

Present Truth

A magazine dedicated
to the restoration
of New Testament Christianity
in this generation

Sola Gratia Solely by Grace
Solo Christo Solely by Christ
Sola Fide Solely by Faith

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Vol. 4 #1

Special Issue

SANCTIFICATION

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Present Truth

Present Truth is a magazine dedicated to the restoration of New Testament Christianity and committed to upholding the great Reformation principle of justification by faith.

Editor: Robert D. Brinsmead
Publishing Editor: Norman Jarnes

Publishers: A group of Christian scholars and businessmen without denominational sponsorship who have united to uphold the objective gospel amid the present deluge of religious subjectivism. Multitudes are being caught up in the popular and frantic effort to find satisfaction in some sort of religious experience. *Present Truth* is a voice in this barren wilderness of groveling internalism, a voice which boldly proclaims those great principles upon which the Reformation was founded—namely:

1. *Sola gratia.* God's saving activity outside of us in the person of Jesus Christ is the sole *ground* of our salvation.

2. *Solo Christo.* Christ's doing and dying on our behalf is the sole *basis* of our acceptance and continued fellowship with God.

3. *Sola fide.* The Holy Spirit's gift of faith through the hearing of this objective, historical gospel is the sole *means* whereby Christ's substitutionary life and death are imputed to us for justification unto life eternal. He who is thus justified by faith and filled with God's Spirit will glory only in Christ's cross and make God's saving work in Christ the central affirmation of his Christian witness. Though he will be careful to obey God and please Him in all things, he will continue to repent rather than glory in the feeble attainments of his own Spirit-filled life.

4. *Sola Scriptura.* The Bible and the Bible only is the Christian's objective and infallible rule of faith and practice, alone sufficient that he may "be established in the present truth" (2 Peter 1:12).

Present Truth is not only committed to the task of upholding these founding principles of the Reformation, but it believes that we today must allow these principles to call all that we do and all that we teach into question. These principles call all traditions into question and all statements about the truth into question—even the ones set forth in this magazine. Our vision is a new Reformation that will recover what the Reformers bequeathed us and complete the restoration they so nobly began.

To Contributors: Since truth is above the preferences and prejudices of any denomination, the editors welcome contributions from anyone and will judge them on their merit alone. If you wish a manuscript returned, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

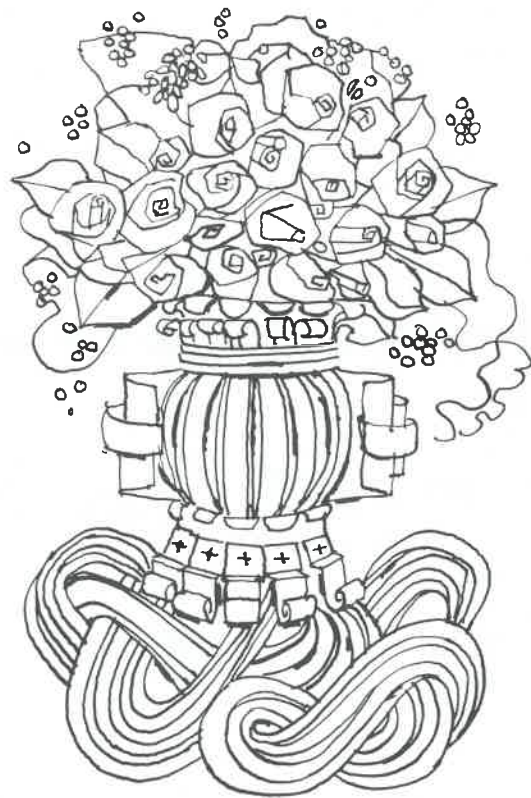
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Editorial Introduction

This issue of *Present Truth* is devoted to the subject of sanctification, or Bible holiness.

Those readers who are familiar with our publication will know that *Present Truth* has taken a strong stand for justification by an outside-of-me righteousness over against the religious subjectivism of the current religious scene. Just as the careless spectator may imagine that Paul's quarrel is with the law, so some have imagined that our quarrel is with Christian experience. It will be remembered that Paul answered his critics by saying that his doctrine of justification by faith did not do away with the law; it merely put it in its right place (Rom. 3:31). Our purpose is not to cry up justification and to cry down sanctification. We want to put sanctification into its proper place so that we can give it the great emphasis which it deserves.

The presentation which follows includes eleven sections on sanctification before discussing justification. The reader could be excused for suspecting that we have put the cart before the horse. But we have done this deliberately. It is not just a matter of trying to keep the best wine till the last. Calvin did the same thing in his *Institutes*. He had special reasons for considering the nature of the renewed life before getting around to justification. And so do we—namely:

1. We want to take the ground from under the feet of those who suggest that our strong emphasis on the objective gospel relegates sanctification to a role of relative unimportance. If we may borrow the method of Paul's defense against his critics, we will say, Do they believe in sanctification? I more! (See Phil. 3:1-7.)

It is not that those who are preoccupied with exciting or satisfying religious experience go too far in the matter of sanctification. They do not go far enough. If we would come to grips with the Bible's rigorous demand for concrete holiness, we would see that sanctification is more than a frothy spiritual euphoria on the top of the brain.

2. Before we turn to what Calvin calls "the main hinge on which religion turns," our aim is to show the

kind of life the gospel will produce. Then there will be no room to misunderstand the doctrine of imputed righteousness as an easy way out of the responsibility to live a holy life. We want to make it clear that justification by faith alone is not an alternative for personal holiness, but the only basis for it. Also, if the uncompromising demand for radical holiness set out in the earlier sections appears as a veritable Mount Sinai to the reader, well and good. That is the way which leads to a genuine appreciation of how we need more than sanctification to stand fearless before God's face.

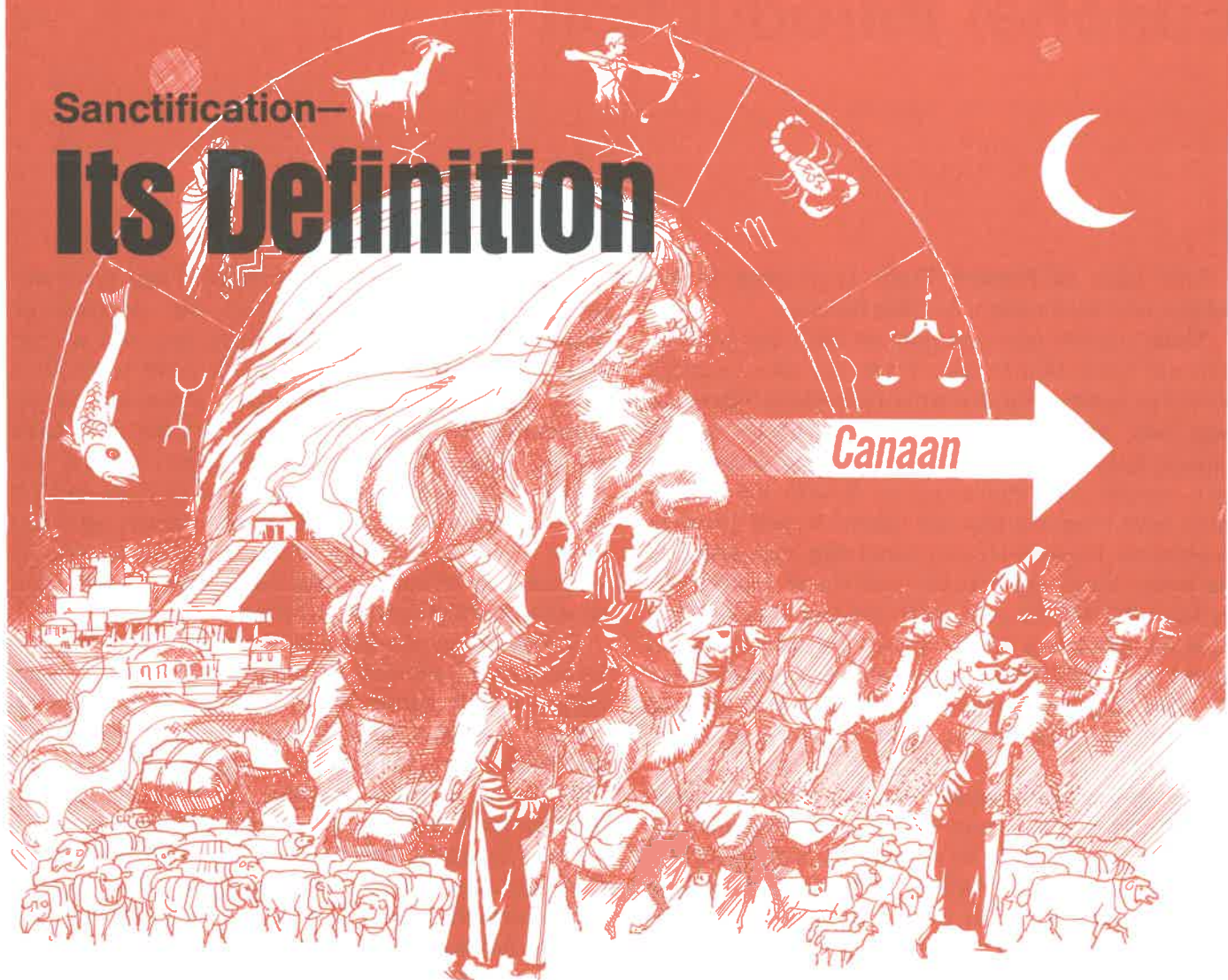
3. We believe the Bible indicates that there is going to be a new (renewed) Reformation in these last days before Christ comes again. We just happen to be "naive" enough to believe it is going to happen in this generation. ("... the hour is coming, *and now is* ...") There is no question but that the truth of justification by faith must be that reformatory movement's message in verity. This renewed Reformation must be final and thorough, one which will give the "man of sin" a wound from which he will never recover. He who would build high must lay the foundation deep. The towering truth of justification by faith must be grounded in the utter seriousness of God's demand for holiness. There must be no place for "cheap grace" sentiments and no room for those antinomian misunderstandings which have heretofore followed Paul and Luther like a dark shadow.

Finally, this editor, who is responsible for the entire presentation, is very conscious of his deficiencies in handling a subject so momentous and has good reason to fear that he has done inadequate justice to the mighty claims of Bible holiness. Some readers will doubtless think of other important areas that could and perhaps should have been dealt with in this brief presentation. Yet the editor has tried to deal with those aspects of sanctification that appear to be most relevant to the current religious scene. The size of the different sections has been determined more by the need to clarify current misunderstandings than by the relative importance of each aspect of sanctification.

R.D.B.

Sanctification—

Its Definition



If you take a concordance and start noting how *sanctify*, *sanctification*, *holiness* and related words are used, the first thing which may strike you is the various ways in which these words are used. To start with, *sanctify* is used in reference to a variety of objects. It may be applied to *places* (the camp of Israel, the hill of Zion), to *time* (the Sabbath, the fiftieth year), or to *people* (the firstborn, the priests, the congregation or individual people). It is also quite evident that the word *sanctification* has different shades of meaning. For instance, *sanctification* may mean any of the following:

1. *A completed act*, as when God sanctified Jeremiah before he was born or the seventh day at creation (Jer. 1:5; Gen. 2:2, 3).

2. *A process*, as when the Hebrews were exhorted to follow holiness or the Corinthians to perfect holiness (Heb. 12:14; 2 Cor. 7:1).

3. *A status that is possessed or enjoyed* (1 Cor. 1:2).

4. *An experience and way of life to practice* (1 Thess. 4:3-7).

Louis Berkhoff, the late Reformed scholar, notices four distinct uses of the words *sanctification* and *sanctify* in the New Testament:

1. It may mean to regard as holy (1 Pet. 3:15; Matt. 6:9).

2. It may mean to ritually separate for holy use, such as in Matthew 23:17, 19.

3. It may mean expiation from defilement, as used in the book of Hebrews.

4. It may be used in accordance with the most commonly accepted theological use, i.e., "... that operation of God by which He especially, through the Spirit, works in man the subjective quality of holiness." — Louis Berkhoff, *Systematic Theology*

(London: Banner of Truth, 1971), p. 527.

Other scholars may contend for some other uses or shades of meaning. The reason why we point this out by way of introduction is to avoid falling into needless theological combat over one particular meaning and ending up like the blind men arguing whether an elephant felt like a spear, a rope or a wall—depending upon which part of the elephant's anatomy each one chanced to touch.

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

Most scholars are agreed that the words *sanctify*, *sanctification*, *holiness*, *holy*, etc., come from Hebrew and Greek words which basically mean *to set apart* or *to separate*. Says R.C. Trench, "Its fundamental idea is separation, and so to speak, consecration and devotion to the service of Deity." — R.C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), p. 331.

This action of *separation* or *setting apart* has two aspects:

1. It means separation *from*. Abraham was separated from Chaldea and from his father's home. Israel was separated from Egypt. The Christian church is called to separate from the world. ("Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord..." 2 Cor. 6:17.) And finally, the faithful worshipers are called to separate from apostate religion. ("... Come out of her, My people..." Rev. 18:4.)

2. Sanctification not only means separation *from* sin, but a separation *to* a new life. Abraham was separated *from* Chaldea *to* become the friend of God. Israel was separated *from* Egypt and consecrated *to* the service of Yahweh. Believers are purged *from* dead works *to* serve the living God (Heb. 9:14). Those who are justified by faith are "delivered *from* the law" *to* "serve in newness of Spirit." Rom. 7:6.

So on the one hand *sanctification* means separation *from* sin, *from* unholy fellowship, *from* the abomination of the heathen, *from* the world and its allurements, *from* the ways of the ungodly. And on the other hand it means separation *to* a life of obedience to God, *to* fellowship with Him, *to* devotion to His glory and service. Thus, as Trench observes, the word *sanctification* (and related words) "speedily acquires a moral significance." — *Ibid.*, p. 332.

In theology *sanctification* has generally come to mean that process of becoming or being made holy. It is true that the New Testament does not use the actual word *sanctification* very frequently to describe this process, but the concept is nevertheless very prominent. Besides calling it *sanctification*, the New Testament uses other expressions which describe this important process. Here are some of them:

1. Following after righteousness (1 Tim. 6:11).
2. Walking in newness of life (Rom. 6:4).
3. Being transformed (Rom. 12:2).
4. Perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. 7:1).
5. Growing up into Christ (Eph. 4:15).
6. Pressing toward the mark (Phil. 3:14).
7. Being built up in the faith (Col. 2:7).
8. Partaking of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).
9. Growing in grace (2 Pet. 3:18).

It is often helpful if a writer or speaker defines his terms at the outset of his presentation. When we use the word *sanctification* in this treatise, we are using the word in its commonly accepted theological connotation. The following definitions of well-known scholars are representative of what we intend to mean by *sanctification*:

L. Berkhoff

Sanctification may be defined as that gracious and continuous operation of the Holy Spirit, by which He delivers the justified sinner from the pollution of sin, renews his whole nature in the image of God, and enables him to perform good works. — Berkhoff, *op. cit.*

A.H. Strong

Sanctification is that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit by which the holy disposition imparted in regeneration is maintained and strengthened. — A.H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (London: Pickering & Inglis Ltd., 1970), p. 569.

W.E. Vine

The process of being made or becoming holy. — W.E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Fleming H. Revell Co.).

F. Pieper

... the internal spiritual transformation of the believer or the holiness of life which follows upon justification. — F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950-1953), Vol. 3, p. 4.

The Westminster Catechism

The work of God's free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness.



Sanctification— Its Scope

It was the whole man that sinned, and it is the whole man whom God wants sanctified. The apostle writes:

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. — 1 Thess. 5:23.

Any view of sanctification that does not include the whole man comes short of Bible sanctification. Although it may present a phase of sanctification which is true, it is still liable to heresy. "Heresy is truth, but truth pushed into undue importance, to the disparagement of the truth upon the other side." — William Lincoln.

For instance, sanctification is very much a thing of the heart (1 Pet. 3:4; Ps. 51:6). But some have taken the heart to mean only the *affections*. When sanctification is focused exclusively on the affections of the heart, it comes to be regarded as a change of religious feelings or a sort of spiritual rapture. People are consequently encouraged to measure their progress in holiness by the intensity of their religious feelings. When they are stimulated by certain spiritual exercises, they regard themselves as full of the Holy Spirit. When there is no spiritual ecstasy, they feel destitute of the Spirit. This type of sanctification craves a steady diet of group revivals and "emotional devotionals." Sometimes "the sickly, sentimental, erotic bridal metaphors of the syncretistic Hellenistic cults . . . have been permitted to cross the threshold of Christian devotional literature unhindered in the allegorizings of the Song of Solomon." — Adolf Koberle, *The Quest for Holiness* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1964), p. 10.

Some have confined sanctification to a thing of the understanding. In their view sanctification resolves itself into *illumination*. There is a lot of truth in this theory. The Bible teaches that knowledge leads to

It was the whole man that sinned, and it is the whole man whom God wants sanctified.

eternal life (John 17:3). Conversion is effected by a revelation of Christ, and transformation into His image comes about by beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (John 3:14; 2 Cor. 3:18). St. Paul prayed that the eyes of the understanding of the redeemed community might be enlightened (Eph. 1:18). The sinful state is called blindness and darkness, while the Spirit brings sight and the vision of light. Spiritual apprehension of truth awakens faith, love and delight. All this is very true and important. But it is still a one-sided theory of sanctification. As Dr. Charles Hodge observes, "The Scriptures, however, do not teach that regeneration consists exclusively in illumination, or that the cognitive faculties are exclusively the subject of the renewing power of the Spirit." – Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1874), Vol. 3, p. 17.

The heart, or mind,¹ includes the cognitive faculties (the powers of understanding, reason, imagination, perception, observation, memory and judgment) as well as the will, the affections (feelings, emotions) and the conscience. Since the image of God is to be

restored in the human soul, the Bible is concerned with the sanctification of the whole mind. Growth in grace should embrace the harmonious development of all man's faculties to the glory of God.

Nor is Bible sanctification exclusively a thing of the mind. The body is very much a part of it. The Bible has a very un-Grecian view of the human body. It teaches that God created it and Christ died to redeem it (Rom. 8:23).

Whereas the Greeks taught that the body was a prison which temporarily incarcerated the human soul, St. Paul taught his Grecian converts that their bodies were a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). But the Corinthian church did not easily shake off their Grecian outlook. They were all too prone to interpret the Christian message in terms of Grecian philosophy. They thought that sanctification was a thing of the spirit only; therefore, what they did with the body was a matter of indifference. Some of the most corrupting heresies came into the church in this way. There were those who advocated that the spiritual elite whose spirits were wholly sanctified could commit the grossest deeds of the flesh without sinning. "Every sin that a man doeth is without the body," they argued. Not so! answered the apostle. "... he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost..." 1 Cor. 6:18, 19. So it was to these Grecian Corinthians that the apostle wrote so pointedly about the place of the human body in sanctification. He spoke of moral purity, marriage, eating and drinking to the glory of God, temperance and bodily discipline and, finally, the bodily resurrection and a judgment of all deeds done in the body.

While no evangelical Christian today would espouse the heresy that immoral acts are no hindrance to holiness, still the Grecian view of the human body is hard to shake off. Many of us still treat the body with shameful indifference. We make little effort to preserve our powers in the best possible condition. We invite great bodily debility by the indulgence of appetite and hurtful habits, and think that God is not concerned with how we regard the laws of life. By intemperance our powers of body and mind are greatly impaired, yet we think this has little or nothing to do with progress in the divine life. But so-called harmless indulgences of the flesh can enslave us and prove to be the greatest hindrance to soul sanctification. We need to distinguish between this spurious "Grecian sanctification" and the New Testament sanctification of the whole man.

¹ The Bible knows of no distinction between *heart* and *mind*. Sometimes both terms are used together for emphasis, and at other times they are used interchangeably.

One of the most striking things about New Testament sanctification is that it is refreshingly fussless and transparently practical. It is also uncomplicated and un sentimental.

The same thing cannot be said about many of the books that fill Christian bookstores. You could cart out a dray load of literature with the following sort of emphasis on Christian existence:

1. Sentimental devotionals about how to achieve a satisfying relationship with Jesus.

2. Mystic spiritual romance plentifully supplied with bridal images, etc.

3. Books which promise to give you the "keys," "secrets" and "steps" to the higher spiritual life which will make you an upper-class Christian. These books often suggest that while the majority of the Lord's people only know Christ as Saviour or Justifier, they have the special knowledge that will usher you into the circle of the more spiritual elite.

4. Books which promise amazing feats of spiritual growth by following certain psychological techniques (with a few Bible texts thrown in). Diagrams and charts are often used to simplify (?) the amazing labyrinth of directions.

5. Books which offer the reality of an experience with the Spirit that can be seen, heard or felt, thereby largely bypassing the need of objective information.

The New Testament knows nothing about the sentimental, spiritual romance. The gospels are historical narrative. The straightforward record of God breaking into human history needs no embellishing. The most awesome and poignant events are stated in the most restrained terms. Then the Holy Spirit speaks through the New Testament Epistles to explain the significance of the Christ event to the elect community. By baptism into Christ (or faith-union with Him), believers have participated in all that Christ has done and suffered. Christ's sinless life, death and ascension have actually become theirs. Christ died and was buried. They too. He ascended into heaven to sit at God's right hand. They too. God sees them only in Christ and reckons them dead, risen and free (Rom. 6:1-7; 7:4-6; Col. 3:1-3; Eph. 2:1-6).

Now in view of what has happened and what has been given to them, the New Testament appeals to believers to reckon what God reckons. They must now count themselves dead to the world, the flesh and the devil, and live as those who are alive from the dead, "that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." 2 Cor. 5:15.

The type of life which Christians are called to live

Sanctification—

Its Fussless, Practical Nature

is fusslessly stated in the most straightforward manner. There are no "secrets" or "mystery keys" here.² The way of holiness is so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

As touching unselfishness, God's people are to bear one another's burdens and to not please themselves, but to help one another (Gal. 6:2; Rom. 15:1-3). Their motto must not be, What is lawful for me? but, What will edify my brother and advance his spiritual welfare? (1 Cor. 8:9-13; 9:19; 10:23-29).

As touching humility, they are not to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think, but with all lowliness of mind count others better than themselves (Rom. 12:3; Phil. 2:3). They must not be snobs, but show as much deference to the poor and lowly as to the rich and influential (Rom. 12:16; James 2:1-4).

² The secret, or mystery, of the New Testament is the gospel, which is now made manifest to the saints (Eph. 3:4-9; Col. 1:26).



As touching peace, they are to live peaceably with all men as far as possible, give no occasion for offence, and be at peace among themselves (Rom. 12:18; 2 Cor. 6:3; Heb. 12:14).

As touching love, they are to bless their enemies, make prayers and supplications for all men, and be tenderhearted, forgiving one another as Christ forgave them (Matt. 5:44; 1 Tim. 2:1; Eph. 4:32).

As touching purity, they must let the peace of Christ stand guard over their thoughts, meditate on elevated themes, let no corrupt words or foolish talk proceed from their mouths, and hate even to touch the garment defiled with sensuality (Phil. 4:7, 8; Eph. 4:29; Jude 23).

As touching joy and contentment, they are to continually give thanks for all things, joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, rejoice in hope of Christ's coming, and be content in whatever state Providence orders them (Rom. 8:28; Phil. 4:4-6, 11).

As touching their deportment, they should live blamelessly before the world so that their good will not be evil spoken of. They are to be epistles of Christ, known and read of all men (Rom. 12:17; 14:16; 2 Cor. 3:2).

As touching their words, they should speak evil of no man nor bring a railing accusation against any. They should at all times be ready to believe the best of every person. They should be swift to hear, slow to speak (Titus 3:2; Jude 9; 1 Cor. 13:7; James 1:19).

As touching temperance and self-control, they should not obey the dictates of the flesh. They should have every appetite and passion under the control of sanctified reason and be temperate in all things lawful (1 Cor. 9:25-27; Rom. 6:12). (There is no such thing as being temperate in things which are harmful. Temperance only applies to lawful things.)

As touching good works, they are to be zealous in their practice, doing good unto all men, especially to

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those of the household of faith (Gal. 6:9, 10; Titus 2:14).

The New Testament also contains practical instruction given to parents, children, masters, servants, preachers, listeners, rich, poor, husbands, wives, rulers and subjects. The path of the saints may be straight and narrow, but it is plainly marked so that no one need guess at anything vital regarding the way of holiness.

Bishop J.C. Ryle has given us this sketch of a holy man:

First, then, let me try to show *what true practical holiness is—what sort of persons are those whom God calls holy.*

A man may go great lengths, and yet never reach true holiness. It is not knowledge—Balaam had that: nor great profession—Judas Iscariot had that: nor doing many things—Herod had that: nor zeal for certain matters in religion—Jehu had that: nor morality and outward respectability of conduct—the young ruler had that: nor taking pleasure in hearing preachers—the Jews in Ezekiel's time had that: nor keeping company with godly people—Joab and Gehazi and Demas had that. Yet none of these was holy! These things alone are not holiness. A man may have any one of them, and yet never see the Lord.

What then is true practical holiness? It is a hard question to answer. I do not mean that there is any want of Scriptural matter on the subject. But I fear lest I should give a defective view of holiness, and not say all that ought to be said; or lest I should say things about it that ought not to be said, and so do harm. Let me, however, try to draw a picture of holiness, that we may see it clearly before the eyes of our minds. Only let it never be forgotten, when I have said all, that my account is but a poor imperfect outline at the best.

(a) Holiness is *the habit of being of one mind with God*, according as we find His mind described in Scripture. It is the habit of agreeing with God's judgment—hating what He hates—loving what He loves—and measuring everything in this world by the standard of His Word. He who most entirely agrees with God, he is the most holy man.

(b) A holy man will *endeavour to shun every known sin, and to keep every known commandment*. He will have a decided bent of mind toward God, a hearty desire to do His will—a greater fear of displeasing Him than of displeasing the world, and a love to all His ways. He will feel what Paul felt when he said, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. vii. 22), and what David felt when he said, "I esteem *all* Thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate *every* false way." (Psalm cxix. 128.)

(c) A holy man will *strive to be like our Lord Jesus Christ*. He will not only live the life of faith in Him, and draw from Him all his daily peace and strength, but he will also labour to have the mind that was in Him, and to be

“conformed to His image.” (Rom. viii. 29.) It will be his aim to bear with and forgive others, even as Christ forgave us—to be unselfish, even as Christ pleased not Himself—to walk in love, even as Christ loved us—to be lowly minded and humble, even as Christ made Himself of no reputation and humbled Himself. He will remember that Christ was a faithful witness for the truth—that He came not to do His own will—that it was His meat and drink to do His Father’s will—that He would continually deny Himself in order to minister to others—that He was meek and patient under undeserved insults—that He thought more of godly poor men than of kings—that He was full of love and compassion to sinners—that He was bold and uncompromising in denouncing sin—that He sought not the praise of men, when He might have had it—that He went about doing good—that He was separate from worldly people—that He continued instant in prayer—that He would not let even His nearest relations stand in His way when God’s work was to be done. These things a holy man will try to remember. By them he will endeavour to shape his course in life. He will lay to heart the saying of John, “He that saith he abideth in Christ ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked” (1 John ii. 6); and the saying of Peter, that “Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps.” (1 Peter ii. 21.) Happy is he who has learned to make Christ his “all,” both for salvation and example! Much time would be saved, and much sin prevented, if men would oftener ask themselves the question, “What would Christ have said and done, if He were in my place?”

(d) A holy man will follow after *meekness*, longsuffering, gentleness, patience, kind tempers, government of his tongue. He will bear much, forbear much, overlook much, and be slow to talk of standing on his rights. We see a bright example of this in the behaviour of David when Shimei cursed him—and of Moses when Aaron and Miriam spake against him. (2 Sam. xvi. 10; Num. xii. 3.)

(e) A holy man will follow after *temperance and self-denial*. He will labour to mortify the desires of his body—to crucify his flesh with his affections and lusts—to curb his passions—to restrain his carnal inclinations, lest at any time they break loose. Oh, what a word is that of the Lord Jesus to the Apostles, “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life” (Luke xxi. 34); and that of the Apostle Paul, “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.” (1 Cor. ix. 27.)

(f) A holy man will follow after *charity and brotherly kindness*. He will endeavour to observe the golden rule of doing as he would have men do to him, and speaking as he would have men speak to him. He will be full of affection towards his brethren—towards their bodies, their property, their characters, their feelings, their souls. “He that loveth another,” says Paul, “hath fulfilled the law.” (Rom. xiii. 8.) He will abhor all lying, slandering, backbiting, cheating, dishonesty, and unfair dealing, even in the least things. The shekel and cubit of the sanctuary were larger than those in

common use. He will strive to adorn his religion by all his outward demeanour, and to make it lovely and beautiful in the eyes of all around him. Alas, what condemning words are the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians, and the Sermon on the Mount, when laid alongside the conduct of many professing Christians!

(g) A holy man will follow after a spirit of *mercy and benevolence towards others*. He will not stand all the day idle. He will not be content with doing no harm—he will try to do good. He will strive to be useful in his day and generation, and to lessen the spiritual wants and misery around him, as far as he can. Such was Dorcas, “full of good works and almsdeeds, which she did,”—not merely purposed and talked about, *but did*. Such an one was Paul: “I will very gladly spend and be spent for you,” he says, “though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved.” (Acts ix. 36; 2 Cor. xii. 15.)

(h) A holy man will follow after *purity of heart*. He will dread all filthiness and uncleanness of spirit, and seek to avoid all things that might draw him into it. He knows his own heart is like tinder, and will diligently keep clear of the sparks of temptation. Who shall dare to talk of strength when David can fall? There is many a hint to be gleaned from the ceremonial law. Under it a man who only *touched* a bone, or a dead body, or a grave, or a diseased person, became at once unclean in the sight of God. And these things were emblems and figures. Few Christians are ever too watchful and too particular about this point.

(i) A holy man will follow after *the fear of God*. I do not mean the fear of a slave, who only works because he is afraid of punishment, and would be idle if he did not dread discovery. I mean rather the fear of a child, who wishes to live and move as if he was always before his father’s face, because he loves him. What a noble example Nehemiah gives us of this! When he became Governor at Jerusalem he might have been chargeable to the Jews and required of them money for his support. The former Governors had done so. There was none to blame him if he did. But he says, “So did not I, because of the fear of God.” (Nehem. v. 15.)

(j) A holy man will follow after *humility*. He will desire, in lowliness of mind, to esteem all others better than himself. He will see more evil in his own heart than in any other in the world. He will understand something of Abraham’s feeling, when he says, “I am dust and ashes;”—and Jacob’s, when he says, “I am less than the least of all Thy mercies;”—and Job’s, when he says, “I am vile;”—and Paul’s, when he says, “I am chief of sinners.” Holy Bradford, that faithful martyr of Christ, would sometimes finish his letters with these words, “A most miserable sinner, John Bradford.” Good old Mr. Grimshaw’s last words, when he lay on his death-bed, were these, “Here goes an unprofitable servant.”

(k) A holy man will follow after *faithfulness in all the duties and relations in life*. He will try, not merely to fill his place as well as others who take no thought for their souls, but even better, because he has higher motives, and more



help than they. Those words of Paul should never be forgotten, "Whatever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord,"—"Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." (Col. iii. 23; Rom. xii. 11.) Holy persons should aim at doing everything well, and should be ashamed of allowing themselves to do anything ill if they can help it. Like Daniel, they should seek to give no "occasion" against themselves, except "concerning the law of their God." (Dan. vi. 5.) They should strive to be good husbands and good wives, good parents and good children, good masters and good servants, good neighbours, good friends, good subjects, good in private and good in public, good in the place of business and good by their firesides. Holiness is worth little indeed, if it does not bear this kind of fruit.

The Lord Jesus puts a searching question to His people, when He says, "What do ye more than others?" (Matt. v. 47.)

(f) Last, but not least, a holy man will follow after *spiritual mindedness*. He will endeavour to set his affections entirely on things above, and to hold things on earth with a very loose hand. He will not neglect the business of the life that now is; but the first place in his mind and thoughts will be given to the life to come. He will aim to live like one whose treasure is in heaven, and to pass through this world like a stranger and pilgrim travelling to his home. To commune with God in prayer, in the Bible, and in the assembly of His people—these things will be the holy man's chiefest enjoyments. He will value every thing and place and

**“... true holiness is a great reality. It is something in a man that can be seen, and known, and marked, and felt by all around him.”
—J. C. Ryle.**

company, just in proportion as it draws him nearer to God. He will enter into something of David's feeling, when he says, "My soul followeth hard after Thee." "Thou art my portion." (Psalm lxxiii. 8; cxix. 57.)

Such is the outline of holiness which I venture to sketch out. Such is the character which those who are called "holy" follow after. Such are the main features of a holy man.

But here let me say, I trust no man will misunderstand me. I am not without fear that my meaning will be mistaken, and the description I have given of holiness will discourage some tender conscience. I would not willingly make one righteous heart sad, or throw a stumbling-block in any believer's way.

I do not say for a moment that holiness shuts out the presence of *indwelling* sin. No: far from it. It is the greatest misery of a holy man that he carries about with him a "body of death;"—that often when he would do good "evil is present with him"; that the old man is clogging all his movements, and, as it were, trying to draw him back at every step he takes. (Rom. vii. 21.) But it is the excellence of a holy man that he is not at peace with indwelling sin, as others are. He hates it, mourns over it, and longs to be free from its company. The work of sanctification within him is like the wall of Jerusalem—the building goes forward "even in troublous times." (Dan. ix. 25.)

Neither do I say that holiness comes to ripeness and perfection all at once, or that these graces I have touched on must be found in full bloom and vigour before you can call a man holy. No: far from it. Sanctification is always a *progressive work*. Some men's graces are in the blade, some in the ear, and some are like full corn in the ear. All must have a beginning. We must never despise "the day of small things." And sanctification in the very best is an *imperfect work*. The history of the brightest saints that ever lived will contain many a "but," and "howbeit," and "notwithstanding," before you reach the end. The gold will never be without some dross—the light will never shine without some clouds, until we reach the heavenly Jerusalem. The sun himself has spots upon his face. The holiest men have many a blemish and defect when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary. Their life is a continual warfare with sin, the world, and the devil; and sometimes you will see them not overcoming, but overcome. The flesh is ever lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and "in many things they offend all." (Gal. v. 17; James iii. 2.)

But still, for all this, I am sure that to have such a character as I have faintly drawn, is the heart's desire and prayer of all true Christians. They press towards it, if they do not reach it. They may not attain to it, but they always aim at it. It is what they strive and labour to be, if it is not what they are.

And this I do boldly and confidently say, that true holiness is a great *reality*. It is something in a man that can be seen, and known, and marked, and felt by all around him. It is light: if it exists, it will show itself. It is salt: if it exists, its savour will be perceived. It is a precious ointment: if it exists, its presence cannot be hid.

I am sure we should all be ready to make allowance for much backsliding, for much occasional deadness in professing Christians. I know a road may lead from one point to another, and yet have many a winding and turn; and a man may be truly holy, and yet be drawn aside by many an infirmity. Gold is not the less gold because mingled with alloy, nor light the less light because faint and dim, nor grace the less grace because young and weak. But after every allowance, I cannot see how any man deserves to be called "holy," who wilfully allows himself in sins, and is not humbled and ashamed because of them. I dare not call anyone "holy" who makes a habit of wilfully neglecting known duties, and wilfully doing what he knows God has commanded him not to do. Well says Owen, "I do not understand how a man can be a true believer unto whom sin is not the greatest burden, sorrow, and trouble." — J.C. Ryle, *Holiness* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1956), pp. 35-39.

Sanctification—

Its Duration

... He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ ... — Phil. 1:6.

The doctrine of sanctification has relevance only to this life. The angels and those redeemed ones who are already in heaven do not need to be exhorted and often reminded to practice charity, patience and self-control. Of course, they will always experience development, and their capacity to love and appreciate God will ever expand. But this is not the process of sanctification. Sanctification is a continual cleansing and separating from sin as much as it is a continual growth in the attributes of the divine character.

There is no point in this life where it will not be appropriate to exhort the saints to the life of Bible sanctification. Said the apostle Peter, "... I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance..." 2 Pet. 1:13. And as long as we are in this tabernacle, we will need to read what Peter says about sanctification. This fact presupposes that in this life we will never arrive at a sinless state, for sinless creatures, being fully sanctified, have no need of the doctrine of sanctification. For them a very large portion of the Bible would be irrelevant.

The Scriptures clearly teach us that sanctification will never be complete until glorification (see Rom. 8:17-25). "Sanctification is glory in the seed, and glory is sanctification in the flower." — Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity* (London: Banner of Truth, 1970). None of the prophets or apostles claimed to be without sin. Said the apostle Paul:

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. — Phil. 3:12-14.

In this life there is no stopping place, no point to which we may come and say, I have fully attained. The law of God still stands to demand a holiness greater than any saint has to give. No matter how high he may climb the alpine heights of holy living, the law stands above him, demanding, Holier yet! Thus, "... by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20)—and so it ever will be in this life.

The basic, inescapable fact that sanctification is always called for in this life, that the process must continue until glorification, is sufficient to cut off all aspirations of perfectionism. There is no such thing as arriving at a great "second blessing" of complete sanctification, unless that "second blessing" is understood as the New Testament "second coming" and glorification.

It is the strangest anomaly that some Christians who practice the ordinance of footwashing in conjunction with the Lord's Supper have been the most prone toward the doctrine of perfectionism. Christ's feet were not washed, because He was without sin. The reason why the disciples needed their feet washed was because they were still sinners—even though they were disciples of Christ. What meaning can footwashing possibly have today unless it is accompanied by confession of personal sinfulness and confession of need of the continual cleansing of Christ?



Why Sanctification Needs to Be Urged Throughout Life

Many evangelical teachers have allowed the preaching of sanctification to languish through false reasoning on gospel premises. They have said, "If you lift up the cross of Christ, talk about the love of God and salvation by free grace, sanctification will come naturally. When people accept the gospel, they will be so full of gratitude that they won't have to be urged or admonished to a life of holiness."

What shall we say about this sort of advice? St. Paul certainly was not content to preach the gospel and leave sanctification and a life of good works to take care of itself. In his letters he reminded the redeemed community what had happened and what had been given to them in the gospel. But he did not stop there. He used the gospel as the basis for very concrete appeals for godly behavior.

There is a fundamental reason why the church needs to be diligently taught and often reminded what constitutes the life of holiness. That reason is the sinfulness of human nature. The best of God's people still have a heart bent to backsliding, and they are prone to forget God's love and man's duty.

In the time of the German Reformation, John Agricola contended that the preaching and urging of Christian duty was unnecessary. "Hang Moses and the Ten Commandments!" he cried. He thought that the preaching of God's love and Christ's cross was all that was necessary. This was the spirit of *antinomianism*, and Luther and Melancthon would have none of it.

Luther wrote more about sanctification and the necessity of good works than many people suppose.

He knew the reason why no teacher of the gospel can take this matter for granted. Said he:

But St. Paul also knows that although Christians have begun to believe and are in a condition in which the fruits of faith should appear, this result is nonetheless not so quickly attained and realized. Therefore it will do no good to think and to say: The doctrine has been presented. This certainly is enough; for where the Spirit and faith are found, fruits and good works will follow of their own accord. For although the Spirit is present and, as Christ says, is willing and is also at work in believers, still the flesh, weak and indolent, is opposed to Him. Then, too, the devil does not cease his efforts to bring to ruin, through temptations and allurements, that feeble flesh. Therefore we must not let people go on, as if it were not necessary to admonish and urge them through the Word of God to lead a good life. No, you dare not be negligent and remiss in this matter . . .

What, then, would happen if such admonishing and urging were discontinued and we simply went on thinking (as many secure religionists are doing): Why, I myself am well aware of what I should do; I have heard it so often and for so many years, yes, have even taught it to others. I hold that if we were to stop preaching and admonishing for a year, we would become worse than any heathen. — *What Luther Says*, ed. Ewald M. Plass (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), Vol. 2, p. 659.

We hope that these remarks may move some preachers to start declaring the whole counsel of God. What we see everywhere is a tendency to pervert the message of grace into an easygoing benevolence. But as Luther warned, people will become secure and lazy by the continual preaching of grace. Those who neglect the doctrine of Bible holiness may have their head in the clouds, but their feet are not on the earth; and this has done great damage to the church.

Sanctification— Its Value



Personal holiness can never put away sin or save us. It has no value as touching our acceptance, or justification, before the face of God. But we must not conclude from this that it has little value. Outside of the article of justification, holiness cannot be too highly commended.

Sanctification is a beautiful thing, for the Bible speaks of "the beauties of holiness." Ps. 110:3. "Sanctification is the first fruit of the Spirit; it is heaven begun in the soul. Sanctification and glory differ only in degree: Sanctification is glory in the seed, and glory is sanctification in the flower." — Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*. Sanctification is a glorious process, for the apostle declares:

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. — 2 Cor. 3:18.

First let us speak of the value which God places upon holiness. The Word declares that the adorning of "the hidden man of the heart" with "a meek and quiet spirit . . . is in the sight of God of great price." 1 Pet. 3:4. And says the writer to the Hebrews, ". . . to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Heb. 13:16. The kindness of the Philipians toward the apostle Paul is called "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice



acceptable, wellpleasing to God." Phil. 4:18. John says that the righteous "keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." 1 John 3:22.

Then we must not forget that the Bible clearly teaches that the saints will finally be judged and rewarded according to their works (Rev. 22:14; Rom. 2:6; etc.). This does not mean they will be rewarded *because of* their works, but *according to* their works. The reward is of grace, but the happiness of the saints in glory and their joy and capacity for service in the hereafter will have some reference to their present faithfulness to Christ.

Says that great Puritan scholar, John Owen:

We must also consider, that holiness is not confined to this life, but passes over into eternity and glory. Death has no power to destroy it; or divest us of it. Its acts indeed are transient, but its fruits abide for ever in their reward. They who die in the Lord rest from their labours, "and their works follow them," Rev. 14:13. "God is not unrighteous to forget their labour of love," Heb. 6:10. There is not any fruit of holiness, not the least, not the giving "a cup of cold water to a disciple of Christ, in the name of a disciple," but it shall be had in everlasting remembrance, and abide for ever in its eternal reward. Nothing shall be lost, but all the fragments shall be gathered up, and kept safe for ever. Every thing else in this world, however specious, shall be burnt up and consumed as "hay and stubble;" when the least, the meanest, the most secret fruit of holiness, shall be

gathered as "gold and silver" into God's treasury, and become a part of the riches of the inheritance of the saints in glory. Let no soul fear the loss of any labour in the duties of holiness, in the most secret contest against sin, for inward purity, for outward fruitfulness, in the mortification of sin, resistance of temptations, in self-denial, or contentment; all that you know, and what you do not know, shall be revived, called over, and abide eternally in its reward. — John Owen, *The Holy Spirit: His Gifts and Power* (Grand Rapids: Kregal Publications, 1967), pp. 224, 225.

Did Luther despise good works? Listen:

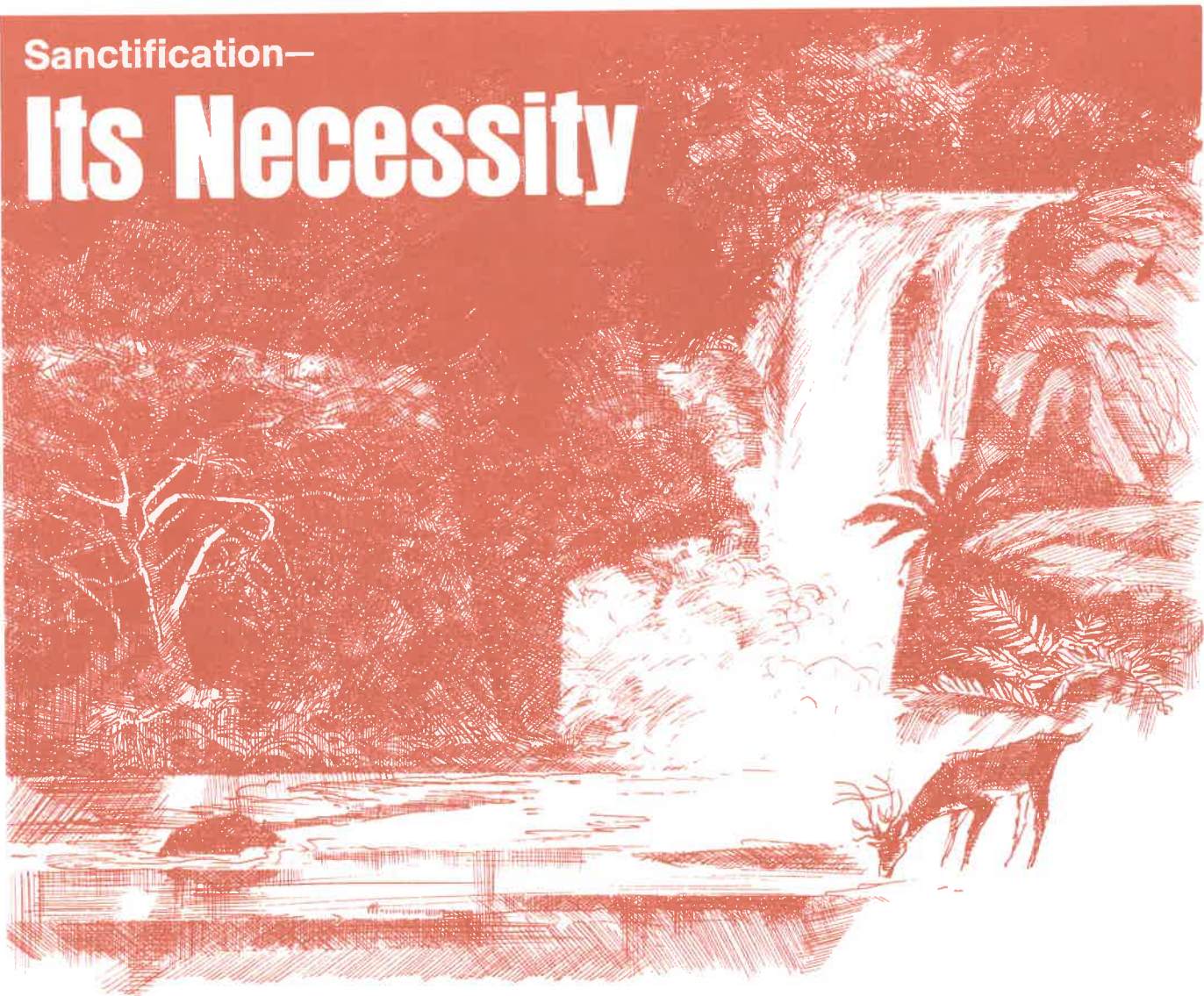
Outside the article of justification we cannot sufficiently praise and magnify these works which are commanded by God. For who can sufficiently commend and set forth the profit and fruit of only one work which a Christian does through faith and in faith? Indeed, it is more precious than heaven or earth. (St.L.IX:442f.)

We teach that to reconcile to God, to make righteous, to blot out sin, is so high and great and glorious a work that alone Christ, the Son of God, could do it and that this is indeed such a pure, special, peculiar work of the one true God and His grace that our works are nothing and can do nothing. But that therefore good works should be nothing or be worth only a penny, who ever heard of such a thing, or who could teach such a thing except the lying mouth of the devil? I would not give up one of my sermons, not one of my lectures, not one of my treatises, not one of my Lord's Prayers, nay, whatever small work I have ever done or am doing, for all the riches of the world . . . — Cited by F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. 3, pp. 59, 60.



Sanctification—

Its Necessity



It is not enough to see the value of holiness. We must acknowledge its absolute necessity in the plan of salvation. There are many willing to grant its value, and they concur that Christians should pursue holiness out of gratitude for the gospel. But they have made such a drastic separation between justification and sanctification that they imagine that a man may remain destitute of holiness, yet still be saved. Sanctification is made to appear as something optional—as if it were a good and proper thing to possess, but practically irrelevant as far as salvation is concerned. This is “evangelical” antinomianism in one of its worst forms, and it is rampant in some sections of the church.

We will therefore make two points about the necessity of sanctification:

1. As a Part of Salvation

We may say that sanctification is the fruit of accepting salvation. But leaving the matter there does not enforce its necessity as radically as the Bible, which says:

Follow . . . holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord . . . — Heb. 12:14.

. . . God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth . . . — 2 Thess. 2:13.

While it is true that no man will be saved by inwrought holiness, it is equally true that no man is saved who is without it. Holiness is not just a fruit of God’s salvation; it is a part of it. This point is so vital to grasp. It requires careful consideration. Clearly

understood, it would cause a revolution in many evangelical circles where people are resting on a salvation which is devoid of holiness and devoid of a genuine hope of heaven.

Salvation has two aspects. It means salvation *from* something and salvation *to* something. The *to* is just as much a part of being saved as the *from*. Israel was saved *from* serving Pharaoh in Egypt *to* serving God in the new theocracy. So salvation means being saved

from sin to righteousness,
from death to life,
from guilt to innocence,
from condemnation to justification,
from disobedience to obedience,
from defilement to purity,
from pollution to holiness.

Thus, the Bible declares that we are "delivered *from* the hand of our enemies" *to* serve God "without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life." Luke 1:74, R.S.V. The blood of Christ is able to "purge your conscience *from* dead works *to* serve the living God." Heb. 9:14. Believers are "delivered *from* the law" *to* "serve in newness of Spirit." Rom. 7:6.

This means that if you receive God's salvation in faith, a new life of obedience and holiness will be part of it. This point is powerfully stated by the Puritan, Walter Marshall, whose book, *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*, has often been described as one of the finest presentations on sanctification ever written in the English language. Says Marshall:

And others, when they are taught by the scriptures, that we are *saved by faith, through 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 harmless. Yea, some are given up to strong Antinomian delusions, that they account it a part of the liberty from the bondage of the law, purchased by the blood of Christ, to make no conscience of breaking the law in their conversation.

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, the privileges of adoption, are parts of our salvation, which 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 a necessary part of our salvation. God saveth us from our sinful uncleanness here, by *the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost*, as well as from hell hereafter (Ezek. xxxvi.29; Titus iii.5). Christ was called JESUS, that is, a *Saviour*, because *he saved his people from their sins* (Matt. i.21). Therefore it is a part of our salvation, to deliver us from our sins; which is begun, in this life, by justification and sanctification, and perfected by glorification in the life to come . . .

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 prepared that we should walk in them* (Eph. ii.10). It is, indeed, one part of our salvation, to be delivered from the bondage of the covenant of works; but the end of this is, not that we may have liberty to sin (which is the worst of slavery) but that we may fulfil the royal law of liberty, and that we may serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter (Gal. v.13; Rom. vii.6). Yea, holiness in this life is such a part of our salvation, as is a necessary means to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in heavenly light and glory; without holiness we can never see God (Heb. xii.14); and, are as unfit for the glorious presence, as swine for the presence-chamber of an earthly prince . . .

Great multitudes of ignorant people, that live under the gospel, harden their hearts in sin, and ruin their souls for ever, 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 punishment due to sin; but they love their lusts so well, that they hate holiness, and would not be saved from the service of sin. The way to oppose this pernicious 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 (John xiii.8) . . .

What a strange kind of salvation do they desire, that care not for holiness?

But, let them not be deceived, God is not mocked. 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 (John vii.37,38); and cry out earnestly to save us, not only from hell, but from sin; saying, Teach me to do thy will; thy Spirit is good (Ps. cxliii.10); Turn thou me, and I shall be turned (Jer. xxxi.18); Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right Spirit within me (Ps. li.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 us through Christ. — Walter Marshall, *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification* (London, Edinburgh: Oliphants Ltd., 1954), pp. 98-101.

2. As a Fitness for Heaven

Holiness is a necessary preparation for the life of heaven; indeed, it is heaven already begun in the soul. Without it a man would have no fitness to enjoy the life to come. It would be hard to state this better than Bishop J.C. Ryle, who wrote:

... we must be holy, *because without holiness on earth we shall never be prepared to enjoy heaven.* Heaven is a holy place. The Lord of heaven is a holy Being. The angels are holy creatures. Holiness is written on everything in heaven. The book of Revelation says expressly, "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." (Rev. xxi. 27.)

I appeal solemnly to everyone who reads these pages, How shall we ever be at home and happy in heaven, if we die unholy? Death works no change. The grave makes no alteration. Each will rise again with the same character in which he breathed his last. Where will our place be if we are strangers to holiness now?

Suppose for a moment that you were allowed to enter heaven without holiness. What would you do? What possible enjoyment could you feel there? To which of all the saints would you join yourself, and by whose side would you sit down? Their pleasures are not your pleasures, their tastes not your tastes, their character not your character. How could you possibly be happy, if you had not been holy on earth?

Now perhaps you love the company of the light and the careless, the worldly-minded and the covetous, the reveller and the pleasure-seeker, the ungodly and the profane. There will be none such in heaven.

Now perhaps you think the saints of God too strict and particular, and serious. You rather avoid them. You have no delight in their society. There will be no other company in heaven.

Now perhaps you think praying, and Scripture-reading, and hymn singing, dull and melancholy, and stupid work—a thing to be tolerated now and then, but not enjoyed. You reckon the Sabbath a burden and a weariness; you could not possibly spend more than a small part of it in worshipping God. But remember, heaven is a never-ending Sabbath. The inhabitants thereof rest not day or night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," and singing the praise of the Lamb. How could an unholy man find pleasure in occupation such as this?

Think you that such an one would delight to meet David, and Paul, and John, after a life spent in doing the very things they spoke against? Would he take sweet counsel with them, and find that he and they had much in common?—Think you, above all, that he would rejoice to meet Jesus, the Crucified One, face to face, after cleaving to the sins for which He died, after loving His enemies and despising His friends? Would he stand before Him with confidence, and join in the cry, "This is our God; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation"? (Isa. xxv. 9.) Think you not rather that the tongue of an unholy man would cleave to the roof of his

mouth with shame, and his only desire would be to be cast out! He would feel a stranger in a land he knew not, a black sheep amidst Christ's holy flock. The voice of Cherubim and Seraphim, the song of Angels and Archangels and all the company of heaven, would be a language he could not understand. The very air would seem an air he could not breathe.

I know not what others may think, but to me it does seem clear that heaven would be a miserable place to an unholy man. It cannot be otherwise. People may say, in a vague way, "they hope to go to heaven;" but they do not consider what they say. There must be a certain "meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light." Our hearts must be somewhat in tune. To reach the holiday of glory, we must pass through the training school of grace. We must be heavenly-minded, and have heavenly tastes, in the life that now is, or else we shall never find ourselves in heaven, in the life to come.

And now, before I go any further, let me say a few words by way of application.

(1) For one thing, let me ask everyone who may read these pages, *Are you holy?* Listen, I pray you, to the question I put to you this day. Do you know anything of the holiness of which I have been speaking?

I do not ask whether you attend your church regularly—whether you have been baptized, and received the Lord's Supper—whether you have the name of Christian—I ask something more than all this: *Are you holy, or are you not?*

I do not ask whether you approve of holiness in others—whether you like to read the lives of holy people, and to talk of holy things, and to have on your table holy books—whether you mean to be holy, and hope you will be holy some day—I ask something further: *Are you yourself holy this very day, or are you not?*

And why do I ask so straitly, and press the question so strongly? I do it because the Scripture says, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." It is written, it is not my fancy—it is the Bible, not my private opinion—it is the word of God, not of man—"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. xii. 14.)

Alas, what searching, sifting words are these! What thoughts come across my mind, as I write them down! I look at the world, and see the greater part of it lying in wickedness. I look at professing Christians, and see the vast majority having nothing of Christianity but the name. I turn to the Bible, and I hear the Spirit saying, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

Surely it is a text that ought to make us consider our ways, and search our hearts. Surely it should raise within us solemn thoughts and send us to prayer.

You may try to put me off by saying "you feel much, and think much about these things: far more than many suppose." I answer, "This is not the point. The poor lost souls in hell do as much as this. The great question is not what you *think*, and what you *feel*, but what you *DO*."

You may say, "It was never meant that all Christians should be holy, and that holiness, such as I have described, is only for great saints, and people of uncommon gifts." I answer, "I cannot see that in Scripture. I read that *every man* who hath hope in Christ purifieth himself." (1 John iii. 3.)—"Without holiness *no man* shall see the Lord."

You may say, "It is impossible to be so holy and to do our duty in this life at the same time: the thing cannot be done." I answer, "You are mistaken. It *can* be done. With Christ on your side nothing is impossible. It *has* been done by many. David, and Obadiah, and Daniel, and the servants of Nero's household, are all examples that go to prove it."

You may say, "If I were so holy I would be unlike other people." I answer, "I know it well. It is just what you ought to be. Christ's true servants always were unlike the world around them—a separate nation, a peculiar people;—and you must be so too, if you would be saved!"

You may say, "At this rate very few will be saved." I answer, "I know it. It is precisely what we are told in the Sermon on the Mount." The Lord Jesus said so 1,900 years ago. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. vii. 14.) Few will be saved, because few will take the trouble to seek salvation. Men will not deny themselves the pleasures of sin and their own way for a little season. They turn their backs on an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." "Ye will not come unto Me," says Jesus, "that ye might have life." (John v. 40.)

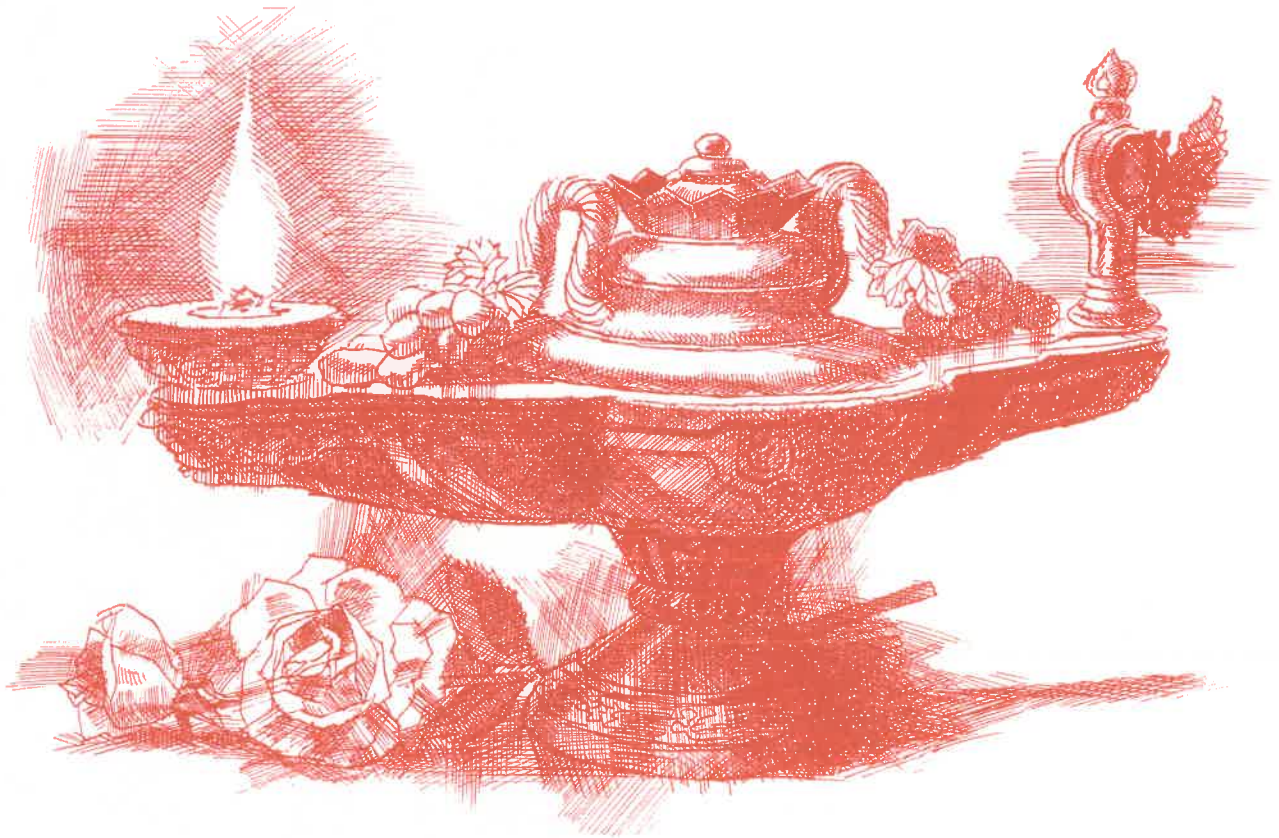
You may say, "These are hard sayings: the way is very narrow." I answer, "I know it. So says the Sermon on the Mount." The Lord Jesus said so 1,900 years ago. He always said that men must take up the cross daily, and that they must be ready to cut off hand or foot, if they would be His disciples. It is in religion as it is in other things, "there are no gains without pains." That which costs nothing is worth nothing.

Whatever we may think fit to say, we must be holy, if we would see the Lord. Where is our Christianity if we are not? We must not merely have a Christian name, and Christian knowledge, we must have a Christian *character* also. We must be saints on earth, if ever we mean to be saints in heaven. God has said it, and He will not go back: "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "The Pope's calendar," says Jenkyn, "only makes saints of the *dead*, but Scripture requires sanctity in the *living*." "Let not men deceive themselves," says Owen; "sanctification is a qualification indispensably necessary unto those who will be under the conduct of the Lord Christ unto salvation. He leads none to heaven but whom He sanctifies on the earth. This living Head will not admit dead members." — J.C. Ryle, *Holiness*, pp. 43-47.



Sanctification—

Its Divine Source



We have briefly surveyed the sanctified life as to its meaning, scope, practical nature, duration, value and necessity. Now we must consider its divine source. Such a life can never be the product of human devising. Sanctification is God's work. He is the author of it. The Lord says of His people, "... I am the Lord that sanctify them." Ezek. 20:12.

Sanctification is the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

1. Of the Father:

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. — 1 Thess. 5:23.

2. Of the Son:

... Jesus Christ... gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. — Titus 2:13, 14.

3. Of the Spirit:

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. — 2 Thess. 2:13.

Sanctification is especially the work of the Third Person of the Godhead. He is holiness personified. His presence sanctifies. God's people are those who are

led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14); they walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16); and they are taught by the Spirit (1 John 2:27).

This holy Person indwells every true believer as the Representative of Jesus Christ. The promise of Jesus belongs to all His people:

And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. — John 14:16, 17.

As the candle of the Lord, He searches out sin. As the fire of the Lord, He purifies the heart. As the oil of the Lord, He heals the wounds of the soul. As the breath of the Lord, He creates spiritual life in Christ's body. As the rain of the Lord, He replenishes the thirsty heart.

Where there is faith, He is the Creator of it. Where there is hatred of sin, He is the Author of it. Where there is love of righteousness, He is the Inspirer of it. Every right impulse, every ray of spiritual enlightenment, every worthy motive, every holy resolve has the Spirit as its source.

As Christ intercedes for us at the right hand of God, His Representative works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving. He strikes the chords of the soul, awakening holy impulses and music of the heart.

Above all, He does not speak of Himself, for He is the Representative of Jesus (John 16:13). He takes the things of Christ and shows them to us. He is our heavenly Instructor, whose lessons are directed to one Object—Christ.

Imparted Righteousness

By being made "partakers of the Holy Ghost" (Heb. 6:4), we become "partakers of His holiness." Heb. 12:10. Peter calls it being "partakers of the divine nature." 2 Pet. 1:4.

Holiness is the life of heaven. It is the life and character of God. Those attributes of the divine character—love, goodness, meekness, patience, integrity, purity, benevolence, kindness, etc.—are *imparted* to the human soul. Thus, they are called the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23). The faculties are not changed, but the principles of God's character be-

come the governing principles of the regenerate heart. This is that inward "adorning" of "the hidden man of the heart." 1 Pet. 3:3, 4. This is what David means when he says, "Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom. . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Ps. 51:6, 10.

In theology this inward working of divine grace has sometimes been called *imparted righteousness*. The actual expression is not found in the Bible, but provided it is used with due care, it is a very fitting expression. Dr. W.H. Griffin Thomas sees its proper emphasis as necessary to keep the doctrine of justification by faith "from the charge of mere intellectual orthodoxy without spiritual vitality." — W.H. Griffin Thomas, *The Principles of Theology: An Introduction to the Thirty-nine Articles* (London: Church Book Room Press, 1956), p. 194. Wesley insisted on *imparted righteousness* as the antidote for antinomianism.

Since *imparted righteousness* is not a Biblical expression, certainly not a Pauline one, there is a danger of confusing *imparted righteousness* (as it has come to be called) with the Pauline *righteousness of (or by) faith*. This error has actually happened in some circles, and it is the utter corruption of the message of salvation. The righteousness that we receive in faith means nothing more than what Christ has done and suffered for us—His satisfaction made to the divine law in our behalf. Biblically speaking, this righteousness of faith *never* becomes a quality of the human soul. Being the work and merit of Another, it may be reckoned to us, but can never be infused. In Paul's scheme of reference, the righteousness of God which is by faith is *imputed*, and the life-giving power of the Spirit is *imparted*—"shed abroad in our hearts." Rom. 5:5. The gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:17), which is *imputed*, and the gift of the Spirit (Heb. 6:4), which is *imparted*, are never confused in the apostolic message.

Having noted that there is reason for caution on this point, we must nevertheless acknowledge that Christ, through His Holy Spirit, does work a real righteousness within the hearts of His people (see Rom. 8:4; Phil. 1:11; 1 John 3:7; Matt. 5:16; etc.). However, the word most frequently used for this inwrought work of grace is *holiness*. Whatever we call it, it is both a divine work and the source of sanctification.

Sanctification—

Its Human Factor

The Holy Spirit's work in the human heart is not substitutionary.

Having shown that sanctification has a divine source, we must now turn our attention to the human factor in the process of sanctification. To stress the divine source and ignore the human factor is a terrible theological blunder—comparable to a doctrine of the incarnation which acknowledges Christ's divinity and ignores His humanity. We know that a sound doctrine of the incarnation must be balanced. It must give full weight to the reality of Christ's divinity and full weight to the reality of His humanity. The same principle applies to the doctrine of sanctification. If we stress the divine work and ignore the factor of human effort, we run into the error of quietism or mysticism—or something worse. If we play up the importance of human effort and ignore sanctification's divine source, we run into the error of humanistic moralism.

In order to avoid the pitfall of quietism and mystic piety, the first thing we draw attention to is this: *The Holy Spirit's work in the human heart is not substitutionary*. So often we hear it said in reference to Christian existence: "The battle is not yours; it is God's." "Let go and let God." "Yield yourself to God as a passive channel, and He will live the victorious life in you." "The Lawgiver on the throne can become the Lawkeeper in your heart." But the Bible knows nothing about this type of mystic, passive, effeminate piety. This error results from utterly confusing the work of the Second and Third Persons of the Godhead.

The work of the Second Person of the Godhead was *substitutionary*. He lived *for us* a sinless life. He stood in our place in the judgment of God and was wounded for our transgressions. He rose again for our justification. And as our Representative, Substitute and Surety, He now presents the merits of His life and death on our behalf in the presence of the Father. These glorious redemptive acts are *substitutionary*. They are done for us. They are done outside of us and without our effort or aid. The gospel proclaims that Christ has thus fought and won the battle for us. Sin has been put away, death conquered, Satan defeated, and everlasting righteousness has been presented and accepted in the presence of God on our behalf. This glad word of salvation creates the faith to *passively* accept this free title to justification and life eternal.

Now the same thing cannot be said about the Spirit's work or our response to His work. His work is in no sense substitutionary, as was Christ's work on the cross. But an inadequate doctrine of justification to life eternal by substitution, representation and



imputation through passive acceptance, causes the deadly error of passive sanctification.

The Bible teaches that faith is the gift of the Holy Spirit and that good works are the fruit of the Spirit's working. But the Bible does not teach that the Holy Spirit does the believing and good works for us. Faith is a meaningful human activity. It is the human agent who does the believing. It is called "your faith." 2 Thess. 1:3. The same thing is true about the works which spring from faith. Paul calls it "your work of faith." 1 Thess. 1:3. It is not called Christ's work of faith nor the Spirit's work of faith, but "*your* work of faith."

While the Holy Spirit imparts the righteous attributes of God to the soul and then inspires, motivates and empowers the believer to a life of good works, He is generally not represented to us as the One who does the acts of righteousness. The great preponder-

ance of Bible texts attribute the actual deeds to the believer, i.e.:

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. — Matt. 5:16.

And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us. — Deut. 6:25.

Now He that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness . . . — 2 Cor. 9:10.

. . . your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father . . . — 1 Thess. 1:3.

Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. — 1 John 3:7.

Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times. — Ps. 106:3.

When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby. — Ezek. 33:18.

Although sanctification is a divine work, it does not take place apart from human cooperation and meaningful human activity. The part of divine grace and human effort is neatly balanced in Paul's appeal to the Philippians: "... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Phil. 2:12, 13.

In sanctification God's grace is no substitute for human effort. We are called to work out what He works in. The Spirit works in us to will and to do, but He does not propose to do for us the willing or doing. That is our work.

The mystical view which attributes the Christian life solely to the Spirit or indwelling of Christ is not only contrary to the realism of the Bible; it destroys the place for human personality and individuality. God wants every individuality to remain distinct. Union with Christ does not mean the mystical absorption of the human into the divine. He does not intend to denigrate the significance of human personality. Redemption means the restoration of true selfhood and the dignity of true self-possession. The Holy Spirit calls the human faculties into exercise, and man, as a responsible agent, is given the inestimable privilege of being a laborer together with God.

Under the influence of quietism, where the Spirit is said to "do it all for you," people get the idea that they must go into neutral gear, cast away their God-given individuality and personal identity, and become some sort of zombie under the Spirit's control. Others, feeling that the Spirit must do it all, will engage in no activity unless they "feel the Spirit move." By this error the door is left open to the strangest human eccentricities.

The Christian life is not just a matter of being a passive channel for the Spirit. The Bible constantly calls us to meaningful activity. There is real work to do. The sanctified life is a fight, a race, a battle. We are called to do, work, watch and suffer. Says Bishop Ryle:

I do not say that the expression "Christ in us" is unscriptural. But I do say that I see great danger of giving an extravagant and unscriptural importance to the idea contained in the expression; and I fear that many use it now-a-days without exactly knowing what they mean, and



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unwittingly, perhaps, dishonour the mighty work of the Holy Ghost. If any readers think that I am needlessly scrupulous about the point, I recommend to their notice a curious book by Samuel Rutherford (author of the well-known letters), called "The Spiritual Antichrist." They will there see that two centuries ago the wildest heresies arose out of an extravagant teaching of this very doctrine of the "indwelling of Christ" in believers. They will find that Saltmarsh, and Dell, and Towne, and other false teachers, against whom good Samuel Rutherford contended, began with strange notions of "Christ in us," and then proceeded to build on the doctrine antinomianism, and fanaticism of the worst description and vilest tendency. They maintained that the separate, personal life of the believer was so completely gone, that it was *Christ living in him* who repented, and believed, and acted! The root of this huge error was a forced and unscriptural interpretation of such texts as "I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.) And the natural result of it was that many of the unhappy followers of this school came to the comfortable conclusion that believers were not responsible, whatever they might do! Believers, forsooth, were dead and buried; and only Christ lived in them, and *undertook* everything for them! The ultimate consequence was, that some thought they might sit still in a carnal security, their personal accountableness being entirely gone, and might commit any kind of sin without fear! Let us never forget that truth,

distorted and exaggerated, can become the mother of the most dangerous heresies. . . .

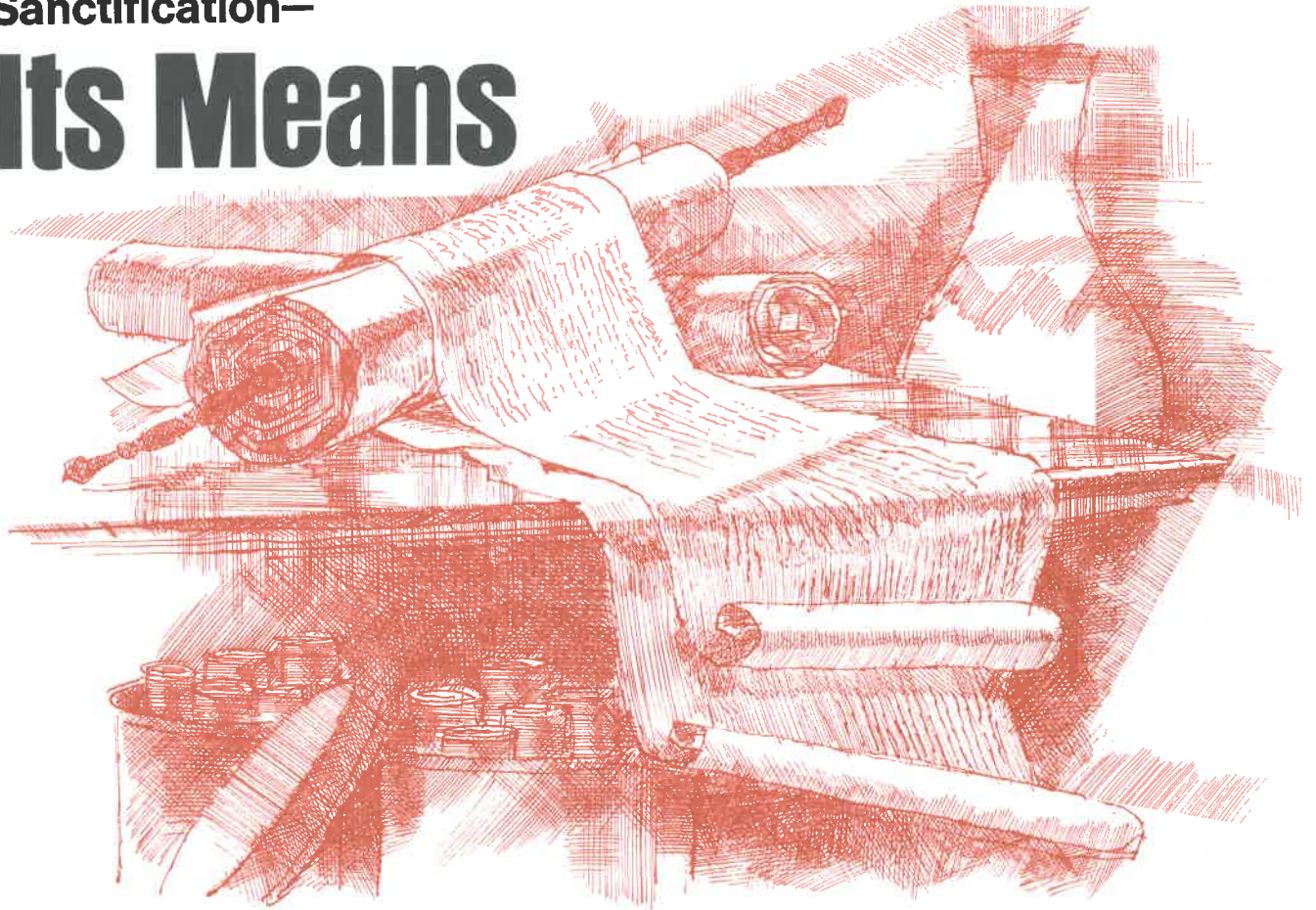
. . . is it wise to teach believers that they ought not to think so much of fighting and struggling against sin, but ought rather to "*yield themselves to God,*" and be passive in the hands of Christ? Is this according to the proportion of God's Word? I doubt it.

It is a simple fact that the expression "yield yourselves" is only to be found in one place in the New Testament, as a duty urged upon believers. That place is in the sixth chapter of Romans, and there within six verses the expression occurs five times. (See Rom. vi. 13-19.) But even there the word will not bear the sense of "placing ourselves passively in the hands of another." Any Greek student can tell us that the sense is rather that of actively "presenting" ourselves for use, employment, and service. (See Rom. xii. 1.) The expression therefore stands alone. But, on the other hand, it would not be difficult to point out at least twenty-five or thirty distinct passages in the Epistles where believers are plainly taught to use active personal exertion, and are addressed as responsible for doing energetically what Christ would have them do, and are not told to "yield themselves" up as passive agents and sit still, but to arise and work. A holy violence, a conflict, a warfare, a fight, a soldier's life, a wrestling, are spoken of as characteristic of the true Christian. The account of "the armour of God" in the sixth chapter of Ephesians, one might think, settles the question.³ — Again, it would be easy to show that the doctrine of sanctification without personal exertion, by simply "yielding ourselves to God," is precisely the doctrine of the antinomian fanatics in the seventeenth century (to whom I have referred already, described in Rutherford's *Spiritual Antichrist*), and that the tendency of it is evil in the extreme.—Again, it would be easy to show that the doctrine is utterly subversive of the whole teaching of such tried and approved books as *Pilgrim's Progress*, and that if we receive it we cannot do better than put Bunyan's old book in the fire! If Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress* simply *yielded himself to God*, and never fought, or struggled, or wrestled, I have read the famous allegory in vain. — J.C. Ryle, *Holiness*, pp. xvi, xvii.

We may summarize the human factor in sanctification by saying that it includes both faith and obedience. First, sanctification requires faith (Acts 26:18). By faith the soul is united to Christ as the branch is united to the vine (John 15:1-5). As the branch partakes of the life of the sap and nourishment of the vine, so the soul who by faith is united to Christ becomes a partaker in His life. Second, sanctification requires obedience (1 Pet. 1:22). The believer must work out what God works in. Human activity is enlisted in the great work of building a character after the divine similitude. This is the greatest and most important work that any human being is called to engage in.

³ Old Sibbe's Sermon on "Victorious Violence" deserves the attention of all who have his works. — Vol. vii, p. 30.

Sanctification— Its Means



The Holy Spirit is the divine Agent of sanctification, yet He uses *means* to accomplish His great work. In logical order we may classify the means as *primary* and *secondary*.

Primary Means

The primary means of the Spirit's sanctification is the Word of God.⁴

Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth. — John 17:17.

And now, brethren, 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. — Acts 20:32.

Husbands, love your wives, even as 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.

Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you. — John 15:3.

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. — Col. 3:16.

Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. . . . Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee. — 1 Tim. 4:13, 16.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. — 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby . . . — 1 Pet. 2:2.

⁴ The sacraments of baptism and the supper are signs of the gospel, for in them the gospel is proclaimed. Other than this acknowledgment, we will not enter into a discussion of the sacraments as a means of grace.

The primary means of the Spirit's sanctification is the Word of God.



The greatest danger exists when men try to separate God's Spirit from His Word. As Luther complained against the Enthusiasts, they sit in a corner or gaze up into heaven for the Spirit instead of coming to terms with the Word of God.

First, we should realize that the Word is likened to seed. As the life of the plant is in the seed, so the life of God is in His Word. He who receives the Word of God into his heart receives the very life and character of God. The germinating principles of truth will work like leaven to transform the entire life into the likeness of the divine character.

Second, Christ is always present in His Word.

But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the Word of faith, which we preach . . . — Rom. 10:6-8.

"Christ in you [or among you], the hope of glory," means that the message of Christ is heard and received by the elect community (see Col. 1:23-27). So the apostle exhorts the church:

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. — Col. 3:16.

Third, the Word "is the vehicle of the Holy Spirit. When the Word is read, the Spirit is present." — Luther. Jesus said, ". . . the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life." John 6:63.

Whether the Holy Spirit convicts, converts, quickens, comforts, heals, guides or strengthens, He always does it by the Word. The Word may reach the heart in the words of the preacher, the entreaty of a friend, or even the warning of a foe. All these agencies God may use as instruments to declare His Word. But it is of utmost importance to realize that "God's Spirit is annexed to His Word." — Calvin. Being filled with God's Spirit is the same as being filled with God's Word (cf. Eph. 5:18; Col. 3:16). That is why Luke records that every time someone was filled with the Spirit, he opened his mouth and declared the Word of God (Acts 2:4, 11, 22; 4:31; Luke 1:67; etc.). Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. If man's heart is filled with the Spirit, he will give evidence of it by speaking the words of God. "For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." John 3:34. So when Paul commanded the Ephesians, ". . . be filled with the Spirit . . .," he added, ". . . speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord . . ." Eph. 5:18, 19:

Much that is being said today about the impartation of the Spirit is an injury to the churches. Many are claiming to have an exciting experience in the Holy Spirit which is given directly to them quite apart from any objective revelation of God's Word. There are signs, miracles, tongues and private revelations, but a sound exposition of God's Word is conspicuous by its absence. In some of the charismatic meetings which we have witnessed, the reading of the Bible was the least spectacular part of the

meeting. In one place the people seemed bored and dull, and some even snored, until the Word was put aside and the spiritual exercises were begun.

The only safe path for our feet is to stand with the Reformers' declaration that men do not receive the Holy Spirit direct from heaven. He is mediated to us only through the Word. Warned Luther:

Therefore I exhort you to be on guard against those noxious spirits who say: A man acquires the Holy Spirit by sitting in a corner, etc. A hundred thousand devils he will acquire, and you will not come to God. — *What Luther Says*, ed. E. Plass, Vol. 3, p. 1462.

Therefore, we must affirm that there is no sanctification for those who neglect the Word or cast a part of the truth behind them.

Law and Gospel

The sanctifying Word comes to men in two forms—law and gospel. God's Word, as "the sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17), has two cutting edges. Says the Lutheran Formula of Concord, "These two doctrines [law and gospel], we believe and confess, should ever and ever be diligently inculcated in the Church of God even to the end of the world . . ." — *Book of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1957), pp. 260, 261.

The right use of God's Word means the right use of the law and gospel. For instance, the Spirit uses the law to convict of sin and wound the conscience (Rom. 7:7-13), but the Spirit is not communicated to men through the law. "The Spirit is life" (Rom. 8:10), but "if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." Gal. 3:21.

Gospel. The Holy Spirit is communicated to men, not through their hearing of the law nor by their doing it, but by their hearing of the gospel (Gal. 3:1-3). Says the apostle Paul to the Thessalonians, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance . . ." 1 Thess. 1:5. When Peter went to the home of Cornelius, he preached the message of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, and the record states, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word." Acts 10:44.

We see all sorts of gimmicks being resorted to today that men may receive the Holy Spirit. Some advocate "five steps"; others more or less. People

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There can be no greater evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence than when the gospel is faithfully proclaimed and men believe on Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

even take lessons on how to talk in tongues, or they do something else to manipulate mind and emotions so that souls are carried away by some spiritual euphoria called the baptism of the Spirit. It is surely a sign of the end time, as Paul declares, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils . . ." 1 Tim. 4:1.

Let these priests of Baal scream and work themselves up to a high pitch of excitement around their altars, but let those armed with the gospel, like faithful Elijah, rear up the altar of God and place on it the true sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. When God sees this sacrifice presented in faith, He answers by fire. There can be no greater evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence than when the gospel is faithfully proclaimed and men believe on Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Besides the fact that the Holy Spirit comes to men through faith in the gospel (Gal. 3:13, 14) (and it is His presence which sanctifies), the gospel brings with it a sanctifying influence:

1. The gospel is a revelation of the divine character. The gift of Christ reveals the Father's heart. In the cross we see truth and justice blended with mercy and compassion. As men behold God as revealed in His crucified Son, the darkness of misapprehension of God's character is swept from their minds, and they come to appreciate His beauty of character. And the more they come to know Him, the more they admire His character. This has a great sanctifying effect on the human character.

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. — 2 Cor. 3:18.

2. The gospel of the cross is a revelation of God's estimate of sin. Here we see that sin is the most costly thing in the universe. The unrelieved heinousness of sin is put on display in the sufferings of God's dear Son. God will by no means spare the guilty. Sin merits awful punishment. In this universe all debts must be paid. Here is no easygoing benevolence that easily overlooks sin. By the cross sin is discerned in its hateful nature, and the soul is imbued with the resolve to hate sin and drive it from the soul temple.

3. The gospel of God's love and forgiveness becomes the motive for all right conduct (2 Cor. 5:14, 15).

The strongest inducement for a Christian to obey the divine law, is the fact that he has been graciously pardoned

for having broken the law. He follows after sanctification, because he has received justification. He obeys the law not in order to be forgiven, but because he has been forgiven. — William G.T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969), Vol. 2, p. 558.

Nothing enters so fully into the motives of conduct as a sense of the pardoning love of Christ. Forgiveness of past sins becomes the greatest incentive to avoid future ones. They are the great promises of the gospel which rouse the believer to separate from everything displeasing to God (2 Cor. 7:1; Rom. 12:1; 2 Pet. 1:4; etc.).

Law. The gospel is the end of the law as a *means* of becoming righteous before God or receiving the Holy Spirit. But the gospel does not mean the end of the law as a rule of life for believers. It is true that the law points us to Christ, but Christ also points us back to the law. Jesus said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." John 14:15. It was only when Paul was delivered from the law as a covenant of works that he could gratefully confess, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man . . ." Rom. 7:22.

Karl Barth and some of the Lutheran theologians have been engaged in a real theological hassle over the order of law and gospel. Barth said, "Gospel and law," while Elert and others insisted, "Law and gospel." But the argument reminds us again of "The Blind Men and the Elephant."

In the matter of *justification* the order is unquestionably law and gospel. The law exposes our guilt and stops our mouths (Rom. 3:19, 20) so that we are prepared for the message of justification by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith (Rom. 3:24-26). Again, the law is a "schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Gal. 3:24. This is what Reformation theology called "the second use of the law."

Yet in some of the Pauline epistles we discern a different order. When writing to the Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, for instance, the apostle first reminds them of the gospel (the indicative), and on that basis he lays down the law (the imperative) as a rule of life for the believing community. This is what Reformation theology called "the third use of the law."

So in the matter of *justification* the order is law and then gospel. But in the matter of *sanctification* it is gospel and then law—i.e., Paul virtually says, "First, here is the gospel. Now in view of what God has done for you and what you now are in Christ, this is how you ought to live."

Sanctification is not rapture or the manifestation of spiritual ecstasy under extraordinary circumstances.

The concrete nature of sanctification — the true keeping of God's commandments — needs to be driven home in this permissive age.

We must return to what we said about the fussless, practical nature of sanctification. There is a danger of becoming too abstract in our definitions of holiness. We forget that the Hebrew writers, who wrote both Testaments, are very concrete. Sin means breaking God's law (1 John 3:4). Justification means being set right before the law (Rom. 2:13; 3:20-31). And what is holiness but a life conformed to the law of God? Sanctification is not rapture or the manifestation of spiritual ecstasy under extraordinary circumstances. It is entire surrender to the will of God. It is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. It is accepting Christ as Ruler as well as Saviour. Walter Marshall begins his great classic, *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*, by showing that sanctification means "to perform the duties of Holiness and Righteousness required in the law." He continues:

The scope of all is to teach you how you may attain to that practice and manner of life which we call holiness, righteousness, or godliness, obedience, true religion, and which God requires of us in the law, particularly the moral law, summed up in the ten commandments, and more briefly in those two great commandments of love to God and our neighbour (Matt. xxii.37,39); and more largely explained throughout the holy Scriptures. My work is to show how the duties of this law may be done . . . — Walter Marshall, *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*, p. 1.

This concrete nature of sanctification—the true keeping of God's commandments—needs to be driven home in this permissive age. There has been such a one-sided harping on "We are not saved by good works," that many people have gotten the idea that good works are of little consequence. *Legalism* used to mean the method of trying to be saved by our obedience to the commands of God. But as Dr. Gordon Clark has recently pointed out,⁵ it has evolved a new meaning. Today it is often taken to mean any conscientious obedience to the will of God as revealed in His Word. The man who trembles at God's Word (Isa. 66:5) and is careful to submit his life to the authority of God's rule is in danger of having his name cast out as a *legalist*.

If we look to Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden and to Christ's obedience in the Garden of Gethsemane, we will not think it a small matter whether we yield conscientious obedience to God or not. We will see that there is no greater evil in the universe than sin—the transgression of God's holy requirements. As disobedience to God's law is the sum of all misery, so obedience to His law is the quintessence of all

⁵ Gordon Clark, "Concerning Justification," *Christianity Today*, Mar. 16, 1973.



happiness. God did not send His Son to suffer and die in infinite shame and humiliation in order that we might enter a new order in which we can regard His holy commandments lightly. The purpose of the atonement was not merely our salvation, but that the divine law and government might be maintained and vindicated. It was that the whole universe might have God's estimate of sin and God's estimate of the holiness of His law.

If the confessions of the Reformation are unanimous in their rejection of salvation *by* the law, they are also at one in their insistence on the fact that we are saved *for* the keeping of the law. As Walter Marshall says, "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." — *Ibid.*, p. 99. Declares John Calvin, "Let us put far from us the ungodly notion that the law is not to be our rule, for it is our changeless rule of life." Says the Puritan, Samuel Bolton:

Just as the Papists set up the law for justification, so the Antinomians decry the law for sanctification. We claim to be free from the curses of the law; they would have us free from the guidance, from the commands of the law. We say we are free from the penalties, but they would abolish the precepts of the law. They tell us that we make a false mixture together of Christ and Moses, and that we mingle law and Gospel together. How unjustly they lay this charge against us let men of understanding judge. We cry down the law in respect of justification, but we set it up as a rule of sanctification. The law sends us to the Gospel that we may be justified; and the Gospel sends us to the law again to inquire what is our duty as those who are justified. Whatever they say of the law, though they cast contempt and disgrace upon it, and upon those who preach it, yet we know that, for the substance of it, it is the image of God, a beam of His holiness. — Samuel Bolton, *The True Bounds*



of Christian Freedom (London: Banner of Truth), p. 71.⁶

The Scripture teaches us that it is not in man to direct his steps (Jer. 10:23). This is as true of the converted man as of the unconverted man. It is true that the believer has the Holy Spirit, but we must not get the idea that the Spirit sets a man free from the need for an objective, outside-of-me rule of life. The apostle Paul does not arrive at a "Spirit ethic." The Spirit is annexed to God's Word. Just as He leads us outside of ourselves to that "cross without" for justification, so He leads us to the "law without" for sanctification. We are justified by the outside work of Christ, and then we must be guided in the way of holiness by the outside Word of God.

Says the apostle, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3:16, 17. It is very apparent that Paul includes law as well as gospel in "all Scripture," for does not the Spirit use the law "for reproof, for correction"? And although the gospel inspires and motivates to good works, how may we be informed as to what works please God unless out of His law?

The law of God has a sanctifying effect far beyond mere information as to what is right and wrong. The law is the revelation of divine holiness, a transcript of God's character. It is an expression of God's idea. When we receive Christ, who is the perfect expression of God's law, it becomes our idea. We begin to love

⁶ The reader is also referred to G.C. Berkouwer's excellent chapter, "Sanctification and Law," in his *Faith and Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952).



what God loves and to hate what He hates. The principles of the divine character, as expressed in God's law, are written by the Spirit of God on the tables of the heart (Heb. 10:16). The perfection which the law demands becomes the aim of our lives, the only standard that we can accept as worthy of the kind of service we owe to God. With the apostle Paul we rejoice in the law of God, yet mourn only that we fall far short of its perfection (see Rom. 7:14-25).

Therefore, it is plain as day, and may be clear to all save those who are obstinately blind, that the Spirit sanctifies the believer by means of the Word of God, and that Word includes both law and gospel. The man who is being sanctified will exhibit the same attitude to the law as the man who wrote Psalm 119. Just as there is no sanctification for those who reject the gospel, so there is no sanctification for those who despise the law.

The obverse side of hearing God speak to us in His Word is prayer—the believer's speaking to God. Yet without gospel and law there is no acceptable prayer. First, because the gospel alone shows us how we may approach God in the name and merits of the Man at God's right hand. His blood, righteousness and intercession give us access with confidence into God's presence (Heb. 10:19-21; Eph. 3:12). Second, because God will hear us when we pray according to His will (1 John 5:14), and the law of God is a revelation of the divine will. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." Prov. 28:9.

The Word, therefore, is the indispensable means of sanctification. The gospel brings the inspiration and power for obedience, and the law illuminates the path of obedience. This is Bible sanctification.

Secondary Means

The Spirit of God also works through secondary means⁷ to promote the believer's growth in the life of holiness.

God's people are called to separate from fellowship with sinners:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. — Ps. 1:1, 2.

I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. — Ps. 26:4.

The apostle warns the church:

Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. . . . And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. — Eph. 5:6, 7, 11, 12.

Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. — 1 Cor. 15:33.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. — 2 Cor. 6:17, 18.

⁷ These things are not "the means of grace" in the sense that the Word of God is *the* means of grace. We do not mean that they convey forgiveness of sins, faith and the Holy Spirit to us, but that God uses these things to nourish faith.

Adversity, prosperity, sickness, disappointment, bereavement, failure and success are tools in the hands of the divine Architect to shape and polish the believer as a living stone for the temple of God.

The assembly of believers, who have been *called out* from the world, is what the New Testament calls "the church." Here God's Word is preached and heard, the sacraments are administered, and the redeemed community have the benefit of Christian fellowship.

The church is the kind of environment that every Christian needs. It is not heaven, but as Luther says, the church is an inn for the sick and for the convalescents. Here the inmates need to be encouraged, fed, edified, warned and disciplined. He who would follow after holiness has something to do. The Bible says:

... not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. — Heb. 10:25.

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. — Col. 3:16.

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. — Gal. 6:1, 2.

... submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. — Eph. 5:21.

Then there are the providences and trials of life, which are used by God to shape and polish the believer as a living stone for the temple of God. Adversity, prosperity, sickness, disappointment, bereavement, failure and success are tools in the hands

of the divine Architect.

Says James:

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. — James 1:2, 3.

Peter declares:

... that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ . . . — 1 Pet. 1:7.

Paul adds:

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.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory . . . — 2 Cor. 4:17.

And says the writer to the Hebrews:

... for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. . . . Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. — Heb. 12:6, 9-11.

Sanctification— Its Effects

... that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. — 2 Tim. 3:17.

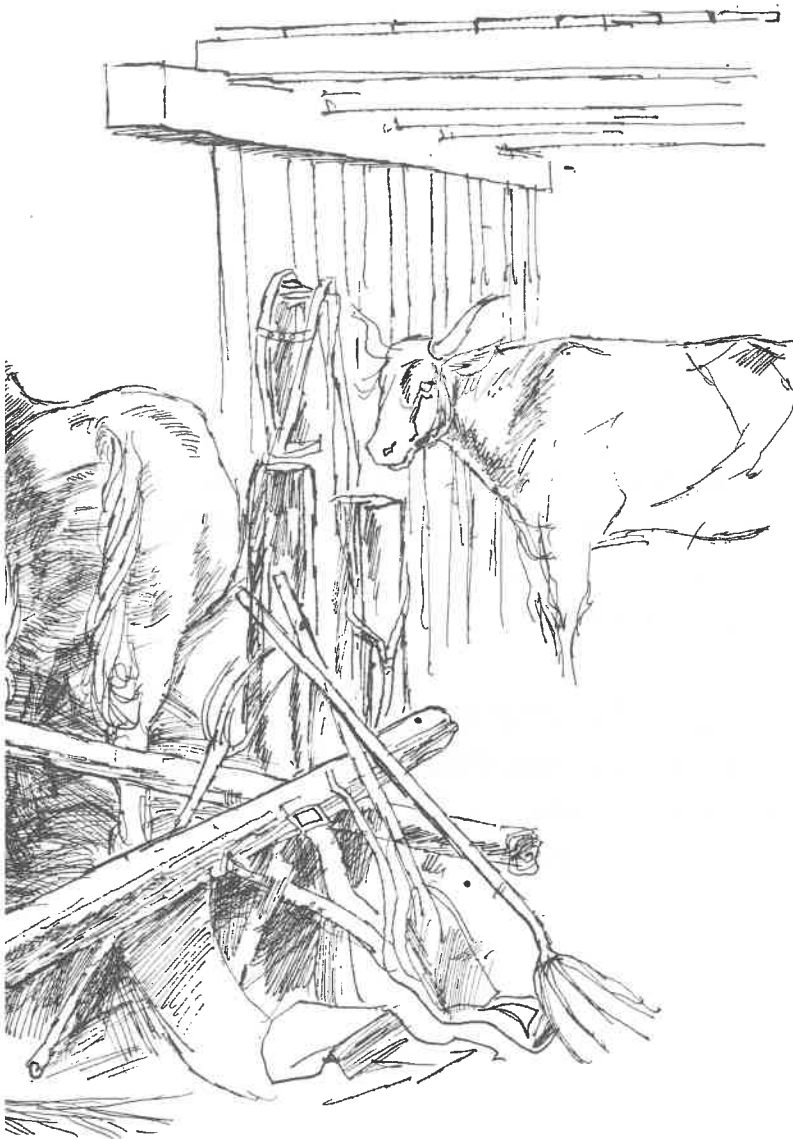
Strictly speaking, good works are not sanctification, but the fruit of sanctification. God imparts His Spirit to the believer and, through His Spirit, the principles and attributes of the divine character. The gospel inspires and motivates. The law guides and directs. God empowers. The believer enlists his energies and faculties to cooperate with divine aid. The result is good works—works that are in harmony with the law of God.

We have already spoken about the value and necessity of good works. Now we want to consider the nature of them.

When Luther was a monk drowned in superstitious darkness, he earnestly wished that he could meet one of the holy and famous saints of the church. He conceived that their good works would consist in rare exploits that ordinary Christians would know nothing about. To wander about in bare feet, to meditate on a pole, to go on fantastic pilgrimages, to say many long prayers, to leave kindred, home, wife and children, to deny the natural desire to be married—in short, to do things that ordinary folk could not do—this was regarded as the essence of good works. After Luther's enlightenment he declared that the greatest sinners on earth were such "holy men" as he once wished he could meet. In his commentary on Galatians he flayed this false piety unmercifully. He showed that the medieval church had made a caricature of the Christian life. Said the Reformer:



After Luther's enlightenment he declared that the greatest sinners on earth were such "holy men" as he once wished he could meet.



We did not learn in the Papacy what constitutes a good work. Before the Gospel came, we were told that the works which we ourselves devised and chose were good works, such as making a pilgrimage to St. James or some other place, giving money to the monks in the cloisters for the reading of many Masses, burning candles, fasting with but bread and water, praying a certain number of rosaries, etc. But now that the Gospel is come, we preach thus: Good works are not those which we choose of ourselves, but those which God has commanded, those which our vocation calls for. A servant does good works when he fears God, believes in Christ, and obeys his master. First he is justified by faith in Christ, then he walks in faith, leads a godly life, is temperate and well-behaved, serves his neighbor, cleanses the stable, feeds the horses, etc. In performing such tasks he does better works than any Carthusian monk. For since he is baptized, believes in Christ, and in assured hope is waiting for eternal life, he goes on and obeys his master and knows that what he does

in his calling pleases God. Therefore everything that he does in his occupation is a good and precious work. It does not look like a great, fine work when he rides out on the field, drives to the mill, etc., but since he has God's command and directive for it, such works, mean as they seem, are nothing else than good works and a service rendered to the Lord. In like manner also a maidservant does good works when she performs her calling in faith, obeys her mistress, sweeps the house, washes and cooks in the kitchen, etc. Though these works are not as glamorous as the works of the Carthusian who hides behind a mask and has people gaping at him, still such works are much better and more precious before God than those of the Carthusian who wears a hair shirt, keeps his vigils, gets up at night and chants for five hours, eats no meat, etc. He does them without God's command and order; how, then, can they please God? Likewise when a burgher or a farmer helps his neighbor, warns him of the danger threatening his body, wife, child, servant, cattle, and goods, etc., such works do not make a great show, but they are nevertheless good and precious works. When the civil government punishes the wicked and protects the virtuous, and when citizens yield obedience to the government and do so from faith and the hope of eternal life, they are performing good works, though they do not shine and glitter in the sight of reason. . . . If you ask reason, the works of a servant, a maid, a master, a mistress, a mayor, and a judge are common, lowly works compared with the Carthusian's keeping his vigil, fasting, praying, abstaining from meat; but if you ask God's Word, the works of all Carthusians and all monks, melted together in one mass, are not as good as the work of a single poor servantmaid, who by Baptism has been brought into the kingdom of God, believes in Christ, and in faith is looking for the blessed hope. These two articles St. Paul would keep alive among Christians: the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Savior, who has called us by Baptism and the Gospel as heirs of eternal life, waiting for that blessed hope and the glorious appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the knowledge that everything we do in our Christian calling and station by faith is altogether a good and precious work; on which account we should be zealous unto good work. . . . Now, therefore, since we have heard what blessed hope we should look for, we should also learn that the works which we do by faith in our appointed calling according to God's command and order are good works. Though such works do not glitter in the sight of reason, they are nevertheless precious before God, while the Carthusian and the monk cannot see and understand these things. For example, I am a preacher; that is my office; if now I believe in Christ and look for the blessed hope and then go and tend to my preaching and perform my calling, even though men hold my office in low esteem, I would not trade my office for all the works that all the monks and nuns do in the cloister. . . . Likewise also that wife is a living saint who believes in Christ, looks for the blessed hope and appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ and in such a faith goes and does what belongs to the calling of a wife. . . . As reason knows nothing of the blessed hope of eternal life, so, too, it does not understand what constitutes truly good works. It reasons thus: This maid milks the cow, this farmer plows the field, they are performing common, lowly works, which also the heathen perform; how, then,

can they be good works? But this man becomes a monk, this woman a nun, they look sour, put on a cowl, wear a rough garment: these are exceptional works, they are not performed by the common people; therefore they must be good. Thus reason argues. Thus reason leads us away from the true knowledge of both the blessed hope and the good works.

Every Christian should accustom himself from his youth to become certain that he is in a God-pleasing calling. He who does that, though he fall down the stairs and die, can nevertheless say: My father, my mother, my master, my mistress, told me to go down; therefore I die in a blessed calling, in the performance of a work that is pleasing to God. (St.L. XIII:2218.) – Cited by F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. 3, pp. 40-42.

The Reformation restored to the church and to Western man a sound, Biblical work ethic. The common duties of common people were seen as sacred callings. This sense of vocation greatly stimulated Western society. Those countries which accepted the Reformation became the most enlightened, advanced and prosperous. Men saw that they could work diligently in their trades and businesses to the glory of God. Said Luther:

Your work is a very sacred matter. God delights in it, and through it He wants to bestow His blessing on you. This praise of work should be inscribed on all tools, on the forehead and the face that sweat from toiling. For the world does not consider labor a blessing. Therefore, it flees and hates it. . . . But the pious, who fear the Lord, labor with a ready and cheerful heart; for they know God's command and will. Thus a pious farmer sees this verse written on his wagon and plow, a cobbler sees it on his leather and awl, a laborer sees it on wood and iron. – *What Luther Says*, ed. E. Plass, Vol. 3, p. 1493.

There is much more to sanctification than attending some religious meetings or engaging in some religious devotions. What good is a "sanctification" that lasts no longer than when we are in a religious meeting? Sanctification consists in the cheerful, faithful and grateful performance of daily duties, of the work that lies nearest. These tasks may seem menial. They may pass unnoticed by human eyes. But God sees the spirit in the work, and He values faithfulness in that which is least. In fact, it takes far more sanctification to be faithful in things small than in things great.

We are not to fret or complain in our humble lot, but trust the wise disposition of Providence. Joseph worked faithfully as a despised slave, and when he was rewarded with a prison sentence, he was faithful to his work in the prison. Though he knew it not, God was training him for a place beside the throne of

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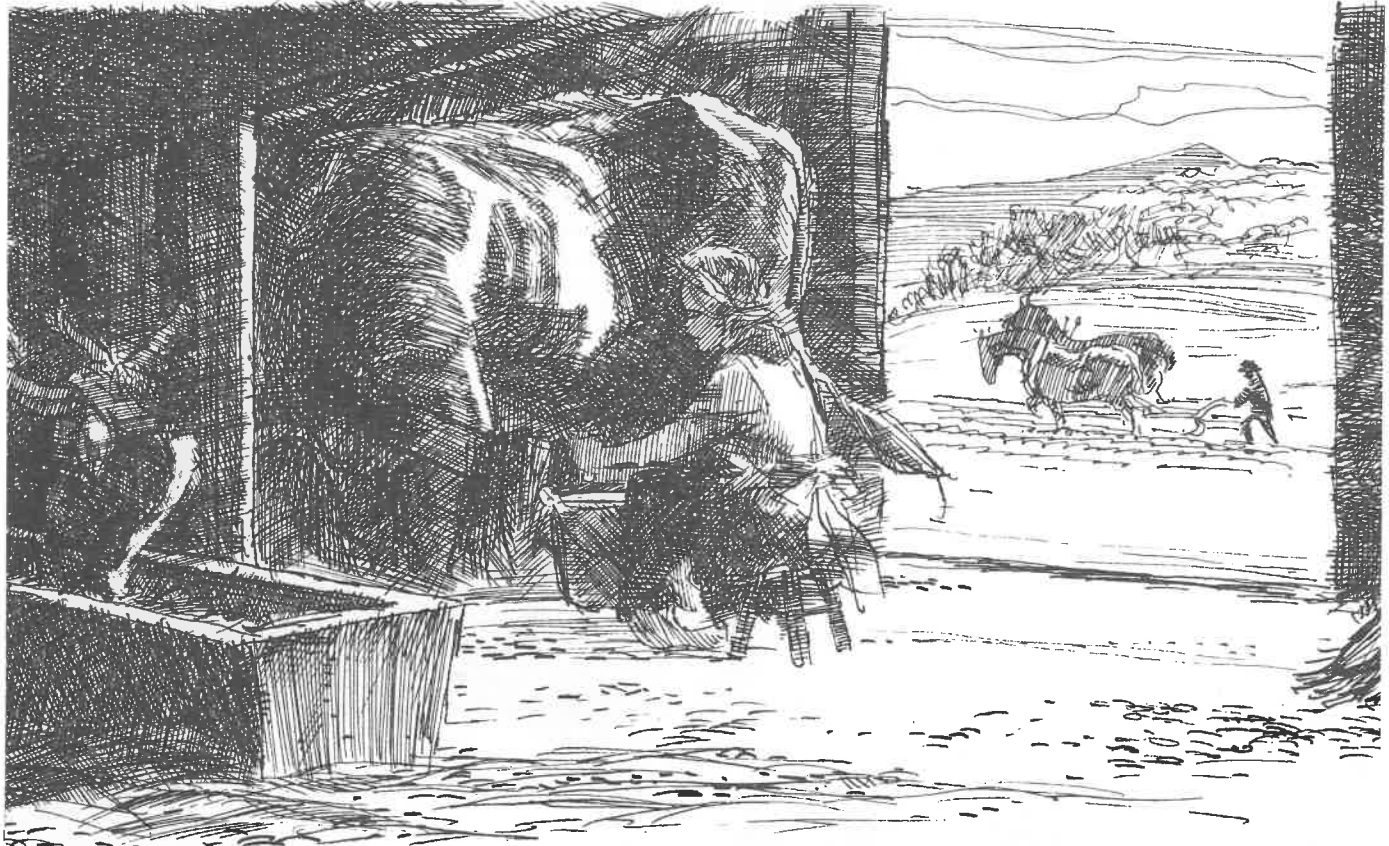
Sanctification consists in the cheerful, faithful and grateful performance of daily duties, of the work that lies nearest.

Egypt. Your faithfulness in the common duties of life may not be rewarded with being adviser to the President, but with a much better destiny—to sit with Christ on the throne of the universe.

Therefore, take up your daily work as God's work and do it as unto the Lord. Put your heart into it. Do it diligently. Seek ways to improve. Remember that Jesus was as perfect a workman as He was in character. He spent more time at a lowly trade than preaching the gospel. Do not spend your time dreaming of how you could do a grander work for God if only you were not bound by present circumstances and responsibilities. "Wisdom [and duty] is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth." Prov. 17:24.

Do not envy another person's place or lot. God gives to every one his work, and no one is more qualified to do that work God has assigned to you than you. Even the different races have their special gifts—the drama and "soul" of the African, the fascinating subtlety of the Oriental, and the pragmatism of the Caucasian.

Gifts—natural or supernatural—are no sign of the possessor's special holiness. Some people are more naturally gracious, affectionate and outgoing. Their talents are sometimes lauded as evidence of their wonderful Christian experience. These gifts, however,



are not character, but talents; and unto whom much is given, much shall be required. There are healthy, happy pagans who have well-ordered personalities too. Culture, refinement and morality are good and beneficial, but they are not sanctification.

Supernatural gifts are no sign that a person's heart is filled with the Holy Spirit. King Saul and Balaam prophesied the Word of the Lord; Judas cast out devils and healed the sick; and the "carnal," factious Corinthians were blessed with many gifts. The effects of sanctification are not measured by what we have, but by how we use what we have. The Corinthians used their gifts to edify themselves, to win status before God and before others. But a man who knows the gospel realizes that status, justification and

salvation are freely bestowed. They cannot be won. He cannot work to secure blessings for himself, for God has already secured them for him in Jesus Christ. Thus, both hands are freed to work for the good of others in faith, humility and gratitude. These are the "good works" which none but Christians can do.

The Nonpersonal Benefits of Good Works

A holy life does not lead to the praise of men, but of God (Rom. 2:29).

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. — Matt. 5:16.

Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples. — John 15:8.

Paul declared that the faith, charity and endurance of the Thessalonians in all their persecutions and tribulations were "a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God." 2 Thess. 1:5. That is to say, the holy lives of God's people vindicate His way of saving sinners by grace. It answers the charge of the enemies of the gospel who declare that justification by faith alone leads to a low estimate of the importance of sanctification. Only those who are dedicated to a life of holy obedience to God's commandments can

praise and vindicate the message of salvation by free grace. A golden ring in a pig's snout is more becoming than talk of salvation by grace on the tongue of those who disdain to obey God's commandments. To them it may be said, "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you . . ." Rom. 2:24.

Although the sanctified obedience of the believer is said to glorify, honor and vindicate the justice of God, it must not be imagined for a moment that it does this in the same degree as it was done by the holy Son of God. His work of atonement was a once-and-for-all-time vindication of God's law, government and righteous character. The work of Jesus in life and death was final and all-sufficient. His vindication of God's law needs no repetition. This was an infinite work performed by an infinite Person.

A candle has its proper use in shedding light in a dark place, but put up against the sun, it can only cast a shadow. "If the stars which seem so very bright at night lose their brilliance in the light of the sun, what will happen to the rarest innocence of man when it is compared with God's purity." – Calvin.

Let us therefore keep the effects of sanctification in Biblical perspective. The holy lives of God's people are a testimony given to men of the truth of the gospel.

The apostle Paul says to the believers:

Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world . . . – Phil. 2:14, 15.

Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. – 2 Cor. 3:2, 3.

Peter declares:

Likewise you wives, be submissive to your husbands, so that some, though they do not obey the Word, may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, when they see your reverent and chaste behavior. – 1 Pet. 3:1, 2, R.S.V.



We have all heard it said, "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one." Some have therefore advocated winning the world to Christ by the sheer magnetism of a Christlike personality or life style. We would not underestimate the importance of a consistent Christian life, which testifies to the truth of the gospel. The problem arises when this particular phase of truth becomes distorted. Heresy is a truth carried to an unwarranted extreme. In some sections of the church the place of "Christ in you" as the means of witnessing has been blown up to such proportions that the Christian's life of victory and piety has virtually become *the* "gospel." The gospel which changes lives has been superseded by the "gospel" of the changed life. This is treachery to Jesus Christ. It puts the candle in the place of the sun and uses God's gifts to rob Him of His glory. Furthermore, this ensnaring, gospel-denying philosophy of sharing the "Christ in you" is an excuse for sloppy handling of the Word of God. Careful exegesis and faithfulness to the Biblical text is patronizingly passed off as the way of those "who have a religion of the head," but not the way of those "who have a religion of the heart." Yet the preaching which honors God most is that which lies closest to the Biblical norm.

The Spirit-filled life of the believer must not be made a substitute for preaching about the one acceptable Life, which was filled with all the fullness of God (Col. 2:9). The apostles proclaimed only one victorious Life. Their burning passion must be ours. Of course we must "live the life" before our fellow men! But that is not preaching the message of Christ. The gospel is the good news, not about what God is doing or is able to do in us, but about what He has done effectively and gloriously in Jesus Christ. When Paul exhorts the Philippians to "shine as lights in the world," he significantly adds, ". . . holding forth the Word of life . . ." Phil. 2:15, 16.

In politics the extreme right is not so far from the extreme left. The same thing is often true in religion. A distorted and exaggerated emphasis on this "gospel" of the radiant Christian life, although often held by the most conservative Christians, has the same religious philosophy as liberal humanism and "the social gospel." Being a good neighbor and citizen becomes the essence of the Christian message, and Christianity becomes like everything else which is offering the same thing. Christianity has produced some wonderful enterprises of good works for human betterment. Yet just doing these things is not Christianity.

The gospel which changes lives has been superseded by the "gospel" of the changed life.

A distorted and exaggerated emphasis on the "gospel" of the radiant Christian life, although often held by the most conservative Christians, has the same religious philosophy as liberal humanism and "the social gospel."

... Be ye holy; for I am holy. — 1 Pet. 1:16.

The Bible acknowledges one standard of holiness—the holiness of God Himself. Holiness means perfect conformity to the law of God, which is the expression of the divine will.

God made man in His own likeness, and He planned that man should be like Him in character. That man fell is no fault of the Creator. He has not changed His standard, nor can He compromise with evil by accepting anything less than perfect holiness. The standard required by God today is the same as required of Adam in his sinless state. We cannot plead that our decreased ability limits our obligation. If this were true, the more men fell from their original state of purity, the less God would require. The end of this reasoning would be to propose that man has no obligation at all.

The gospel has not been given to create a lower standard or to make it possible for God to accept an imperfect obedience in the place of a perfect one. The divine law cannot be modified or relaxed to meet man in his fallen condition, for the end of the gospel is to “magnify the law, and make it honorable.” Is. 42:21. The claims of the law must be urged upon all men, especially upon those who acknowledge Christ as Lord as well as Saviour. The gospel must not be mingled with the law in such a way as to weaken its force or dilute its demand. Neither must the law be “brewed and stewed” with the gospel to rob it of its promise. Both must be distinguished, yet harmonized in the one body of God’s Word, so that each maintains its full force.

Let us therefore examine the kind of obedience that God requires and that a holy man will strive to render:

1. First of all, God requires a *willing* service, for “willingness is the soul of obedience.” — Thomas Watson.

If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land . . . — Is. 1:19.

As far as God is concerned, what is not done willingly is not done at all.

2. God requires a *fervent* obedience.

... fervent in spirit; serving the Lord . . . — Rom. 12:11.

The angels serve God with burning fervor and devotion. Obedience without fervency is like sacrifice without fire. The works of the Laodiceans are condemned because they are neither cold nor hot (Rev. 3:14-19). This nauseates the One who ardently

Sanctification—

Its Standard

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loves His people.

3. Obedience must be *entire*.

Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all Thy commandments. — Ps. 119:6.

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. — James 2:10.

He who refuses to keep God’s law entirely, breaks it wholly. We must not be like the Pharisees who specialized in some points of obedience, yet neglected the weightier matters of the law (see Matt. 23:23). If we withhold allegiance to the Lord on one point, we are still guilty of treason and highhanded rebellion against the Ruler of the universe.

4. God calls for *consistent* obedience.

Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times. — Ps. 106:3.



5. Acceptable obedience must be *sincere*. King Amaziah “did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.” 2 Chron. 25:2. Instead of being commended, he stood condemned.

6. *Love* is the mainspring of all true obedience, for “love is the fulfilling of the law.” Rom. 13:10.

And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul . . . — Deut. 10:12.

7. Justice demands a *joyful* obedience.

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless

His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations. — Ps. 100.

Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and He shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until He have destroyed thee. — Deut. 28:47, 48.

It is the spirit of joyful service that makes Christ’s yoke easy and His burden light (Matt. 11:30). God wants to put His law in our hearts, not on our backs.

8. The soul of godliness is *fearful* obedience—a service rendered in the spirit of reverence and awe for our Maker and King. The Lord says:

. . . to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word. — Is. 66:2

(see also Is. 66:5; Rev. 14:7).

9. What is all this but an obedience that is in every way, at all times, and under all circumstances *perfect*?

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. — Matt. 5:48.

The man who walks with God is no one else than the man who agrees with God. God's standard is his standard. God's idea is his idea. God makes no compromise with sin. Neither will he. God never offers an excuse for sin. Neither will the man of God. "... his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night." Ps. 1:2. Accepting no other standard but perfect holiness and conformity to the will of God, he bends the energies of his whole being to reach the mark set before him.

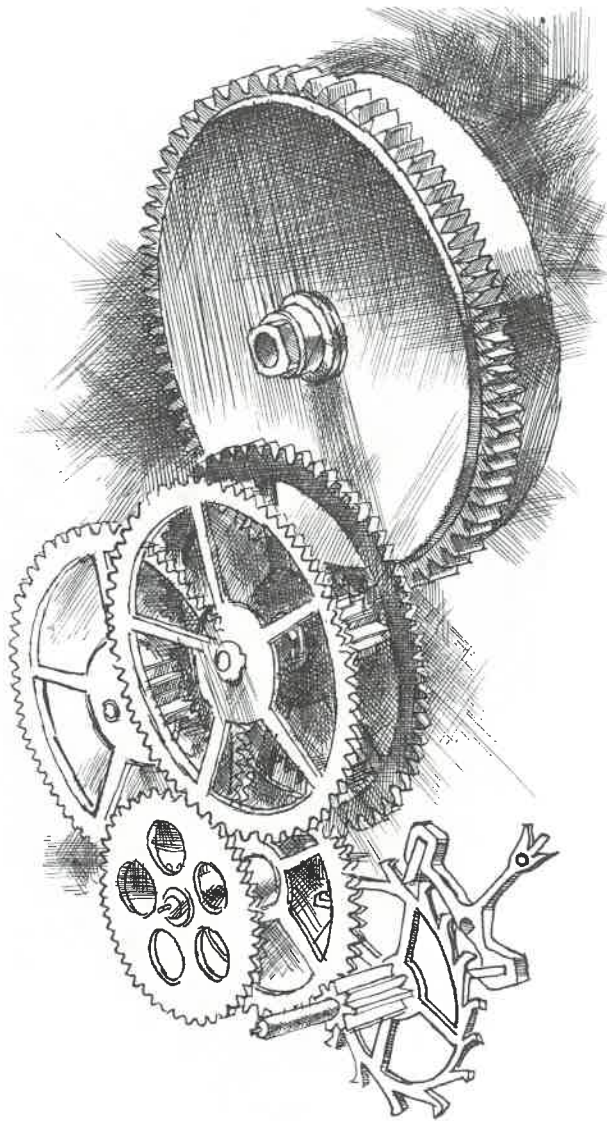
The man who walks with God is no one else than the man who agrees with God.

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. — Phil. 3:12-14.

Above the believer stands the law, saying, "Holier yet," and gladly he responds, "Yes, Lord, holier yet." He does not fret because the standard is so high, nor does he count the commandments grievous because they call for an obedience far above his best endeavors.

This standard of sanctification is the heart's desire and prayer of all true Christians. None claims to have reached it, but all press toward it. This is what a holy man strives and labors to be. As Owen says, "I do not understand how a man can be a true believer unto whom sin is not the greatest burden, sorrow, and trouble." And what is sin but to fall short of this standard (Rom. 3:23)?

The standard of sanctification is the heart's desire and prayer of all true Christians. None claims to have reached it, but all press toward it.



Sanctification— Its Mainspring

In the preceding sections we have dealt with the inward work of sanctification—its meaning, scope, practical nature, duration, value, necessity, its divine source, its human factor, its means, effects and standard.

We come now to the heart of the matter, to that which is the mainspring of Christian existence. It is the matter of justification by faith. Here is the pulsating heart of Biblical revelation and all true evangelical religion.

Sanctification is what God does inside the believer. Important as it is, it is not the basis of salvation nor the foundation of the Christian's hope. Sanctification, of course, is a work of grace, but it is fed from the springs of a higher, more primary work of grace. Unless sanctification is rooted in justification and constantly returns to justification, it cannot escape the poisonous miasma of subjectivism, moralism or Pharisaism.

Human reason would tell us that what grace does in changing the heart of the sinner is the most important thing God could possibly do in the salvation process. This contention is the heart of Roman Catholic soteriology, and it must be admitted that the overwhelming preoccupation of evangelicalism today is its message of being saved by "letting Christ come into the heart," by being born again, etc. It is sheer evangelical Romanism.

The great truth of justification by faith, however, does not deal with the acts of God *within* the believer, but with the saving acts of God *outside* the believer.

First, the ground of a man's acceptance with God unto life eternal is sheer grace. "... being justified freely by His grace..." Rom. 3:24. The Greek word here translated *freely* is elsewhere translated *without cause*. Grace is not conditioned on any quality in the human heart. So far is it from relating to a quality within man that the apostle declares that this "grace... was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Tim. 1:9. It is a quality in God's heart, His disposition to be kind and merciful to those who are lost and undeserving. Grace means God's attribute of accepting those who are unacceptable—not excepting those whom He has previously sanctified.

Yet God cannot allow His grace to override His justice. The rule of law must be upheld. God must have valid grounds to forgive sinners and to accept them as righteous. Those grounds are also completely outside of us.

... being justified freely by His grace *through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus* [through His (God's) act of liberation in the Person of Christ Jesus—N.E.B.] ... — Rom. 3:24.

Christ's doing and dying are the sole grounds of God's being able to judge us and treat us as righteous. This is being "justified by Christ." Gal. 2:17. The gospel proclaims that sinners are saved by the objective, concrete acts of God in history. This is an action which is so far outside the sinner that it happened two thousand years ago. This is Christianity. It is the only truly historical religion. All other religions teach that salvation is found in some process within the worshiper, and consequently the worshiper's supreme preoccupation is with his internal experience. Christianity alone proclaims a salvation which is found in an event outside the believer.

This truth, of course, is a great offence to human pride. Cannot we at least sympathize with the children of Israel in the wilderness? Many were bitten by serpents and were facing certain death. Moses put a likeness of a deadly serpent on a pole and invited the dying to look and live. Whoever had heard of such a thing as this? The poison was inside, and how could something completely outside bring them any help? So they were inclined to reason.

To us who are bitten by that old serpent, the devil, Jesus declares:



And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up... — John 3:14.

The basis of salvation is not a subjective process. If the way of salvation were simply a matter of inviting Christ into the heart or being born again by the Spirit, then Christ need not have come here to suffer and die. No amount of sanctification or inward holiness can bridge the gulf that sin has made and put us into right relationship with God. Fellowship with God cannot rest on an internal process of being made holy. Perfection is not something that God requires at the end of the road. He demands perfection and absolute holiness before any right relationship can begin.

So we say again, Salvation and right standing with God rests on what God has already done outside of us in the Person of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24). Two thousand years ago there was an objective, concrete, historical event. God Himself broke into human history in the Person of His Son. He became our representative Man. He bore our nature and became so identified with us that all which He did was not only for us, but was exactly the same as if we had done it. He strove with sin, the devil and death. He utterly defeated them and destroyed their power. His victory was for us. It was really *our victory*. When He lived that holy life, which measured with the claims of God's law, it was for us. It was exactly the same as if we had lived it. When He bore the punishment for sin, justice saw us punished in Him. "... if One died for all, then are all dead..." 2 Cor. 5:14. When He arose and was accepted with joy into the presence of God, honored and exalted to God's right hand, all that was for us. It was our humanity that God embraced in the Person of His Son. As certainly as God came to this earth in the Person of Christ, just so certainly have we gone to heaven in the Person of Christ. The gospel does not proclaim the good things that God *will* do, but it proclaims the good things which He *has* done. By His glorious acts outside of us, He has actually accomplished our liberation. He has forgiven, justified and restored us to glory and honor in the Person of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3-7; 2:4-6; Rom. 4:25; 5:8-10, 18, 19; Col. 2:10).

Justification is not only *by grace* and *by Christ*; it must also be *by faith*. That which God has done outside of us in His Son must be believed and received. Faith comes by hearing this message of Christ (Rom. 10:17, R.S.V.). Faith does not bring salvation into existence. It does not produce the righteousness by which God justifies us. Faith does not *make*; it *takes*. It is becoming conscious of something already in existence.

Faith is completely objective in its action. It is not affixed to anything horizontal, to anything which is on earth, or to anything which can be seen. Therefore, it is not faith in what the Holy Spirit has done within us. It is not faith in our sanctification or in some past experience of being born again. Faith is affixed to what is in heaven, to what we have in Christ at God's right hand (Col. 3:1-4). Therefore, we must decisively say that sanctification, being on earth, being in the believer, and being seen, is no part of the righteousness which is by faith alone. The righteousness which is of faith alone is the doing and dying of Christ. It is that life of perfect holiness

which Christ now presents at the bar of justice on our behalf. The only righteousness which we have before God is the righteousness which is actually before God. Our righteousness, therefore, is where we need it most—in God's presence, before God's law, at the Father's right hand. For our righteousness is Christ Himself (Jer. 23:6), who is absent from us on earth. As John Bunyan declared, the sublime mystery of the Bible is "that a righteousness that resides with a person in heaven should justify me, a sinner, on earth." This is righteousness by faith. It is a righteousness which the Reformers declared to be "an alien righteousness"—a righteousness completely outside of man and so foreign to human reason that it can be known only by the gospel.

We have seen that God justifies by grace, on the grounds of Christ's work, and applies the blessing to the sinner who receives it in faith. The grace that justifies is outside of man. The righteousness which justifies is outside of man. And the faith that accepts the blessing is affixed to that which is outside of the believer. We must press this radical truth further and consider that God's act of justifying the believing sinner is also outside the believer. This may be seen in two different ways.

1. *The Meaning of Justification.* Justification is a legal word having reference to trial and judgment. It does not mean to make a person subjectively righteous any more than condemnation means to make a person subjectively wicked. Justification is simply a verdict of the court *declaring*, or *pronouncing*, a person to be righteous. In the case of God's verdict, He declares the believing sinner to be righteous because the sinner's Representative is righteous. Or to put it another way, when the sinner claims the righteousness of Christ as his own and presents it before God, the Judge acknowledges that the debt has been paid, and the sinner is set right before the law.

Justification, therefore, is not an act of God within the sinner, but it is an act of God outside the sinner. It is God's verdict upon him. It is a forensic, declaratory act. It is not based on the holiness of the one who believes, but on the holiness of Him in whom the one believes. This point is crucial. In this matter of our acceptance with God, we are not to be anxious about what God thinks of us, but about what God thinks of Christ, our Substitute. If we confuse justification with the internal sanctification process, faith totters, and we find it impossible to stand before God with a pacified conscience. Justification

Justification is an act of God's grace that is wholly outside the experience of the one who believes.

The doctrine of imputed righteousness undergirds all ethical and reformatory action.

pertains to what God does *for us*, not what He does *in us*.

2. *The Method of Justification.* In Romans, chapter 4, the apostle not only declares that God justifies the ungodly (v. 5), but that God does this by *imputing* righteousness to the one who believes (vv. 3, 5-7). In chapter 5 Paul shows that the righteousness which God imputes is "the righteousness of One" (vv. 18, 19). Now the word *impute* does not mean *to infuse*. It simply means *to attribute* to the sinner that which he does not possess in himself. For instance, when Eli *thought* (imputed) that Hannah was drunk, that did not make Hannah drunk (1 Sam. 1:13). Imputation does not change the object, but it changes the way the object is regarded. The supreme illustration of this is Calvary. Our sins were imputed to Christ (2 Cor. 5:19-21). This did not subjectively make Him a sinner. But it did change the way God regarded Him. It had a decisive bearing on the way justice treated Him.

God's act of justification depends on perfect righteousness, of course. Yet it does not depend on this righteousness being in us, but on it being interceded for us in God's presence. God reckons it to us simply because Christ performed it for us and we accept it in faith.

Therefore, whichever way we look at it and whichever way we turn it, *justification* is an act of God's grace that is wholly outside the experience of the one who believes.

We are aware of those objections, hoary with age, which rush in, crying derisively, "Legal fiction!" "Divine make-believe!" "Celestial bookkeeping!" "As-if, pasted-on righteousness!" etc.

We will answer these objections by considering the inseparable relationship between justification and sanctification. Indeed, it is now our purpose to show how due emphasis on this outside work is the only thing that can lead to the experience of God's inside work. The kind of justification we have considered is the dynamic mainspring of sanctification. The doctrine of imputed righteousness undergirds all ethical and reformatory action.

Under four heads we will consider how God's outside act of justification makes the inside process of sanctification possible. The four vantage points from which we will view this unique relationship between justification and sanctification are the legal, the psychological, the efficient and the positional.

1. Legally

Let us not be afraid to think in legal categories, for the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures moves in this atmosphere. God is Judge and Lawgiver. He is the God of law and order. Unlike the unpredictable gods of the heathen, we can depend on Him to act in harmony with His own law of eternal rectitude. *Justification*, that great Pauline word, is a word of the law court. God is not only in the business of saving sinners, but in the business of vindicating His law. Paul argues that our salvation is grounded in law and justice as much as in grace and mercy (see Rom. 3:24-26). Our own consciences demand justice and cannot be pacified unless God's fellowship with us is grounded on justice.

God was not playacting at Calvary. If He were not bound by His own law of eternal rectitude, then Christ need not have died. Calvary was not a legal fiction. It proves that divine law is inexorable. It gives us a legal (lawful) basis of salvation.

We accept the legal principle in the most sacred of human relationships. A woman who ignores a legal relationship and tries to establish a relationship with a man by experience alone is prostituting a fundamental law of life. In the Revelation of St. John, Babylon (which represents all false religion) is called a harlot (Rev. 17:5). Babylon is every system that tries to establish a relationship with God on the basis of experience. Sanctification is living a life of fellowship with God. Justification is its legal basis, and without justification no fellowship can exist.

Let us examine this legal basis of sanctification from the negative aspect of sin and from the positive aspect of holiness.

a. *In the Matter of Sin.* It has often been said that justification is deliverance from the guilt of sin, while sanctification is deliverance from the power of sin. But we must not split them up so that we would conceive of a man enjoying one blessing without the other. This often happens in "holiness" theology where it is postulated that there are two types of Christians—the elect, who are delivered from the guilt of sin, and the very elect, who are also delivered from the power of sin; or those who only (?) know Christ as Saviour and those who also know Christ as Lord. The Bible knows nothing of this kind of separation between justification and sanctification. It is thoroughly mischievous in its results. If it does not lead to spiritual pride among those who imagine that they are out of Romans 7 into Romans 8, it

leads to the Christ-denying notion that a man can be saved from the guilt of sin and yet continue to wallow in its pollution—as if sanctification were optional as far as salvation is concerned.

There is a direct relationship between the guilt of sin and the power of sin. If the guilt of sin is removed, the power of sin is broken. This is Paul's point in Romans 6:14: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." That is to say, as long as a man is "under the law," sin will be king over him, and he will be forced to surrender to its reign. But if he comes under grace, sin has no more power to rule and tyrannize.

In Romans 7 Paul goes on to explain this mystery of the relationship between the law and sin's power. The strength of sin is not in sin itself, for "the strength of sin is the law." 1 Cor. 15:56. The law—yes, the holy, just and good law of God—binds a man to the service of sin by the power of omnipotent justice. Sin is the master ("the husband") that man chose to serve, and the law binds him in this relationship just like a woman is bound by the law to the husband of her choice. As the good law keeps the criminal in jail, so it is God's law which binds the sinner to the miserable service of sin. In fact, ". . . sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." Rom. 7:8. That is to say, sin gets its legal right from the law to take control of any man who is under the law and work in him all manner of evil desires.

Freedom from the power of sin is only found in coming to terms with the law of God. As long as we are in debt to its righteous demands, we are "under the law" and will surely be kept in the prison house of sin. But as soon as faith takes hold of Christ's doing and dying as ours, we are justified, or set right before the law. Indeed, that is the reason why the law kept us shut up—until "faith came" (see Gal. 3:23, 24). When by faith in Christ we stand before the law as forgiven and righteous, the law no longer binds us to that old master. Sin has no more power to hold us. Justification makes us (legally) free not to serve sin. Deliverance from sin's power is therefore the inevitable result of deliverance from sin's guilt.

b. *In the Matter of Holiness.* It has often been said (and truly) that justification is our title to heaven. We must not forget, however, that the life of heaven begins in the life of holiness here and now. Sanctification is glorification begun. It is the life of heaven in the seed, the first fruits, or down payment, of the

immortal inheritance (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14). Heaven is access into God's presence. It is to partake of His holiness and to participate in His life. But this participation in the holiness of God begins here with those who "have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come." Heb. 6:4, 5.

In the Fall man lost all those rights and privileges. A sinner has no right or title to participate in God's life of holiness. Yet Christ, and Christ alone, has won for man this right of access: ". . . as many as received Him, to them gave He the right, or privilege [margin], to become sons of God [to be partakers of His divine nature—2 Pet. 1:4], even to them that believe on His name . . ." John 1:12. Faith justifies, and being justified, we have legal access (rights and titles) to enter the way of holiness. Along this route to "the celestial city" many trials lie in wait to purify our faith. There are giants to beat us, nets to catch us, and crafty men to beguile us. And along the King's highway travel such saints as "Ready to Halt," "Little Faith" and poor "Christian," who runs afoul of trouble times without number. In such times of temptation and human weakness, how could we assure our hearts before God unless we could look to our title found in the righteousness of the One who represents us at God's right hand? How easily faith would falter and we would stand disarmed in the midst of our enemies if, being challenged for our right to be traveling the road of sanctification, we put our hand (like "Ignorance") into our own bosom to find some grounds to be among the saints. Happy is the man who, in the hour of test and trial, can look outside to atonement instead of inside to attainment.

Though Satan should buffet,
Though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

Thus, justification is the legal (lawful) basis of sanctification. It makes holiness possible by removing sin's lawful right to rule us and by restoring our lawful right to walk in the way of holiness.

2. Psychologically

Justification and sanctification are psychologically related. We may expect that He who made and understands man's nature will work to save him in a way best suited to his deepest psychological needs.



A life of sanctification (fellowship with God) is not possible unless we are first persuaded that we are acceptable and pleasing to God. This persuasion cannot be grounded on our past, present or future performance. God wants us first to know that He is fully satisfied with Jesus. He has found Him righteous, and with Him He is well pleased. What is that to us? Christ is our Representative. He bears our humanity in the presence of God, and God wants us to know that He accepts our humanity in the Person of His Son. In this matter of acceptance, therefore, it is sufficient for us to know that Jesus is accepted. It is this faith which enables us to serve God freely, gladly, and out of spontaneous love.

If a believer tries to live the Christian life to either secure or consolidate his acceptance with God, immediately the springs of free, grateful and spontaneous obedience are dried up. God is more interested in the motive of service than the actual performance. When justification by faith is lost, we can only work in the Father's vineyard like the "elder son" in the parable of the prodigal. God's authority is on our



backs instead of in our hearts. We keep a careful check on the years of "faithful" service. And we are more in the pignen than the younger son who is away in the "far country."

Since love is the essence of sanctification (Rom-13:10), we should remember the teaching of Jesus that he who is forgiven much (justification), the same loves much (sanctification) (see Luke 7:40-47). He who hears the word of justification ("Neither do I condemn thee . . .") is the only one psychologically qualified to obey the command of sanctification (" . . . go, and sin no more") (see John 8:3-11).

Says W.G.T. Shedd:

The strongest inducement for a Christian to obey the divine law, is the fact that he has been graciously pardoned for having broken the law. He follows after sanctification, because he has received justification. He obeys the law, not in order to be forgiven, but because he has been forgiven. 2 Cor. 5:4, "The love of Christ constraineth us not to live unto ourselves, but unto him which died for us." And the love meant, is Christ's redeeming love. 2 Cor. 7:1, "Having these promises [of forgiveness], let us cleanse ourselves

from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." Because God has blotted out all his past sin, the believer has the most encouraging of all motives to resist all future sin. Had God not pardoned the past, it would be futile to struggle in the future. — William G.T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*.

Justification also frees the soul for true Christian service. Dr. W.H. Griffin Thomas puts this well:

It is also the secret of true spiritual service. The soul released from anxiety about itself, is free to exercise concern about others. The heart is at leisure from itself to set forward the salvation of those around. — W.H. Griffin Thomas, *The Principles of Theology: An Introduction to the Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 194.

3. Efficiently

As we have seen in an earlier section, the Holy Spirit is the efficient Agent of sanctification. God sends Him into the hearts of His people in order that they might be sanctified. How then can our sanctified obedience be the condition for receiving the Holy Spirit? Yet on every hand we read books and listen to sermons telling us how we may receive the Holy Spirit by "five steps," "seven steps," "absolute surrender," and other amazing feats of human endeavor. Some even teach that the outpouring of God's Spirit will take place when God's people are fully sanctified. But if we could do these things in order to get the Holy Spirit, what would we need the Spirit for?

What is the testimony of God's Word? Simply that Christ, by His perfect righteousness, has won for us the gift of God's Spirit. The Spirit has been given to this one Man (Acts 2:32, 33), and all who receive this one Man are forgiven and receive the Holy Spirit without measure (Acts 10:43, 44; John 7:38, 39).

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? . . . For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. — Gal. 3:1, 2, 10-14.



If we are “in Christ,” joined to Christ as the branch is united to the vine, it is inevitable that we will be “partakers of His holiness.”

The way of justification by faith is the only way of receiving the Spirit of God. To be justified means to be declared righteous. It means that God not only regards us as righteous, but can proceed to treat us as righteous. How does He treat the forgiven sinner as righteous? By giving him the gift of the Holy Spirit. Nothing more and nothing less than perfect righteousness is necessary for the outpouring of God’s Spirit. As every believer has this perfect righteousness *imputed* to him, he may on this one infallible basis have the Holy Spirit *imparted* to him.

When the doctrine of justification by faith is allowed to languish, there is no Holy Spirit and, of course, no true sanctification—even though people spend all their time talking about getting ready for the outpouring of God’s Spirit. When justification by faith is revived, the Spirit breathes new life into the church, and God’s people run the way of sanctification with great joy and zeal.

These two gifts belong together—“the gift of righteousness” (Rom. 5:17), which is imputed, and the gift of the Spirit, which is imparted (“shed abroad in our hearts”) (see Rom. 5:1, 5). We may separate these two blessings in the matter of thinking so that we may know where to repose in hope of salvation. But to separate justification and the gift of the Holy Spirit in point of time is a great mischief. It divides the Trinity and divides the church.

4. Positionally

Justification and sanctification are dual benefits which Christ won for man by His life, death and resurrection. Yet we cannot secure an interest in these benefits, we cannot share in them, unless we become one with Christ through faith-union. As Luther says, “He who believes shall possess all things, and he who believes not shall possess nothing.”

Upon being united to Christ, we are justified, for “if the root be holy, so are the branches.” Rom. 11:16. And if we are “in Christ,” joined to Christ as the branch is united to the vine, it is inevitable that we will be “partakers of His holiness.” Union with Christ therefore secures the two benefits. The legal benefit is justification, and the moral benefit is sanctification. It is impossible to secure one without the other. As Calvin says:

Christ cannot be torn into parts, so these two which we perceive in him together and conjointly are inseparable—namely, righteousness and sanctification. Whomever, therefore, God receives into grace, on them he at the same time

bestows the spirit of adoption [Romans 8:15], by whose power he remakes them to his own image. . . . Yet Scripture, even though it joins them, still lists them separately in order that God's manifold grace may better appear to us. — John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), Bk. 3, chap. 11, sec. 6.

Why, then, are we justified by faith? Because by faith we grasp Christ's righteousness, by which alone we are reconciled to God. Yet you could not grasp this without at the same time grasping sanctification also. For he is "given unto us for righteousness, wisdom, sanctification and redemption." [1 Cor. 1:30]. Therefore Christ justifies no one whom he does not at the same time sanctify. These benefits are joined together by an everlasting and indissoluble bond, so that those whom he illuminates by his wisdom, he redeems; those whom he redeems, he justifies; those whom he justifies, he sanctifies. — *Ibid.*, chap. 16, sec. 1.

Thus, whichever way we look at the relationship of justification and sanctification, they are inseparable. Says Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones:

Do we realize that if we truly understand the doctrine of justification by faith we have already grasped the essence and nerve of the New Testament teaching about holiness and sanctification? Have we realized that to be justified by faith guarantees our sanctification, and that therefore we must never think of sanctification as a separate and subsequent experience? The Apostle's entire argument has been this, that if we truly realize what is meant by justification, we realize that it inevitably means that we are 'in Christ' also, and that that guarantees our deliverance from sin and our final glorification. — D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: The New Man; Exposition of Chapter 6* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), p. 190.

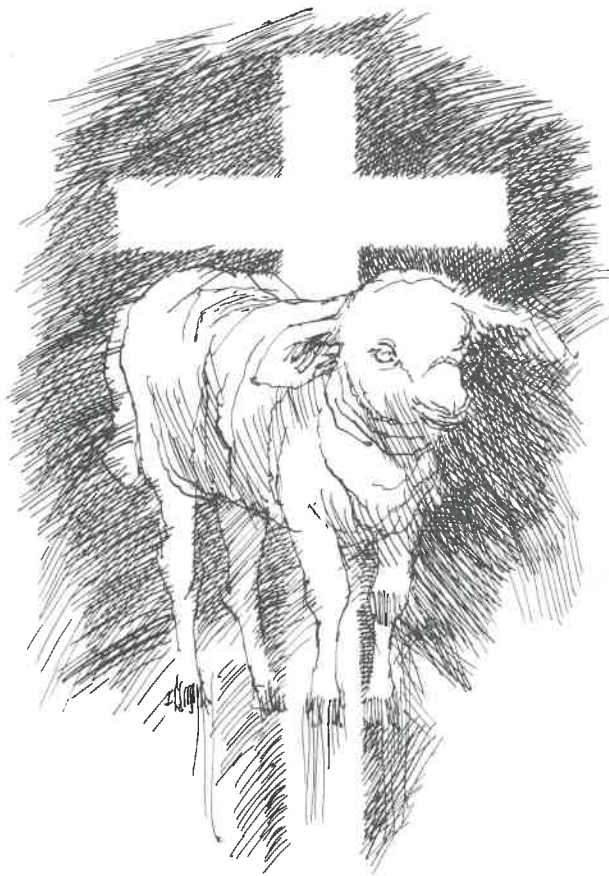
Some Practical Examples of How Justification Is the Mainspring of Sanctification

When Christ directed the woman taken in adultery, ". . . go, and sin no more," He was commanding her to live the new life of holiness and purity. But this new life of sanctification was only possible as she first grasped the hope of justification that was given her in the promise of Christ, "Neither do I condemn thee . . ." John 8:11. The liberating decree of "no condemnation" (Rom. 8:1) sets the soul free to run the way of God's commandments.

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul exhorts them, "Mortify *therefore* your members which are upon the earth . . ." Col. 3:5. When we see the word *therefore*, common sense should direct us to see what it is *there for*. The apostle has just finished telling the Colossians, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." v. 3.

"... Christ justifies no one whom he does not at the same time sanctify." — John Calvin.

The liberating decree of "no condemnation" sets the soul free to run the way of God's commandments.



“The New Testament method and way of sanctification, therefore, is to get us to realize our position and standing, and to act accordingly.”— D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

This illustrates the inseparable Biblical relationship between the *indicative* (you *are*) and the *imperative* (you *ought*). First the believers are reminded that they *are* dead. (Through faith, or baptism, they have been united to Christ. God considers that when Christ died, they died.) Then they are told, “Put to death your members which are upon the earth.” As if to say, “God counts you as dead men, for that is what you really are in Christ. Now this gives you the right and responsibility to act like men who are dead to sin.” We are not commanded to put to death our sinful desires *in order to* become dead, but *because* we are dead. *Being* is not the result of *doing*, but *doing* is the result of *being*.

Further on Paul adds to the Colossians, “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye *have* put off the old man with his deeds . . .” Col. 3:9. Every human religion reverses that order. The best it can tell us is to stop lying and thereby put away the old man and his deeds. But the way of the gospel is utterly contrary to human devisings. It says, “You are dead; now act like dead men. You are pure; now flee from impurity. You are perfect; now seek to become perfect. You *are*; therefore *do!*” “The New Testament method and way of sanctification, therefore, is to get us to realize our position and standing, and to act accordingly.” — *Ibid.*, p. 262.

Here is another example of how the Biblical command to live in holiness is undergirded by the fact of justification:

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. — 2 Cor. 7:1.

This illustrates how we must grasp the promise of justification before we can obey the command of sanctification. We cannot “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness” unless we believe that we are already washed in the blood of the Lamb (1 John 1:9). We cannot engage in the process of perfecting holiness unless we realize that “by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” Heb. 10:14.

Consider this apostolic command: “. . . speak evil of no man . . .” Titus 3:2. Is there any commandment of God’s Word that we so easily transgress? Who can endure this straight edge of the law? For we are not only commanded to refrain from speaking evil of good men, but we are forbidden to speak evil of any man. And what a blessed, innocent and holy congregation a pastor would have if the members carried this out! Yet if the pastor merely exhorts his

congregation to live this sort of life, it is only an exercise in moralism. Obedience to this imperative is only possible as the congregation is reminded and keeps grasping the message of justification by faith. When Paul says "... speak evil of no man ...," he adds:

For [for this reason, in view of this] we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. — Titus 3:3-7.

The publican who in the parable of Christ went down to his house justified had prayed, "God, be merciful to me, *the* sinner!" Luke 18:13, N.A.S.B. This man was blessed because he was really poor in spirit (Matt. 5:3). He saw himself not only as a sinner, but as *the* sinner. He felt that no one could be a sinner like he. He stood before God as if he were all the world's sin. This is the man whom God counts righteous. Now when a congregation grasps this kind of justification before God, how can they speak evil of any man?

Whether Paul is appealing for humility (as in Philippians 2), a forgiving spirit (as in Ephesians 4) or dedicated service (as in Romans 12), he always does so on the basis of the gospel. Christian existence is gospel existence. Sanctification is justification in action.

Perhaps the most striking illustration of how redemption undergirds all ethical action is found in the Old Testament—right in God's own preface to the Ten Commandments: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. [Therefore] thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not. . . . Thou shalt not. . . . Thou shalt not. . . ." etc. (Ex. 20:2-17). God's redemptive acts back there (which are an illustration of His liberating acts in Christ and justification by faith) made the new life of obedience a right as well as a responsibility for the redeemed people. Appeals to live the good life which are not based on the truth of justification by faith can only lead to moralism and legalism. But justification puts the believer on vantage ground—legally, psychologically, efficiently and positionally. It makes the yoke of sanctification easy and the burden of holiness light. "The eternal truth is that the law never stands



by itself but can be found only, as under the old Dispensation, in the ark of the Covenant." — Berkouwer.

The Need for a Constant Return to Justification

Since the life of holiness is fueled and fired by justification by faith, sanctification must *constantly* return to justification. Otherwise, the Christian cannot possibly escape arriving at a new self-righteousness. We cannot reach a point in sanctification where our fellowship with God does not rest completely on forgiveness of sins.

We cannot reach a point in sanctification where our fellowship with God does not rest completely on the forgiveness of sins.



Growing toward Christian maturity does not mean being weaned from our dependence on imputed righteousness.

This is why Luther called justification the article of the standing or falling church. He confessed that his whole soul and ministry were saturated with the truth of justification. This is why he bitterly complained against the evangelical radicals who regarded sanctification, or the new life in the Spirit, as the higher stage in the soteriological process. The man who thinks he can get beyond justification by grace falls from grace (Gal. 5:4).

In fact, the major aspect of sanctification is a growing appreciation of our need of God's justification through Jesus Christ. Growing toward Christian maturity does not mean being weaned from our dependence on *imputed* righteousness. The man who is strong in faith is strong in the doctrine of grace. He becomes more and more overwhelmed and bowed down with the sense of God's mercy and increasingly affixed to justification by the merits of Christ alone.

Says G.C. Berkouwer:

The believer's constant "commerce" with forgiveness of sins and his continued dependence on it must—both in pastoral counselling and in dogmatic analysis—be laid bare, emphasized, and kept in sight. Only thus can we keep at bay the spectre of haughtiness—"as if we had made ourselves to differ". — G.C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification*, p. 84.

The way of sanctification is to remember what has happened and what has been given to us.

Or worse yet, if in our zeal for sanctification we fail to keep the preeminence of justification before us, we will get lost in a "minute concern with inwardness." — *Ibid.*, p. 86. "History shows how easy it is to get lost when one treats of internal grace." — *Ibid.* Our only safety is a constant return to the objective truth of salvation by the outside-of-me righteousness of Christ.

Therefore, we must affirm that the essential mainspring of sanctification is to *remember*. The way of sanctification is to remember what has happened and what has been given to us. It is amazing how often this point is emphasized both in the Old and New Testament. Israel's ethical action was to be constantly undergirded and inspired by her remembrance of what had happened and what had been given to her (see Deut. 5:15). As long as Israel remembered God's redemptive acts in the beginning of her history, she would persevere in the way of holiness. If she forgot what had happened and lost sight of what was given her, she was sure to swerve from the way of holiness.

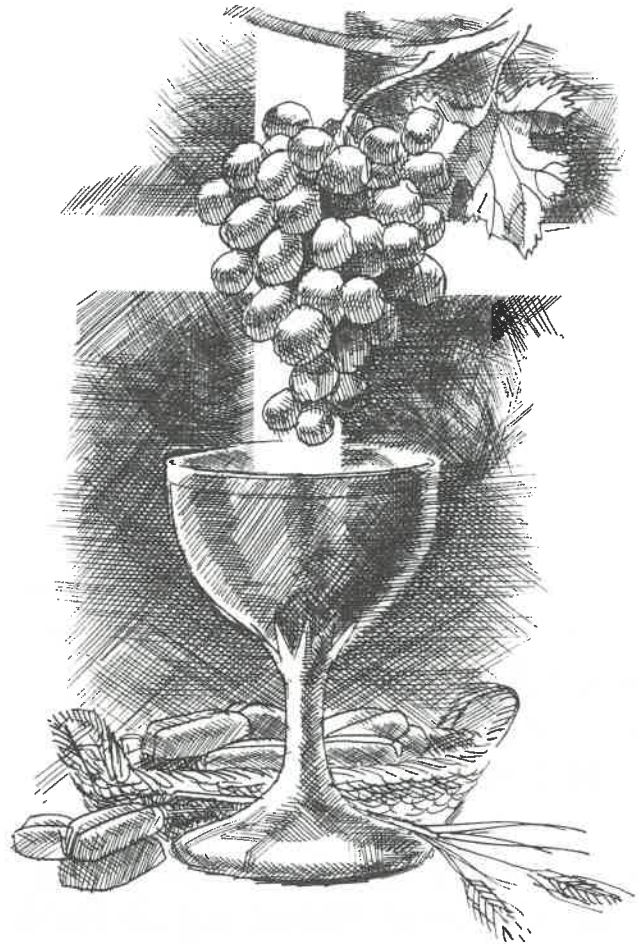
Our fathers understood not Thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of Thy mercies; but provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red Sea. Nevertheless

He saved them for His name's sake, that He might make His mighty power to be known. He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up: so He led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. And He saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left. Then believed they His words; they sang His praise. They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel. . . . They forgot God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red Sea. . . . Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not His Word . . . — Ps. 106:7-13, 21, 22, 24.

When the prophets exhorted Israel to put away her sins and to live in holy obedience, they based their appeals to ethical conduct on the fact that God had delivered Israel from Egypt. Israel's future success depended upon remembering her past.

The New Testament church is also founded on a concrete, historical act of deliverance. The deliverance from Egypt serves as a type of God's real act of liberation in the Person of Jesus Christ. Christ has died and has risen again, and by faith (or baptism) the church has become a participant, or sharer, in all that Christ has done. By the work of Jesus Christ on her behalf, she is free from sin and justified in the sight of God. Yet she must *remember* what has happened and what has been given to her. As Christ Himself broke the bread and divided the cup, He said, ". . . this do in remembrance of Me." 1 Cor. 11:24. God's people have nothing to fear for the future except they forget what has happened in their inaugural history.

The triumph of the Christ event is concrete, irreversible, immutable. This is where Paul rests his case in his triumphant Romans 8 passage. He entertains no fears for "things present, nor things to come" (v. 38), because he remembers what has happened in the past (v. 34). And when he had occasion to exhort the immature Christian communities whom he found lapsing into such "fleshly" things as quarreling, lying or sloth, he saluted them as saints (1 Cor. 1:2). With words fresh from glory, he took them by the ears and reminded them what had happened in the Christ event and that by faith (or baptism) they were sharers in all that Christ had done and suffered. Yes, he told these faulty, fumbling, stumbling believers that they were dead (Col. 3:3; Rom. 6:6), risen (Eph. 2:1-6) and free (Rom. 7:4). Having shown them what they were, he showed how their unchristlike behavior was inconsistent with their privileged position. Then he warned them that those who continued in Christ-denying behavior would not inherit the kingdom (see Eph. 5:3-6). The factious



God's people have nothing to fear for the future except they forget what has happened in their inaugural history.

Every Pauline Epistle is an immutable testimony that the church can make progress in sanctification only in proportion to its grasp of justification.

The church is never led away from the first blessing to look for a “second blessing.”

Corinthians had to be reminded of the gospel. The apostle wrote to them:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. — 1 Cor. 15:1, 2.

The Epistles of Paul were written to encourage growth (sanctification) in people who were already believers. This point is very significant. Yet how did the apostle go about to promote such growth in grace? Every Epistle was a mighty call to *remember* what had happened in the Christ event and how believers are justified by faith in God’s redemptive action in Jesus Christ. Every Pauline Epistle, therefore, is an immutable testimony that the church can make progress in sanctification only in proportion to its grasp of justification. Each Epistle is a call to *remember*. The church is never led away from the first blessing to look for a “second blessing.”

It must feed on the first blessing, the forgiveness of sins. The warfare of the church, according to Scriptural testimony, springs from the demand really to live from this first blessing. — *Ibid.*, p. 64.

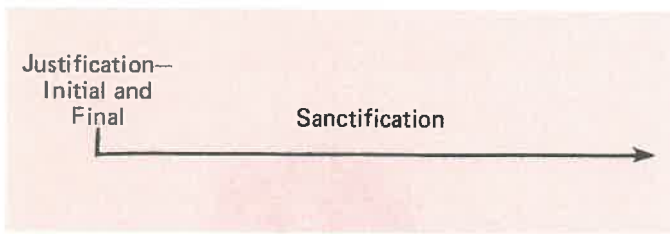
Other Principles Necessary to Keep Justification at the Center

We have shown:

1. That justification and sanctification must always be kept together.
2. That sanctification must constantly return to justification.
3. That justification must always remain the center of the church’s attention. It must always remain the major chord in the soteriological melody. If sanctification is allowed to drown out the dominant New Testament note, Christian teaching degenerates into sheer moralism or Pharisaism.

There are three basic principles necessary to keep justification at the center and dominant.

a. *The Present, Continuous Nature of Justification.* For all its strength, Reformed theology tends to relegate justification by faith to an initiatory action in the soteriological process. This is because it contends that the subjective (personal) justification of the believing sinner is a once-and-for-all, non-repeatable act. Hence the relationship between justification and sanctification is seen as justification succeeded by sanctification:



The tendency is to celebrate justification as something which happened “back there when I became a Christian”—or to have a memorial of it perhaps once a year. Admittedly, the Reformed doctrine of “the perseverance of the saints” puts some stern backbone into the necessity for sanctification. But where this is lost in the more popular “once saved, always saved” version, justification by faith really ceases to be vitally relevant in daily Christian existence.

The Arminian alternative is to regard justification as mere forgiveness for past sins, then sanctification as the higher stage in the soteriological process. Final justification is conditional on sanctification, as illustrated:



We submit that both the Reformed and the Arminian scheme fail to keep justification at the center. We suggest that Paul sees the atonement of Christ (objective justification) as the once-and-for-all-time event. The believer is subjectively (personally) justified (declared righteous) when he receives Christ in faith. “. . . *being justified* [present continuous tense] freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus . . . through faith . . .” Rom. 3:24, 25. This is not just something which happened “back there when I became a Christian.” The law *always* demands perfect righteousness. We always find ourselves falling short⁸ of the law’s demand (Rom. 3:20, 23). Hence, we must always confess ourselves as sinners and must always flee in faith to lay hold of that “righteousness of One,” with which the law is well pleased. *Believing* unto justification is not a once-and-for-all action, but in the New Testament (John 3:16 for instance) it is generally written in the present continuous tense. As Luther writes in his commentary on Romans, the believer always waits

⁸ In Romans 3:23 the verb translated “come short” is in the present continuous tense.

and asks to be justified, and as he keeps counting himself a sinner and imploring God’s mercy, God keeps counting him righteous.⁹ Justification, therefore, is no mere filling station along the way or no mere door that we enter but once. To accept God’s justification in faith is our whole work for our whole life. We never get past it. We never get beyond it. And certainly (as Luther warned many times) we never learn it too well. So we may diagram this concept as follows:



This diagram illustrates how sanctification constantly lives under the primary and preeminent grace of justification.

b. *The Radical Demands of God’s Law.* If there is one reason above all others why justification by faith has little significance in today’s church, it is because the church has not been taking the law of God with the radical seriousness that Calvary demands. If God

⁹ The present continuous nature of justification was the genius of Luther’s emphasis. In “The Disputation Concerning Justification” (1536), he says:

. . . forgiveness of sins is not a matter of a passing work or action, but comes from baptism which is of perpetual duration, until we arise from the dead. — *Luther’s Works* (American ed.; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press; St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-), Vol. 34, p. 163.

. . . Forgiveness of sins is not a matter of a passing work or action, but of perpetual duration. For the forgiveness of sins begins in baptism and remains with us all the way to death, until we arise from the dead, and leads us into life eternal. So we live continually under the remission of sins. Christ is truly and constantly the liberator from our sins, is called our Savior, and saves us by taking away our sins. If, however, he saves us always and continually, then we are constantly sinners. — *Ibid.*, p. 164.

On no condition is sin a passing phase, but we are justified daily by the unmerited forgiveness of sins and by the justification of God’s mercy. Sin remains, then, perpetually in this life, until the hour of the last judgment comes and then at last we shall be made perfectly righteous. — *Ibid.*, p. 167.

For the forgiveness of sins is a continuing divine work, until we die. Sin does not cease. Accordingly, Christ saves us perpetually. — *Ibid.*, p. 190.

Daily we sin, daily we are continually justified, just as a doctor is forced to heal sickness day by day until it is cured. — *Ibid.*, p. 191.

was not taking the demands of His law with utmost seriousness, then what was the death of Christ all about?

Justification itself is a legal term. It has no meaning apart from law. It means to be set right before the law (A.H. Strong). If Christ died and set aside the claims of the law, then we do not need to be justified. If the law is still in force to make demands upon us, then we need to be justified by the blood and obedience of Jesus Christ.

The strength of Reformed theology is that it recognizes that man today is still obligated to render to God the obedience that God required of man in his sinless state. This demand for perfect righteousness cannot be annulled, modified or relaxed. Christ did not die to make a lower or easier standard acceptable to God. Christ lived a sinless life in order that our faith might grasp the virtue of His obedience and be able to present to the law the perfect obedience which it rightfully demands. This does not mean that the believer, being justified by a vicarious righteousness, can become secure and lazy, not caring if he obeys or disobeys the holy commandments. He sees the law as an expression of the kind of man God wants him to be. In the gospel he sees that this is now the kind of man he is in Jesus Christ. Now the law becomes an expression of the kind of man he wants to be in daily, concrete existence. God's ideal has become his ideal.

This is what the Reformers called "the third use of the law"—the law as the rule of life for the justified believer. Although it cannot tyrannize the conscience of the believer, it is a radical and rigorous demand for utmost perfection in every act, word, thought and motive—a spiritual law (Rom. 7:14) that desires "truth in the inward parts." Ps. 51:6. As believers, we will "delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. 7:22), and the Spirit works within us "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." Rom. 8:4. But alas, there is another factor which we must contend with—something which causes us to cry out in anguish. This brings us to our next point.

c. The Radical Sin of the Believer. "... by the law is the knowledge of sin." Rom. 3:20. Conversion to Christ does not do away with the bitter knowledge of our sin, but it rather puts us where we may endure its increasing revelation. It is not from immature believers that we hear startling confessions about the corruption of human nature, but from holy prophets, apostles and mature saints. We may even be surprised that they cry out of the depth and bitterness of soul anguish, "Woe is me! . . .," "O wretched man that I



am! . . .," etc. Giddy spirits who have soared up to heaven in high and mighty experiences (and like to testify of their "victory life of piety") find these testimonies of prophets and apostles hard to understand. They think, for instance, that when Paul delineated his state of wretchedness in Romans 7:14-25, he must have been talking about his pre-conversion days or at least his pre-"second blessing" days. But in the light of the radical demand of God's law, Romans 7 is not so hard to understand—certainly not by him who has honestly sought to come to terms with God's holiness in day-to-day existence. In Romans 7:14-25 there is too much evidence to the contrary to deny that it is really Paul the apostle speaking about himself. But what does he mean when he confesses:

For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 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.

“Our purest works are no better than filthy rags, when tried by the light of God’s law.”—J. C. Ryle.

Christian worldling throwing stones at a Christian perfectionist. (See A.H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 881.)


Paul is not describing himself at his worst, but himself at his best—i.e., “. . . the good that I would I do not . . .” This is not a description of a man who loathes God’s commandments and counts them grievous. Here is a man who delights to do God’s will. With the psalmist he rejoices to run the way of God’s commandments. But when such deeds are judged by the law with its demand for absolute righteousness, they fall short. Judged by the strict justice of that law, this man would be judged as the son who said, “I go, sir,” and went not. The law knows one standard. To miss the mark partially, even by a hair’s breadth, is to miss entirely. So the best deeds of such a man could only “merit death and destruction.” — Calvin.

Again, Paul declares: “. . . the evil which I would not, that I do.” “. . . what I hate, that do I.” The law of God requires not only that we love righteousness, but that we hate iniquity. It requires that we not only resist evil, but that we hate it inwardly, instantly and radically. Now let the best Christian bring to the law the sin which he manfully resisted. The demands of the law are so rigorous that it would judge the Christian as having done the evil which he hated.

This point is beautifully illustrated by Bunyan in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. “Faithful” nobly resisted the temptation of the “Old Man” to marry his three daughters—“the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life.” But he was soon met by man “Moses,” who beat him unmercifully for having a secret inclination to agree with the “Old Man.” “Moses,” who represented the law, would have killed him except for the mercy and intervention of the Man with the nail prints in His hands.

Judged by the law, the best state of the best saint is vanity. “Our purest works are no better than filthy rags, when tried by the light of God’s law.” — Ryle. This is why the apostle cries out, “O wretched man that I am! . . .” That is to say, when he hates evil and does the right, his performance is wretched compared to the purity of the law’s demands (or the holiness of the Son of God).

The flesh, or sinful nature, of the believer is no



Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? — Rom. 7:15-24.

The apostle is not confessing overt aberrations in Christian conduct or moments when faith falters and sin gets the mastery of him. (If that were what he means, then we would agree that Romans 7:14-25 is not describing the high calling of a Spirit-filled saint.) This is not a passage to excuse falling (much less, rushing) into known acts of disobedience. Unfortunately, it has often been used to justify a low standard of piety and a defeatist view of the Christian life. In short, Romans 7:14-25 has often been made into a soft pillow on which hypocrites rest their heads. A.J. Gordon well says:

If the doctrine of sinless perfection is heresy, the doctrine of contentment with sinful imperfection is a greater heresy. . . . It is not an edifying spectacle to see a

different from that of the unbeliever. "The regenerate man is no whit different in substance from what He was before his regeneration." — Bavinck. The whole church must join the confession, "Have mercy upon us miserable sinners." The witness of both Testaments is unmistakably clear on this point.

And enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. — Ps. 143:2.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. — 1 John 1:8.

No work or deed of the saints in this life can meet the severity of God's law. Apart from God's merciful judgment, the good works of the saints would be "mortal sin" (Luther), and nothing is acceptable to God unless mediated through the covering cloud of Christ's merits. Because of "indwelling sin," we need mercy at the end as much as at the beginning, for the old nature is as evil then as ever. Growth in grace, therefore, does not mean becoming less and less sinful, but on the contrary, it means becoming more and more sinful in our own estimation.

It is this conviction of the wretchedness of even our sanctified state—which conviction comes by the law—that keeps sanctification from the rocks of self-righteousness. It keeps the Christian's little bark constantly pointed toward his only star of hope—justification by faith in a righteousness that stands for him in heaven. The refuge of the sinner must ever also be the refuge of the saint.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. — Prov. 18:10.

... and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. — Jer. 23:6.

Conclusions

Sanctification cannot exist without justification, "for the heart of sanctification is the life which feeds on justification." — Berkouwer, *op. cit.*, p. 93. And justification cannot exist without sanctification any more than light can exist without heat.

Justification and sanctification must be seen as two parallel lines which cannot meet this side of glory. Justification looks back to the finished work of God in Jesus Christ and declares, "... ye are complete..." (Col. 2:10); sanctification points us away to the return of Christ and says, "Not... already perfect..." Phil. 3:12. Justification pronounces us

already pure (1 John 1:9); sanctification commands us to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit (2 Cor. 7:1). Justification clothes us in Christ's victory (John 16:33); sanctification means pressing on to overcome (Rev. 3:21). Justification tells us that the battle is won (Is. 40:2); sanctification nerves us on to "fight the good fight of faith." 1 Tim. 6:12. Justification is resting in God's completed work (Matt. 11:28; Heb. 4:1-10); sanctification is pressing on toward the mark (Phil. 3:14). Here is the paradox of being and seeking to become; of being righteous by faith and sinful in nature; of "possessing all things," yet "having nothing." 2 Cor. 6:10.

Why does and why must this paradox between justification and sanctification exist? It exists because of the separation of the two advents of Christ. At His first coming He redeemed us, perfected us, and gave us life and immortality (Heb. 9:12; 10:14; 2 Tim. 1:10). At His second coming He brings us these



blessings to enjoy as empirical realities (Eph. 1:14; 1 John 3:3; Heb. 11:40; Col. 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:50-56). The first advent was *inaugurated eschatology*—for in Christ the last things have already taken place. The second advent is *consummated eschatology*—for then God will openly disclose what Christ has already done. The decisive victory has already taken place (first advent), and Christ is seated at God's right hand "expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." Heb. 10:13. Then that victory will be disclosed to the view of all. In "the times between" we must live by faith—knowing that we are righteous, yet still seeking to become righteous; believing that death has been destroyed, yet waiting for the sight of death to disappear; confessing that our sins have been put away, yet anxious that we feel sin no more.

It is from this separation of these two advents—Christ has come, and Christ will come—that we have the paradoxical relationship between justification and sanctification. And because we must relate the "now" and the "not yet," we must live in the tension of having and not having.

It is not in vain that the apostles frequently exhort us to faith and patient waiting in "the times between." Church history has proved that human

nature wants to solve the paradox "here and now" instead of waiting for the "there and then." Antinomianism tries to destroy the tension by settling for justification and throwing out the absolute necessity of the inward process of sanctification. Perfectionism tries to destroy the tension by getting beyond forgiveness and establishing a relationship with God on the basis of sanctification. Either way, human nature wants to reduce the two parallel lines of justification and sanctification to one line this side of eternity. But this cannot be done without heresy. As a train needs twin tracks and must operate on both, so it is with a sound soteriology. And just as a train cannot jump one rail without jumping both, so it is with justification and sanctification.

If one protests that he is not comfortable living with this paradox and this tension, then we must remind him that he is not supposed to be. Life is not fulfilled in the historical process. Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. We dwell in tents with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, being heirs with them of the same promise. When faith becomes sight and grace is lost in glory, sanctification will be consummated, and forgiveness of sins will be no more. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

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