" (Psa 119:4); as also by His promises: "O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them" (Deu 5:29). By our obedience Christ is glorified, grace is magnified, and God is gratified.[348] By our obedience, we are preserved from the paths of the destroyer, kept from placing a stumbling-block before our fellows, and prevented from ruining our testimony.

Vivification or living unto God is the same thing as being conformed unto the image of His Son, or emulating the example that Christ has left us. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1Jo 2:6). Christ is a pattern unto us in His graces, His states, and in the special acts of His mediation. None so perfectly exemplified the graces of faith, patience, humility, self-denial, and obedience, and therefore did He say, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me" (Mat 11:29). The states through which Christ passed were those of humiliation and exaltation, and the members follow their Head, in first suffering and then entering into glory (Rom 8:17). The special acts of Christ's mediation were His death and resurrection, and to these also we are to be conformed (Phi 3:10-11). Experimental sanctification, then, consists in *Christlikeness*.[349]

Its Progress

Its Progress, Part One:
The Truth of "Progressive Sanctification"

Introduction

Normal Christian experience is a progress in practical holiness. Where there is life there is growth, and even when growth ceases there is a development and maturing of what is grown, unto increasing fruitfulness or usefulness. We say "normal," for even in the natural (which ever adumbrates[350] the spiritual) there is such a thing as stunted growth and arrested development—alas that we so often see examples of this among the Lord's people. Yet those very failures only emphasize the fact—testified to by every Christian conscience—that we *ought* to go on "from strength to strength" (Psa 84:7), that we *should be* "changed into" the image of the Lord "from glory to glory" (2Co 3:18), that is, from one degree of it to another. That such progress *is* our duty is clear from many passages: "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more" (1Th 4:1).

A controversy

It seems strange that there are those who not only repudiate in toto[351] any such thing as "progressive sanctification," but who are bitterly opposed to those who contend for the same, even though our contention be scripturally and soberly conducted; stranger still that those very men belong to the same denomination as John Gill.[352] They know quite well that those whom they condemn do not advocate any refining of the old nature or spiritualizing of the old man, nor have the slightest leanings to the evil dogma of fleshly perfection. Nevertheless, they continue to misrepresent and denounce them. It is quite true that the believer possesses a sanctification that is absolute and perfect, admitting of no degrees or improvements. Yet that does not alter the fact that there is another sense in which the believer's sanctification is a relative and imperfect one, and that the pursuit of holiness is to be his chief quest. Why confuse two totally different aspects of the subject, and refuse to recognize they *both* exist?

> *The adjuncts or properties of sanctification. First, it is imperfect in the present state, though it will most certainly be made perfect; where the work is begun, it will be performed. Sanctification in Christ is perfect, but sanctification in the saints themselves is imperfect: it is perfect with respect to parts, but not with respect to degrees. Sanctification, as a principle, which is the new creature or new man, has all its parts; though these are not grown up to the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ, as they will do. Where there is one grace, there is every grace, though none perfect. There is a comparative perfection in the saints when compared with what they themselves once were, and others are, and, when compared even with other saints, for one saint may have a greater degree of grace and holiness than another. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect" (Phi 3:15); and yet the greatest of those was not absolutely perfect, even the apostle himself, who said so in Philippians 3:12 (John Gill).*

Sanctification is imperfect and progressive.

That sanctification in the best of men is *imperfect* appears unmistakably from various considerations. *First, from the continual wants of the saints.* In this life they "hunger and thirst after righteousness," which shows they are not yet filled (Mat 5:6). They own themselves to be "poor and needy" (Psa 86:11): their strength is feeble, and they constantly require fresh supplies of grace to subdue sin, resist temptation, perform duties, and persevere in faith and in obedience. True, the grace of God is sufficient for them, yet they are bidden to seek it (Heb 4:16; Jam 1:5). *Second, it appears from the confessions of the same*: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect" (Phi 3:12). *Third, it appears*

from the defects of their graces. Let us ask those who repudiate progressive sanctification, "Is your faith such that there is no need for it to be increased—your love, hope, patience, meekness, goodness, self-control, such that there is no room for improvement?"

But though our practical sanctification be imperfect, it is *progressive*. "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Pro 4:18). Various figures are employed in Scripture to set this forth. The increase of grace in the believer was likened by Christ to "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mar 4:28). The Apostle John distinguishes the various stages of Christian growth by likening young converts to "little children," whose knowledge is small and strength weak; then to "young men," who are strong and vigorous and have overcome the wicked one; and then to "fathers" in Christ, who are mature and fruitful (1Jo 2:13-14). At first, light and discernment is very dim, like the sight of the man whose eyes Christ opened: he saw men like trees walking, but later all things clearly (Mar 8:24-25). There is such a thing as growing in grace, increasing in the knowledge of God, becoming more fruitful. To admit this, is to grant a progress in practical holiness.

Progress in sanctification is to be highly prized and sought.

An *increase of holiness* should be desired and sought by us above everything else. What a high price should we set upon closer conformity to Christ. How diligently should we hide God's Word in our hearts that we sin not against Him. How earnestly and frequently should we pray for the cleansing of our hearts and the renewing of a right spirit within us. Heavenly grace is to be prized above all the comforts, honors, and riches of this passing world. The approbation[353] of God is to be greatly preferred to the good opinion of men. Trials and afflictions are to be valued if they promote (as they should) our practical sanctification. If we are willing to take bitter medicine for the removal of bodily disorders, shall we murmur at bitter experiences sent for the purging of our lusts? If we can bear the pain of lancing[354] a festered limb, shall we fight against the knife of the Great Physician when He would let out some of our corruptions? Let, then, growth in grace be made the chief business of life, no matter what temporal sacrifices it involves.

Philippians 1:9-11

"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet *more and more* in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ. Being *filled* with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Phi 1:9-11). Those prayers recorded in Scripture are the outbreathings of holy men, expressing their deepest longings after those things that the Spirit in them deemed to be most excellent. Here the apostle besought God on behalf of the Philippian saints,

- first, for those graces in them which are the inward springs of holiness: love, and knowledge and judgment;
- second, that they might perform their duties with sincere hearts and God's approval to the end of their course;
- third, that they might be increasingly fruitful.

"That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment" (v. 9). Why is love first? Do not faith and knowledge, in the order of nature, go before love? Must we not know and

trust a person before we can love him? Ah, it is the *springs* of holiness which are here in view, and love is the more immediate, for "faith worketh by love" (Gal 5:6). "Provoke one another unto love and to good works" (Heb 10:24) is the order: stir up the principle of love till it be enkindled, and good works, as the flame, will arise. We are predestinated to be holy before Him in love (Eph 1:4)—holiness arises from love, and therefore is love the fulfilling of the Law. It is love that makes the divine commandments to be "not grievous" unto us (1Jo 5:3). Let us, then, see to it that our hearts be inflamed with the wondrous love of God for us.

"Love" and "knowledge"

The apostle adds, "That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge" (Phi 1:9). Generally, Christians have to pray that their love might keep pace with their knowledge, but here Paul prays that their knowledge might be equal to their love. Usually, the believer's intelligence is ahead of his affections; it was, it seems, otherwise with the Philippians. No doubt the reader has observed that there are, broadly speaking, two sorts of saints: affectionate souls, whose hearts are warm toward Christ and his people, but less intelligent in spiritual things; others more knowing, yet less passionate, though equally Christians. The primitive times give instances of each. The Corinthians were very intelligent (*see* 1Co 4-5), but they were short in love (1Co 8:2-3). The Thessalonian and Philippian saints were a more simple and affectionate sort of Christian, whose love exceeded their knowledge—hence this particular prayer on their behalf.

There is nothing more painful to behold than Christians, who are truly sincere in love and warm in zeal of God, falling into wrong courses through lack of needful light, by which to distinguish between truth and error, duty and sin, bringing dishonor upon the Lord, and being a stumblingblock to their fellows. Yet so it sometimes happens. If there are those who possess much light and knowledge, who are not so exercised about the sincerity of their heart and the uprightness of their walk as they ought to be, there are others whose affections are warm and who are conscious of their sincerity, yet largely ignorant of God's revealed will, nevertheless confident that their course is right, and unwilling to study the Word or listen to those who desire to teach them the way of the Lord more perfectly. It is the part of wisdom to be slow in engaging in any new course, for, once we are committed to it, pride makes it very hard to acknowledge we are wrong.

Love, then, needs the adjunct of light. Our affections require *directing* if they are to issue in righteousness. A longing to please God is the first essential; willingness to be instructed by Him therein is the second. Therefore, Paul here prayed for the Philippian saints that their love might "abound yet more and more in knowledge and all judgment." That is, that they might ever be able to distinguish between right and wrong and discern their duty in every case, however dark and doubtful or disputable it might appear. That knowledge is only obtainable through the Scriptures, and effectual by the Spirit's powerful application of the same. There is much fanaticism on this point today, which, though having a pious sound, is most dishonoring to God. We have personally heard more than one assert very emphatically that they were "prompted by the Spirit" to do a thing God has expressly forbidden. My reader, the Holy Spirit never prompts one to do anything which is contrary to the Scriptures, so a knowledge of *them* is essential if we are to ascertain whether our "prompting" be of the Spirit or the restless urge of the flesh.

"Judgment" (sense)

The apostle adds to knowledge "and in all judgment," or, as the margin[355] gives (preferably, we believe), "sense." This is where he places the emphasis, "in *all* sense," to denote this is of the greatest importance—such "knowledge" as has sense added to it. Thomas Goodwin very helpfully suggested that this term has a threefold force. First, as added to "knowledge," the two words together signify the same as the term *faith*. What is faith but a spiritual perception of spiritual things?[356] As God has placed in

our bodies senses suited to the material objects we come into contact with, so at regeneration He communicates that which is suited to the spiritual realm. There is no bodily sense but what faith is expressed by it. "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psa 34:8); "My sheep hear my voice" (Joh 10:27); "Which our hands have handled" (1Jo 1:1)—all referring to actions of faith.

Second, by "sense" is meant *experience*, which is a distinct thing from faith, as is clear from Romans 5:1-4. "Tribulation worketh patience," or submission to God, "and patience, experience." Did we not find in our afflictions that, after we had submitted to God (humbly bowed to His rod), He either delivered us from them or manifestly supported us under them? Thereby faith was strengthened against the next trial, for experience breeds "hope," or a confidence that God will conduct us safely through this wilderness and land us eventually in Canaan.[357] Experience, then, is an acquired knowledge based on sense. The possessor of it has learned for himself the reality of God and the sufficiency of His grace. Contrariwise, just so far as the tried Christian turns from God to self or the creature for help, will he discover how worthless it is to lean upon an arm of flesh. It is thus "by reason of use" that we learn to have our "senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb 5:14).

Third, by "sense" is meant those deep and blessed *impressions* on the soul, over and above the light of faith or knowledge by ordinary experiences. Such impressions truly are sense rather than knowledge, as all find who are favored with them. They are therefore said to "pass knowledge" (Eph 3:19) and are entitled "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" (Phi 4:7). The same is hinted at in Romans 5. First, the believer through being justified by faith has peace with God (v. 1). Later, his passing through tribulations develops his graces. Patience is strengthened, hope is kindled, "and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit" (v. 5). This assurance of God's love, then, is not apprehended so much by knowledge, as it is *shed abroad*, not in the understanding, but in the heart![358] So too, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1Pe 1:8). A high and heavenly sense of Christ is what is meant (compare John 14:21).

"Approve things that are excellent"

"That ye may approve things that are excellent" or (margin) "try things that differ" (Phi 1:10). An increase in love, knowledge, and sense issues in an enlarged ability in the understanding to discern, judge of, and approve spiritual things. There is more discretion to choose that which is best. What is here mentioned has reference to the capacity to detect counterfeits and contraries, with the additional idea of the judgment relishing, closing with, and cleaving to that which is perceived to be good. The same term occurs again in, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom 12:2)—that is, not only discern the will of God in its truth from falsehood, in all the latitude of it, but *approve* it. There is a variety and vastness in the duties commanded (and the sins forbidden), and to discern this, especially the spiritual part of them, calls for much holiness of heart and discernment of mind.

As there is a double meaning to the term "approve" (discern and esteem), so the objects approved may be understood in a twofold way. First, as "the things that are excellent," which agrees with "approve." Second, "things which differ" which corresponds to "try" or "discern" between good and evil. An increase of holiness in the heart enables the understanding to distinguish more readily between true and false doctrine, wherein so many go astray. Not only so, there is a choosing of and cleaving to the former, and a rejection of the latter. So very much depends upon the state of our hearts. Where *that* is healthy and the understanding properly enlightened, there will be wisdom in matters doctrinal and prudence in matters practical. "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phi 3:8), is the sure consequence of "love abounding yet more and more."

"Be sincere" and "without offense"

"That ye may be sincere" is the next consequence which follows from increasing holiness. Sincerity is opposed to what is counterfeit: "sincerity and truth" are joined together in 1 Corinthians 5:8. That is *sincere* which is genuine, right, true. "Sincere" (according to the derivation of our English word) means "without mixture of wax"; there is no pretense or mingling of the false with the true. In connection with piety, sincerity signifies a right intention Godwards. In 2 Corinthians 1:12 we read of "godly sincerity": a sincerity of which God is witness. It is joined there with "simplicity," which is explained in "if thine eye be single" (Mat 6:22)—the same word. We cannot, as the whitewashed worldling desires, serve two masters or mix fleshly craftiness with spiritual purity. Sincerity, then, is uprightness of heart, purity in its motives, aiming solely at the pleasing and glorifying of God.

"And without offense till the day of Christ" (Phi 1:10). The word for "offense" signifies the mistreadings, stumblings, and bruisings of the feet in walking. As in "sincerity," the intention of the mind is compared to the ("single") *eye*, so our actions are likened unto *steppings.* To be "without offense" is to avoid such ways as would induce others to sin or be occasions of stumbling. It is to give no scandal. Second, it is to refrain from any action contrary to the principles we profess before others: hence we find Paul blaming Peter and others for their departing from the truth of the gospel and "not walking uprightly" (Gal 2:14). Third, it is to keep from anything contrary to that light which the conscience has received to walk by. Now, in order to this blameless walk, we need to "exercise" ourselves (Act 24:16), and promptly confess and seek cleansing (1Jo 1:9) wherein we have failed.

"Fruits of righteousness"

"Being filled with the fruits of righteousness" is the final issue of increased holiness. Now a tree is said to be full of fruit when all its branches are laden therewith. A Christian is full of fruit when all the faculties of his soul and members of his body are active in obedience to God. As there is a superfluity[359] of evil flowing from the unregenerate, so there should be an abounding of goodness from the regenerate: "unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work" (Col 1:10). One virtue is to be added to another (2Pe 1:5-7). To be holy "in all manner of conversation" (1Pe 1:15) is the standard at which we must aim; and that not occasionally and spasmodically,[360] but at all times, and that unto the very end of our earthly course—"till the day of Christ."

"Which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God." Those fruits are "by Jesus Christ," first, because of our union with Him, as branches in the Vine. Second, because their life is that of the Spirit, which we have received from Christ. Third, because they are performed by motives drawn from Christ and are patterned after the example He has left us. Fourth, because it is for His sake God accepts them. And they are unto the "glory and praise of God" so far as that is our aim in them.

Summary

Here, then, is what we understand by "progressive sanctification" or increasing holiness: our love for God and His people waxing stronger and stronger, directed by spiritual knowledge and confirmed by spiritual perception—the result being that we have an enlightened understanding to perceive more clearly the path of duty, a heart that rings true before God, and a walk that is without scandal, making us fruitful both inwardly and outwardly, thereby honoring Christ and pleasing God.

(For part of the above we are indebted to Thomas Goodwin).

Its Progress, Part Two:
The Error of Sinless Perfection

Introduction

As there are some who deny that there is any such thing as "progressive sanctification," so there are others who go to an opposite extreme and contend for the attainment of "entire sanctification" in this life, teaching "sinless perfection" in the flesh. Yea, there have been and still are numbers of professing Christians who claim they have lived for so many years without the commission of any known sin. This book would lack completeness were we to ignore this phase of the matter, and, as the present stage seems to be the best one for considering this somewhat vexed question, we have decided to canvass[361] it, ere[362] proceeding further with our present aspect. Is it possible for a Christian to reach the point where he can live in this world without sinning?

Those who answer the above question affirmatively differ considerably among themselves as to what sin is, as to the standard and rule of holiness (that is, what law we are now obliged to fulfill), and as to the means whereby this perfection may be attained. We will not take the space to describe all the various brands of this error, but rather concentrate upon that which is most likely to affect some of our readers. As can readily be supposed, all "perfectionists" have low and defective views of both sin and holiness. This at once appears in their designating transgressions of God's Law mistakes of ignorance, infirmities, while Romanists distinguish between mortal and venial sins.[363] John Wesley[364] taught that "entire sanctification" in this life consists in "a state in which perfect faith in Christ and perfect love for God fills the whole soul and governs the entire life," so that "all inward disposition to sin, as well as all outward commission of it, is excluded."

What Scripture says

That *no man*, whatever his advantages and attainments may be, does arrive at sinless perfection in this life is clearly asserted in Scripture. "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (Pro 20:9). "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecc 7:20). "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal 5:17). "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after...Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended" (Phi 3:12-13). "For in many things we offend all" (Jam 3:2). "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1Jo 1:8). These divine testimonies are decisive and prove that we are utterly deceived if we suppose we are living without sin.

When, then, we read, "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not...Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1Jo 3:6, 9), it is certain the apostle did *not* affirm that every true Christian, or any *one* of them, is free from sin in this life, for he would not expressly contradict what he had said in this same epistle (1:8). No, his evident meaning is that none who is truly born of God and united by faith to Christ sins as do the unregenerate, or as he himself did before he passed from death unto life. He no longer lives in sin. He makes it not his trade and practice; rather does he now live a life devoted to Christ, though attended with much imperfection and defiled by much sin.

In like manner, those passages which speak of saints as "perfect" must be interpreted in harmony

with the general tenor of Scripture. Such a verse as, "Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight" (Isa 38:3), signifies *sincerity* as opposed to hypocrisy. Accordingly, such "perfection" as is mentioned in Scripture is explained as denoting *uprightness*: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil" (Job 1:1). Elsewhere, Job disclaims any pretentions to sinless perfection: "If I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse" (9:20). In a number of places in the New Testament "perfection" signifies maturity, in contrast from those who are babes and the inexperienced. He who carefully and impartially studies his Bible will discover that saints are not said to be "perfect" in any higher sense than these. Paul said emphatically, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect"—yet immediately after he spoke of himself and others as being "perfect" (Phi 3:12, 15). He must use that term, then, in two different senses, otherwise he would contradict himself.

A. A. Hodge[365]

First, the Scriptures never assert that a Christian may in this life attain to a state in which he may live without sin. Second, the meaning of special passages must be interpreted in consistency with the entire testimony of Scripture. Third, the language of Scripture never implies that man may here live without sin. The commands of God are adjusted to man's responsibility, and the aspirations and prayers of the saints to their duties and ultimate privileges, and not to their personal ability. Perfection is the true aim of the Christian's effort in every period of growth and in every act. The terms 'perfect' and "blameless" are often relative, or used to signify simple genuineness. This is evident from the recorded fact. Fourth, that all the perfect men of the Scriptures sometimes sinned, witness the histories of Noah, Job, David, and Paul (A. A. Hodge).

Robert Hawker[366]

Independent of what passeth in the day in those chambers of imagery within me, were I to be judged for what takes place in the watches of the night in my sleeping hours, even in those things which some may deem involuntary and perhaps venial, yet even here I find it good to confess guilt before God. I know not what the advocates of sinless perfection may think of this statement. It is possible they may assert that no responsibility is attached to any supposed or real criminality in sleep. And, indeed, I am not anxious to go into the inquiry, whether it be so or not. It is simply of the facts themselves for which I contend. Sure I am, that in a multitude of instances, while my body takes rest in sleep, there is another part of me, a thinking faculty, which doth not sleep, and which is not infrequently most busily engaged in thoughts and words and actions. And, indeed, at times so engaged in evil, as I should blush to communicate to the nearest and dearest earthly friend I have. It becomes an important question with such as those who insist upon sinless perfection to answer, from whence do such things arise? I stay not to determine the point as to my responsibility from them. Let that part of the subject be set aside. But it should seem to be a self-evident truth, that if evil were not within, such circumstances of evil could not be produced. They are the words of my Lord which saith, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies" (Mat 15:19).

Precious Lord Jesus! How can I, with such views of indwelling corruption, take confidence from any inherent holiness? Should I not tremble at the very thought of Thine inspection, if my acceptance before Thee is dependent upon the least atom of worth in me? If Thy Word be "quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow"; if this be a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," how 'naked and open' must be everything to Thy knowledge "with whom we have to do" (Heb 4:12-13). And should my Lord, as an almighty spiritual anatomist, cut down to the backbone of my frame, and throw open at one view the whole inward structure—shouldest Thou, great God, make bare the privy[367] chamber of my heart, the depth of which, and the workings of which, I myself cannot explore, but where all my "secret sins are in the light of Thy countenance" (Psa 90:8)—Lord, how should I stand before Thee in the discoveries Thou wouldest make, "whose eyes are as a flame of fire" (Rev 1:14)? And can I—can any man—in the consciousness of such things, be led to advocate the cause of sinless perfection? The question rings through all the chambers of the conscience, and the walls of the heart reverberate the solemn sound, and echoes to the inquiry, "How shall man be just before God? How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (Job 25:4).

When I look back to the days of old, when I consider the years of many generations, when I read the groans and self-reproaches of the greatest servants of the Most High, not in the days of their un-regeneracy, but many of them years after a saving work of grace had been wrought in their heart, I ask myself the question, "Did these men indeed feel what they have said; and, under such impressions, could anyone have made them believe the doctrine of sinless perfection? Nay, has God the Holy Spirit, in the history of those faithful followers of the Lord, given a single instance in all the Bible of such an one?" Gracious Lord Jesus! I desire to lay low in the dust before Thy divine majesty, under a conscious sense that "in me [that is, in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing" (Rom 7:18).

Yea, blessed Lord, let me go softly all my days under a deep sense of it, learning more and more my own nothingness, that I may therefrom, under God, know how to value more and more Christ's fullness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency. And if the daily workings of my heart do but endear my Lord the more to me, I am content to be indeed nothing, yea, worse than nothing, so that Christ may be glorified (Robert Hawker, 1820—a few words altered by us).

Finding the balance

Let it be clearly understood that we are *not* advocates of sinless perfection. While it be true, blessedly true, that the Law has been satisfied by the Lord Jesus for the justification of all His people, yet its righteous requirements upon us have not been abated one iota, for every Christian is under binding obligations to love the Lord with all his heart and his neighbour as himself. He is called upon to be holy in all manner of conversation, to lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset him, and to run the race set before him (1Pe 1:15; Heb 12:1). He is commanded to mortify his members which are upon the earth, to make no provision for the flesh, to abstain from all appearance of evil, to seek the glory of God in everything which he does (Col 3:5; Rom 13:14; 1Th 5:22; 1Co 10:31). Sin is never to be courted or allowed, but resisted and forsaken. The Christian is obligated to follow the example Christ has left him and walk in His steps. He is to constantly *aim* at sinless perfection, and, forgetting all past failure, strive for a complete conformity to Christ.

Everything in us and from us that is contrary to God's holiness is criminal. Every falling short of the perfect standard He has set before us is sinful, and is to be confessed by us. But it does not follow from this that any Christian has, does, or will in this life fully conform to the divine rule of duty. For that, the believer is wholly dependent upon God's sovereign grace. He is no more holy than he is made so by omnipotent operations of the Holy Spirit; and, though God requires him to be perfectly holy, yet He is under no obligation, by promise or any other way, to make the Christian perfectly holy in this world. His requiring of holiness does not imply any such obligation on His part, nor has He given any promise to that effect in the new covenant. But He has promised to *preserve* His people in holiness so that they shall not apostatize,[368] and He has promised to make them perfectly holy at their *glorification*, so that they shall never sin again for all eternity (1Jo 3:2).

How God uses our lack of perfection

As to the particular degree of holiness and the particular exercises of it in each Christian, God orders it as He pleases, to answer His own all-sufficient purpose. To one there is given five talents, to another only two. The Redeemer is able to make every believer perfectly holy at his first conversion, so that he should never be guilty of another sin. And had that been the wisest and best, it had been so ordered. Remember that God's thoughts and ways are high above ours (Isa 55:8), and the wisdom of this world is foolishness with Him. We may be certain, however, that it is most wise and best that none of the redeemed *should* be perfectly holy in this life, even though we were quite unable to now see any of the reasons *why* the redeemed are still in such an imperfect state and in so great a degree sinful, or the wise (if, to us, mysterious) ends which are answered thereby. A few of these shall now be mentioned.

First, if believers were now perfectly holy, they would not be so fit to live in this disordered, sinful world. There would not be that analogy of one thing to another which is observable in all the works of God, and which is proper and wise—that is, every creature being fitted to its particular environment: fish to water, birds to air, etc. This is not a world suited to be the dwelling-place of immaculate beings. But it *does* furnish a suitable scene and state of discipline to form and train the redeemed for a state of perfect holiness and happiness in another world.

Second, if Christians were perfectly holy in this life, it would not be a state of trial, as it now is. Their

temptations would be neither so many nor strong. Satan could not have so much power and advantage to harass them, seeking to seduce them; and their danger would not be so great and apparent. Consequently, they would not have the opportunity for the exercise of such graces as humiliation and repentance for their repeated sins, loathing themselves for the same, mortifying their lusts, longing for deliverance, and exercising faith and patience through such dark and disagreeable circumstances as now they have, and by which Christ is honored and themselves prepared for rewards in His kingdom.

Third, such a state of imperfection is both suited and necessary to teach them more effectually and make them feel by abundant experience the total depravity of fallen human nature, the evil character and odiousness of sin, the inconceivable and inexpressible deceitfulness and obstinacy of their own hearts, and their absolute dependence upon the sovereign grace of God to prevent their destruction and save them. Thereby are they enabled to perceive more clearly and appreciate more deeply the atonement that Christ has made for them, and the exceeding greatness of His power that preserves such wretches. Thereby they learn such lessons to better advantage in this state of imperfection and sin than they could in a state of perfect holiness.

Fourth, the power of God is much more conspicuous and sensible in maintaining a small degree of holiness in the heart of a Christian in the midst of the opposition with which it and he is surrounded and assailed, than in making him perfectly holy at once. In this way, the weak Christian, in the midst of strong temptations and powerful enemies, constantly exercising all their cunning to devour him, is upheld by the omnipotent hand of the Redeemer, and the little spark of holiness implanted in his heart is kept alive and burning, notwithstanding there is so much within and without tending to extinguish it. This is as great and wondrous a miracle as the preservation of a spark of fire year after year in the midst of the sea. The Christian is by his very situation and experience made in some measure conscious of this, and exclaims, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2Co 12:9).

Fifth, the wondrous condescension, goodness, tender love, infinite long-sufferance of the Savior are also exercised and manifested by His constant care of believers, though they be so imperfect and sinful, and offend in many things, and are often guilty of that which in itself is sufficient to provoke Him to give them up. There is much more opportunity for Him to act out and display His grace and forbearance, than if they were perfectly holy from the time of their conversion. This was illustrated by His attitude toward the first of His New Testament disciples. What selfishness, ingratitude, stupidity, and unbelief they manifested, yet how tenderly and patiently did He deal with them (Mat 16:5-12, 22-23; Luk 9:54-56). Thus He treats *all* His disciples while in this life. They are, in measure, conscious of this, and love Him all the more for it—though they grieve bitterly over their sin and failures.

Thus the wisdom and goodness of God appear in so ordering it that no man, even the most eminent saint, shall be perfectly holy in this life, but that all the redeemed shall in this world be very imperfect and sinful, for the reasons mentioned above and the ends which are answered thereby. More might be added, yet the half cannot be discovered by us now. A clear and full view of the infinite wisdom and goodness of God in this is reserved for the future state, when the saved shall review all the dispensations of heaven and ways of Him Who is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working" (Isa 28:29). Should the carping objector exclaim, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" The answer is, "God forbid" (Rom 6:1-2). Nor will those considerations exert any evil influence upon those whose hearts are right toward God—rather will they be the more thankful for the few rays of light that they cast upon a dark problem.

Summary

But, to turn to the more immediate aspect of our theme, though the believer be not perfectly sanctified in this life, he *does make progress* in holiness. This is clear from our Lord's words, "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (Joh 15:2). Every living branch in the Vine grows in grace and fruitfulness, or, to express it in another way, he advances both in the work of mortification and of vivification. Most frequently such growth is likened unto that of trees (Psa 92:12; Hos 14:5), and it must be borne in mind that they grow both downwards and upwards, by the deepening of their roots and the spreading of their branches—the one unseen, the other apparent to the eye. But it is this very fact which most deeply exercises an honest heart, for, so far from progress in holiness, he can perceive only retrogression,[369] and, instead of increasing fruitfulness, the decay of many of his graces.

The Christian's growth in grace is a mystery to be apprehended by *faith* rather than by sight. Our spiritual life is maintained by faith much more then the discerning of the increase of it. Yea, the spiritual life, strange and paradoxical as it sounds to carnal reason, is advanced *by contraries*: by falls and dissertations,[370] and therefore is discerned by faith rather than by sense, for "faith is the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). Moreover, the Christian's desires for grace grow larger, and his sense of want more acute (and this is a growth in itself), which hinders a perception of his progress: "There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches" (Pro 13:7). Again, there are great differences among Christians in the matter of growth. Some are planted in a congenial soil (under an edifying ministry), but with others it is quite different. Some are more shielded from temptations. Some grow without intermission (Col 1:6); others leave their first love. Some die early, and therefore God fits them for heaven the sooner. Some are most fruitful in their early days…others…bring forth most fruit in old age.

Its Progress, Part Three: Indicators of Progress

At the close of the last section, we pointed out that the present aspect of our subject is one that deeply exercises many of God's people. It is with the desire to remove some of their difficulties and to throw light upon their problems that we devote another section thereto. Let us begin by mentioning several things that do *not* denote progress in personal and practical holiness.

What does not indicate progress in practical sanctification

First, growth in grace is not an *advancing inoutward profession and ostentation*, so that men shall "think of me above" what I am indeed (2Co 12:6), but in inward and substantial godliness. When the roots of a tree do not strike deeper into the earth, yet its branches continue to spread, that is not true *growth*, for a strong wind will blow it over. Many people in Christendom are like that. There is a great spreading abroad outwardly and a plentiful show of leaves, but the fruits of vital piety are lacking.

Second, progress in holiness consists not in an *increase of gifts or enlarged abilities* for public service, but [in] an increase in graces. The Corinthians grew fast in gifts, so that they were enriched "in all utterance and in all knowledge...so that they came behind in no gift" (1Co 1:5, 7); nevertheless, the apostle told them that they were but "babes" and "carnal" (1Co 3:1, 3). And therefore did he point out to them "a more excellent way" (12:31), which (as chapter 13 shows) was the presence and exercise of *true grace*, even love to God and love to our brethren, an ounce of which is of more real worth than a ton of gifts—for "though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass" (13:1). Ah, my reader, you may not be able to pray in public as some do; you may lack their readiness of speech when talking of divine things; you may not be sought after to occupy positions of prominence in the church; but if you have a tender conscience, an honest heart, a gentle spirit, a forbearing disposition, you have that which is far more valuable than any gifts for public use.

Third, an increase in fruitfulness is not to be measured by the *success we have in our service to the Lord*. If He has called you to preach the gospel, and you now obtain fewer souls for your hire than was the case in former years, that is not (necessarily) to be taken as a proof of your spiritual decay. It is true that the conversion of souls under the labors of the apostles is called "fruit" by Christ Himself (Joh 15:16),[371] and it is also true that God generally makes the most use of those whose hearts and lives are the holiest. Yet it was through no recorded failure on his part that John the Baptist must "decrease" that Christ might "increase." Older ministers are often required to give place to younger ones, but this is not because of a decay of grace in them. If the minister's heart be large in its desires and he is faithful in his endeavors to do good, God will reckon more fruit to him than to others who are less faithful but more "successful."

Fourth, growing in grace and the bringing forth of more fruit is not to be measured by the *largeness or smallness of those opportunities we have for the doing of more or less good*. Some that have the most grace are often stationed in isolated places and are largely unknown to their fellow Christians. Some have larger opportunities when they are young and less when old, and yet they bring forth more fruit before God then than formerly, because He accepts the will for the deed. The public labors of the Baptist were ended when he was cast into prison, yet he brought forth precious fruits by not envying Christ because He [had] secured *his* disciples, but rejoiced that the work of God went forward—more grace was expressed therein than in many sermons. So Paul spent much of his later life in prison, yet the fruit he brought forth there was quite as valuable as his preaching.

Fifth, increasing holiness is not to be measured by *our inward comforts and joy*, but rather by the more substantial qualities of faith, obedience, humility, and love. Very often it happens that the fragrant blossoms of ravishments[372] fall off when the fruits of meekness, patience, and lowliness come on. What matters it though the gloss wear off, if the material be strong and substantial? Young Christians grow like new [musical] instruments: they have more varnish than the old, but they are not so sweet and mellow in sound. Often the decrease of joy is a means of increase of sincerity: lack of peace causes more exercise of faith, just as the taking away of floats compels the beginner to swim. One that has the assistance of floats and the stream with him appears to swim as well as another with more experience and strength, but remove the floats from him and pit him against the stream, and his progress is not so swift, yet is it more sure.

Sixth, there is great danger of being deceived over *inward affections,* for, even when they be drawn out unto Christ, yet their appearance may be greater than the reality. So often in a young Christian there is warm affection, yet much of self in it: great zeal, yet not a little of the energy of the flesh. He enters into duties more eagerly at first, but more spiritually later. New objects being set before him draw out after them the old nature as well as the principle received at regeneration. It was thus with Israel of old. They were obedient to Moses' call, and sang Jehovah's praises after their deliverance at the Red Sea (Exo 15:1, 20); yet it was not long before the mixed multitude lusted after the fleshpots of Egypt (16:3), and only the spiritual were satisfied with the heavenly manna (1Co 10:1-4). When fire is first kindled there is more smoke, but, after the flames come that control all into a narrower compass, the fire hath more heat in it. The believer's affections become purer, less mixed with the vapors of self-love as he grows in grace.

Seventh, we must not seek to determine our progress in holiness by *any one grace or the performance of any particular duty*, but take in the entire extent and latitude of character and conduct. One who has grown much in grace may be less in some kinds of duties than he was when a babe in Christ. Probably we then spent most of our available time in praying, reading, and meditating. Because we spend *less* time in them now, that is no proof of our spiritual decay: there are *other* duties to be performed that in earlier days were neglected but are now made conscience of. To have more time available for prayer and reading is most delightful to a spiritual soul, yet the faithful discharge of business or domestic responsibilities is more profitable to others and more pleasing to God, if He has so appointed them. The mother who is faithful in the home honors God just as truly and fully as the most self-sacrificing missionary.

What indicates progress in practical sanctification

But let us turn now to the positive side and note some of the indications in and characters of an increase in holiness.

First, we grow *when we are led on to exercise new graces*, and so add one to another as 2 Peter 1:5-7 enjoins. As our knowledge of Scripture increases, affections are awakened answerable to the truths newly discovered to us. At first, the Christian does not exercise all the graces of the new man, though all are in him. As in the natural we first live a life of semi-consciousness, then one governed by the physical senses, and then one of reason, it is much the same in the spiritual. There are various "grades" or "standards" that Christians go through, as children at school rise from inferior to the higher. First we are placed under the Law and have heart exercises awakened by its requirements; then under the gospel other affections are stirred into activity.

Second, we are increasing in holiness *when the same graces advance*, as when the Christian's love grows "fervent" (1Pe 4:8). Faith at first is like a tiny mustard seed, but afterwards it develops into a tree. An awakened sinner often casts himself upon Christ much as a drowning man clutches at a passing spar:

[373] later, he has a more intelligent perception of His suitability and worth, until he attains unto "full assurance of faith" (Heb 10:22). Thus in godly sorrow, when from mourning for sin because it is contrary to God's holiness, we go on to mourning over sin as grieving to Him Who loves us, we are growing in grace. So when we have more strength to resist temptations. So in prayer, when our petitions are more for spiritual blessings than for material mercies, when we learn to plead with God in a scriptural manner, when we pray much for others.

Third, we are increasing in holiness *when the duties we perform and the fruits we bear are more ripe, that is, more spiritual, and less juicy, that is, emotional*. Though they grow not in size or number—we pray not more nor longer—yet they are more holy, or more savoury and solid. It is a mistake to measure spiritual growth by the *multitude* of our performances: God prizes quality far more highly than He does quantity. When one is sick or aged, he is obliged to be less in active duties; but increased spirituality in those he *can* engage in more than makes up for this. One short prayer put up in faith, with a broken heart, is in God's sight more fruit than a long one or a day spent in formal fasting, in the same sense that the "widow's mite" was more than all the other gifts cast into the treasury (Mar 12:43).

Fourth, an increase of holiness is indicated *by the soul's becoming more firmly rooted in Christ*, and this makes the fruits more acceptable unto God. By being more rooted in Christ, we mean the believer's living more *out* of himself and *in* Christ. At our conversion we were emptied of self-righteousness, and as we grow in grace we become emptied of our strength, wisdom, abilities, so that we recognize with increasing clearness that without Him we can do *nothing* (Joh 15:1-8). So of our service, "Not I, but Christ in me" (Gal 2:20) is our ready acknowledgement. Consequently, when growth in grace is mentioned, "and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Pe 3:18) is at once added by way of explanation—for there can be no real growing in grace except as we increase in the vital and experimental knowledge of Christ. As to "worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phi 3:3) are the surest signs of grace, so of genuine growth.

Fifth, *the more we bring forth fruit in season*, the more fruit we may be said to bear, for it is the timeliness of them which enhances their value. In the natural, fruit which is *forced* by artificial means is never so wholesome as that which is ripened normally by the sun. There is a time for everything. To be studying the Bible when I should be taking needful recreation, to be praying when I should be discharging other duties, to regale[374] myself by happy fellowship with other Christians when I ought to be visiting the sick, or attending to the public means of grace when home duties plainly call for my attention, is to bring forth *untimely* fruit. So to rebuke when I should comfort, or comfort when I should rebuke: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver" (Pro 25:11). In Psalm 1 the righteous man is said to bring forth fruit "in his season." Young Christians are often set on good works by the devil that they are not yet qualified to perform.

Sixth, *when we grow more constant in performing duty, more even in a godly course, and more settled in our spiritual affections*, it is a sure sign that we are growing. Youth is more unstable than maturity, more given to change. The young believer is more influenced by his emotions than his judgment, and therefore more easily carried away by religious excitement, and more quickly discouraged when things go wrong. The development of patience and perseverance is a clear mark of spiritual growth. To go by fits and starts, to be much in duties for a while and then almost abandon them, to be on a mountain top one day and down in the valley the next, is a character of immaturity and weakness. But being not weary in well doing in the face of opposition, to continue pressing forward despite many failures, to go on seeking grace notwithstanding many refusals, denotes growth.

Seventh, we may be said to be increasing in holiness *when, although difficulties increase and opportunities lessen, we continue faithfully therein*. An orchard which produces fruit in a cold and uncongenial season, though it be less in quantity and quality, is really for it (relatively) to yield more than

if the year had been a warm and propitious one. The Lord takes into account the times and circumstances in which our lot is cast: "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience" (Rev 2:2).[375] Fidelity to Christ means far more in such an evil day as ours than if we were in the midst of a heaven-sent revival. Little is regarded by God as much as when His child has had to stand almost alone, when his strictness has been almost universally scoffed at by modern religionists.

Judge rightly

Our object in this section is to resolve a case of conscience, rather than handle the subject of spiritual growth in either a doctrinal or hortatory[376] manner. Instead of discoursing upon progressive holiness in general or seeking to urge believers thereto, we have sought to indicate, both negatively and positively, some of the marks of growth in grace [so] that an exercised soul might be able to discern more clearly his actual condition. It is most important that we should be able to judge rightly of our case and not flatter ourselves on the one hand nor deprecate[377] ourselves on the other. Some are more tempted to the former, others to the latter. It is easy to make a mistake and jump to a wrong conclusion. As in the physical realm, many suffering from insidious diseases suppose they are healthy, while others who are sound and vigorous imagine they are ill—so it is spiritually.

While it is the duty and privilege of the Christian to ascertain what progress divine grace is enabling him to make in his spiritual course, and to be assured he is not a fruitless branch of the Vine, yet God does *not* intend that he should be satisfied with his attainments or fall in love with himself. Far from it! Rather is it His design that he should live more and more out of himself, upon Christ. And it is for this reason that He suffers the most spiritual of His people to be constantly plagued by indwelling sin, and sees to it that they are kept continually busy in fighting the weeds that are ever threatening to crowd out the flowers and fruit in the garden of their souls. Should they become at all self-complacent, He will soon stain their pride by withholding the dews of His Spirit, and then their graces speedily wilt and wither. In such a case they are hard put to perceive any fruit at all.

In addition to all that has been said above, let it be pointed out that subsequent growth in grace is not nearly so apparent to our senses as first conversion is. That is a radical change from death unto life, from being brought out of darkness unto God's marvelous light, from no grace at all to the beginnings of grace in us—whereas that which follows is renewing of the life already received, additions of light, and further degrees of grace. To be translated out of a prison to a kingdom as Joseph was (Gen 39-41), would affect him far more than to have a new kingdom added to him later, as Alexander had. The very newness of grace in the first instance makes a much stronger impression upon the heart and understanding than do the later additions of it. When one takes up any art or science, growth is prompt, because everything we read thereon is novel,[378] whereas later, the same things are met with again and again, and that which is new is harder to discover, though now he learns more perfectly what he previously knew.

Evidences and characteristics of growth

Again, time must be allowed for growth and the discovery of it. "When for the time ye ought to be teachers" (Heb 5:12), implies that a sufficient space had elapsed for them to have passed the infantile stage. The sun's rising is slow and by degrees, so that its progress cannot be perceived till after its motion for an hour or so. Let it be remembered that things most excellent have the slowest development. Bulrushes and the weaker kind of plants shoot up swiftly, but oaks and other more solid trees grow very slowly. Moreover, there are great differences in the pace of growth even among the same specie of trees or animals. So it is spiritually. God has appointed the measure of growth in all His people, yet they are

brought to the fullness in very different times and ways.

Growth in mortification is evidenced by our denying self more and more, by the things of this world making less of an appeal upon us, and by a steadier and more regular watching over our hearts. Such work is new to us at first, and the putting forth of unaccustomed efforts is always more taxing than actions we are used to; but, as the habit is formed, the strain is not noticed so much. Moreover, an increase of spiritual (not intellectual) light[379] exhibits filthy corners in the heart hitherto unsuspected; consequently, the farther one proceeds with God the more *spiritual* his conflict becomes. When the believer resists, not only the grosser worldly and fleshly lusts, but also makes conscience of pride, self-confidence, impatience, unworthy motives, the weakness of his faith, and the sparseness of his love, then is he indeed growing in grace.

Growth in vivification is evidenced in further supplies of grace and the effects they produce. It may be asked whether every new degree of grace affects the whole of our souls, or if it be confined to one faculty? The answer is the former, for, as every new degree of light (as the sun rises) shines throughout the whole hemisphere, so new grace is diffused throughout the entire man—understanding, conscience, affections, and will—just as it did at our conversion. But may not one grace grow more than the other? Growth in our bodies is proportionate, one member together with another; so our graces all languish or thrive together (Heb 5:12-14). But some graces are exercised more and so abound more, just as, though our two arms both grow, yet through employing the right one more constantly it becomes stronger than the left.

It may be of interest to enquire whether this increase in grace be only by the normal and spontaneous development of the graces, or by a new addition to them. The latter. Just as a cloth comes out a deeper color each time it be dipped in the dye, every new degree of grace is by a fresh act of creation put forth by God. Therefore when David, being fallen, prayed for an increase of grace, he cried, “Create in me a clean heart, O God” (Psa 51:10). He Who begins the work by the same power perfects it. Every new degree of grace is called a fresh conversion. “When thou art converted,” said Christ to Peter (Luk 22:32), who was converted already. It is God Who “giveth the increase” (1Co 3:7). Yet, as pointed out in previous chapters, our concurrence is required.

(For much in the above we are indebted to Thomas Goodwin.)

Its Practice

Its Practice, Part One:
The Relation of Practical to Positional Sanctification

Ere seeking to open up this final phase of our many-sided subject, we had better make quite clear *the relation* between it and what has preceded. The believer possesses now a sanctification that is absolute, complete, and inalienable.[380] He was sanctified by God the Father from all eternity, when chosen in Christ and blessed with all spiritual blessings in Him (Eph 1:3-4). He was sanctified by God the Son at the completion of His redemptive work upon the cross (Heb 13:12). He was sanctified by God the Spirit at regeneration (2Th 2:13). Now this should, and does, produce radical effects in his life, though these effects vary considerably, both in specie[381] and degree, in different cases, which variations are, in their final analysis, to be attributed unto the sovereignty of God's grace. Looking at the same thing in another way, we may say that this grand blessing and gift, which is the believer's, entails definite obligations which he is required to discharge, and those obligations are what we are about to contemplate.

Does the fact of positional sanctification mean the saints do not strive for holiness?

The ideas of the natural man here, as everywhere, are at direct variance with God's. People generally suppose that holy conduct makes a saint; whereas God's way is to make saints, and then demand from them holy conduct. An attentive reading of the New Testament epistles will discover abundant confirmation of this. For example, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal 5:25): since the Spirit has regenerated us, our responsibility is to walk in newness of life. "I therefore...beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Eph 4:1): we do not become saints by walking worthily, but, because God has sanctified us in Christ Jesus, He bids us conduct ourselves suitably to such a high privilege. "Now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Eph 5:8). That is the divine order—an inestimable privilege is conferred, and then we are called upon to make a fitting response thereto.

As this is a point of first importance, and one that is woefully subverted in some quarters today, we beg the reader to bear patiently with us while we labor it a little further. "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (1Co 1:2). As we learn from the chapters that follow, the Corinthians were in a low spiritual and moral condition and were acting most unworthily of their high calling; nevertheless, they *were* saints and addressed as such. They were "saints" or "sanctified ones," not because they were perfect people, but because they had been sovereignly and supernaturally called of God; yet, alas, their conduct was most unsaintly. Theirs was, indeed, an extreme case, yet, for that very reason, it forcibly illustrates the point we are now pressing. God makes saints and then He bids them avoid everything incongruous[382] therewith. "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints" (Eph 5:3).

Not only are the saints exhorted to avoid everything contrary to their high calling, but they are to cultivate all that is consonant[383] therewith. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy [saints] and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering…" (Col 3:12). "Keep thyself pure" (1Ti 5:22)—not, "make thyself pure"—emphasizes the same thought. "The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness" (Ti 2:3). Their practical conduct should conform to their standing in Christ. Believers are, even now, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation," yet that did not hinder the apostle from saying, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1Pe 2:9, 11). Yes, it was because they *were* "strangers and pilgrims," and not in order to become such, that they were exhorted to act accordingly.

Men, in their fancied wisdom, may conclude that it had been much more conducive to holy living, to

have concealed the wondrous truth of the believer's completeness in Christ, and have left him to struggle on, stimulated by the thought that there is much for him to do and attain unto before he is qualified to enter into everlasting glory. Ah, but "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1Co 3:19), and, sad to say, His wisdom is foolishness to them. It is the very revelation of the exceeding riches of His grace that exerts the greatest influence upon the renewed heart. And, therefore, God had not only made known the completeness of His people's sanctification in Christ, but He uses the same to promote their spiritual purity. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1Jo 3:3; *see also* 2Co 5:14-15).

Errors about practical sanctification

Practical holiness is promoted by nothing but the improvement or use of *evangelical* principles and motives. It is men's misunderstanding of the true way of practical sanctification—by the exercise of faith and love—which has caused them to decline from the truth and accept the Papist, Arminian, and Antinomian errors, wherein Satan appears to their natural understandings as an angel of light. The believer's living unto God is *not* by his own power, but by faith's appropriation of the strength of *Christ*. Many suppose that the doctrine that we are here inculcating makes Christians careless of good works. Not so! It makes them careless of seeking to do them by their own natural power and in a way of slavish fear, and it makes them careful of relying on the grace of God and heartily desirous of doing that which is pleasing in His sight.

Yet that ancient objection is still made by those who imagine that the only effectual method of enforcing holiness is by telling people their ultimate salvation depends entirely on their own conduct and the determinations of their own will—supposing that to assure Christians they are already delivered from the wrath to come by their faith in Christ, thus freeing them from all terrors of hell, is to leave them without any argument or motive of sufficient force to produce practical holiness. Whereas the truth is that, if Christians have no better security against the wrath to come than from their own behavior and use of their wills, they, conscious of the deceitfulness of sin and of their own hearts, and of all the temptations and dangers attending their course, might indeed see reason for terror and dread, but in a manner and degree far from being favorable to inculcating holiness.

It is true that fear has its place and use for the restraining of sin, yet the proper principle of true holiness is *love* and the faith which works by love. But if the believer has nothing to look to for securing him against damnation but the exercise of his own will and the aids and assistance which he is free to use or neglect, then there will be cause for continual terror, such terror as has torment, and which is altogether inconsistent with that love which is the mainspring of holiness. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1Jo 4:18). How differently has the divine scheme of grace mixed and tempered things for the advancement of holiness! Though the salvation of God's people be secured upon the most solid foundation, yet there remains much for them to fear with regard to sin and its consequences, with regard to the terrible chastisements, both inward and outward, which God visits upon the iniquities of His people.

The truth about practical sanctification

Yet the Christian has, at the same time, a sure and well-founded hope, a strong consolation, a blissful prospect, and the most attractive motives which tend to increase love to God, and to His sovereignty and holiness, and to strengthen his heart in laboring for conformity to it. Thus we may perceive the wisdom of that scheme which, while placing the curb of fear upon the unholy and unruly passions of the heart, supplies motives which contribute much to the advancement of love and strengthening of the hearts of Christians in their course. By divine grace they have the greatest cause for that love which is the source of all acceptable obedience, yet a godly fear which is subservient[384] to that love, having its root mainly

in love itself. The grace of the new covenant has provided for the promotion of good works in a manner and degree far beyond what the Law of the old covenant produced.

Practical sanctification is required of the saints.

Practical sanctification is absolutely demanded of those who are sanctified in Christ. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1Th 4:3-4, 7). Those words, and there are many such in the New Testament, can only refer to our practical sanctification in daily life. We need to be much on guard here, lest in seeking to avoid the error of evacuating our perfect standing as God's holy ones, we fall into that other which evades the force of God's call to holiness of life. And let it be emphatically stated that the standard of practical holiness is *the holiness of God Himself*, and nothing lower. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Mat 5:48). "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1Pe 1:16).

The nature and extent of this calling to practical holiness is set forth in passage after passage. "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1Pe 1:15). "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" (2Pe 3:11). There is a special need in these days of factitious[385] morality and of false sentiments as to what constitutes evangelical holiness, to turn to the Word of God, that we may search and try ourselves and our ways by its unerring standard. Men, even Christian men, are ever prone to *select* virtues which they esteem and vices which they condemn—and the selection made by each individual is too apt to consist of virtues to which he is, or imagines himself, much inclined, and of vices to which he has, or thinks he has, little or no inclination. But the holiness of God demands he does not deal with a selection of virtues and vices; He requires holiness *in everything.*

The standard of holiness which God sets before us is, like Himself, perfect, and He will not lower it a single degree to meet our infirmities. He claims the whole being and requires holiness in every thought, word, and deed. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1Co 10:31). "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col 3:17). "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ" (1Pe 4:11). Nothing short of an all-embracing holiness will measure up to the standard God has set before us. It is not only the outward life but the inward also which is exposed to His searching light (Heb 4:12-13). Unto all the exercises and emotions of the heart, its motives and purposes, its affections and sufferings, God presents the claims of His holiness.

It makes nothing against the Scriptures quoted above that other passages in God's Word (like Rom 7:14-25; Phi 3:12-13) just as clearly show that *none actually attain unto* God's standard in this life, that our practical holiness falls far short of the perfection to which we are called, and is so often interrupted in its progress because the medium of its action and manifestation is weak and imperfect, and is tainted[386] by the "flesh," which ever lusteth against the spirit (Gal 5:17). On the one hand, we must steadily decline[387] to lower God's standard, confess the sad failure of our life and the many imperfections of our walk, no matter how humiliating this may be. It is because sinless perfectionists have such slight views of the enormity of sin, and such an inadequate conception of that holiness which God requires, that they are so easily deceived.

Christian reader, it is just because our sanctification in Christ *is* eternally complete and absolutely up to the satisfaction of God's thoughts and heart, that we are called to the pursuit of perfect holiness and are to be satisfied with nothing less. It is just because of this that we can never reach a point at which we may cease the pursuit. The goal of today must be the starting point of tomorrow, and so till the end of our earthly pilgrimage. "Follow peace with all, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb

12:14). In those words the Holy Spirit has not hesitated to predicate[388] eternal destiny upon the presence or absence of personal holiness, not because it rests on that, but because in the new creation there is never life without life's action—in God's husbandry, there is never root without fruit in some measure.

Practical sanctification reflects positional sanctification.

Practical sanctification, or holiness of heart and life, of character and conduct, is, then, a *reflection* or *manifestation* of that perfect sanctification which the believer has in and through Christ; yet it is now but a *dim* reflection at best, because obstructed by the flesh, which remains unchanged to the last. It is because of our consciousness of the *dimness* of this reflection that we so often become discouraged and distracted. A sincere soul is much troubled over his conformity to Christ, and is so often made to wonder whether the root of the matter be in him at all. Let it be said, then, for the comforting of such, that holiness is more *longed after* than realized in this life; yet this statement requires to be guarded, lest those not entitled to it should draw consolation therefrom. Not a few have a vague and general wish for holiness in the abstract while having no relish for it in the concrete and the details of what is involved in a close walking with God.

The Israelites of old were well pleased with the abstract idea of serving the Lord, and avowed their purpose of doing so. They said, "The LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins" (Jos 24:18-19). Certain of the Jews said to Christ, "Lord, evermore give us this bread" (Joh 6:34), yet when He told them what it was to have the Bread of Life, they were offended. Ah, when it comes to the actual point of treading the narrow way—of watching and striving against sin both within and without, of rowing against the stream of the flesh, of diligently using all those means which are necessary for communion with God—they falter, murmur, and do nothing.

These vague and idle wishes after holiness that many religionists have are but hasty and ill-considered, and not deliberate and serious. The hearing of a powerful sermon, or the reading of an impressive article, produces a real but evanescent[389] effect; and for the moment, such people are quite carried away. The commendations of holiness and the representations of its imperative necessity convince the mind, and they assent thereto, and promise themselves they will now make the pursuit thereof their chief business. Their emotions are stirred, the Word is received willingly, and they "consecrate" themselves afresh to God. But alas, their "goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away" (Hos 6:4). Only that of which God Himself is the Author will survive the testings of time and endure for eternity.

Practical sanctification is based upon God's grace.

The experience of such people is not bottomed[390] in grace, and therefore they have no spiritual sincerity to sustain them. *Their* desires after holiness are but empty wishes, unaccompanied by diligent and laborious efforts. "The desires of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour" (Pro 21:25). It is like saying, "O that I had a lovely garden," and then refusing to spade, plant, and weed it; or, "O that I were in such a place," and then to be too lazy to journey there. The wishes after holiness of this class are not steady and lasting but are quickly crowded out by lusting after other things. They are not prepared to "buy the truth" (Pro 23:23). But he who truly thirsts for God and yearns to be conformed to His image will put forth his utmost endeavors after the same. The language of the regenerate is, "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD [enjoy fellowship with Him] all the days of my life" (Psa 27:4).

"LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear" (Psa 10:17). How comforting is this for those lowly ones who sincerely yearn after personal

holiness! Their very yearning is a prayer, which reaches the ear of Him Who will not quench the smoking flax. "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them" (Psa 145:19). And again, "The desire of the righteous shall be granted" (Pro 10:24). Yes, not only does God hear the spiritual desire of His distressed child, but, in due time, He will fulfill it. That is a promise for *faith* to lay hold of, for its accomplishment is not in this life, but in the next. Meanwhile, our duty is defined in that word, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psa 37:4). Meditate upon His wondrous perfections, seek communion with Him, honestly endeavor to please Him.

Since God has promised to grant the desire of the righteous, how important it is that the Christian should watch against *the abatement*[391] of his spiritual longings. If a man loses his natural appetite, his body soon languishes. So it is with the soul. True, *we* can neither give ourselves an appetite nor retain it, but we *can* do those things that will greatly impair it, and it is our responsibility to avoid whatever is injurious to our health—true alike naturally and spiritually. It is the Christian's duty to do as those who would keep in the fire: cherish the spark, blow upon the embers, add more fuel to it. On the one hand, we must guard against those things which would chill and quench our love for God; and, on the other, we must "strengthen the things which remain" (Rev 3:2).

Its Practice, Part Two
Hindrances and Objections

Because they have been perfectly sanctified by Christ, and because they have been made saints by the Holy Spirit, believers are called upon to lead saintly lives, that is, to yield unto God the throne of their hearts and aim at His glory in all their conduct. Therein does the *practice* of sanctification actually consist. It is the fitting response that the Christian is required to make unto the amazing grace that has been shown him. Negatively, he is to avoid everything that is contrary to and inconsistent with his high calling in Christ. Positively, he is to seek after and cultivate whatever will manifest and adorn the same. God claims the entire being, and demands holiness in every thought, word, and act. The standard of personal holiness that He has set before us is one of flawless perfection; and at this, we must constantly aim.

Things that hinder practical sanctification

At the close of the last section, we pointed out how important it is that the Christian should watch against the abatement of his spiritual longings, and avoid whatever tends to dampen his love for God and dull his appetite for spiritual things. Let us now mention some of the things that bring deadness upon the soul and greatly hinder the practice of sanctification.

First, *the committing of sins that have not been duly repented of.* Where sin is not fully repented of, it is *allowed* (condoned), and therein the Holy Spirit is resisted and grieved. Consequently, He withholds both His comforts and His grace, and the believer's strength is greatly reduced. God will not be trifled with, and when He is offended thus, He smites the heart with deadness and hardness, so that the spiritual life is much impaired and power for holy living is considerably reduced. Learn, then, to stand in awe, not only of great, but [also of] smaller sins.

Second, *slackness in the performance of duties*, especially neglect of those means of grace whereby the Christian is kept healthy and fresh in living unto God. Slothfulness and carelessness more often steal in upon believers than positive outbursts and commission of sin. They are more insidious, less likely to be judged by them, and are frequent causes of deadness of heart. This sluggishness of soul is most reprehensible, for it is a despising of the means God has appointed for our good. To expect grace from God when we turn from the channels through which it flows is to tempt Him or act presumptuously. To lie upon a bed of ease and then say Christ must do it all is a species of hypocrisy. When the spouse sleeps, Christ withdraws (Song 5:6). Grace was never intended to incite to idleness. The fact that *God* works in us is the very reason why *we* must work (Phi 2:12-13).

Third, *ingratitude, or lack of thankfulness for those spiritual benefits we have already received.* God requires to have His gifts acknowledged, therefore does He often stay His hand and suspend the influences of His grace where His bounty be not owned. "Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Col 2:7)—the way to grow in faith is to be thankful for what we *have* received, and not, under a pretence of humility and modesty, deny that we have any! To bless God for the grace he has already bestowed is an effectual means of retaining it and of having more added to it. But if you are ungrateful and querulous,[392] be not surprised if deadness and discouragement of heart come upon you.

Fourth, *fleshly indulgence and flirting with the world* is a great hindrance to the practice of holiness. Just so far as we gratify the flesh, we are straitened[393] in the spirit, and to the extent that we seek comfort and satisfaction from the world do we deprive ourselves of the grace and joy there is to be found

in Christ. An immoderate use of earthly things, an inordinate affection for human objects, an unequal yoke with unbelievers, brings deadness upon the soul. How much, then, we need to make that prayer our own: "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way" (Psa 119:37). The Spirit is grieved when we become addicted to vain pleasures, and therefore as sensuality increases the vitality of grace in us decays.

Other things injure the life of practical holiness, but we name only two more. [Fifth,] *pride in spiritual attainments*. When we take credit to ourselves for our growth in grace or victories over sin, the Spirit is grieved and His operations cease.[394] "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (Jam 4:6). He is jealous of His honor and will not divide it with us. The garland[395] we put upon our own heads soon withers, and those gifts we become puffed up with are quickly blasted. By humiliating falls, God teaches us to ascribe all glory to Himself.

[Sixth,] *heavy troubles, temporal reverses, family bereavements, the loss of health* dampen our spirits and retard the wheels of spiritual action. Therefore we find the Psalmist praying, "I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word" (Psa 119:107).

Probably there are not a few of our readers ready to exclaim, "In the last few sentences you have placed your finger closer to the seat of *my* trouble than in any of the previous points. It is the difficulty of the way, the trying nature of my circumstances, the unsuitable environment in which I am placed that really makes it impossible for me to live a saintly life and be a fruitful Christian." Ah, my friend, *that* is no valid excuse. The heavier be the pressure upon us, the more it should drive us to our knees. The deader we feel ourselves to be, the more earnest should we cry unto God for Him to quicken us. Was it not so in the case of the Psalmist? True, he was "afflicted very much," yet he did not give way to despondency and conclude his situation was beyond relief. No, he turned unto God and sought fresh supplies of grace.

Objection: "Are some exempt from practical sanctification due to their circumstances?"

"If one is placed in circumstances quite decent and honourable, yet not conducive to holiness, where does sanctification count in one's life?" This question was recently sent us by a reader who was much interrupted while writing us, and apologized for the wording. But the thought is quite intelligible. Let us express it in a variety of forms. If one be placed in circumstances where there is nothing to encourage striving after a closer walk with God, how can he expect to thrive like those who are more congenially[396] situated? If one be obliged to work day after day among a company of the godless, and even in the home meet with opposition and ridicule, will not the fruits of the Spirit be necessarily chilled? If one has so many domestic duties to perform that there is scarcely any time available for the cultivation of personal piety, and, when at night she is too exhausted to read with profit, how can one expect to grow in grace?

Let us begin our answer to these very pertinent inquiries by affirming that there are no "circumstances" which are uncongenial to the cultivation and exercise of personal holiness, no environment or situation in life which is unsuitable to a close walking with God. We quite understand what is in the mind of the above questioner, and fully appreciate the force of his difficulty; but he is failing to take into account several vitally important considerations, and it is his very failure in overlooking these considerations which will make him the more surprised at the answer we have given. Well can we imagine some saying, "Ah, you would not be so quick to affirm that no circumstances are uncongenial to personal holiness if you had to live your life as and where I am compelled to live mine."

The divine side

Bear with us for a few moments, dear friend, and seek to weigh impartially what we now write. Take first the *divine* side of the matter. Is it not *God Himself* Who regulates all our "circumstances"? Most certainly it is, for it is written, "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom 11:36). Then it is *God*, and not blind fate, not a fickle "fortune" (or misfortune), Who has placed you in the very situation which you now occupy! He is the One Who planned from all eternity the very environment which you are now in. To believe otherwise is virtual atheism! Moreover, if you are His child, then He always has in view your highest and ultimate welfare. "For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28). And that "all things" includes your unpleasant "circumstances"!

The human side

Now let us turn to *the human* side of the matter, by which we mean the *response* which you ought to make to what has just been pointed out. Your first duty is to *exercise faith* in the above passages, and recognize God's shaping hand in your present lot. Your second duty is obviously to humbly submit and *be content* with what God has appointed, and not chafe and murmur at it, for that is nothing but a species of rebellion against the providential will of God. Not only will it not help you, but it is folly to envy those whom you suppose are more favorably situated for the cultivation of holiness. *Every* situation has its own (relative) disadvantage and difficulties. You little know of the temptations which the "favorably situated" ones encounter!

Your third duty is to humbly but earnestly beg God to sanctify the "circumstances" to you. He is able to bring good out of evil, to make a real blessing [of] what now seems to be a serious hindrance. Nothing is too hard for God to accomplish. He can bring a clean thing out of an unclean. He can make the desert to rejoice and the wilderness blossom as the rose. He can make the feeble mighty and bring the dead to life. Surely, then, He is well able to sanctify to your soul the most trying situation, the most unpropitious[397] environment, and make fertile to you its sterile soil. The fact is, dear reader, that that very lot you find so hard to bear only provides a suitable opportunity for you to prove the sufficiency of God's grace.

Ah, *that* is the very essence of the matter. If you definitely and diligently seek grace from God and are then enabled to be submissive, trustful, humble, patient, unmurmuring, thankful that your lot is not far worse than it is, then you *are* bringing forth the fruits of holiness! Are we not told that "a meek and quiet spirit…is in the sight of God of great price" (1Pe 3:4)? Yes, valued by Him more highly than some of the showier gifts which others are permitted to exercise in the pulpit. All plants are not the same, nor do they all thrive equally well in the same kind of soil. Likewise, there is great variety in the graces of the Spirit, and *different environments* are needed for their cultivation and manifestation. Shall the fern complain because God placed it in a damp and shaded nook? Shall the water lily murmur because a pond rather than a garden be its dwelling place?

Objection: "The call to practical sanctification only condemns my failure."

"Alas," you say, "how that *condemns* me! How sadly have I failed to see God's will appointing and His hand shaping my circumstances. I am almost, if not quite, as blind as the grossest skeptic. Of course I am quite familiar with the words, 'All things work together for good to them that love God,' but I have never applied them to the *unpleasant* details of my life. And, oh, what complaining, impatience, unbelief, rebellion, I am guilty of! Truly I am like 'a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke' (Jer 31:18). I must admit how often I have envied those whose path appeared to be much smoother and easier than mine, and it *does* seem to me that if I had more leisure or a stronger body, and close contact with those who are

spiritually minded, I would make better progress.

"As for the third duty you mentioned, I *have* begged God to sanctify trials to my heart, to give me strength to carry the cross, to make a blessing to me those things which I find most unpleasant. Oh, how earnestly and frequently have I besought Him for grace to be meek and quiet, content and unmurmuring, patient and trustful. But alas, I cannot have His ear, for I often find the more I pray the more trying things become and the worse I am. I acknowledge that I am a complete failure and feel utterly discouraged. I know not what more to do, and can only cry out, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' (Rom 7:24). Tell me, is there no remedy, no relief to be obtained, no way in which I can obtain deliverance from my sinful self?"

It is just at this very point that the religious quacks of the day so often obtain a hearing, and persuade distressed Christians to give a trial to *their* remedy. Struggling against the power of indwelling sin, often tripped up by Satan, brought to seriously question their regeneration, at their wit's end to know what to do for relief, certain preachers will assure them that God has provided for just this contingency. Varying somewhat in their terms (according to the particular school they belong to), they will tell such an one whose experience we have described above that he or she has been "justified" but not yet "sanctified," and that if "the second blessing" be sought and obtained, a tremendous difference will follow. Or, the distressed one will be informed that what he needs is the "filling" or "baptism of the Spirit," or that "the higher life" or "the victorious life" is what provides the grand panacea[398] for all his ills.

The erroneous solution of a "second blessing"

Let us take the "second blessing" people first. This blessing is referred to by them as "entire sanctification," "perfect love," and "complete cleansing." They insist that it is a second work of grace wrought in the believer, as definite and distinct as what took place at his conversion. They teach that the first blessing bestows the *pardon* of sin, whereas the second removes the *root* of sin, purifying the heart from all corruption. They claim that those who enter into this second blessing may live a life which is without spot or blemish, wholly acceptable unto God. Its leaders affirm that they are entirely delivered from evil inclinations, all inward pollutions, that temptations only come to them now from without, and that the fiery darts of the wicked one fall harmlessly against the shield of their faith. They are pure internally and victorious externally—filled with perfect love, peace, and joy.

This second blessing is entered into by the seeking soul "laying his all upon the altar," unreservedly consecrating himself to God. He must believe without the slightest doubting that the Lord is able and willing to perform this work of grace in him and eradicate the sinful nature from his being. He is told that just as surely as the Lord sent down fire from heaven and consumed the sacrifice which was placed upon the temple altar of old, so the Holy Spirit will now come as a flame of fire and burn up his evil propensities, root and branch. He is informed that the secret of the whole thing lies in the exercise of childlike faith. Having placed his all upon the altar, he must be fully assured that God has accepted his sacrifice, and totally ignoring the evidence of his senses and feelings, he is to believe the great work is done, that he is now entirely sanctified, that sin has been eradicated from his being, and he must now thank God for it and testify to his fellows that the second blessing is his.

What shall we say of these things? First, that they are an utter delusion, a religious mirage which mocks the weary traveler across the desert of time. They promise that which is unfulfilled and unattainable in this life. Second, they cruelly raise hopes in the heart of distressed people, the dashing of which leaves them in a far worse state than they were before. These poor souls have implicit confidence in their teachers, and carry out their instructions to the letter, and when they find the result is not what they were told, they blame themselves—for their lack of faith, etc. In the course of our experience we have met with numbers who have honestly and earnestly sought this "second blessing" of "entire sanctification," only to meet with disappointment and then sink into abject despair. Some of them

(known to us personally) ended in the madhouse, while others committed suicide. Third, such teaching is directly contrary to the Word of God and therefore is to be shunned as a plague.

The erroneous solution of a "higher life"

A few words now upon the "higher life" teaching. While not so extreme and pernicious as the former, it is nevertheless delusive and disappointing. There are various schools with different terms to describe their "blessings." But that which is common to them all is this: God has provided something far better for His children in this life than that which merely accompanies conversion, something which if sought and received will lift them above the level occupied by so many Christians, which will deliver them from an up-and-down experience, from doubting and mourning, and make them overcoming believers. Though the "flesh" be not eradicated, they will now live constantly in the Spirit. Though the sinful nature be not removed, they will have complete victory over it. Though they are yet feeble and fallible creatures, the Spirit will so fill and energize them that they shall possess wondrous "power for service" and become successful "winners of souls for Christ."

And how is this wondrous change brought about? What must one do who is keenly desirous of entering into this blissful experience? Various answers are returned. Some say we must wait upon God and continue in earnest prayer, pleading Christ's promise, as the disciples did the ten days preceding Pentecost. Others say at conversion we simply accepted Christ as our Savior, and that now we must surrender to Him as "absolute Lord and Master of your life, so that never again will you question His authority or disobey His commands." Still others tell us that the reason why we have failed so sadly hitherto is because we have attempted to resist the devil and overcome sin in our own strength, but that if we now receive Christ in His fullness, turn the battle completely over to Him, and trust Him moment by moment, we shall be more than conquerors.

What shall we say to these things? First, that they are entirely without Scriptural warrant. Where is there any record in Acts of the apostles revisiting their converts and telling them of something far better than what became theirs at conversion? Where is there anything in the epistles (some of which were addressed to churches in a very low spiritual state) exhorting the saints to seek a "baptism" or "anointing" of the Spirit? There is none! Second, to talk about first accepting Christ as Savior and then surrendering to Him as Lord betrays a deplorable ignorance or perverting of the Scriptures. He must be received as Lord *before* He becomes the Savior of any. The New Testament uniformly refers to Him as "Lord and Saviour" (2Pe 3:2, 18), never as "Saviour and Lord!" Third, the closing sentences of the last paragraph are absurd: where is the truly born-again soul who seeks to overcome sin in his own strength? A prayerless Christian is a contradiction in terms. The very fact that he *is* a Christian ensures that he has learned of his own powerlessness (Phi 3:3), and that he now seeks grace and help from God.

Surely if ever there were a saint who fully surrendered the throne of his heart to the scepter of Christ, who was filled with the Spirit, and who had entered into God's best for him in this life, it was the Apostle Paul. Was, then, *he* completely free from sin? Did he fully measure up to the standard of holiness God has set before us? Were there no faults and failings in his Christian life? Witness the sharp contention between him and Barnabas (Act 15:39), and remember that it always takes two to make a quarrel. Hear him acknowledging, "Without were fightings, within [not all was perfect peace, but] were fears" (2Co 7:5). Observe his vacillation in 2 Corinthians 7:8, first, determining to sharply rebuke their sin, then sorrowing because he had done so, lest their feelings had been unduly hurt, and then regretting that he had been sorry. If any reader be inclined to give ear to the errors we have mentioned above, we beseech him to candidly test them by the apostle's own experience:

> *"…I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I…For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do…O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord…" (Rom 7:14-25).*

"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phi 3:11-14).

Conclusion

Summary

The doctrine of sanctification is of such vast importance, occupies so large a place in the Word of God, and is so many-sided in its scope, that we deemed it well to write thereon at length, especially as it is so little understood today. It seemed necessary to approach the subject from various angles, to distinguish between its several parts, and to consider separately its different aspects. Having done so, perhaps we can help the reader most in this conclusion by briefly reviewing the ground we have covered, summarizing the explanations and expositions given, and endeavoring to further clarify one or two points which may not yet be quite clear to the interested reader—after which we would strongly advise those who desire to get a clear grasp of this blessed truth to *re-read* the book, setting aside all other reading while he does so.

Sanctification is an act of the Father, then of the Son, and then of the Holy Spirit, whereby God's people are *set apart* for His delight and glory. It is a *cleansing* of their persons so that they may be fitted for God's use; while it is also the *adorning* and making meet of those who are going to dwell with God forever. He not only accounts the believer holy in Christ, but He makes him so in himself, by communicating to him a principle of holiness and by the Holy Spirit's making his body His temple. The sanctification of the believer must be considered under its three tenses: he has already been sanctified, he is now being sanctified, and he will yet be fully sanctified in the future.

The sanctification of the believer is a moral quality imparted to him at regeneration, which is the same in its nature as that which belongs to the divine character. It is the image of God—lost by the first Adam, restored by the last Adam—stamped upon the heart, consisting of righteousness and holiness. It is the very antithesis of sin: as much so as light and darkness, death and life, God and the devil. As all sin is a transgression of the Law, true sanctification brings its possessor into conformity to the Law. Sanctification is, therefore, an integral and essential part of *salvation*, being a deliverance from the pollution and power of sin, causing its recipient to love what he once hated, and to now hate what he formerly loved.

In order to get a clear grasp of the whole subject, it is very necessary to distinguish sharply between its two principal aspects: the *positional* and *practical* holiness of the believer, that is, the *status and state* which the meritorious work of Christ has given him before God, and the *response* which this calls for from him. This vitally important distinction will be best observed by us as we view the subject under its two chief aspects: the divine inworking of holiness and the human outworking thereof. This outworking, or performance of practical holiness, issues from the principle of grace received at the new birth and proceeds along the lines of mortification and vivification, or, denying unto sin and living unto God.

There are two great dangers against which we must be continually on our guard: that of dwelling so much upon the believer's perfect sanctification in Christ that he has little or no concern about the cultivation of practical holiness, and that of being so occupied with the practical holiness and our failure to measure up to God's standard of the same, that we lose sight of and cease to live in the joy and power of that holiness which we have in our covenant Head. Some are more prone to the one, some to the other. It is most essential that we preserve a balance between the objective and subjective sides of the truth, yet this is far from being an easy attainment. On the one hand, the renewed soul can only enjoy real peace by looking away from self with all its failures unto the One Who has met every requirement of God for us.

On the other hand, the heart can only be kept right before God as we make conscience of all known sins, judge ourselves unsparingly for them, and penitently confess the same.

Each part of our sanctification is inseparably connected with the other. The elect were first sanctified by God the Father before the foundation of the world, when by an act of His will they were blessed with all spiritual blessing in Christ and much graced in the Beloved. Second, they were sanctified by the incarnate Son of God, Who, by His infinitely meritorious work, has set the elect before God in all His worthiness and surety perfections. A perfect holiness is as indispensable as a perfect righteousness in order to have access to and communion with the thrice holy God, and in Christ we have the one as truly as we have the other, for by His one offering He has perfected us forever. Yet is it absolutely necessary to mix faith therewith if we are to live in the power and enjoyment of the same, and that is not possible until we are, third, sanctified by the Spirit.

It is only by means of the Spirit's sanctifying us that we obtain personal proof that we are among the favored number of those sanctified by the offering of Christ, for it is by His operations alone that we are capacitated[399] to enter into the good secured for us by the Redeemer. But it is *this* aspect of our subject that presents the acutest problem to the conscience of the believer, who, conscious of such an ocean of corruption still raging within, finds it so difficult to be assured that a supernatural work of grace has been wrought in his heart. It is therefore of great importance that we should be quite clear upon this branch of our theme, and ascertain what the sanctification of the Spirit consists of, and what is not included therein —that is, it does not involve the eradication of the carnal nature in this life.

Positionally, our sanctification by the Spirit results from our being vitally united to Christ, for the moment we are livingly joined to Him His holiness becomes ours, and our standing before God is the same as His. *Relatively*, our sanctification of the Spirit issues from our being renewed by Him, for the moment He quickens us we are set apart from those who are dead in sins. *Personally*, we are consecrated unto God by the Spirit's indwelling of us, making our bodies His temples. *Experimentally*, our sanctification by the Spirit consists in the impartation to us of a principle or "nature" of holiness whereby we become conformed to the divine Law. Thus, our sanctification by the Spirit is the outcome of that supernatural operation whereby we are "created in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:10), which radically distinguishes us from the ungodly, and capacitates us to walk in faith and obedience.

In carrying on His work of grace in the believer, God does not set aside his accountability and deal with him as a mechanical robot. No, He enforces the believer's responsibility by enlisting his cooperation and by blessing his use of the appointed means. The Christian life is a vigorous warfare, and holiness is only prompted in his heart and life by his watchfulness and alertness, striving and contending against his spiritual foes. The life of faith and the race of holiness cannot be maintained except by diligent attention, earnest effort, and perseverance. Carelessness and slothfulness are dangerous and, if persisted in, are fatal. Mortification and vivification are absolutely necessary.

Sanctification, then, is a *blessing* which the elect have received from God the Father, a blessing which includes their being eternally set apart or consecrated for His pleasure, the cleansing of them from all that would unfit, and the adorning of them with all that is necessary, to make them meet for His use. It is a *gift* which they have in and through Christ—a perfect, inalienable, and eternal gift. It is a *moral quality*, communicated by the Holy Spirit, an holy principle or new nature. It is also a *duty* that God requires from us. To insist that the pursuit and practice of holiness is our obligation in nowise clashes with God's free grace, for, while it is true that we can perform no part of our duty except by divine grace, it is equally true that God's grace is given to us for no other reason[400] than that we may rightly perform our duty. Divine grace and our obedience *are* opposed in justification (Rom 11:6), but *not* so in our sanctification (Phi 2:12-13).

2 Corinthians 7:1

If there be one verse in the New Testament which comes nearer to furnishing us with a complete outline of the essential features of our subject, perhaps it is, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2Co 7:1). This is an exhortation unto the practice and performance of holiness. Four things in it are to be duly noted. First, the *basis* of the appeal, namely, the fact that God has made precious promises unto the believer—the particular reference being to those given in the closing verses of chapter 6. Second, the *task* set before us, namely, to cleanse ourselves from all that defiles, outwardly and inwardly. Third, the aim or *design* of this, namely, the effecting of holiness. Fourth, the *dynamic* for the same, namely, the fear of God. Let us enlarge a little upon these points.

The duty here enjoined is that we "cleanse ourselves," and this, not in order to win God's regard for us, but because we are already His "dearly beloved." It is the response that we ought to make to the wondrous grace that has been shown to and bestowed upon us. The emphasis is thrown upon the Christian's responsibility and the discharge thereof. A prayerful pondering and an earnest effort to obey this call is very necessary if we are to be preserved from that deforming lopsidedness which is so prevalent in Christendom today. "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," *is as much a part of holy Writ* as is, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin"; yet for every time 2 Corinthians 7:1 is quoted, probably 1 John 1:7 is cited a hundred times. That ought not to be!

Sin is polluting and defiling and is no more to be tolerated by the saint than is physical filth. If we are careful to keep our bodies clean, much more diligent should we be in seeing to it that the soul be kept pure. Just so far as we entertain the idea that sinning is unavoidable, that it is an inevitable part of our daily lot, will we lose sight of its heinousness, cease judging ourselves, and become the prey and sport of the evil one. "Awake to righteousness, and sin not" (1Co 15:34), is the standard which God has set before us, and at which we must constantly aim. We are duty bound to cleanse ourselves from all that defiles us, both inwardly and outwardly, and to "keep ourselves unspotted from the world" (Jam 1:27).

Let it be remembered that holiness of *heart* is the chief part of our conforming to the spiritual Law of God, for no outward work is considered by Him as holy unless the heart be right before Him, for it is the heart which He sees and tries. Inward purity—that is, the disallowing, resisting, striving against the motions of sin within us—is absolutely necessary for maintaining external purity of practice, integrity, and righteousness. Out of the heart are the "issues of life." What most prevails *there* is what comes forth into more or less open manifestation. When sin in general or any lust in particular is entertained in the heart, it will be likely some time or other to force an eruption. Hence the tremendous importance of, "Keep thy heart with all diligence" (Pro 4:23). Cleanse yourself from pride, unbelief, impatience, covetousness, an unforgiving spirit, levity,[401] hypocrisy—everything contrary to true piety.

"Perfecting holiness in the fear of God" is to be the believer's aim and design—to walk worthy of his high calling, to act consistently with his standing and state in Christ. Having been made a saint by the sovereign and effectual call of God, saintly conduct is to be his constant endeavor. Sanctified condition is both the starting point and motive of practical holiness. "Perfecting holiness" *does not mean* that the holiness which the believer now has before God is defective and incomplete and needs to be augmented by his own efforts. No, indeed. He has already been "perfected forever" by the one offering of Christ (Heb 10:14). The meaning of this word "perfecting" is that we are to *carry out to its proper issue* the gospel which is ours in Christ, and this we are to do by cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. But as this term is much misunderstood in other passages, we will add a few remarks upon it.

"But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected" (1Jo 2:5). This expression,

"the love of God," is made sufficiently definite and emphatic in this epistle to forbid any thought that it could possibly refer to *our* love to Him.[402] It is the contemplation of the wondrous love of God that furnishes the most influential motive to move us to the performance of practical holiness. But it may be asked, "How can it be said that the love of God is perfected? Was it ever imperfect? And if it were, how could it be perfected by a believer's keeping His Word?" The answer is that by our obeying His commands *the design* of God's love in us is reached. "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us" (1Jo 4:12). The same explanation holds good of this statement: the love of God toward us reaches its proper result and its end is accomplished in us when Christians love one another.

"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment" (1Jo 4:17-18). The Revised Version….renders this, "Herein is love [namely, the love spoken of in the preceding verse] made perfect with us," that is, *has attained its end*. Verses 9 and 10 show clearly the object which the love of God had in view concerning us; and now this design is accomplished, for, "because as he [Christ] is, so are we in this world." We are before God in all the perfection and acceptableness of His Son's propitiation, viewed not as sinners, but as made the righteousness of God in Him. If, then, we really know and believe the love God hath to us, and see what wonders it has accomplished, the result must be "that we may have boldness in the day of judgment."

The fact is that in John's epistle "the love of God" always expresses *His love* to us, and never ours to Him. Nothing but a spirit of delusion could cause any man to boast that his love for God was "perfect"—without defect in nature, manner, or degree. But the one verse which settles once for all the meaning of this term "made perfect" is, "And by works was [Abraham's] faith made perfect" (Jam 2:22), for obviously this declaration cannot mean that the patriarch's faith itself was thereby perfected, but rather that, in his acts of obedience, faith *reached its designed end* and achieved its proper result. So, in like manner, by cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, we are "perfecting holiness," that is, God's design in sanctifying us in Christ is now *realized.*

The fear of God

A word upon the *dynamic*[403] for this task. The design of our holiness in Christ, namely the cleansing of ourselves from all filthiness, is to be realized "in the fear of God." That does not signify a servile horror of incurring His wrath, but a filial awe of His majesty and a dread of grieving Him. Alas, this is something that has well-nigh disappeared from modern religion. Fifty years ago, it was a common thing to designate a believer, "a God-fearing man," but today, were one so described, the majority of professing Christians would shun him as a melancholy[404] Puritan. The love of God has been so disproportionately emphasized and His awe-inspiring sovereignty and holiness so ignored, that instead of His being an object to be feared, people prate[405] about God as though they were His equals. And, consequently, as the principal dynamic for it be lost, practical holiness or personal piety is now at such a low ebb everywhere.

Of the wicked, it is written, "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom 3:18). They are not afraid of trifling with Him and treading His commands beneath their feet. But with the saints it is otherwise, for "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Pro 9:10), and they have been "made wise unto salvation." "By the fear of the LORD men depart from evil" (Pro 16:6). It was so with Joseph, for when tempted to evil, he declared, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen 39:9). Oh, to live day by day in the realization, "Thou God seest me" (Gen 16:13), for how else shall we "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phi 2:12)? Then beg God, my reader, to

place His holy fear within you, and to make your heart stand in awe of His majesty.

Closing exhortation

Our task is completed. Those who followed us carefully through this book will have perceived that the writer felt he was sailing through deep waters, and at times much caution was needed so as to avoid being wrecked on dangerous rocks. Yet we have not consciously avoided any difficulty, but sought to grapple fairly with each one that was presented. How far we succeeded, the reader must decide. We have sought diligently to enforce the standard of holiness God sets before us, while we have studiously maintained that none fully measures up to it in this life; yet such failure rests wholly *on us* and is highly culpable. The fullness there is in Christ (Joh 1:16) is available for us to draw upon. The grace of God is sufficient for every need. We do not—we dare not—justify the Christian for walking in any measure after the flesh.

No sin is to be allowed by us. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves [and not other people!], and the truth is not in us," is among the, "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not" (1Jo 1:8; 2:1). We entreat those who are panting after the perfected likeness of God's Son not to be deceived as to their present condition and attainments, and, on the other hand, not to be discouraged because of their difficulties and defeats. The narrow way of holiness is not an easy down-slope, winding through flowery fields. It lies through an enemy's country, and, though faith may always rejoice that far more is He that is for us than all who can be against us (1Jo 4:4), yet the believer cannot say in the presence of the enemy, as His Lord could, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me" (Joh 14:30).

We are called to ceaseless vigilance, yet faith's fight is one in which the issue is not doubtful. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1Jo 5:4), yet this necessarily implies that the victory will be changed unto defeat if the eye be turned from the Object of faith to regale[406] itself on the proofs of victory won. Believers are to shine as lights in the world, but they only shine by *reflected* light, so that to do so they must be ever turned toward the Sun of righteousness, occupied not with their shining, but with its Source. Nothing is further from practical holiness than to *boast* of it, for, the closer one walks with Christ, the more conscious will he be of his own unchristlikeness and hang his head in shame. Keep short accounts with God. Seek to hide His Word in your heart that you may be kept from sinning. Let your chief petition be for enabling grace. Look forward to that day when your sanctification will be consummated by glorification, when you will be done with sin forever.

Short Biography of Arthur W. Pink

Arthur W. Pink was born in Nottingham, England, in 1886, and born again by God's Spirit in 1908. He studied for only six weeks at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, U.S.A., before beginning pastoral work in Colorado. He later pastored churches in California, Kentucky, and South Carolina before moving on to preach and teach in Sydney, Australia. In 1934, he returned to his native England, moving to the Isle of Lewis, Scotland, in 1940, where he remained until his death in 1952.

His monthly journal, *Studies in the Scriptures,* was published without interruption from 1922 to 1953, the remaining writings being printed after his death. Each issue of the *Studies* normally included six to eight expository articles. Sustaining single-handedly this volume of in-depth Biblical exposition over his lifetime is a testimony to the grace of God upon his labors. His writings are known for their clarity, zealous exhortation, careful exposition, and Christ-centeredness. While virtually unknown to the Christian world when he died, his writings continue to grow in their influence upon God's people around the world.

[1]**Justification** – "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardons all our sins (Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7) and accepts us as righteous in His sight (2Co 5:21), only for the righteousness of Christ (Rom 5:19) imputed to us and received by faith alone (Gal 2:16; Phi 3:9)" (*Spurgeon's Catechism,* Question 32).
[2]**transcendent** – above and independent of the physical universe.
[3]**Surety** – one who becomes responsible for another, especially for their debts; here referring to Christ.
[4]**glorified** – honored; praised; exalted.
[5]**incarnate** – taking flesh; of Christ, being made a true man.
[6]**Federal Head** – one who represents a group united to him (for example, a president acting for a country united under a constitution). Here it is used of Christ, Who represents His people, acts for them, and is united to them.
[7]**immutable** – unchangeable.
[8]**Benjamin Willis Newton** (1807-1899) – pastor and writer. First associated with John Nelson Darby and the Plymouth Brethren, he later was at the center of the division of Brethrenism into Open (Newton) and Exclusive (Darby) Brethren. Subsequently, he opened an independent chapel in London and fellowshipped with Strict Baptists.
[9]**creedal** – having to do with doctrinal creeds, confessions of faith, catechisms.
[10]**hyper-Calvinists** – those who believe there is no need to evangelize the lost, since God sovereignly will save His elect regardless of the actions of men.
[11]**Arminians** – followers of Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), whose doctrine included denial of unconditional election (contrary to Romans 9:11 and other Scriptures).
[12]**pontifical** – relating to the pontiff or pope, particularly his unwarranted claim to infallibility.
[13]**Plymouth Brethren** – assemblies seeking New Testament simplicity, begun in 19th century Britain; generally Arminian and dispensational in theology.
[14]**Reformers** – 16th century Christians, such as Martin Luther (1483-1546), John Calvin (1509-1564), and Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531), who sought to reform the abuses of Roman Catholicism.
[15]**Puritans** – 16th & 17th century proponents of biblical reform within the Church of England; generally Calvinistic.
[16]**dispensations** – divine plans or administrations of the affairs of God's purpose.
[17]**elected** – chosen by God for salvation (see Rom 8-9, Joh 6: Eph 1, and others).
[18]**Thomas Boston** (1676-1732) – Scottish church leader and author. *Human Nature in its Fourfold State* and *The Crook in the Lot* are some of his many works.
[19]**covenant of grace** – the underlying promise of salvation inherent in and uniting various biblical promises (Gen 3:15; Gen 12:1-3; 2Sa 7:5-17; Jer 31:31-34; Gal 3).
[20]**quickening** – life-giving (Joh 5:21).
[21]**faith** – understanding and belief of the truth; demonstrated by actions consistent with that truth (Mar 4:20; Mat 13:23; Luk 8:15; Joh 20:27).
[22]**reconciliation** – change in relationship from hostility to harmony.
[23]**adoption** – "Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God." (*Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Question 34)
[24]**type** – a pattern pointing to something greater.
[25]**Mediator** – a go-between; "It pleased God in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus His only begotten Son, according to the Covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and Man; the Prophet, Priest and King; Head and Savior of His Church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world: Unto Whom He did from all eternity give a people to be His seed, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified." (*1689 London Baptist Confession* 8.1)
[26]**"wisdom" - holiness**– Wisdom is not technically equivalent to holiness. Wisdom is the art of navigating life according to the Word of God. Nevertheless, wisdom and holiness cannot be separated.
[27]**Nathaniel Emmons** (1745-1840) – New England pastor and theologian. Associated with the movement that came to be known as the "New England Theology" or "Hopkinsianism" (after Samuel Hopkins). Nathaniel Emmons was among those who fell into a tragically erroneous form of this teaching. In his sermon *Duty of Sinners to Make a New Heart*, he explicitly denies the miraculous nature of the new birth and practically denies the doctrine of total depravity. Let the reader take warning.
[28]**abstruse** – difficult to understand or comprehend.
[29]**enthusiastical fancy** – irrational desire.
[30]**interests** – share; participation.
[31]**John Owen** (1616-1683) – English Congregationalist minister and voluminous writer; served as chaplain in Oliver Cromwell's army and as vice-chancellor of Oxford University. His writing ministry spanned forty years and produced 24 volumes of theology, earning him the title "the Prince of the Puritans."
[32]**Papists** – those loyal to the Pope; Roman Catholics.
[33]**canonized** – among Roman Catholics, the recognition of a particular deceased person as a "saint." According to Scripture, all God's people are saints (Rom 1:7; 8:27; Deu 3:1-3; Psa 89:7; 148:14; Act 9:13).
[34]**mean** – poor; base; shabby.
[35]**cognates** – related words.
[36]**experimental** – experiential; empirical.

[37]**Thomas Manton** (1620-1677) – English Puritan minister and writer. He participated in the Westminster Assembly and served under Oliver Cromwell.
[38]**James Hervey** (1714-1758) – Calvinistic Anglican clergyman, writer, and contemporary of George Whitefield and John Wesley.
[39]**second covenant** – the New Covenant. "And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant…" (Heb 12:24). "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mat 26:28).
[40]**imputed** – credited; accounted; reckoned to one's account.
[41]**meetness** – suitableness.
[42]**without us** – outside us. "And be found in him, *not having mine own righteousness*, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith…" (Phi 3:9).
[43]**efficacy** – power; effectiveness.
[44]**Universalists** – followers of the doctrine that there is no hell and that God will save all men from the just punishment of their sins.
[45]**ideas** – Those interested in a different understanding of knowledge (epistemology) than that described in this section may consider *Lord God of Truth* by Gordon Clark and *Concerning the Teacher* by Aurelius Augustine.
[46]**special pleading** – an argument that ignores all unfavorable evidence.
[47]**tautology** – useless repetition.
[48]**ineffable** – unspeakable; beyond one's capacity to comprehensively or adequately articulate.
[49]**martially** – in the context of marriage.
[50]**dishonor** – ignominy; disgrace (2Ti 2:20).
[51]**ceremonial** – pertaining to the worship connected with the Old Testament Tabernacle and Temple (see Heb 8-9).
[52]**evinced** – shown clearly.
[53]**antitype** – what was foreshadowed by a previous symbol, or type.
[54]**paschal** – associated with Passover.
[55]**devotement** – consecration.
[56]**practical manner** – The author's desire is to show how this doctrine is to be applied to the Christian's life (Rom 12:1-2; Ti 2:11-15).
[57]**reconciled** – changed in relationship from being an enemy at war with God to peace with Him (2Co 5:18-21).
[58]**native pollutions** – natural sinfulness.
[59]**evangelical** – pertaining to the faith or principles of the gospel.
[60]**disinterested** – free from self-interest.
[61]**approbation** – approval; commendation.
[62]**repining** – complaining; discontent.
[63]**glorification** – God's final completion of the work of salvation, in which believers are conformed to the image of Christ in their bodies: they will be like Him (2Co 3:18; Col 1:27; Rom 8:28-30; 1Jo 3:2-3; Phi 3:20-21; 1Co 15:42-58).
[64]**communion** – fellowship.
[65] John Owen, *Complete Worksof John Owen* (Banner of Truth Trust); Vol 2, 511.
[66] "**the Holiness people**" – groups that broadly follow in the tradition of John Wesley and the Methodists in their views of personal sanctification. While not all holiness movements accept Wesley's doctrine of sinless perfection, they do tend to look on holiness as a "second blessing"—a "second work of grace" that transforms the Christian's inner life.
[67]**Antinomian** – from the Greek *anti*, against, and *nomos*, law; antinomianism means "against law." Antinomians are those who hold the theological view that God's Law has no place in the life of a believer.
[68]**Covenant of Works** – the agreement or administration that God established with Adam in the Garden of Eden before his fall into sin. It established man's obligation to obey God with the penalty of death for disobedience (Gen 2:16-17) (see *The Covenants: of Works and of Grace)*
[69]**pernicious** – harmful; subtly dangerous.
[70]**lasciviousness** – lust.
[71]**Walter Marshall** (1628-1680) – British minister ejected as a Nonconformist in 1662. Concerning his book from which our author quotes: "Marshall began to focus more on studying and preaching Christ. He realized that he had been trying to make personal righteousness the basis of his dealings with God and the ground of his peace. Consequently, he had not submitted to the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. When he focused upon Christ, he found holiness, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost. *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification* was the fruit of that experience. Of this book, James Hervey stated that if he were banished to a desert island and could take only a Bible and two other books, Marshall's classic would be one of them" (*Meet the Puritans*, Joel Beeke & Randall J. Pederson, Reformation Heritage Books, Grand Rapids, 2007).
[72]**indispensable unto his salvation** – Holiness is not a meritorious pre-condition to salvation, but it is always a necessary consequence of salvation.
[73]**malady** – illness.
[74]**preeminently…promises** – The author's wording here may be unclear. Obedience may give evidence that we have believed the promises (1Jo 2:3), but it is not the basis upon which this interest is given (Ti 3:5). Ultimately, our participation in God's promises is all by grace (Rom 11:5-6). We receive the promises by faith, not by works (Eph 2:8-10). The biblical emphasis on faith corresponds with grace and gives glory to God (Rom 4:14-16). "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom 4:5). Let the reader keep these truths in mind, for similar statements appear elsewhere in this work.
[75]**superlative** – supreme.

[76]**intercourse** – communication.
[77] Holiness is never the prerequisite to salvation, but is always a by-product of it.
[78]**end** – goal; purpose.
[79]**earnestly endeavor** – the author is speaking of those who profess to be believers, but who have no desire to pursue holiness.
[80]**requisite** – required; necessary.
[81]**unholy persons** – those who make a profession of faith but show themselves to be unregenerate by their lack of a generally holy life.
[82]**Covenant of Grace** – God's gracious, eternal purpose of redemption, conceived before the creation of the world, first announced in Genesis 3:15, progressively revealed in history, accomplished in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, the benefit of which is applied to all that believe in Him.
[83]**acceptance…obedience** – The provision made for the acceptance of the Christian's imperfect obedience is Christ's work of substitution : God is pleased with His imperfect redeemed people (Psa 149:4) and their flawed obedience (Heb 13:16), not because they meet the standard of His Law (1Jo 1:8), but because Christ did: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1Pe 2:5).
[84]**capricious** – acting on whim; impulsive; unpredictable.
[85]**D.V.** – abbreviation for the Latin *Deo Valente*, which means "God willing."
[86]**infecting** – Adam's sin corrupted the nature of all the human race.
[87]**enmity against God** – the condition of being an enemy; consider 2 Corinthians 4:3-4. *See also* John 12:31; 14:30; Ephesians 2:2; 6:12; 1 John 5:19.
[88]**immediate** – direct; without the use of means.
[89]**mediate** – indirect; by the use of means.
[90]**made holy thereby** – *See* Romans 6 (especially verse 6).
[91]**N.B.** – Latin: *Nota Bene*; note of importance.
[92]**Laodiceans** – Christ said of them, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev 3:17).
[93]**miasma** – unpleasant or poisonous atmosphere or vapor.
[94]**lost theimage of God** – Two views of this exist in history: some agree with Pink here; however, Calvin taught that sin has only marred or damaged the image of God in man, rather than completely destroying it. Regardless of which view is taken, both lead to the same solution: the restoration to the image of God is only made possible through regeneration by the Holy Spirit, by faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work of redemption.
[95]**macerations** – wasting away of the body through fasting.
[96]**flouted** – mocked; showed contempt.
[97]**servile** – slavish.
[98]**art** – human methods.
[99]**genial** – mild; pleasant.
[100]**nitre** – washing soda.
[101]**reparation** – repair.
[102]**educed** – brought out; drawn out.
[103]**culpable** – guilty; worthy of blame.
[104]**extenuation** – excuse; lessening the guilt of an offence.
[105]**means of grace** – things ordained by God to communicate His grace to His people. These include prayer (Phi 4:6-7) and the Word of God read (1Ti 4:13) and preached (Rom 10:13-17).
[106]**repent** – "Repentance to life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sins and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, does with grief and hatred of his sin turn from it to God, with full purpose to strive after new obedience." (*Spurgeon's Catechism*, Q. 70); see FGB 203, *Repentance*
[107]**fellowship** – communion; sharing in common.
[108]**concord** – agreement.
[109]**Belial** – Satan; literally, "worthless."
[110]**bounden** – obligatory.
[111]**became us** – was fitting or suitable for us.
[112]**inviolate** – intact; uninjured.
[113]**natural generation** – normal physical birth or procreation.
[114]**quickening** – life-giving.
[115]**stock as changes the graft** – The imagery is that of a rooted, growing plant receiving a portion of another plant by graft. This grafted portion, being in union with the rooted plant, receives its character from the host plant.
[116]**no longer morally fit** – The author is addressing the issue of a believer and broken fellowship with God, not the ground of our acceptance with God. The ground of our acceptance with God is always the Person and work of Christ (Rom 4; Gal 1, 3; Rev 5).
[117]**radically** – fundamentally.
[118]**most exercises his heart** – While this categorical statement may instantly appeal to believers, the author fails to provide a biblical demonstration. This may be generally true, but it should not be taken with the full weight of a biblical truth, nor should it be used as a test of conversion, until it can be proven biblically.

[119]**typical economy** – the time of the old covenant, called "typical" because of the ceremonial worship that consisted of types and symbols that would be fulfilled by Christ in the New Covenant (Heb 10).
[120]**atonement** – *literally* "at-one-ment"; the condition of being *at one* with another; theologically, atonement means reconciliation with God by removing or covering the guilt of sin; this was accomplished through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
[121]**mortification** – killing; putting to death.
[122]**palpable** – easy to see; obvious.
[123]**makes conscience of** – has a sensitive conscience toward; feels the sinfulness of.
[124]**unjudged sin** – sin in the believer that he himself fails to condemn (see 1Co 11:31-32).
[125]**capacitated** – enabled.
[126]**paucity** – smallness of number.
[127]**rubbish** – trash.
[128]**dogma** – doctrine; teaching.
[129]**experimental** – practical; manifest in experience.
[130]**connoted** – suggested; implied.
[131]**John Gill** (1697-1771) – Baptist minister, theologian, and biblical scholar; known for his commentary on the whole Bible as well as his *Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*; born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, England.
[132]**Stephen Charnock** (1628-1680) – Puritan theologian and pastor in England; perhaps best known for his work, *Treatise on the Existence and Attributes of God*, published after his death.
[133]**reproduce in his creature measure** – be like God in the named characteristics to the extent his nature as a creature would allow.
[134]**enmity –** hatred.
[135] u**ltimating –** ending; culminating.
[136]**coalesce** – unite; make a single whole.
[137]**leper** – Under the Old Testament, the leper was considered unclean and excluded from the congregation (Lev 13:44-46).
[138]**loathsome leper…curse** – For more on this, see *Suppose an Unholy Man Went to Heaven* by J.C. Ryle
[139]**adumbrated** – foreshadowed; faintly disclosed.
[140]**exigencies** – urgent demands.
[141]**Thomas J. Crawford** (1812-1875) – Professor of Divinity at the University of Edinburg. His work *The Doctrine of Holy Scripture Respecting the Atonement* is cited above (with some apparent alteration).
[142]**relief of self…fear of hell…self-preservation** – Scripture indicates that fear and self-interest are not always improper motivations (Act 2:39-41; Rom 11:20-21).
[143]**Thomas Goodwin** (1600-1680) – Congregationalist minister and Puritan theologian. He participated in producing *The Westminster Confession of Faith* and *TheSavoy Declaration* (1658). He has been called "the readable Puritan" and his works have been published in 12 volumes. *The Child of Light Walking in Darkness* may be among his best-known works.
[144]**privative** – negative.
[145]**sacraments** – The author does mean us to understand that we are regenerated by participation in the sacraments (that is, baptism and the Lord's Supper). We are regenerated only by the Holy Spirit (Eze 11:19, 36:26; Rom 7:4).
[146]**transitory** – temporary.
[147]**fruition** – realization of that which was desired.
[148]**over-love of** – improper attachment to; inordinate desire for.
[149]**efficacious** – effective; producing the intended result.
[150]**dross** – waste that collects on the surface of molten metal; something worthless.
[151]**continuance of spiritual life** – This arises and is sustained by the grace of God (Phi 1:6; 2Ti 4:18; Joh 6:33, 63; 2Co 3:6).
[152]**severally** – separately.
[153]**treat** – address.
[154]**George Swinnock** (1627-1673) – English Nonconformist pastor and Puritan author; his works were published in five volumes.
[155]**vivification** – being made alive.
[156]***summum bonum*** – *Latin*: highest good.
[157]**treatise** – systematic written exposition or treatment of a subject.
[158]**consequent** – result.
[159]**capacitated** – enabled.
[160]**faith by which he is (instrumentally) justified** – Faith is the gift of God (Eph 2:8-9).
[161]**relative change** – change in the relationship of a thing to something else, not in the thing itself.
[162]**real change** – change in a thing itself.
[163]**without us** – external to us; outside of us.
[164]**Abraham Booth** (1734-1806) – English Baptist pastor and theologian; *The Reign ofGrace, from Its Rise to Its Consummation* is perhaps his best-known work.
[165]**George Smeaton** (1814-1889) – Scottish theologian and contemporary of Robert Murray M'Cheyne and Andrew and Horatius Bonar; professor both at Free Church College in Aberdeen and New College Edinburgh.
[166]**expiation** – removal or covering of sin.

[167]**enduement** – blessing or gift from which the recipient derives benefit.
[168]**triune** – three in one; referring to the Trinity.
[169]**prosecution** – working through.
[170]**antedates** – precedes.
[171]**election** – "God having, out of His good pleasure from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life (2Th 2:13), did enter into a Covenant of Grace to deliver them out of the state of sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer (Rom 5:21)." (*Spurgeon's Catechism*, Q. 19)
[172]**predestinated** – predetermined; appointed beforehand (Rom 8:28-30).
[173]**blessedness** – happiness (*see* 1Ti 1:11).
[174]**manifestative** – displayed; revealed.
[175]**foreviews** – foreknowledge.
[176]**mystical** – hidden or secret; a previous mystery now revealed (Eph 5:32).
[177]**grace** – Grace in Scripture often describes God's favor freely shown to those that deserve His wrath. It is used here to describe the favor of God enjoyed by the sinless Son of God, in Whom He is well-pleased (Mat 3:17).
[178]**compensatory** – making satisfactory payment.
[179]**imputatively** – by imputation; having the merits of another reckoned to us.
[180]**identification with Christ** – This describes the believer's relationship with Christ, particularly in terms of things the Christian now has in common with Jesus. Wonderful benefits are associated with this relationship. Believers have been crucified with Christ (Rom 6:6; Gal 2:20), buried and raised with Christ (Col 2:12), seated with Christ (Eph 2:6), and are joint-heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17). Glory to God!
[181]**hallowed** – made holy.
[182]**R.V.** – *Revised Version* of the English Bible, published 1885.
[183]**Charles Hodge** (1797-1878) – American Presbyterian theologian, minister, and principal at Princeton Theological Seminary; promoted Reformed theology, defended the infallibility of Scripture, and condemned Darwinism. His writings include a systematic theology and several commentaries.
[184]**James Inglis** (1813-1872) – Pastor, preacher, and editor. A native of Scotland, he immigrated to the USA where he became a Baptist. He pastored the First Baptist Church of Detroit, Michigan, and edited *Waymarks in the Wilderness*, drawing on the teachings of J. N. Darby and the Plymouth Brethren.
[185]**obtains** – is real; happens.
[186]**filial** – as of a child toward a parent.
[187]**Alexander Carson** (1776-1844) – Baptist pastor and author from Northern Ireland. He was originally ordained as a Presbyterian minister, but, in attempting to refute Baptist theology, he became convinced it was biblical. His book *Baptism in Its Mode and Subjects* may be his most well-known work.
[188]**commingling** – mixture.
[189]**preponderant** – dominant; greater in amount.
[190]**makeweight** – extra amount added in order to make something the right weight.
[191]**dupes** – deceived people.
[192]**not by self-efforts** – This does not mean that sanctification requires no personal effort, but that it is not a condition into which we can work ourselves without the work of the Holy Spirit. We "work out" our sanctification (Phi 2:12).
[193]**John Newton** (1725-1807) – Evangelical Anglican minister, author, and hymn writer. His hymns include *How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds* and *Amazing Grace*.
[194]**typed out** – set out in a type or pattern.
[195]**Spirit of Christ** – The Holy Spirit is also sent by God the Father (Gal 4:6). In addition, the Spirit is called not only the Spirit of Christ, but the Spirit of God ("God" is sometimes a reference to the Father specifically, 2Co 13:14). "Spirit of your Father" appears in Matthew 10:20.
[196]**oblation** – offering.
[197]**accorded**–given.
[198]**His blood…procured the Holy Spirit** –Christ's incarnation was for the purpose of our redemption and adoption as sons (see Gal 4:4-7). One of the blessings of our adoption is God's sending His Spirit into our hearts.
[199]**secures their forgiveness** – The efficacious cause of their forgiveness is always the blood of Christ (Heb 9:14; 10:1-23; 1Pe 3:18).
[200]**wrested** – distorted.
[201]**As our cover-page articles…indicate** – a reference to the series *The Holy Spirit*, which appeared as the lead articles in the *Studies in the Scriptures* from 1933-1936
[202]**Samuel Eyles Pierce** (1746-1849) – English Baptist pastor and theologian; he authored more than 50 books. Our author here quotes from his *Treatise upon Growth in Grace.*
[203]**style** – call.
[204]**vitiated** – corrupted.
[205] Calvin takes another view of the meaning of "in righteousness" in Ephesians 4:24. If *righteousness*be taken as a general term for uprightness, *holiness*may refer to that higher purity that lies in being devoted to the service of God. Others have considered *holiness*to refer to the first table of the Law, and *righteousness*to the second table, as in the song of Zacharias, "That we may serve him in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life" (Luk 1:74-75).

[206]**providence of God** – "God's works of providence are His most holy (Psa 145:17), wise (Isa 28:29), and powerful (Heb 1:3), preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions (Psa 103:19; Mat 10:29)." (*Spurgeon's Catechism*, Q. 11)
[207]**vamping up** – patching up; refurbishing.
[208]**suppling** – making soft or pliant.
[209] Not all readers will be convinced of the author's understanding of types and symbols here.
[210]**washed…by the tears of repentance** – This is metaphorical language: while repentance can include sorrow, repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of action; only God Himself can take away our love of sin (Jer 13:23).
[211]**line and plummet** – plumb bob; string and weight used in construction. Might be used by masons to ensure a wall they are building is straight and not leaning. Used here metaphorically to describe a rule or standard by which something is to be measured or judged.
[212]**wide of the mark** – missing the goal; not conforming to the standard.
[213]**positive precepts** – obligations positively commanded by God as opposed to those arising from the moral nature of things.
[214]**Moral Law** – in this context, the Ten Commandments.
[215]**license** – freedom; lack of restraint.
[216]**Christ died in vain** – That is, since it would be unrighteous of God to dispense with His eternal moral requirements, He cannot do so. So, if Christ died to secure this objective, He died in vain. The author's point is that this was *not* Christ's objective.
[217]**adduce** – appeal to as evidence.
[218]**animate** – enliven; move to action.
[219]**issue** – outcome; result.
[220]**fancy** – imagination.
[221]**heartfelt** – earnest; sincere.
[222]**convertible** – interchangeable.
[223]**impenitent** – without repentance.
[224]**mean** – base; poor.
[225]**acquiesce** – submit; comply.
[226]**supernal** – heavenly; superior.
[227] This was a 31 part series in the *Studies in the Scriptures* on the Holy Spirit, spanning 1932-1937.
[228]**Law…its spirituality** – "The Law may be said to be 'spiritual,' because it comes from the Spirit of God; and reaches to the spirit of man; it requires truth in the inward parts; spiritual service and obedience; a serving of it with our minds; a worshipping of God in spirit and truth; a loving of him with all our hearts and souls, as well as a performance of all the outward acts of religion and duty; and because it cannot be truly obeyed and conformed to without the assistance of the Spirit of God." (John Gill on Romans 7:14)
[229]**new awfulness** – new awareness of the danger of his sinful condition.
[230]**inveterate** – habitual.
[231]**framed** – inclined.
[232]**repining** – complaining.
[233] This statement might be viewed as generally accurate, but it is an overstatement nonetheless.
[234]**meet** – appropriate.
[235]**no longer under the Law as a covenant** – see Hebrews 12:18-29 and Galatians 4.
[236]**the Law and not the gospel is the rule of our sanctification** – It must be said that the gospel also defines what is right in Christian behavior (Phi 1:27), that what the Law condemns is also contrary to sound doctrine and against the gospel (1Ti 1:9-11), and that the gospel of Christ is the pattern for Christian living (Joh 13:34, 15:12; Eph 5:25; Phi 2:5-11; 2Co 8:1-9).
[237]**inapposition** – placed close together; side by side.
[238]**typed out** – typified; given in a representative picture.
[239]**James Fraser** (1700-1769) – Scottish pastor and theologian; contemporary of George Whitfield and of the Cambuslang revival.
[240]**glass** – mirror.
[241]**feel** – in this context: realize, believe.
[242]**mercenary** – purely selfish.
[243]**incorrigible** – without repentance; difficult or impossible to change or reform.
[244]**to him it appears that he has committed the unpardonable sin** – This is certainly true of some, but this not necessarily the experience of every awakened and quickened sinner.
[245]**waifs** – homeless or orphaned children.
[246]**gainsay** – deny.
[247]**no hypocrite…O wretched man** – This is no doubt true for many; yet, this is not stated in Scripture, and we should be careful not to make it the standard for all. One who does so cry should not assume on that basis alone that he is *not* a hypocrite; rather, he should take no assurance that he has been saved until he has believed on Christ.
[248]**sublimated** – changed into something better.
[249]**sow** – pig.
[250]**easy** – comfortable; without pain.
[251]**quick** – alive; perceptive; sensitive.
[252]**assaulting of it** – that is, assaulting your gospel obedience.

[253]**interest** – stake; claim.
[254]**contending** – fighting; struggling.
[255]**notionally** – theoretically.
[256]**N.B.** – Latin *Nota Bene*: observe; take note.
[257]**originating…cause** – The originating cause of sanctification is the Triune God Himself (Eph 2:10).
[258]**meritorious…cause** – The meritorious cause of sanctification is Christ, in His Person and work (see Rom 6:6).
[259]**instrument** – means by which something is done. Faith is a gift of God (Eph 2:8-9) and is the fruit of God's work in the believer.
[260]**faith** – The author warns against confusing faith and it effects in the next subheading, "Do Not Confound with Fruits"; nevertheless, we must read the author carefully. Faith is understanding and believing in Christ as He is set forth in the gospel (Joh 2:2; 4:50; 8:24; 16:27; 20:31; Act 16:31; 1Ti 1:16; 1Pe 1:21; 1Jo 5:13), *not* keeping the commandments, as important as obedience is (Rom 4:1-8; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8-10). Saving faith *always* produces obedience (1Jo 2:1-11). Any so-called faith that does not do so is deficient, either in its object (that is, a false or incomplete gospel was embraced) or its belief (that is, gospel facts were comprehended but, in reality, not received by faith in the heart as truth).
[261]**appropriates** – takes.
[262]**instrumental efficacy** – Faith does not *merit* these blessings, but faith is the "instrument" by which they are received.
[263]**Everlasting Covenant** – Covenant of Redemption; the eternal purpose of the Father and the Son concerning our salvation.
[264]**fanaticism** – extreme, irrational zeal.
[265]**influence** – power to cause an effect.
[266]**importunate** – persistent; insistent.
[267]**Elim** – a place of Israel's rest and refreshment on their wilderness journey (see Exo 15:27).
[268]**petulance** – irritation; complaining.
[269]**votaries** – adherents; advocates.
[270]**tractable** – easily managed or controlled.
[271] The words of Paul are applicable here: "They measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2Co 10:12).
[272]**Martin Luther** (1483-1546) – German Reformer; known as a pastor, theologian, and hymn writer. He was used by God to begin the recovery of the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone.
[273]**wont** – accustomed.
[274]**Not necessarily…victory over it** – that is, not *absolutely*. By the grace of God, a significant measure of progress against sin is granted in this life (1Jo 1:5-2:17; Rom 8:11-14).
[275]**wants** – needs.
[276]**vouchsafed him** – delivered to him as a gracious privilege.
[277]**sophistries** – deceitful arguments.
[278]**Romanists** – Roman Catholics.
[279]**will o' the wisp** – ignition of gas over swamps producing a mysterious light attributed by some to "spirits"; metaphorically, an elusive or misleading hope or goal.
[280]**Seventh Day Adventists** – religious group begun in 1863 by Ellen G. White. Adventists are distinguished by observance of Saturday as the Sabbath, keeping of dietary laws, and doctrines of investigative judgment, conditional immortality, and annihilation of the wicked.
[281]**aesthetical** – having to do with beauty and its enjoyment.
[282]**Keswick** – Keswick movement, aligned with the Keswick Convention in England. It may be referred to as the Higher Life movement and advances a view of sanctification growing out of the Wesleyan view of entire sanctification or sinless perfection (see 1Jo 1:8 for a biblical correction).
[283]**John Dick** (1764-1833) – Scottish minister and professor in the Secession Church.
[284]**sophistical** – made-up; convincing but contrived; false.
[285]**pungency** – strength; sharpness; penetrating power.
[286]**Alcoran** – the Muslim Koran.
[287]**thus requite** – repay in this way; respond to Christ in this way.
[288]**go nowhere** – The reader should not take this statement as a license to isolationism (*see* Hebrews 10:24-25). The reader may wish to consult Iain Murray's *Life of Arthur W. Pink* for an interpretation of Pink's isolationism.
[289]**illumination of the Spirit** – *See* Mat 16:17; Joh 15:26; 16:7-13; 1Jo 5:20.
[290]**inherent grace** – God's gracious work within a person.
[291]**alchemist** – performer of alchemy, a Medieval "science" that sought to transform common material into precious metals, such as gold.
[292]**tributary –** subject; subservient.
[293]**beneficent** – benevolent; beneficial.
[294]**dotings** – excessive, uncritical fondness and love.
[295]**concupiscence** – illegitimate desire; craving; lust.
[296]**succor** – help.
[297]**not a divine act, but a work of God's grace** – that is, not a one time event of the past but something that continues.
[298]**fructifying** – making fruitful.

[299]**mortification** – putting to death.
[300]**vivification** – making alive.
[301]**concurrence** – cooperation.
[302]**Pelagians** – those adhering to false doctrines ascribed to Pelagius, thought to be a British monk who taught in Rome, living in the 4th and 5th centuries. He was refuted by Augustine. Pelagianism denies the total depravity of man, that Adam's posterity is incapable of true spiritual good (contradicting Romans 3:12; 8:7, and others). Rather, Pelagianism holds that man is born innocent and capable of choosing good or evil without divine intervention. Pelagianism was condemned at the Council of Carthage (AD 418) and the Council of Ephesus (AD 431).
[303]**lasciviousness –** inappropriate passionate desire; lewdness.
[304]**abolition** – total removal.
[305]**connive** – conspire.
[306]**putridity** – rottenness.
[307]**root and branch** – entirely; in every part.
[308]**gripes** – pressures or pains from something that distresses or afflicts.
[309]**rings** – causes; produces.
[310]**repentance**…**therefrom** – It is important to draw a distinction between repentance and its fruits (Mat 3:1-8; Luk 3:8; Act 26:20). Repentance is a part of conversion (Act 3:19) and is a result of the profound change in our hearts that takes place as God moves us from a state of unbelief to faith in Christ (Mat 21:32; Act 20:21; Heb 6:1).
[311] This statement is borrowed from John Owen's *Mortification of Sin*.
[312]**sports** – plays; amuses oneself.
[313]**John Bunyan** (1628-1688) – Baptist pastor; author of the classic *ThePilgrim's Progress*. Bunyan's complete works are available at *www.johnbunyan.org*. The piece our author refers to can be found at www.johnbunyan.org.
[314] The author is not arguing that faith alone is insufficient for salvation, but that those united to Christ by faith will be actively involved in mortification.
[315]**John Flavel** (1628-1691) – Puritan minister and author. Flavel's works have been published in six volumes and include *The Mystery of Providence*.
[316]**means and end** – as opposed to cause and effect. The all-sufficient work of Christ is the *cause* of our salvation, but those saved by Christ will be found living by the Spirit on their way to glory. The author here is using John Owen's terminology from *Mortification of Sin*.
[317]**assiduous** – constant; unremitting.
[318]**physic** – medicine.
[319]**constitutional weakness** – weakness in one's health.
[320]**nipping…in the bud** – stopping at first appearance, as one would cut a bud before it blooms; dealing with the problem early.
[321]**transitoriness** – temporariness.
[322]**incursions** – invasions.
[323]**privative** – of deprivation, loss.
[324]**ere** – before.
[325]**recess** – withdrawal; cessation.
[326]**loathness** – unwillingness.
[327]**adjunct** – accompaniment.
[328]**acceptable obedience** – That is, His children's obedience that is pleasing to Him through the merits of Jesus Christ.
[329]**perceptive will…disposing will** – God's perceptive will is His revealed will, His plans and commands that He makes clear to us; His disposing will is the secret will of His own decrees of providence and redemption.
[330]**James Ussher** (1581-1656) – archbishop in the Church of Ireland; respected as a scholar of church and world history; his *Annals of the World* is perhaps his best-known work.
[331]**paradox** – in this context, something appearing self-contradictory or impossible but which in reality is not. Some have used the word "paradox" to mean real contradiction. Such a view is incompatible with the biblical doctrine of the infallibility of Scripture (Joh 10:35).
[332]**meet** – fit.
[333]**actuation** – force that sets in motion.
[334]**lethargy** – sluggishness; drowsiness.
[335]**surfeiting** – partying; gluttony.
[336]**gross** – fat; callous; dull.
[337]**Robert Haldane** (1764-1842) – Scottish preacher and author; known for his *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans*.
[338]**only way** – Our only ground of fellowship with God is by the grace of Christ our Mediator (Eph 2:13-18; 1Ti 2:5). Having been redeemed, we are called to walk in obedience. This does not save us, but God has promised to manifest Himself to those that so walk. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" (Joh 14:21). In addition, consider 2Co 6:1418; 1Jo 1:5-10; 1Pe 5:5.
[339]**intercourse** – communication.
[340]**improve** – make good use of.
[341]**indubitable** – certain; without doubt.

[342]**animal spirits** −natural vitality; physical health.
[343]**mean** – base; worthless.
[344]**gaineth His favor and fellowship** – Our works *in themselves* do not merit God's favor. They are gifts of grace (1Co 1:4-9), and, by the merits of Christ, God is pleased with the obedience of His people and blesses them with His presence (Heb 13:16; Joh 14:23).
[345]**everlasting fruition of Him in Glory** – that is, eternal possession of and enjoyment of God in His presence (1Th 4:16-18; Jer 31:33). This will not be had *without* holiness (see Heb 12:14), but it is *not* had *because* of holiness (Eph 2:5-10).
[346]**upbraided** – reproached.
[347]**eminent** – distinguished; outstanding.
[348]**gratified** – pleased.
[349]**Christlikeness** is of such importance that we ask our reader to turn to our article on "Christ Our Exemplar."—*A. W. Pink* (Found in the August 1937 issue of *Studies in the Scriptures*)
[350]**adumbrates** – exhibits a faint resemblance to.
[351]**in toto** – entirely.
[352]**men belong…Gill** – a Strict Baptist. Strict, or Particular, Baptists were the doctrinal forefathers of today's Reformed Baptists and Primitive Baptists. The Strict Baptist *Gospel Standard* magazine, early editors of which included J. C. Philpot (1802-1869) and William Gadsby (1773-1844), advocated a position strictly against progressive sanctification.
[353]**approbation** – approval.
[354]**lancing** – medical procedure where a wound is cut open to drain infectious material in pursuit of healing.
[355]**margin** – Some Bible editions provide textual information in the margins that are not included in the translation.
[356]**Faith…a spiritual perception** – While this is true, faith is more than perception: it is persuasion. It believes that which it sees is true (Joh 6:69; 16:30).
[357]**Canaan** – the Promised Land.
[358]**not…but in the heart** – When the Bible speaks of the heart, it most often encompasses all the inner man: the mind, will, and emotions. We must be careful in forcing a division between heart and mind.
[359]**superfluity** – abundance.
[360]**spasmodically** – occurring in uneven intervals.
[361]**canvass** – examine thoroughly, in detail.
[362]**ere** – before.
[363]**mortal and venial sins** – a Roman Catholic distinction made concerning types of sin: mortal being greater, venial being lesser. The biblical doctrine is that, while there may be degrees in the guilt and consequences of sin, the least sin deserves death (Rom 6:23) and the only remedy is the righteousness of Christ (Rom 4:1-8).
[364]**John Wesley** (1703-1791) – English revival preacher in Britain during the time of the Great Awakening; an Anglican clergyman, he was influential in the Methodist movement. He opposed the doctrine of predestination and taught a view of sanctification known as "entire sanctification" or "Christian perfectionism," which asserts Christians may in this life reach a point at which they no longer sin.
[365]**A. A. Hodge** (1823-1886) – American Presbyterian pastor, missionary to India, theologian, and Princeton professor; known for his book *Outlines of Theology*.
[366]**Robert Hawker** (1753-1827) – English evangelical Anglican minister; author of the devotional classic *Poor Man's Morning and Evening Portions*.
[367]**privy** – private.
[368]**apostatize** – to abandon one's profession of the Christian faith.
[369]**retrogression** – decline; reverting to a previous state.
[370]**dissertations** – debates; arguments. The author here may be using the word to mean "conflicts."
[371]**fruit** – "A question now arises, why does Christ say that this fruit will be perpetual? As the doctrine of the gospel obtains souls to Christ for eternal salvation, many think that this is the perpetuity of the fruit. But I extend the statement much farther, as meaning that the Church will last to the very end of the world; for the labor of the apostles yields fruit even in the present day, and our preaching is not for a single age only, but will enlarge the Church, so that new fruit will be seen to spring up after our death" *(John Calvin on John 15:16)*.
[372]**ravishments** – great delights; ecstasies.
[373]**spar** – pole used to support the sails or rigging of a ship. The picture here is a shipwrecked man in danger of drowning grasping for the wreckage of the ship in order to avoid death.
[374]**regale** – entertain; bring happiness to.
[375]**thy patience** – See the larger passage, Revelation 2:1-7.
[376]**hortatory** – exhorting; encouraging.
[377]**deprecate** – disapprove of; belittle.
[378]**novel** – new.
[379]**spiritual (not intellectual) light** – This is not to imply that we bypass the mind, but that the sins of the inward man are spiritually discerned.
[380]**inalienable** – incapable of being transferred or taken away.
[381]**specie** – kind.
[382]**incongruous** – inconsistent.
[383]**consonant** – consistent.

[384]**subservient** – subordinate; useful in promoting a purpose.
[385]**factitious** – dissentious; divisive.
[386]**tainted** – contaminated; polluted.
[387]**decline** – refuse.
[388]**predicate** – assert; declare.
[389]**evanescent** – temporary; fleeting.
[390]**bottomed** – founded; based.
[391]**abatement** – reduction.
[392]**querulous** – complaining.
[393]**straitened** – restricted; confined.
[394]**His operations cease** – Our author would agree that God will never utterly cease His good work of grace in His true children (Phi 1:6; Luk 22:31-32; Heb 13:5-6).
[395]**garland** – circular wreath of flowers or leaves, often worn on the head as a decoration or symbol of honor.
[396]**congenially –** suitably; in a conducive way.
[397]**unpropitious** – unfavorable.
[398]**panacea** – solution for all problems; cure-all.
[399]**capacitated** – enabled.
[400]**no other reason** – We might add that God's glory is a more primary reason (1Co 1:26-31; Rom 11:32-36).
[401]**levity** – irreverence; inappropriate lightness.
[402] Other commentators would take exception to this statement.
[403]**dynamic** – force that effects change or progress.
[404]**melancholy** – sad; gloomy.
[405]**prate** – talk foolishly or at tedious length.
[406]**regale** – enjoy; entertain; amuse.