

Free Grace Broadcaster

ISSUE 215

SANCTIFICATION

*“For this is the will of God,
even your sanctification.”*

1 Thessalonians 4:3

Our Purpose

*“To humble the pride of man,
to exalt the grace of God in salvation,
and to promote real holiness in heart and life.”*

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#215

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THE IMPORTANCE OF SANCTIFICATION

Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

WHAT is “sanctification”? Is it a quality or position? Is sanctification a legal thing or an experimental? That is to say, “Is it something the believer has in *Christ* or in himself? Is it absolute or relative?” By which we mean, “Does it admit of degree or no? Is it unchanging or progressive?” Are we sanctified at the time we are justified, or is sanctification a later blessing? How is this blessing obtained? By something that is done *for* us, or *by* us, or both? How may one be assured he has been sanctified: what are the characteristics, the evidences, the fruits?...Are sanctification and purification the same thing? Does sanctification relate to the soul, the body, or both? What position does sanctification occupy in the order of Divine blessings? What is the connection between regeneration and sanctification? What is the relation between justification¹ and sanctification?...Exactly what is the place of sanctification regarding salvation: does it precede or follow, or is it an integral part of it? Why is there so much diversity of opinion upon these points, scarcely any two writers treating of this subject in the same manner? Our purpose here is not simply to multiply questions but to indicate the *many-sidedness* of our present theme...

The great importance of our present theme is evidenced by the prominence that is given to it in Scripture: the words *holy*, *sanctified*, etc., occurring therein hundreds of times. Its importance also appears from the high value ascribed to it: it is the supreme glory of God, of the unfallen angels, of the Church. In Exodus 15:11, we read that the Lord God is “glorious in holiness”—that is His crowning excellency. In Matthew 25:31, mention is made of the “holy angels,” for no higher honor can be ascribed them. In Ephesians 5:26-27, we learn that the Church’s glory lieth not in pomp and outward adornment, but in *holiness*. Its importance further appears in that this is the aim in all God’s dispensations.² He elected His people that they should be “holy” (Eph 1:4); Christ died that He might “sanctify” His people (Heb 13:12); chastisements³ are sent that we might be “partakers of God’s holiness” (Heb 12:10).

Whatever sanctification be, it is the great promise of the covenant made to Christ for His people. As Thomas Boston⁴ well said, “[Sanctification] shines like

¹ **justification** – Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in His sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone. (*Spurgeon’s Catechism*, Q. 32) See FGB 187, *Justification*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

² **dispensations** – God’s arrangement of events by divine rule and care.

³ **chastisements** – authoritative corrections of one who is at fault; corrective punishment.

⁴ **Thomas Boston (1676-1732)** – Scottish Presbyterian minister and theologian.

the moon among the lesser stars. Sanctification is the very chief subordinate end of the Covenant of Grace,⁵ standing therein next to the glory of God, which is the chief and ultimate end thereof. The promise of it is the center of all the rest of these promises. All the foregoing promises—the promise of preservation, the Spirit, the first regeneration or quickening⁶ of the dead soul, faith, justification, the new saving relation to God, reconciliation,⁷ adoption,⁸ and enjoyment of God as our God—do tend unto it as their common center and stand related to it as means to their end. They are all accomplished on sinners on design to make them holy.”⁹ This is abundantly clear from, “The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life” (Luk 1:73–75). In that “oath” or covenant, sworn to Abraham as a type of Christ (our spiritual Father: Heb 2:13), His seed’s serving the Lord in holiness is held forth as the chief thing sworn unto the Mediator¹⁰...

Not only is true sanctification an important, essential, and unspeakably precious thing, it is wholly *supernatural*. “It is our duty to enquire into the nature of evangelical holiness, as it is a fruit or effect in us of the Spirit of sanctification because it is abstruse¹¹ and mysterious, and undiscernible unto the eye of carnal reason. We say of it in some sense as Job of wisdom, ‘Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears. God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof...And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding’ (28:20-23, 28). This is that

⁵ **Covenant of Grace** – God’s gracious, eternal purpose of redemption, conceived before the creation of the world, first announced in Genesis 3:15, progressively revealed in history, accomplished in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, and appropriated by faith in Him.

⁶ **regeneration** or **quickening** – God’s act of creating new life in a sinner by the power of the Holy Spirit, resulting in repentance and faith in Christ and holiness of life.

⁷ **reconciliation** – the change in relationship from being an enemy at war with God to peace with Him: in Christ, God reconciled sinners to Himself by Christ’s substitutionary death and resurrection, thereby setting them free to restored union with God.

⁸ **adoption** – Adoption is an act of God’s free grace whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God. (*Spurgeon’s Catechism*, Q. 33, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY)

⁹ Thomas Boston, “A View of the Covenant of Grace from the Sacred Records” in *The Complete Works of the Late Rev. Thomas Boston*, Vol. 8 (London: William Tegg, 1853), 487.

¹⁰ **Mediator** – a go-between; “It pleased God in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus His only begotten Son, according to the Covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and Man; the Prophet, Priest and King; Head and Savior of His Church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world: Unto whom He did from all Eternity give a people to be His seed, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.” (1689 London Baptist Confession 8.1, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY)

¹¹ **abstruse** – difficult to understand.

wisdom whose ways, residence, and paths are so hidden from the natural reason and understandings of men.

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

“Believers themselves are oft-times much unacquainted with it, either as to their apprehension of its true nature, causes, and effects, or, at least, as to their own interests and concernment therein. As we know not of ourselves the things that are wrought in us of the Spirit of God, so we seldom attend as we ought unto His instruction of us in them. It may seem strange indeed that, whereas all believers are sanctified and made holy, they should not understand nor apprehend what is wrought *in* them and *for* them and what abideth *with* them! But, alas, how little do we know of ourselves of what we are and whence are our powers and faculties, even in things natural. Do we know how the members of the body are fashioned in the womb?”¹³

Clear proof that true sanctification is wholly supernatural and altogether beyond the ken¹⁴ of the unregenerate is found in the fact that so many are thoroughly deceived and fatally deluded by fleshly imitations and satanic substitutes of real holiness. It would be outside our present scope to describe in detail the various pretensions that pose as Gospel holiness, but the poor Papists, taught to look up to the “saints” canonized by their “church,” are by no means the only ones who are misled in this vital matter. Were it not that God’s Word reveals so clearly the power of that darkness that rests on the understanding of all who are not taught by the Spirit, it would be surprising beyond words to see so many intelligent people supposing that holiness consists in abstinence from human comforts, garbing themselves in mean¹⁵ attire, and practicing various austerities¹⁶ that God has never commanded.

¹² **enthusiastical fancy** – mystical delusion; misdirected religious imagination.

¹³ John Owen, “A Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit,” *The Works of John Owen*, Vol. 3 (Edinburg: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1981), 371-73.

¹⁴ **beyond the ken** – outside the limits of one’s knowledge.

¹⁵ **mean** – shabby; poor in quality.

Spiritual sanctification can only be rightly apprehended from what God has been pleased to reveal thereon in His holy Word and can only be experimentally known by the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit. We can arrive at no accurate conceptions of this blessed subject *except as our thoughts are formed by the teaching of Scripture*, and we can only experience the power of the same as the Inspirer of those Scriptures is pleased to write them upon our hearts...Even a superficial examination of the Scriptures will reveal that holiness is the opposite of sin; yet the realization of this at once conducts us into the realm of mystery, for how can persons be sinful and holy at one and the same time? This difficulty deeply exercises¹⁷ the true saints: they perceive in themselves so much carnality,¹⁸ filth, and vileness that they find it almost impossible to believe that they are holy...We must not here anticipate the ground that we hope to cover, except to say, the Word of God clearly teaches that those who have been sanctified by God are *holy in themselves*. [May] the Lord graciously prepare our hearts for what is to follow.

From *Studies in the Scriptures*, reprinted and available from Chapel Library.

A.W. Pink (1886-1952): Author of *Studies in the Scriptures* and numerous books; born in Nottingham, England.



¹⁶ **austerities** – rigidly severe self-disciplines; extremely strict moral practices.

¹⁷ **exercises** – causes painful mental struggle.

¹⁸ **carnality** – fleshly, worldly, or sensual inclinations.

THE DEFINITION OF SANCTIFICATION

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)

WHILE yet upon the threshold of our subject, let it be premised that there is an order, as well as a harmony, in the operations of the Spirit, which it is highly important [to observe]...Now the order of the Spirit is this: *regeneration* of the heart first, then its *sanctification*. Reverse this, and we derange every part of His work and, as far as our individual benefit extends, render it entirely useless...Sanctification has its commencement and its daily growth in a principle of life implanted in the soul by the eternal Spirit. To look for holiness in an individual still dead in sins is to look for fruit where no seed was sown, for the actings of life where no vital principle exists. It is to expect, in the language of our Lord, to “gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles” (Mat 7:16). The first and imperative duty of an unrenewed man is to prostrate himself in deep abasement and true repentance before God. The lofty look must be brought low, and the rebellious will must be humbled. In the posture of one overwhelmed with a sense of guilt, he must look by faith to a crucified Savior and draw from Him life, pardon, and acceptance. It is most solemnly true that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord” (Heb 12:14); yet all attempts towards the attainment of holiness before repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will but disappoint the soul that looks for it.

This work of renewal done...motives and exhortations to a life of holiness now find a ready response in the heart, [which is] already the temple of the Holy Spirit. The incorruptible seed (1Pe 1:23) sown there germinates into the plant and blossoms and ripens into the fruits of holiness. The well of “living water” created there springs up and pours forth its stream of life and purity, adorning and fertilizing the garden of the Lord. Let us then be careful not to disturb the arrangement and reverse the order of the blessed Spirit in His work...

What is true sanctification? The question is vastly more important than would appear at first sight. Unscriptural views of sanctification have been found to exist, not only among the unregenerate, but even in the Church of Christ also. Yet every dear child of God, who honestly desires to follow the Lord fully and to live as a temple of the Holy Ghost, deeply feels the necessity of the Spirit’s teaching in a matter so personal and so momentous as this...Sanctification has been defined as “the work of God’s Spirit whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God and are enabled more and more to die to sin, and live to righteous-

ness.”¹ Briefly and emphatically, it is *a progressive conformity of the whole man to the Divine nature.*

[During the time of the Levitical priesthood], the term *sanctified* had a peculiar meaning. Persons and things were said to be sanctified that were “separated, set apart and offered to God.” Thus, the furniture of the temple was pronounced *holy* or *sanctified*; the ark, the altar, all the utensils of the temple, and the vestments of the priest were regarded as sanctified because [they were] set apart and dedicated to God. For the same reason, persons were said to be sanctified who were solemnly consecrated to the service. The dispensation of ritual having passed away, the word, by an easy and natural accommodation, has assumed a more comprehensive and evangelical meaning: [it] is now employed to set forth *the advance of the believer in conformity of heart to the will and image of God.*

In explaining the nature of sanctification, we would first establish from the Scripture the spirituality of the Divine Law. There is a sense...in which the believer is dead to the Law. His union to Christ has delivered him from the Law as a covenant of works...The believer is “accepted in the Beloved” (Eph 1:6)—pardoned, justified, and sanctified in Christ...The believer in Christ is released from [the Law] *as a ground of acceptance*, but not as a standard of holiness...Sanctification, then, is a growing conformity to the spirituality of the Divine Law...The closer the resemblance of the believer to the spirituality of the Law of God in his life, his temper, and habit of his mind, his principles, his daily walk in the world and out of the world, among the saints or as surrounded by the ungodly, the more thoroughly is the work of sanctification advancing in his soul.

In all this, there is a more simple surrender of the will to God. The holy Robert Leighton² has remarked that to say from the heart “Thy will be done” constitutes the very essence of sanctification. There is much truth in this, more than perhaps strikes the mind at the first view. Before conversion, the will—the governing principle of the soul—is the seat of all opposition to God. It rises against God, His government, His Law, His providence, His grace, His Son. To *all* that appertains to God, the unrenewed will of man is hostile. Here lies the depth of man’s *unholiness*. The will is against God: so long as it refuses to obey Him, the creature must remain unholy. Now it needs no lengthy argument to show that when the will, as renewed by the Holy Ghost, is made to submit to God, the holiness of the believer must be in proportion to the degree of its submission...The will of God is supremely obeyed in heaven, and in this consist the holiness and the felicity of its glorious inhabitants...

It is the revealed will of God that the believer should walk as an obedient child: “O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as

¹ *Spurgeon’s Catechism*, Q. 34, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

² **Robert Leighton** (1611-1684) – Scottish minister known for his holy, humble life.

a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea” (Isa 48:14). And, when these are the responsive breathings of his soul, “I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way...I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart” (Psa 119:127-128, 132)—such a soul is maturing in holiness and is becoming fitted “for the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col 1:12).

Furthermore, sanctification includes a growing resemblance to the likeness of Christ. How beautifully and explicitly has the Holy Ghost unfolded this in His Word! This was the exhortation of our dear Lord: “Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart” (Mat 11:29). Throughout the writings of His Apostles, the same truth is exhibited: “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom 8:29)...Here is the glorious pattern of a child of God. Sanctification is conformity to the image and the example of Christ. The more the believer is growing like Jesus, the more he is growing in holiness. On the contrary, the less resemblance there is to Christ in his principles, in the habit of his mind, in his spirit, temper, daily walk, in every action, and in every look, the less is he advancing in the great work of holiness.

From “The Sanctification of the Spirit,” 105-36, in *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, reprinted by The Banner of Truth Trust, www.banneroftruth.org, used by permission.

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878): Nonconformist pastor; born in London, England.



As the term is applied to Christians, it is used to designate three things or three parts of one whole: first, the process of setting them apart unto God or constituting them holy (Heb 13:12; 2Th 2:13); second, the state or condition of holy separation into which they are brought (1Co 1:2; Eph 4:24); third, the personal sanctity or holy living that proceeds from the state (Luk 1:75; 1Pe 1:15).—*A. W. Pink*

THE NATURE OF SANCTIFICATION

J. C. Ryle (1816-1900)

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.”—1 Thessalonians 4:3

THE subject of sanctification is one that many, I fear, dislike exceedingly. Some even turn from it with scorn and disdain. The very last thing they would like is to be a “saint” or a “sanctified” man. Yet...it is a subject of the utmost importance to our souls. If the Bible is true, it is certain that unless we are “sanctified,” we shall not be saved. Three things, according to the Bible, are absolutely necessary to the salvation of every man and woman in Christendom. These three are justification, regeneration, and sanctification. All three meet in every child of God: he is both born again *and* justified and sanctified. He that lacks any one of these three things is not a true Christian in the sight of God and, dying in that condition, will not be found in heaven and glorified in the last day.

This subject is peculiarly seasonable in the present day. Strange doctrines have risen up of late upon the whole subject of sanctification. Some appear to confound it with justification. Others fritter¹ it away to nothing under the presence of zeal for free grace and practically neglect it altogether. Others are so much afraid of “works” being made a part of justification that they can hardly find any place at all for “works” in their religion. Others set up a wrong standard of sanctification before their eyes and, failing to attain it, waste their lives in repeated secessions from church to church, chapel to chapel, and sect to sect in the vain hope that they will find what they want. In a day like this, a calm examination of the subject as a great leading doctrine of the Gospel may be of great use to our souls...if you are a thoughtful, reasonable, sensible Christian, I venture to say that you will find it worthwhile to have some clear ideas about sanctification.

THE NATURE OF SANCTIFICATION: Sanctification is that inward spiritual work that the Lord Jesus Christ works in a man by the Holy Spirit when He calls him to be a true believer. He not only washes him from his sins in His own blood, but He also separates him from his natural love of sin and the world, puts a new principle in his heart, and makes him practically godly in life. The instrument by which the Spirit effects this work is generally the Word of God, though He sometimes uses afflictions and providential visitations “without the Word” (1Pe 3:1). The subject of this work of Christ by His Spirit is called in Scripture a “sanctified” man.

¹ **fritter** – do away with piece by piece.

He who supposes that Jesus Christ only lived and died and rose again in order to provide justification and forgiveness of sins for His people has yet much to learn. Whether he knows it or not, he is dishonoring our blessed Lord and making Him only a *half* Savior. The Lord Jesus has undertaken everything that His people's souls require: not only to deliver them from the *guilt* of their sins by His atoning death, but also from the *dominion* of their sins by placing in their hearts the Holy Spirit; not only to justify them, but also to sanctify them. He is, thus, not only their "righteousness," but also their "sanctification" (1Co 1:30). Let us hear what the Bible says: "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified" (Joh 17:19). "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it" (Eph 5:25-26). "Christ...gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Ti 2:14). "Christ... bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1Pe 2:24). Christ has reconciled you "in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight" (Col 1:22). Let the meaning of these five texts be carefully considered. *If words mean anything, they teach that Christ undertakes the sanctification, no less than the justification, of His believing people.* Both are alike provided for in that "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure" (2Sa 23:5), of which the Mediator is Christ. In fact, Christ in one place is called "He that sanctifieth," and His people, "they who are sanctified" (Heb 2:11).

The subject before us is of such deep and vast importance that it requires fencing, guarding, clearing up, and marking out on every side... I shall therefore not hesitate to lay before my readers a series of connected propositions or statements drawn from Scripture, which I think will be found useful in defining the exact nature of sanctification...Some of them may be disputed and contradicted, but I doubt whether any of them can be overthrown or proved untrue. I only ask for them a fair and impartial hearing.

Sanctification is the invariable result of that vital union with Christ² that true faith gives to a Christian. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (Joh 15:5). The branch that bears no fruit is no living branch of the Vine. The union with Christ that produces no effect on heart and life is a mere formal union, which is worthless before God. The faith that has not a sanctifying influence on the character is no better than the faith of devils. It is a dead faith because it is alone (Jam 2:17). It is not the gift of God. It is not the faith of God's elect. In short, where there is no sanctification of life, *there is no real faith in Christ.* True faith works by love. It constrains a man to live unto the Lord from a deep sense of gratitude for redemption. It makes him feel that he can never do too

² See FGB 214, *Union with Christ*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

much for Him that died for him. Being much forgiven, he loves much. He whom the blood cleanses walks in the light. He who has real, lively hope in Christ purifies himself even as He is pure (Jam 2:17–20; Ti 1:1; Gal 5:6; 1Jo 1:7; 3:3).

Sanctification is the outcome and inseparable consequence of regeneration. He that is born again and made a new creature receives a new nature and a new principle and always lives a new life. A regeneration, which a man can have and yet live carelessly in sin or worldliness, is a regeneration invented by uninspired theologians, but never mentioned in Scripture. On the contrary, St. John expressly says, “He that is born of God doth not commit sin” (1Jo 2:29); “doeth righteousness” (3:9–14); “loveth the brethren,” “keepeth himself,” and “overcometh the world” (5:4–18). Simply put, the lack of sanctification is a sign of *non*-regeneration. Where there is no holy life, there has been no holy birth...

Sanctification is the only certain evidence of that indwelling of the Holy Spirit that is essential to salvation. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom 8:9). The Spirit never lies dormant and idle within the soul: He always makes His presence known by the fruit He causes to be borne in heart, character, and life. “The fruit of the Spirit,” says St. Paul, “is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” and such like (Gal 5:22). Where these things are to be found, there is the Spirit; where these things are wanting, men are dead before God...It is nonsense to suppose that we have the Spirit if we do not also “walk in the Spirit” (Gal 5:25). We may depend on it as a positive certainty: *where there is no holy living, there is no Holy Spirit...*As many as are actually “led by the Spirit of God, they”—*and they only*—“are the sons of God” (Rom 8:14).

Sanctification is the only sure mark of God’s election. The names and number of the elect are a secret thing, no doubt, which God has wisely kept in His own power and not revealed to man. It is not given to us in this world to study the pages of the Book of Life and see if our names are there. But if there is one thing clearly and plainly laid down about election, it is this: *elect men and women may be known and distinguished by holy lives.* It is expressly written that they are...“chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that they should be holy” (Eph 1:4). Hence, when St. Paul saw the working “faith” and laboring “love” and patient “hope” of the Thessalonian believers, he said, “I know your election of God” (1Th 1:3–4). He that boasts of being one of God’s elect while he is willfully and habitually living in sin is only deceiving himself and talking wicked blasphemy. Of course, it is hard to know what people really are; and many who make a fair show outwardly in religion may turn out at last to be rotten-hearted hypocrites.³ But where there is not, at least, *some* appearance of sanctification, we may be quite certain there is no election...

³ See FGB 193, *Hypocrisy*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

Sanctification is a reality for which every believer is responsible...I maintain that believers are eminently and peculiarly responsible and under a special obligation to live holy lives. They are not as others—dead, blind, and unrenewed. They are alive unto God and have light, knowledge, and a new principle within them. Whose fault is it, if they are not holy, but their own? On whom can they throw the blame if they are not sanctified but themselves? God, Who has given them grace, a new heart, and a new nature, has deprived them of all excuse if they do not live for His praise. This is a point that is far too much forgotten...The Word of God always addresses its precepts to believers as accountable and responsible beings. If the Savior of sinners gives us renewing grace and calls us by His Spirit, we may be sure that He expects us to use our grace and not to go to sleep. It is forgetfulness of this that causes many believers to grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30) and makes them *very useless and uncomfortable Christians*.

Sanctification is a thing that admits of growth and degrees. A man may climb from one step to another in holiness and be far more sanctified at one period of his life than [at] another. More pardoned and more justified than he is when he first believes he cannot be, though he may feel it more. More sanctified he certainly may be because every grace in his new character may be strengthened, enlarged, and deepened...If there is any point on which God's holiest saints agree, it is this: that they see more, know more, feel more, do more, repent more, and believe more as they get on in spiritual life and in proportion to the closeness of their walk with God. In short, they "grow in grace," as St. Peter exhorts believers to do and "abound more and more," according to the words of St. Paul (2Pe 3:18; 1Th 4:1).

Sanctification depends greatly on a diligent use of Scriptural means. The "means of grace" are such as Bible reading, private prayer, and regularly worshipping God in church, wherein one hears the Word taught and participates in the Lord's Supper. I lay it down as a simple matter of fact that no one who is careless about such things must ever expect to make much progress in sanctification. I can find no record of any eminent saint who ever neglected them. They are appointed channels through which the Holy Spirit conveys fresh supplies of grace to the soul and strengthens the work that He has begun in the inward man...Our God is a God Who works by means, and He will never bless the soul of that man who pretends to be so high and spiritual that he can get on without them.

Sanctification is a thing that does not prevent a man having a great deal of inward spiritual conflict. By conflict, I mean a struggle within the heart between the old nature and the new, the flesh and the spirit, which are to be found together in every believer (Gal 5:17). A deep sense of that struggle and a vast amount of mental discomfort from it are no proof that a man is not sanctified. No, rather, I believe they are healthy symptoms of our condition and prove that we are not dead,

but alive. A true Christian is one who has not only peace of conscience, but war within. He may be known by his warfare as well as by his peace...

Sanctification is a thing that cannot justify a man, and yet it pleases God. The holiest actions of the holiest saint that ever lived are all more or less full of defects and imperfections. They are either wrong in their motive or defective in their performance and in themselves are nothing better than “splendid sins,” deserving God’s wrath and condemnation. To suppose that such actions can stand the severity of God’s judgment, atone for sin, and merit heaven is simply absurd. “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified...Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom 3:20, 28). The only righteousness in which we can appear before God is the righteousness of other⁴—even the perfect righteousness of our Substitute⁵ and Representative, Jesus Christ the Lord. His work, and not our work, is our only title to heaven. This is a truth that we should be ready to die to maintain.

For all this, however, the Bible distinctly teaches that the holy actions of a sanctified man, although imperfect, are pleasing in the sight of God. “With such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb 13:16). “Children, obey your parents...for this is well pleasing unto the Lord” (Col 3:20). “We...do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (1Jo 3:22). Let this never be forgotten, for it is a very comfortable doctrine. Just as a parent is pleased with the efforts of his little child to please him, though it be only by picking a daisy or walking across a room, so is our Father in heaven pleased with the poor performances of His believing children. He looks at the motive, principle, and intention of their actions and not merely at their quantity and quality. He regards them as members of His own dear Son, and for His sake, wherever there is a single eye, He is well pleased...

Sanctification, in the last place, is absolutely necessary in order to train and prepare us for heaven. Most men hope to go to heaven when they die; but few, it may be feared, take the trouble to consider whether they would enjoy heaven if they got there. Heaven is essentially a holy place; its inhabitants are all holy; its occupations are all holy. To be really happy in heaven, it is clear and plain that we must be somewhat trained and made ready for heaven while we are on earth...What could an unsanctified man do in heaven, if by any chance he got there? Let that question be fairly looked in the face and fairly answered. No man can possibly be happy in a place where he is not in his element and where all around him is not congenial to his tastes, habits, and character. When an eagle is happy in an iron cage, when a sheep is happy in the water, when an owl is happy in the blaze of noonday sun, when a fish is happy on the dry land—then, and not until then, will I admit that the unsanctified man could be happy in heaven.

⁴ See FGB 191, *Imputed Righteousness*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

⁵ See FGB 207, *Substitution*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

From J.C. Ryle, *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots*,
available from Chapel Library.

J. C. Ryle (1816-1900): Bishop of the Anglican Church; author of *Holiness*, *Knots Untied*, and many others; born at Macclesfield, Cheshire County, England.



CHRIST AND SANCTIFICATION

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)

BY simple, close, and searching views of the cross of Christ, the Spirit most effectually sanctifies the believer. This is the true and great method of Gospel sanctification. Here lies the secret of all real holiness and, may I not add, of all real happiness? For if we separate happiness from holiness, we separate that which, in the Covenant of Grace, God has wisely and indissolubly united. The experience of the true believer must testify to this. We are only *happy* as we are *holy*—as the body of sin is daily crucified, as the power of the indwelling principle of sin is weakened, and as the outward deportment more beautifully and closely corresponds to the example of Jesus. Let us not then look for a happy walk apart from a holy one. Trials we may have; indeed if we are the Lord's covenant ones, we shall have them, for He Himself has said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (Joh 16:33). Disappointments we may meet with—broken cisterns, thorny roads, wintry skies; but if we are walking in fellowship with God, walking in the light, growing up into Christ in all things, [with] the Spirit of adoption dwelling in us and leading to a filial and unreserved surrender—Oh! there is happiness unspeakable, even though in the very depth of outward trial! *A holy walk is a happy walk*. This is God's order...and therefore must be wise and good.

The Spirit especially and effectually sanctifies by unfolding the cross of Jesus. We desire to enlarge upon this point, not only because He Himself presents it in His Word as one of vast importance, but from the sober conviction of our judgment that there is no great advance in holiness without a growing knowledge of Christ as the sanctification of the believer. A reference to God's Word will place this truth in its proper light. "And thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Mat 1:21). Not only shall He save them from the guilt and condemnation of sin, but also from the indwelling power or reign of sin, so that "sin shall not have dominion over" them (Rom 6:14)...Again, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1Co 1:2). But the most striking allusion to this important truth is found in verse 30, where the Lord Jesus is especially spoken of as made of God the *sanctification* of His people: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." It is *essential* to a right reception of the subject that we should know in what points of view Christ is made our sanctification, so that believing in Him and receiving Him as such, we may "grow up into Him in all things" (Eph 4:15).

In the first place, the atoning work of Christ lays the foundation of sanctification. He opens a way by which God, so to speak, can treat with the soul in the great business of its holiness. Only upon the broad basis of His Law honored, His holiness secured, and His justice satisfied can God in the way of mercy have communication with the sinner. Here we see the great glory of Jesus as the God-Man Mediator. His atoning work opens a channel through which God, without compromising a single perfection of His nature, can communicate the saving and sanctifying power of His grace to the soul. The obedience and bloodshedding of our adorable Lord are ever connected in the Divine Word with the sanctification of the Church. A few examples will suffice to show this.

Speaking of the legal but imperfect sanctification by the sacrifices under the Law, the Apostle supplies an argument in favor of the superior sanctification by the blood of Christ. “For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb 9:13-14...*Let the reader also consult the following passages: Rom 5:9; 1Pe 3:18; Col 1:14; Heb 2:14-15; 1Jo 4:10*).

Thus does the atoning blood of Jesus lay the foundation of all future degrees of sanctification. The cross of Christ is, so to speak, the starting point of the soul in this glorious career of holiness and the goal to which it returns. *By* it, the body of sin is wounded, and wounded fatally. *From* it, pardon, peace, and holiness flow. And *through* it, the soul daily rises to God in a holy surrender of itself to His service. Let no man dream of true mortification of sin, of real sanctification of heart, who does not deal constantly, closely, and believingly with the atoning blood of Jesus. The Holy Spirit brings the cross into the soul and lays it upon the heart to be the death of sin. “I am crucified with Christ” (Gal 2:20). “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Phi 3:10). “I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus” (Gal 6:17)—*and see how the cross lifted [Paul] above the world and deadened him to it*—“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal 6:14). Thus did Paul breathe after and attain unto holiness.

The intercession of our Lord Jesus pleads for and secures the sanctification of the believer. In this sense, it may be said that He is “made of God unto us sanctification.” The Christian reader may be but imperfectly aware how closely connected is every spiritual grace and blessing that he receives with the advocacy of Jesus at the right hand of God. (*Lord, increase our faith in this great and sanctifying truth!*) While yet upon earth, our dear Lord commenced that work of intercession for the sanctification of the church, which He ascended up on high more fully to

carry on. This was the burden of His prayer; and it forms, as John Owen observes, “the blessed spring of our holiness”—“Sanctify them through thy truth” (Joh 17:17). And not only would He leave it, as it were, as a model of the intercession of His exalted priesthood, but for our encouragement He would provide an evidence of its success. To Peter, about to pass through a severe temptation, He says, “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not” (Luk 22:32). Nor *did* his faith fail. It was sifted, it was severely shaken, it was powerfully tried, *but it failed not!* Not a particle of the pure gold was lost in the refining, not a grain of the pure wheat in the sifting. Why?—*because Jesus had interceded, and His intercession was all-prevailing.* O the vast and costly blessings that flow into the soul from the intercession of Christ! Never shall we know the full extent of this until we pass within the veil. We shall then know the secret of our spiritual life, of all our supports, consolations, and victories: why it was that the spark in the ocean was not quite extinguished, why the vessel in the storm and amid the breakers did not quite become a wreck; why, when temptations assailed, crosses pressed, afflictions overwhelmed, and unbelief prevailed, our faith still did not fail and our [little boat] was not driven from its moorings; and that “out of the depths” (Psa 130:1), we were enabled to cry, “Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ” (2Co 2:14). The secret will then disclose itself—*the intercession of Jesus our great High Priest.*

How sweet and consoling to the believer is this view of our exalted Immanuel in the hour of bereavement, when confined to his chamber of solitude, or languishing upon his bed of “pining sickness” (Isa 38:12). Too deeply absorbed in sorrow, it may be, to give utterance to his anguished spirit in prayer—his bodily frame so weakened by disease and racked by pain as to render the mind unfit for close and connected spiritual thought—*O how sweet the intercession of Jesus is then!* How sweet to know that in the hour of the soul’s extremity when human sympathy and power are exhausted, Jesus has entered into heaven “now to appear in the presence of God” (Heb 9:24) for His suffering child. And when all utterance has failed on earth, when the heart is broken and the lips are sealed, *then* to look up and see our elder Brother, the Brother born for our adversity, the exalted High Priest waving the golden censer before the throne while the cloud of His atoning merit goes up before the mercy-seat, bearing as it ascends the person, the name, the circumstances, and the wants of the sufferer below—precious Gospel that opens to the eye of faith so sweet a prospect as this! When you cannot think of Him, afflicted soul, He is thinking of *you*. When you cannot pray to Him, He is praying for *you*, for “He ever liveth to make intercession” (Heb 7:25). But our Lord Jesus is the sanctification of the believer in still another and blessed sense.

View Him as the Head of all mediatorial fullness to His people. “It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell” (Col 1:19). “And of his fulness have

all we received, and grace for grace” (Joh 1:16). Here is sanctification for the believer who is mourning over the existence and power of indwelling sin, feeling it to be his greatest burden and the cause of his deepest sorrow. In the growing discovery of the hidden evil—each successive view, it may be, deeper and darker than the former—where is he to look but unto Jesus? Where can he fly, but to His cross? Hemmed in on every side by a host of spiritual Philistines, no avenue of escape presenting itself, the eternal Spirit leads the soul to a simple view of Jesus, opens to him the vast treasury of His grace, and the free welcome to all comers. And what does he find in that fullness? All that he wants to pardon sin, to hide deformity, to overcome unbelief, and [to] break the power of strong corruption; he finds that there is enough in Christ to make him holy, that, in simply taking his sins to Jesus, they are pardoned; in taking his strong infirmities, they are subdued; in taking his wants, they are supplied. In a word, he finds Christ to be his “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1Co 1:30).

From *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, reprinted by The Banner of Truth Trust.



We may speak of believers as those who are sanctified by God the Father, that is to say, they are set apart. They were set apart before they were created, they were legally set apart by the purchase of Christ, they are manifestly and visibly set apart by the effectual calling of the Spirit of grace.—*Charles Spurgeon*

DEFINITIVE AND PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

John Murray (1898-1975)

WHEN we speak of sanctification, we generally think of it as that process by which the believer is gradually transformed in heart, mind, will, and conduct, and conformed more and more to the will of God and to the image of Christ, until at death the disembodied spirit is made perfect in holiness, and at the resurrection his body likewise will be conformed to the likeness of the body of Christ's glory. It is biblical to apply the term *sanctification* to this process of transformation and conformation. But it is a fact too frequently overlooked that in the New Testament the most characteristic terms that refer to sanctification are used, not of a process, but of *a once-for-all definitive act*.

We properly think of calling, regeneration, justification, and adoption as acts of God effected once for all and not requiring or admitting of repetition. It is of their nature to be *definitive*. But a considerable part of New Testament teaching places sanctification in this category. When Paul, for example, addresses the believers at Corinth as the church of God, "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (1Co 1:2), and later in the same Epistle reminds them that they were washed, sanctified, and justified (1Co 6:11), it is apparent that he co-ordinated their sanctification with effectual calling, with their identity as saints, with regeneration, and with justification. Again, when in 2 Timothy 2:21 we read, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work," there need be no question but the term *sanctified* is used in the same sense. And when Paul says, "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 5:25f.), it is most likely that the sanctification referred to is explicated in terms of "the washing of water by the word." Although in Acts 20:32 and 26:18, "the sanctified" could have reference to the complete sanctification of the age to come, the usage in Paul's epistles would favor the signification whereby believers are viewed as *the sanctified*.

The [noun] *sanctification* has a similar connotation. "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness [*sanctification*]" (1Th 4:7). "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel" (2Th 2:13-14). The terms for *purification* are used with the same import (Act 15:9; Eph 5:26; Ti 2:14).

We are thus compelled to take account of the fact that the language of sanctification is used with reference to some decisive action that occurs at the inception of the Christian life, one that characterizes the people of God in their identity as

called effectually by God's grace. It would be, therefore, a deflection from biblical patterns of language and conception to think of sanctification *exclusively* in terms of a progressive work.

What is this sanctification? No passage in the New Testament is more instructive than Romans 6:1-7:6. The teaching here is oriented against the question with which Paul begins: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"—a question provoked by the [introduction] accorded to grace in the preceding context. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 5:20-21). If the grace of God, and therefore His glory, are magnified the more according as grace overcomes sin, the inference would seem to be, "Let us continue to sin in order that God's grace may be the more extolled." It is this inference the Apostle rejects with the most emphatic negative at his disposal, properly rendered in the corresponding Hebrew idiom, "God forbid!" The perversity of the inference he lays bare by asking another question: "How shall we, that are dead [*have died*] to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom 6:2). The pivot of the refutation is "we died to sin." What does Paul mean?

He is using the language of that phenomenon with which all are familiar: the event of death. When a person dies, he is no longer active in the sphere, realm, or relation in reference to which he has died. His connection with that realm has been dissolved: he has no further communications with those who still live in that realm, nor do they have with him. He is no longer *en rapport* with life here; it is no longer the sphere of life and activity for him. The Scripture brings this fact of experience to our attention... "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more" (Psa 103:5, 16).

In accord with this analogy, the person who lives *in* sin or *to* sin lives and acts in the realm of sin—it is the sphere of his life and activity. And the person who died to sin no longer lives in that sphere. His tie with it has been broken, and he has been translated into another realm... This is the *decisive* cleavage that the Apostle has in view. It is the foundation upon which rests his whole conception of a believer's life; and it is a cleavage, a breach, a translation as really and decisively true in the sphere of moral and religious relationship as in the ordinary experience of death. There is a once-for-all definitive and irreversible breach with the realm in which sin reigns in and unto death.

The antitheses that the Apostle institutes in this passage serve to point up the decisive breach that this change involves. Death in sin means the service of sin as bondservants (Rom 6:6, 16-17, 20); sin reigns in our mortal bodies (6:12); obedience is rendered to the lusts of sin (6:12); we present our members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin and as the bondservants to uncleanness and to iniquity

unto iniquity (6:13, 19); we are free (footloose) in respect of righteousness (6:20); sin has dominion over us, and we are means that the old man has been crucified and the body of sin destroyed—we no longer serve sin (6:6); we are justified from sin (6:7); we are alive to God and live to Him (6:10-11); sin no longer reigns in our mortal body and does not lord it over us (6:12, 14); we present ourselves to God and our members as instruments of righteousness to God, so that we are servants of righteousness unto holiness (6:13, 19); we are under the reign of grace (6:14); we render obedience from the heart to the pattern of Christian teaching (6:17); the fruit is unto holiness, and the end everlasting life (6:22). This sustained contrast witnesses to the decisive change. There is no possibility of toning down the antithesis; it appears all along the line of the varying aspects from which life and action are to be viewed. In respect of every criterion by which moral and spiritual life is to be assessed, there is absolute differentiation. This means that there is a decisive and definitive breach with the power and service of sin in the case of everyone who has come under the control of the provisions of grace...The person begotten of God does righteousness, loves and knows God, loves those who are begotten of God, and keeps the commandments of God (1Jo 2:3-6, 29; 4:7, 20-21; 5:2-3)...

It might appear from the emphasis that is placed in the New Testament upon the definitive breach with sin and the newness of life in the Spirit that union with Christ entails, that no place remains for a process of mortification and sanctification by which sin is put to death more and more and conformity to holiness progressively attained. Romans 6 is the passage in which more than any other the accent falls upon the decisive deliverance from the power and defilement of sin. But in that same Epistle the Apostle delineates for us the conflict that ensues for the believer because of indwelling sin. And it is significant that he should have to bring against himself such indictments as “I am carnal, sold under sin” (7:14); “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!” (7:23-24); “I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin” (7:25). Even in Romans 6, we find repeated exhortations that imply, to say the least, the need for constant vigilance against the encroachments of sin.

No New Testament writer is more insistent upon the definitive character of the believer’s sanctification than is the Apostle John. So sweeping are John’s terms that we have the greatest difficulty in reconciling them with the teaching of the New Testament elsewhere and with the obvious facts of Christian experience. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (1Jo 3:9). “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him” (1Jo 3:6). Yet John in that same epistle says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive

ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1Jo 1:8). He does not regard the believer as sinlessly perfect, for he sets forth the consolation for the believer when he sins—“We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1Jo 2:1). And for John there is the self-purifying aspect of the believer’s life: “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1Jo 3:3).

When we take account of the sin that still inheres in the believer, and of the fact that he has not yet attained to the goal appointed for him, the condition of the believer in this life...is one of *progression*, a progression both negative and positive in character. It embraces both mortification and sanctification.

In reference to mortification, two passages in the New Testament are particularly striking because of the contexts in which they appear. “But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom 8:13). “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col 3:5). These two passages are the more instructive because they occur in contexts in which the once-for-all death to sin and the translation thereby to the realm of new life in Christ are in the forefront. In Romans 6, the accent falls upon this definitive transition; and the pivotal consideration is “ye died to sin.” But in Romans 8:13, the Apostle addresses believers and clearly intimates that their own agency is to be enlisted in putting to death the deeds of the body, a duty made all the more remarkable since he had already said that the body of sin had been destroyed (Rom 6:6). This activity is one that can be exercised only in the strength and grace of the Holy Spirit; and of that, Paul takes account when he says, “By the Spirit.” But it is an activity in which they as believers are to be engaged, and it consists in nothing less violent than that of putting to death. The context of Colossians 3:5 contains the same reflection upon the once-for-all death to sin by the death of Christ. “If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as living in the world do you subject yourselves to ordinances?” (Col 2:20). “For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col 3:3). The exhortation, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth,” is one that arises from the categorical propositions that precede. It is clear, as in Romans 8:13, that the activity of the believer is enlisted in this process. The implication is, therefore, to the effect that, notwithstanding the definitive death to sin alluded to in Colossians 2:20 and 3:3, the believer is not so delivered from sin in its lust and defilement but that he needs to be actively engaged in the business of the slaughterhouse with reference to his own sins...This process is exemplified particularly in *knowledge* and *love*. The prominence given to knowledge and to the enlightenment of the understanding (*cf.* Eph 1:17, 18; 4:13-15; 2Pe 3:18), as the knowledge and understanding of the truth, enforces the lesson that it is in proportion to this increase that there can be the increase of the fruit of the Spirit in love, joy, and peace...As John reminds

us, “God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1Jo 4:16). But love is not a static emotion: it must increase and abound more and more (*cf.* Phi 1:9; 1Th 3:12; 4:10). And love is fed by the increasing apprehension of the glory of Him Who is love, and of Him in Whom the love of God is manifested.

From “Definitive Sanctification,” 277-80, and “Progressive Sanctification,” 294-99, in *The Collected Works of John Murray*, Vol. 2, published by The Banner of Truth Trust, www.banneroftruth.org, used by permission.

John Murray (1898-1975): Reformed theologian; author of numerous books and articles; instrumental in founding Westminster Theological Seminary; born in Badbea, Sutherland County, Scotland.



MORTIFICATION AND VIVIFICATION

A. W. Pink (1886-1952)

SANCTIFICATION...begins with and continues as a consequent of regeneration. Viewed from the experimental and practical side, sanctification is not a Divine *act*, but a work of God's grace, wherein He sustains and develops, continues and perfects, that which He imparted at the new birth. Thus considered, sanctification is a growth under the supporting and fructifying¹ influences of the indwelling Holy Spirit: a growth from spiritual infancy to childhood, from childhood to youth, from youth to spiritual maturity. This growth follows a twofold process: the *mortification*² of the old nature and the *vivification*³ of the new nature.

Throughout that twofold process there is a concurrence between the Spirit and the believer, and this [is] because holiness is both a *privilege* and a *duty*, a Divine gift and a human attainment...From one viewpoint, sanctification is indeed the work of God; but from another, it is the work of man, assisted by supernatural grace. As a *privilege*, sanctification is the subject of promise and prayer (Eze 36:25-27; Joh 17:17; 1Th 5:23). But as a *duty*, sanctification is the subject of exhortation (Eze 18:31, 2Co 7:1, 1Pe 1:15)...

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

The process of our sanctification, then, is both a *Divine* and a *human* one...This process is a [lengthy] one, so that the believer gradually becomes more and more out of love with sin and in love with holiness. Now, as we have said above, this spiritual growth follows the twofold process of *mortification* and *vivification*. Yet

¹ **fructifying** – causing to bear fruit, therefore, producing good works according to Scripture.

² See FGB 201, *Mortification*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

³ **vivification** – bringing to life; living unto God.

those two actings are not so distinct that the one can go on independently or at a distinct time from the other, for the one necessarily accompanies the other. Nevertheless, in explaining that process of experimental and practical sanctification, they need to be separately expounded. A little reflection will show the order in which they need to be contemplated—we have to *die* to sin before we can *live* to God.

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection...” (Col 3:5). This means put to death those fleshly lusts that are set upon earthly objects and thus prevent their evil fruits of “fornication,” etc. With this expression, “Your members which are upon the earth,” compare “the body of sin” (Rom 6:6), which does not mean our physical body, though sin acts through it. The term *mortify* is not used in Scripture *absolutely* to kill and destroy, so as that which is mortified no longer has any being, but rather that it should be rendered impotent and useless, un-able to produce its wicked works...

The subjugation⁴ of indwelling sin so that it may not have power to bring forth the works of the flesh is the constant duty of the believer. The health and comfort of his spiritual life depend thereon: he must be daily killing sin, or it will kill him. “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom 8:13). “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1Co 9:27). The solemn alternatives presented in these passages are too plain to be misunderstood...These passages are to be taken at their face value, for there is no conflict between them and any others: believers are preserved in the paths of righteousness, and God has nowhere promised to secure any soul that sports with sin.

This work of mortification is a very difficult one, especially considering the prevalence of corruption and the multitude of temptations we are exposed to; the subtlety and watchfulness of Satan, who goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour...the instability of our resolutions and the fickleness of our affections; the ceaseless efforts made by our corruptions to gain the advantage over us...Now it is this that renders it so *essential* that we make a right use of those methods that God has prescribed for the mortification of sin, the chief of which is the denying of self and the taking up of our cross. And that is to be done daily (Luk 9:23)...It is because of the extreme difficulty of the work of mortification that Christ bids those contemplating discipleship to “sit down first and count the cost” (Luk 14:28). Nevertheless, we must settle it in our minds that either we must fight sin or be eternally lost...

⁴ **subjugation** – forced submission to control by another.

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

If indwelling sin is to be subdued by the Christian, if temptations are to be successfully resisted, then, *first*, he must make a real effort daily to maintain in his mind a constant sense of the heinousness⁵ of sin, as being that abominable thing which God hates. The believer will never put forth his utmost endeavors against it while he regards sin lightly. *Second*, he must strive to keep his conscience under the awe of God, for this is the great preventative against sin. Without [this] all other external rules and helps signify nothing, for “by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil” (Pro 16:6). *Third*, there must be a diligent watching against the occasions of sin, against those things that excite our corruptions and tempt us to wrongdoing. Let those who are really concerned turn up and ponder the following passages: Job 31:1; Psalm 18:23; Proverbs 4:14-15 and 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Jude 23. Our disobedience to these precepts accounts for much of our failure. *Fourth*, see to it that you do not give sin an advantage by making provision for its lusts. How diligent we are in this respect over the body: if there be any constitutional weakness, how carefully we guard against it—shame on us that we are less diligent about our souls. *Fifth*, form the habit of nipping sin in the bud, resisting its first risings. That is more than half the battle—to heed *promptly* the convictions from the Spirit. *Sixth*, train the mind to dwell upon the enormity of sin. The fearfulness of its guilt, the horribleness of its defilement—think of what it cost Christ to make atonement for it. *Seventh*, let there be frequent self-examination as to our motives and ends, and to discover what most absorbs our hearts. *Eighth*, deep humility for past sins begets hatred of sin and caution against it (2Co 7:11). *Ninth*, spare no pains to nourish and develop those graces that are the opposites of your besetting sins. Pride is weakened by cultivating humility, uncleanness by purity of mind and conscience, love of the world by heavenly mindedness. *Tenth*,

⁵ **heinousness** – monstrous and outrageous wickedness.

make yourself willing to be reprov'd for your faults (Psa 141:5). *Eleventh*, meditate often upon the vanity of the creature and the transitoriness of all earthly pleasures. The sweetest enjoyments this world has to offer are but fading flowers and withering grass. *Twelfth*, cry mightily unto God for restraining grace (Psa 19:13). Appropriate such promises as Micah 7:19 and Romans 6:14; plead the blood of Christ for victory. *Thirteenth*, seek to get chastisements and afflictions sanctified unto your souls (Isa 27:9; Heb 12:11). *Finally*, beg the Spirit to teach you to "Put on the whole armour of God" (Eph 6:10-18). We have covered much ground in these fourteen points, and they need to be carefully pondered if they are to be made real helps in this work...

It has already been pointed out that the two different actings of the Christian in *mortification* and *vivification*...need to be separately expounded. The order in which we should consider them is obvious: we must *die* to sin (relatively speaking) before we can *live* (in any measure) to God...Disease must be subdued before health can be enjoyed; the lamp must be cleansed before its light can shine forth clearly; rags must be discarded before new apparel is put on. This order is uniformly insisted on throughout the Scriptures:

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

As the term is used theologically, *vivification* means a living unto God. It is not enough that the believer should die unto sin: he must also *walk in newness of life*. Recess from the world is worthless unless it issues in access to God. Practical holiness consists not so much in a mere *abstinence* from a sensual life, but *principally in living unto God*—delighting in Him, desires after Him, carefulness to please Him, loathness⁶ to offend Him. God has imparted grace to the regenerate not simply that they may have it, but that they use the same to His glory: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal 5:25). The grace God has given His

⁶ **loathness** – unwillingness; reluctance.

people is to be exercised by them in a course of hearty obedience to Him, according to the directions that He has given in His Word.

God has predestinated His people to be conformed to the image of His Son: now Christ died unto sin (Rom 6:10)—so must we. Christ lives unto God—so must we. In mortification, there is a likeness unto Christ's death; and in vivification (or living unto God), there is a likeness to His resurrection: the latter is the inseparable adjunct⁷ of the former. Christ cannot be divided: those who partake with Him in the one act partake with Him in the other. God will not leave His work in us half done: if He makes us to hate and forsake the evil, then He also causes us to love and seek after the good. In Psalm 1, the godly man is not only described as walking not in the counsel of the ungodly, standing not in the way of sinners, and sitting not in the seat of the scornful, but also as delighting in the Law of the Lord, meditating therein day and night, and then bringing forth his fruits in his season. God subdues sin in us to make way for a life of righteousness.

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

First, there is now a holy reverence for God because of His Person, His perfections, His works. Of the unsanctified it is said, "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom 3:18). But where a principle of grace and holiness has been infused, the fear of God quickly appears, for it is "the beginning of wisdom" (Pro 9:10). The regenerate man cannot now do the things that he did before and that others do: "But so did not I, because of the fear of God" (Neh 5:15). It is this heart-awe for God, this godly reverence, this filial⁸ fear, which is one of the roots from which springs spiritual obedience, for such reverence necessarily yields submission to the revealed will of God. When Israel avowed at Sinai "All that the Lord hath said, we will do," He answered, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" (Deu 5:29). The fear of God, then, precedes the keeping of His commandments. It is this principle of godly reverence that the Lord is pledged to give unto His people according to the terms of the New Covenant: "I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever" (Jer 32:39). That "fear" is the same as the "new spirit" of Ezekiel 11:19, and as the writing of His Law on our hearts (Heb 8:10). This same spiritual grace is also called fearing "the LORD and [not His "judgments," but] his goodness" (Hos 3:5).

⁷ **adjunct** – something joined to or connected with something else as a supplementary part.

⁸ **filial** – bearing the relation of a son or daughter.

Second, accompanying this filial awe is a sincere and holy love for God from which springs acceptable obedience to Him. That love consists in the heart's being drawn out to God and delighting itself in Him. It is a disposition and inclination of soul unto communion with Him with complacency,⁹ so that its language now is "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee" (Psa 73:25). An unregenerate man cannot love God nor take any delight in His perfections, ways, or worship; for "the carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom 8:7). The unsanctified desire to depart from Him and dismiss Him from their thoughts. Job says of the hypocrite, "Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?" (27:10)—no, he will not. But in regeneration, the Lord circumcises the heart or renews and sanctifies it to love Him with all the soul, and that sincerely and cordially.

Third, vivification manifests itself in a complete submission to the will of God in all things—not only to His *preceptive* will, but to His *disposing* will also, even to the most adverse dispensations of providence. Instances of this may be seen in the cases of Aaron, Eli, David, and others, who rebelled not nor murmured, but were quiet and silent, resigned to the Divine will under the most severe rebukes and the most painful trials (Lev 10:3; 1Sa 3:18; 2Sa 15:25-26). Much of sanctification lies in the conformity of our wills to the will of God. As the saintly Usher¹⁰ said, "Sanctification is nothing less than for a man to be brought to an entire resignation of his will to the will of God, and to live in the offering up of his soul continually in the flames of love as a whole burnt offering."

Fourth, vivification is expressed by being spiritually minded. "To be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom 8:6); that is, the bent and inclination of a renewed mind is unto spiritual things; for it is that whereby we live to God and enjoy peace with Him. By nature, we care only for the things of the flesh, minding earthly concerns (Phi 3:19)—our corrupt hearts are set upon them, disposed towards them, eager after whatever leads to the enjoyment of them. But the regenerate mind things above, and in vivification their affections are drawn out after and fixed upon them (Col 3:3)...None but God can satisfy the sanctified.

Fifth, vivification is seen in religious exercises or acts of devotion to God, particularly in the actings of grace in them. Here too there is a radical difference between the unregenerate and the regenerate: the former engages in religious exercises formally, as a matter of duty; but the latter (when in a healthy state) takes delight therein. The ministry of the Word is attended with affection, and prayer is engaged in with fervor; for prayer is the very breath of a sanctified soul toward God. It is not so much in the outward performance that the believer differs from the unbeliever, as in *the holy actings of his heart*, such as eager desires after com-

⁹ **complacency** – the condition of being pleased with something; satisfaction.

¹⁰ **James Usher** or **Ussher** (1581-1656) – theologian; Archbishop of Church of the Ireland.

munion with God therein. The sanctified soul cannot be satisfied with using the means of grace *unless he meets with God in them*. A sanctified soul seeks the glory of God in all that he does.

From *Studies in the Scriptures*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.



THE MOTIVE OF SANCTIFICATION

Abraham Booth (1734-1806)

CHRIST indeed finds His people entirely destitute of holiness and of every desire after it, but He does not leave them in that state. He produces in them a sincere love to God and a real pleasure in His ways...

The vast importance of sanctification and the rank it holds in the dispensation of grace appear from hence: It is the [goal] of our eternal election—a [primary] promise and a distinguished blessing of the Covenant of Grace; a precious fruit of redemption by the blood of Jesus; the design of God in regeneration; the primary intention of justification; the scope of adoption, and absolutely necessary to glorification... Sanctification, therefore, may be justly denominated a [primary] *part* of our salvation and is much more properly so termed than a *condition* of it. For to be delivered from that bondage to sin and Satan under which we all naturally lie and to be renewed after the image of God must certainly be esteemed a great deliverance and a valuable blessing.

Now, in the enjoyment of that deliverance and in the participation of this blessing consist the very essence of sanctification. Hence, the word is used to signify *that word of divine grace by which those that are called and justified are renewed after the image of God*. The effect of this glorious work is true holiness or conformity to the moral perfections of the Deity. In other words, love to God and delight in Him as the chief Good... To love the Supreme Being is directly contrary to the bias of corrupt nature. For as natural depravity consists in our *aversion* to God, which manifests itself in ten thousand various ways, so the essence of true holiness consists in *love* to God. This heavenly affection is the fruitful source of all obedience to Him and of all delight in Him, both here and hereafter. Nor is it only the true source of all our obedience: it is also the sum and perfection of holiness *because all acceptable duties naturally flow from love to God*...

The persons on whom the blessing of sanctification is bestowed are those that are justified and in a state of acceptance with God. For concerning them, it is written—and it is the language of reigning grace: “I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts” (Heb 8:10). The blessing here designed and the favor here promised are that *love to God* and that *delight in His Law and ways* that are implanted in the hearts of all the regenerate. [These constantly incline] them to obey the whole revealed will of God as far as they are acquainted with it. Sanctification is a New Covenant blessing; and in that gracious constitution, it is promised as a *choice privilege*, not required as an *entitling condition*.

Those happy souls who possess the invaluable blessing and are delivered from the dominion of sin are not *under the Law*, neither seeking justification by it nor [exposed] to its curse. [They are] *under grace*, completely justified by the free favor of God, and live under its powerful influence. This text strongly implies that all *who are under the Law as a covenant* or [*who*] *are seeking acceptance with the eternal Judge by their own duties* are under the dominion of sin, whatever their characters may be among men or however high their pretenses may be to holiness. And as those that are under the Law have no holiness, they can perform no acceptable obedience...A man's person must be accepted with God before his works can be pleasing to Him.

To set the subject in a clearer light, it may be of use to consider that to constitute a work truly good, it must be done from *a right principle*, performed by *a right rule*, and intended for *a right end*. It must be done from *a right principle*: this is the love of God. The great command of the unchangeable Law is "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God" (Deu 6:5; Mat 22:37). Whatever work is done from any other principle, however it may be applauded by men, is not acceptable in the sight of Him Who searches the heart. For by Him, principles as well as actions are weighed.

It must be performed by *a right rule*: this is the revealed will of God. His will is the rule of righteousness. The Moral Law, in particular, is the rule of our obedience. It is a complete system of duty; and considered as moral, [it] is immutably the rule of our conduct...

It must be intended for *a right end*: [this] is the glory of the Supreme Being. "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1Co 10:31) is the peremptory¹ command of the Most High. As this is the end for which Jehovah Himself acts in all His works, both of providence and grace, so it is the highest end at which we can possibly aim. No man, however, can act for so sublime an end but he that is taught of God and fully persuaded that justification is entirely by grace... For until then, he cannot but refer his supposed good actions principally to *self* and his own acceptance with God. This is the highest end for which such a person can possibly act, though he often proposes other and baser ends. But those works that are truly good and that the Holy Spirit calls the fruits of righteousness are, in the design of their performer as well as in the issue, to the glory and praise of God...

To confirm the argument and to illustrate the point, I would observe that man is a fallen creature, entirely destitute of the holy image and love of God. So far from loving his Maker or delighting in His ways, *he is an enemy to Him*...Neither the commands of the Divine Law—though the strictest and purest imaginable—

¹ **peremptory** – insisting on immediate obedience; not open to discussion or debate.

nor all the vengeance threatened against disobedience to those commands *can work in our hearts the least degree of love to God the Lawgiver...*

Fallen man, therefore, cannot love God but as He is revealed in a Mediator. He must behold his Maker's glory in the face of Jesus Christ before he can love Him or have the least desire to promote His glory. Now, as there is no revelation of the glory of God in Christ but by the Gospel, and as we cannot behold it but by faith, it necessarily follows that no man can unfeignedly² love God or sincerely desire to glorify Him while ignorant of the truth. But as there is the brightest display of all the Divine perfections in Jesus Christ, and as the Gospel reveals Him in His glory and beauty, so through the sacred influence of the Holy Spirit sinners behold the infinite amiableness³ and transcendent glory of God in the Person and work of Immanuel. The Gospel [is] a declaration of that perfect forgiveness that is with God and of that wonderful salvation that is by Christ, [both of] which are full, free, and everlasting. By whomsoever the Gospel is believed, peace of conscience and the love of God are in some degree enjoyed, while in proportion to the believer's views of the Divine glory revealed in Jesus and his experience of Divine love shed abroad in the heart will be his returns of affection and gratitude to God as an infinitely amiable Being, considered in Himself as inconceivably gracious to needy, guilty, unworthy creatures. His language will be, "What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name" (Psa 116:12; 103:1). Being born from above, he delights in the Law of God after the inward man (Rom 7:22) and is habitually desirous of being more and more conformed to it, as it is a transcript of the Divine purity and a revelation of the Divine will. Now he is furnished with that generous principle of action: *love to God*. The obedience he now performs and that which God accepts is but the obedience of a child or of a spouse, *not* the service of a mere mercenary in order to gain a title to life as a reward for his work, much less of a slave that is driven to it by the goad of terror. [It is the obedience] of one who regards the divine commands as coming from a father or from an husband. Being dead to the Law, he lives to God (Gal 2:19).

I said, "Being dead to the law." This is the case of none but those that are poor in spirit and have received the atonement in the blood of Christ, those who rely on His work alone as completely sufficient to procure their acceptance with God and as perfectly satisfying an awakened conscience, respecting that important affair. So the Apostle: "Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ...But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held" (Rom 7:4, 6). In these remarkable words, the believer is described as being dead to the Law and the Law as dead to him. By which are signified that the Law has no more

² **unfeignedly** – genuinely; sincerely.

³ **amiableness** – loveliness.

power over a believer to exact obedience as the condition of life or to threaten vengeance against him in case of disobedience than a deceased husband has to demand obedience from a living wife; or because of disobedience to threaten her with punishment...But though the Law, *as a covenant*, ceases to have any demands on them that are in Christ Jesus, yet as a rule of conduct and as in the hand of Christ, it is of great utility to believers and to the most advanced saint. Nor, thus considered, is it possible that it should be deprived of its authority or lose its use. For it is no other than the rule of that obedience that the nature of God and man and the relation subsisting between them render necessary. To imagine the Law vacated in this respect is to suppose that relation to cease that has ever subsisted—and *cannot but subsist*—between the great Sovereign and His dependent creatures, who are the subjects of His moral government. Nor, thus considered, are its commands burdensome or its yoke galling⁴ to the real Christian. He approves of it! He *delights* in it after the inward man (Rom 7:22)! For, as a friend and a guide, it points out the way in which he is to manifest his thankfulness to God for all His favors. And the new disposition he received in regeneration from his Law-fulfiller inclines him to pay it the most sincere and uninterrupted regards. The obedience he now performs is in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter (Rom 7:6).

Should any pretenders to holiness, the genuine offspring of the ancient Pharisees, object that by faith we make void the Law, our answer is ready: “God forbid: yea, we establish the law” (Rom 3:31), both by the doctrine and the principle of faith. *By the doctrine of faith*: because we teach that there is no salvation for any of the children of men without a perfect fulfillment of all its righteous demands. This, though impossible to a fallen, enfeebled creature, was punctually performed by Messiah the Surety.⁵ [This righteousness] being placed to the account of a believing sinner renders him *completely* righteous. Thus the Law, so far from being made void, is honored, is *magnified*, and that to the highest degree! The obedience performed to the preceptive⁶ part of the Law by a Divine Redeemer, and the sufferings of an incarnate God on the cross in conformity to its penal sanction, more highly honor it than all the obedience that an absolutely innocent race of creatures could ever have yielded [or] than all the suffering that the many millions of the damned can endure to eternity. *By the principle of faith*: for as it purifies the heart from an evil conscience through the application of atoning blood, so it works by love—love to God, His people, and His cause, in some degree conformable to the Law as the rule of righteousness...If anyone therefore pretends to believe in Christ, to love His name, and to enjoy communion with Him, who does

⁴ **galling** – making sore by chafing or rubbing.

⁵ **Surety** – one who enters into a bond to undertake the responsibilities or debt of another.

⁶ **preceptive** – pertaining to or conveying a command.

not pay an habitual regard to His commands, he is “a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1Jo 2:4). For our Lord...informs us also that the reason why any one does not keep his sayings is *because he does not love Him*, whatever he may profess to the contrary. That is no love, which is not productive of obedience; nor is that worthy [of] the name of obedience, which springs not from love. Pretensions to love without obedience are glaring hypocrisy;⁷ and obedience without love is mere slavery...The Gospel only can furnish us with such principles and motives to obedience as will cause us to take delight in it. When we know the truth as it is in Jesus, then, and not until then, the ways of wisdom will be ways of pleasantness. Then faith will work by love to God and our neighbor.

From *The Reign of Grace, from Its Rise to Its Consummation*, reprinted by
The Baptist Standard Bearer, www.standardbearer.org.

Abraham Booth (1734-1806): English Baptist preacher; considered one of the most learned men of his day; born in Blackwell, Derbyshire, England.



⁷ See FGB 193, *Hypocrisy*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

A. W. Pink (1886-1952)

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

“These blessings walk hand in hand; and never were, never will be, never can be parted. No more than the delicious scent can be separated from the beautiful bloom of the rose or carnation: let the flower be expanded, and the fragrance transpires. Try if you can separate gravity from the stone or heat from the fire. If these bodies and their essential properties, if these causes and their necessary effects, are indissolubly connected, so are our justification and our sanctification.”¹

“For like as though Adam alone did personally break the first covenant² by the all-ruining offence, yet they to whom his guilt is imputed do thereupon become inherently sinful through the corruption of nature conveyed to them from him, so...Christ alone did perform the condition of the second covenant.³ [And] those to whom His righteousness is imputed do thereupon become inherently righteous through inherent grace communicated to them from Him by the Spirit. So teacheth the Apostle in...Rom 5:17, ‘For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.’ How did death reign by Adam’s offence? Not only in point of guilt whereby his posterity were bound over to destruction, but also in point of their being dead to all good, dead in trespasses and sins. Therefore, the receivers of the gift of righteousness must thereby be brought

¹ James Hervey (1714-1758), *Theron and Aspasio: A Series of Dialogues and Letters upon the Most Important and Interesting Subjects*, Vol. 2 (London: Rivington, 1789), 67.

² **first covenant** or **Covenant of Works** – the agreement or administration that God established with Adam in the Garden of Eden before his fall into sin. It established man’s obligation to obey God with the penalty of death for disobedience (Gen 2:16-17).

³ **second covenant** or **Covenant of Grace**.

to reign in life, not only legally in justification, but also morally in sanctification.”⁴

Though absolutely inseparable, yet these two great blessings of Divine grace are quite distinct. In sanctification, something is actually imparted to us; in justification, it is only imputed. Justification is based entirely upon the work Christ wrought *for* us; sanctification is principally a work wrought *in* us. Justification respects its object in a legal sense and terminates in a relative change—a deliverance from punishment, a right to the reward; sanctification regards its object in a moral sense and terminates in an experimental change both in character and conduct—imparting a love for God, a capacity to worship Him acceptably, and a [fitness] for heaven. Justification is by a righteousness [*outside of*] us; sanctification is by a holiness wrought *in* us. Justification is by Christ as Priest and has regard to the penalty of sin; sanctification is by Christ as King and has regard to the dominion of sin: the former cancels its damning power; the latter delivers from its reigning power.

They differ, then, in their *order* (not of time, but in their nature), justification preceding, [and] sanctification following: the sinner is pardoned and restored to God’s favor before the Spirit is given to renew him after His image. They differ in their *design*: justification removes the obligation unto punishment; sanctification cleanses from pollution. They differ in their *form*: justification is a judicial act by which the sinner is pronounced righteous; sanctification is a moral work by which the sinner is made holy: the one has to do solely with our *standing* before God, the other chiefly concerns our *state*. They differ in their *cause*: the one issuing from the merits of Christ’s satisfaction; the other proceeding from the efficacy of the same. They differ in their *end*: the one bestowing a title to everlasting glory; the other being the highway that conducts us thither. “And an highway shall be there...and it shall be called The way of holiness” (Isa 35:8).

From *Studies in the Scriptures*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.



⁴ Thomas Boston, “A View of the Covenant of Grace from the Sacred Records” in *The Complete Works of the Late Rev. Thomas Boston*, Vol.8 (London: William Tegg, 1853), 454.

HOLINESS IN LITTLE THINGS

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

THE alphabet of Gospel truth is that “Christ died for our sins” (1Co 15:3). By this we are saved, obtaining peace with God, and “access...into this grace wherein we stand” (Rom 5:2). But he who thus believes is also made partaker of Christ (Heb 3:14), partaker of the divine nature (2Pe 1:4), partaker of the heavenly calling (Heb 3:1), partaker of the Holy Ghost (Heb 6:4), partaker of His holiness (Heb 12:10). In the person of his Surety, he has risen as well as died; he has ascended to the throne, is seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph 2:6), his life is hid with Christ in God (Col 3:3). That which he is to be in the day of the Lord’s appearing, he is regarded as being *now* and is treated by God as such. Faith, in one aspect, bids him look forward to the glory; in another, it bids him look back upon this weary land as if he had already finished his pilgrimage. “Ye are come unto mount Sion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb 12:22).

Surely, then, a Christian man is called to be consistent and decided, as well as joyful, not conformed to this world (Rom 12:2), but to that world to come in which he already dwells by faith. What manner of person ought he to be in all holy conversation and godliness (2Pe 3:11)?...Certainly, one who is “risen with Christ” ought to be *like* the Risen One. He will be expected to be meek and lowly, gentle and loving, simple and frank, kind and obliging, liberal and generous, not easily provoked or affronted, transparent and honest, not selfish, narrow, covetous, conceited, worldly, unwilling to be taught...True Christianity is healthy and robust, not soft, sickly, nor sentimental; yet, on the other hand, not hard, lean, ill-favored, nor ungenial...We want not merely a high and full theology, *but we want that theology acted out in life*, embodied nobly in daily doings...The higher the theology, the higher and the manlier should be the life resulting from it. It should give a divine erectness and simplicity to the Christian character and bearing; true dignity of demeanor without pride, stiffness, or coldness; true strength of will without obstinacy, caprice,¹ or waywardness. The higher the doctrine is the more it ought to bring us into contact with the *mind* of God, which is “the truth,” and with the *will* of God, which is “the Law”...We prize the lofty teaching of the Epistles, but we prize no less “the law and the prophets” (Mat 7:12; 22:40; Luk 24:44). We listen to the apostolic *doctrine* and learn to say, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Gal 2:20); yet we do not turn away from the apostolic *precepts* as beneath us: “Putting away lying, speak

¹ **caprice** – an unpredictable change of mind, opinion, or behavior; whim.

every man truth with his neighbour” (Eph 4:25). “Let him that stole steal no more” (Eph 4:28). “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice” (Eph 4:31). “Uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you...Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting” (Eph 5:4). “Put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication” (Col 3:8). “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds” (Col 3:9)...These are the commandments of the Holy Ghost, and they are Law just as truly as that which was proclaimed in Horeb amid fire and darkness.

The true question with us...is not whether we are to obey this law or that law, but *any* law at all. If obedience to apostolic Law be not legalism, then neither is obedience to the Moral Law...The [true] life then is not a life *against* law, nor a life *without* law, nor a life *above* law, but a life like that of the great Law-fulfiller—a life in which the Law finds its fullest and most perfect development. It was so in Jesus; it is so in us as far as we resemble Him in spirit and in walk. It is a thoroughly conscientious, upright, honorable life...[conscientious] in little things as well as great, in business, in the ordering of our households, in the laying out of our time and our money, in fulfilling engagements, in keeping promises, in discharging duties, in bearing witness for Christ, in nonconformity to the world.

The man who knows that he is risen with Christ and has set his affection on things above will be a just, trusty, ingenuous,² unselfish, *truthful* man. He will add to his faith “virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (2Pe 1:5-7). He will seek not to be “barren nor unfruitful” (2Pe 1:8). “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report” (Phi 4:8)—these he will think upon and *do*.

For there is some danger of falling into a soft and effeminate Christianity under the plea of a lofty and ethereal³ theology. Christi-anity was born for *endurance*: [it is] not an exotic, but a hardy plant, braced by the keen wind, not languid,⁴ childish, nor cowardly. It walks with firm step and erect frame. It is kindly, but firm; it is gentle, but honest; it is calm, but not facile;⁵ obliging, but not imbecile;⁶ decided, but not churlish.⁷ It does not fear to speak the stern word of condemnation against error nor to raise its voice against surrounding evils under the pretext that

² **ingenuous** – honorably straightforward; free from deception.

³ **ethereal** – heavenly.

⁴ **languid** – showing a disinclination for physical exertion or effort.

⁵ **facile** – possessing a softness of disposition that is easily wrought upon by others.

⁶ **imbecile** – weak-willed through lack of mental power.

⁷ **churlish** – harsh; brutal.

it is not of this world. It does not shrink from giving honest reproof, lest it come under the charge of displaying an unchristian spirit. It calls sin “sin,” on whomsoever it is found and would rather risk the accusation of being actuated by a bad spirit than not discharge an explicit duty...The religion of both Old and New Testaments is marked by fervent, outspoken testimonies against evil. To speak smooth things in such a case may be sentimentalism, but it is not Christianity. It is a betrayal of the cause of truth and righteousness. If anyone should be frank, manly, honest, cheerful (I do not say blunt or rude, for a Christian must be courteous and polite), it is he who has tasted that the Lord is gracious and is looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God. I know that charity covereth a multitude of sins; but it does not call evil good because a good man has done it. It does not excuse inconsistencies because the inconsistent brother has a high name and a fervent spirit. Crookedness and worldliness are still crookedness and worldliness, though exhibited in one who seems to have reached no common height of attainment.

With many of us, the Christian life has not gone on to maturity. “Ye did run well; who did hinder you?” (Gal 5:7). It has been a work well begun, but left unfinished; a battle boldly entered on, but only half fought out; a book with but the preface written, no more. Is not thus Christ dishonored? Is not His Gospel thus misrepresented, His Cross denied, His words slighted, His example set at naught?...Did a holy life consist of one or two noble deeds—some signal⁸ specimens of doing or enduring or suffering—we might account for the failure and reckon it small dishonor to turn back in such a conflict. But a holy life is made up of a multitude of *small* things...Little words, not eloquent speeches or sermons; little deeds, not miracles, nor battles, nor one great heroic act or mighty martyrdom, make up the true Christian life...The avoidance of little evils, little sins, little inconsistencies, little weaknesses, little follies, little indiscretions and imprudences, little foibles,⁹ little indulgences of self and of the flesh, little acts of indolence or indecision or slovenliness¹⁰ or cowardice, little equivocations¹¹ or aberrations¹² from high integrity, little touches of shabbiness¹³ and meanness, little bits of covetousness and penuriousness,¹⁴ little exhibitions of worldliness and gaiety, little indifferences to the feelings or wishes of others, little outbreaks of temper, crossness, selfishness, vanity—the avoidance of such little things as these goes far to make up at least the negative beauty of a holy life.

⁸ **signal** – striking; remarkable.

⁹ **foibles** – failings or weaknesses of character.

¹⁰ **slovenliness** – carelessness.

¹¹ **equivocations** – the use of words that have two or more meanings in order to mislead.

¹² **aberrations** – departures or strayings from the path of morality.

¹³ **shabbiness** – meanness and shamefulness.

¹⁴ **penuriousness** – stinginess.

And then attention to the little duties of the day and hour, in public transactions or private dealings or family arrangements; to little words, looks, and tones; little benevolences, forbearances, or tendernesses; little self-denials, self-restraints, and self-forgetfulnesses, little plans of quiet kindness and thoughtful consideration for others; to punctuality, method, and true aim in the ordering of each day—these are the active developments of a holy life, the rich and divine mosaics of which it is composed...It is of small things that a great life is made up; and he who will acknowledge no life as great save that which is built up of great things, will find little in Bible characters to admire or copy.

One who has “learned of Christ,” who “walks with God,” will not be an artificial man, not one playing a part or sustaining a character. He will be thoroughly natural in manners, words, looks, tones, and habits. He will be like that most natural of all creatures, a little child. Christianity becomes *repulsive* the moment that it is suspected to be fictitious...The “epistles of Christ” to be “known and read of all men” (2Co 3:2) must be transparent and natural. In living for Christ, we must follow Him fully, not copying a copy, but copying Him. Otherwise, ours will be an imperfect testimony, a reflected and feeble religion, devoid of ease, simplicity, and grace, bearing the marks of imitation and art, if not of forgery.

From *God’s Way of Holiness*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.



LET US THEN SHINE!

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

THAT which among men so frequently takes the name of *holiness* is very unlike the biblical reality. Whether used in connection with the hardness of a lifeless orthodoxy, or the genialities of a fond idealism,¹ or the smooth regularities of a mechanical devotion, or the religiousness of pictorial superstition,² or the austerities of self-righteous mortification,³ or the sentimentalisms of liberalized theology, or the warm dreams of an earnest pantheism,⁴ the words *holy* and *holiness* and *spirituality* have become misnomers⁵ or ciphers,⁶ as ambiguous in meaning and profane in use as would have been Aaron's ephod⁷ upon the shoulders of a priest of Baal. This retention of Bible formulas and a Bible terminology *after* the expulsion or perversion of Bible *meaning* is one of the sacrilegious dishonesties of the age, which are so uncomfortably offensive to a straightforward student of the Word...

[Christ] is the representation, the illustration, the model: likeness to Him is holiness. He that is holy is conformed to His image. Every other ideal is vanity. We must learn from the four Gospels what living holiness is; for a doctrinal exposition of it, we must turn to the Epistles. Thus, we shall understand both what it is not and what it is.

“Abide in me” (Joh 15:4), “learn of me” (Mat 11:29), “follow me” (Mat 4:19; 16:24; Joh 12:26) are the contents and summing-up of the Christian statute book, constituting our true directory and guide in the pursuit of holiness. Here we have:

1. **The *life*** “Abide in me.” From the Prince of life the new life comes to us, even out of His death and tomb; for “we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, [*that we may be also in that*] of his resurrection” (Rom 6:5). We “are dead,⁸ and [our] life is hid with Christ in God” (Col 3:3). Thus, we are “alive unto righteousness”—we live, and yet not we, but *Christ* in us (Gal 2:20). We come to Him *for* life, or rather, first of all, He comes to us *with* life. We “apprehend him,” or rather, first of all, “We are apprehended of him” (Phi 3:12); and the “abiding in him” is but a continuance of the first act of “coming,” a doing the same thing all

¹ **genialities...idealism** – the pleasantries of a foolishly unrealistic pursuit of perfection.

² **pictorial superstition** – religious images or icons of deity, angels, or saints.

³ **austerities...mortification** – severe, self-inflicted practices for subduing one's passions.

⁴ **pantheism** – the belief that God is everything and everything is God.

⁵ **misnomers** – wrong uses of a term.

⁶ **ciphers** – secret codes.

⁷ **Aaron's ephod** – Aaron's priestly garment of gold, purple, scarlet, and fine-twined linen.

⁸ *have died*

our life that we did at first. *Thus we live*...Because He liveth, we live and shall live forever. His life is *ours*, and our Christianity must be (like its fountainhead) a thing of vitality, power, and joy—our life the most genial, earnest, and useful of all lives, out of us flowing “rivers of living water” (Joh 7:38).

2. The *scholarship*. “Learn of me.” His is the school of heaven, the school of light. Here there is all truth and no error. The Tutor is as perfect as He is “meek and lowly” (Mat 11:29). He is at once the teacher *and* the lesson. With Him is the perfection of training and discipline and wisdom. There is no flaw, no failure, no incompleteness in the education that He imparts. He teaches to know, to love, to act, to endure, to rejoice, to be sorrowful, to be full, and to suffer want (Phi 4:12). The range of scholarship enjoyed by His disciples is only to be measured by His divine stores, His “treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3). The end of His instruction and discipline is to make us holy men, conformed to His likeness, and imitators of His heavenly perfection.

3. The *walk* “Follow me.” It is not merely a life to which we are called, but a walk—a “walking about,” as the Greek implies. [It is] not a sitting alone; not a private enjoying of religion, but a walk—a walk in which we are visible on all sides, a walk that fixes many eyes upon us, a walk in which we are “made a spectacle” to heaven, earth, and hell (1Co 4:9). It is no motionless resting or retirement from our fellows, but a moving about in the midst of them, a coming into contact with friends and foes, a going to-and-fro upon the highways and byways of earth. As was the Master, so must the servant be. On His way to the Cross, He looked round and said, “Follow me” (Joh 12:26). On His way to the throne, after He had passed the Cross, He said the same (Joh 21:22). To the Cross and to the crown alike, then, we are to follow Him. It is one way to both.

He then that would be holy *must be like Christ*, and he that would be like Christ *must be “filled with the Spirit”* (Eph 5:18). He that would have in him the mind of Christ must have the same “anointing” as He had—the same indwelling and in-working Spirit, the Spirit of “adoption,” of life, faith, truth, liberty, strength, and holy joy. It is through this mighty Quickener that we are quickened. It is through “sanctification of the Spirit” that we are sanctified (2Th 2:13; 1Pe 1:2). It is as our Guest that He does His work: not working without dwelling nor dwelling without working (2Ti 1:14), not exerting a mere influence, like that of music on the ruffled soul, but coming into us and abiding with us; so that being “filled with His company,” as well as pervaded by His power, we are thoroughly “transformed.” He does not merely ply us with arguments nor affect us with “moral suasion,” but impresses us with the irresistible touch of His divine hand and penetrates us with His own vital energy. Nay, He *impregnates* us with His own purity and life in spite of desperate resistance, unteachableness, and unbelief on our part all the days of our life.

He that would be like Christ, moreover, *must study Him* We cannot make ourselves holy by merely *trying* to be so, any more than we can make ourselves believe and love by simple energy of endeavor. No force can effect this. Men *try* to be holy, and they fail. They cannot work themselves into holiness by direct effort. They must gaze upon a holy object and so be changed into its likeness “from glory to glory” (2Co 3:18). They must have a holy Being for their bosom friend. Companionship with Jesus, like that of John, can alone make us to resemble either the disciple or the Master.

He that would be holy must *steep himself in the Word*, must bask in the sunshine that radiates from each page of revelation. It is through the truth that we are sanctified (Joh 17:17). Exposing our souls constantly to this light, we become more thoroughly “children of the light”...For, against evil, divine truth is quick and powerful...It is “the sword of the Spirit,” with whose keen edge we cut our way through hostile thousands. It is the rod of Moses, by which we divide the Red Sea, defeat Amalek, and bring water from the desert rock. What evil, what enemy within or without is there that can withstand this unconquered and unconquerable Word? Satan’s object at present is to undermine that Word and to disparage its perfection. Let us the more magnify it and the more make constant use of it. It is indeed only a fragment of man’s language, made up of human letters and syllables, but it is furnished with superhuman virtue. That rod in the hand of Moses, what was it? A piece of common wood. Yet it cut the Red Sea in twain. That serpent on the pole, what was it? A bit of brass. Yet it healed thousands. Why all this? Because that wood and that brass were connected with omnipotence, conductors of the heavenly electricity. So let the Bible be to us the book of all books for wounding, healing, quickening, strengthening, comforting, and purifying.

Yet, he that would be holy must fight. He must war a good warfare (1Ti 1:18); fight the good fight of faith (1Ti 6:12), though not with carnal weapons (2Co 10:4). He must fight upon his knees, being sober, and watching unto prayer (1Pe 4:7). He must wrestle with principalities and powers, being strong in the Lord and the power of His might, having put on the whole armor of God: girdle, breastplate, shield, helmet, and sword (Eph 6:13-17). This battle is not to the strong (Ecc 9:11), but to the weak: it is fought in weakness, and the victory is to them that have no might. For in this conflict, time and chance do not happen to all; but we count upon victory from the first onset, being made more than conquerors through Him that loved us and are cheered with the anticipation of the sevenfold reward “to him that overcometh” (Rev 2:7, etc.). Though we have the hostility of devils in this our earthly course and combat, we have the ministry of angels in aid (Heb 1:14), as well as the power of the Holy Ghost (Eph 1:13).

He that would be holy must *watch*. “Watch thou in all things” (2Ti 4:5). “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” (1Co 16:13). Let the sons

of night sleep or stumble in the darkness; but let us, who are of the day, be sober, lest temptation overtake us, and we be ensnared in the wiles of the devil or the seductions of this wanton world. “Blessed is he that watcheth” (Rev 16:15). In watching, let us witness a good confession (1Ti 6:13), not ashamed of Him Whose badge we bear. Let us run a swift and patient race. “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us” (Heb 12:1) and “follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness” (1Ti 6:11), having our eye upon the coming and the kingdom of our Lord Jesus (Ti 2:13).

He that would be holy must [*understand*] *his responsibility for being so*, both as a member of Christ’s body and a partaker of the Holy Ghost. The thought that perfection is not to be reached here ought not to weaken that sense of responsibility nor lead us to give way to aught that would grieve “the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph 4:30)...Nay, for the personal possession of that fullness, as far as vessels such as ours can contain it, each saint is responsible. We are sanctified by the blood (Heb 13:12) that we may be sanctified by the Holy Ghost (1Co 6:11), be led by the Spirit (Gal 5:18), be temples of the Holy Ghost, even in our bodies (1Co 6:19), walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16), speaking by the Spirit (1Co 12:3), living in the Spirit (Gal 5:25), and having the communion of the Holy Ghost (2Co 13:14)...

The Christian man must *not trifle with sin under any pretense*, least of all on the plea that he is not “under the Law.” The apostolic precepts and warnings are quite as explicit as the Mosaic and much more numerous...As possessors of the Spirit of love, we must be loving, laying aside all malice, guile, hypocrisies, and evil-speaking, discharging daily the one debt that is never to be paid (Rom 13:8). For the indwelling Spirit is not idle nor barren, but produces fruit, divine fruit in human hearts, heavenly fruit on earthly soil, fruit that indicates its inner source and tells of the glorious Guest within: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,²³ Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal 5:22-23)...As those who have been delivered from “this present evil world” (Gal 1:4), let us like the saints of old be separate from it, standing aloof from its gaities, as men who have no time for such things, even were they harmless, keeping our raiment undefiled. Let us be suspicious of its foolish talking and jesting, jealous of its light literature, which “eats as doth a canker” (2Ti 2:17), vitiating⁹ the taste and enervating¹⁰ the soul. Let us maintain unblunted the edge of our relish¹¹ for prayer and fellowship with God as the great preservative against the seductions of the age: *for only intimacy with God can keep us from intimacy with the world.* Let us not try to combine the novel and the Bible, the

⁹ **vitiating** – corrupting morally; perverting.

¹⁰ **enervating** – weakening morally.

¹¹ **relish** – vigorous and enthusiastic enjoyment.

closet and the ballroom—nor attempt to serve two masters, to drink two cups (1Co 10:21), to worship two gods, to enjoy two religions, to kneel at two altars.

Let us be on our guard against old self in every form, whether it be indolence,¹² or temper, or coldness, or rudeness, or disobligingness,¹³ or slovenliness, or shabbiness,¹⁴ or covetousness, or flippancy,¹⁵ or self-conceit, or pride, or cunning, or obstinacy, or sourness,¹⁶ or levity,¹⁷ or foolishness, or love of preeminence. Let us cultivate a tender conscience, avoiding old notions and conceits, yet watching against the commission of little sins and the omission of little duties; redeeming the time, yet never in a hurry; calm, cheerful, frank, happy, genial, generous, disinterested,¹⁸ thoughtful of others. Seeing we must protest against the world on so many important points, let us try to differ from it as little as possible on things indifferent, always showing love to those we meet with, however irreligious and unlovable, especially avoiding a contemptuous spirit or an air of superiority.

As disciples of Christ, let our discipleship be complete and con-sistent, our connection with Him exhibiting itself in conformity to His likeness. [Let] our life [be] a comprehensive creed, our walk the embodiment of all that is honest, lovely, and of good report. Christ's truth sanctifies as well as liberates; His wisdom purifies as well as quickens. Let us beware of accepting the liberty without the holiness, the wisdom without the purity, the peace without the zeal and love.

Let us be true men, in the best sense of the word: true to ourselves, true to our new birth and our new name, true to the church of God, true to the indwelling Spirit, true to Christ and to the doctrine concerning Him, true to that book of which He is the sum and the burden. Let us be true to truth, loving it, not because it is pleasant, picturesque, or ancient, but *because it is true and divine*. On it let us feed, with appetite new-whetted¹⁹ every day; so shall we add, not one, but many cubits to our stature, growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ...

Our spiritual constitution must be braced, not only that we may be strong for work or fight, but that we may be proof against *the infection of the times*, against the poison with which the god of this world, “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph 2:2) has impregnated our atmosphere. For this we need not only the “strong meat” recommended by the apostle (Heb 5:12-14), but the keen, fresh mountain air of

¹² **indolence** – laziness.

¹³ **disobligingness** – the disregard of another's wishes; deliberate unhelpfulness.

¹⁴ **shabbiness** – despicably mean behavior.

¹⁵ **flippancy** – lack of respect or seriousness.

¹⁶ **sourness** – the character of being bitter or gloomy.

¹⁷ **levity** – treating serious matters with a lack of due respect.

¹⁸ **disinterested** – free from self-seeking.

¹⁹ **new-whetted** – made more acute; sharpened.

trial, vicissitude,²⁰ and hardship, by means of which we shall be made hardy in constitution and robust in frame, impervious to the contagion around (whether that come from ecclesiastical pictorialism or religious liberalism), impregnable against the assaults of Satan the Pharisee or Satan the Sadducee. They who have slid into a creed (they know not how), dreamed themselves into it, or been swept into it by the crowd; they to whom the finding of a creed has been a matter of reading, education, or emotion; they to whom faith has been but the result of an intellectual conflict, not a life and death struggle of conscience—these possess not the true power of resistance. They carry no *disinfecting* virtue, no *error-repelling* power about with them. The epidemics of the age tell sorely upon them; even though they may have taken hold of the truth, it becomes evident that the truth has not taken hold of them. In a time of uncertainty, skepticism, speculation, false progress, we need to recognize the full meaning of the apostolic “we know” (1Jo 5:13-20), “we believe” (2Co 4:13), “we are confident” (2Co 5:6), “we are persuaded” (2Ti 1:12). For that which is divine must be true, that which is revealed must be certain, and that which is thus divinely true and certain must be immortal. Like the results of the exact sciences, it is fixed, not varying with men and ages. That which *was* true, *is* true, and *shall be* true forever...Let us place ourselves simply in the hands of the quickening Spirit. He will pour into us the fullness of a diversified, fruitful, healthful life. The evil in us is too strong for any power save omnipotence. The resistance of a human will is too powerful for philosophy, logic, poetry, or eloquence. *The Holy One alone can make us holy!*

Life is not one battle but many. It is made up, too, of defeats as well as victories. Let us not be unduly troubled or grow moody when a battle is lost. There is always time to win another, and such a thing as flight or demoralization should be unknown in the army of the living God...“If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom 8:31). “Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle” (Psa 18:39).

The Christian life is a great thing, one of the greatest things on earth. Made up of daily “littles,” it is yet in itself not a little thing. But in so far as it is truly lived, whether by poor or rich, by child or full-grown man, [it] is noble throughout—a part of that great whole in which and by which is to be made known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places...the manifold wisdom of God (Eph 3:10).

It does not need to be a long life; a short one may be as true and holy as a long one. A short one is not a failure. John the Baptist had perhaps the shortest ministry in the church, yet it was no failure: *it was one of the greatest successes*. “He was a burning and a shining light” (Joh 5:35)...We may say that it does not need the threescore years and ten to unfold the beauties of holiness.

²⁰ **vicissitude** – change of circumstance, often for the worse.

If the new life were the mere rubbing off the rust of the old; if the sweetening of the Marah well of our corrupt nature were but a common, non-miraculous process; if all goodness be within the easy reach of any earnest man; if a refined literature and a liberalized theology, and the cultivation of the beautiful, and social science, and a wider range of genial recreation be the cure for all the evil that is in us and in our age—then there has been much ado about trifles, the Bible is an exaggeration, and the gift of the Holy Spirit a superfluous exhibition of power. If sin be but a common scar or wrinkle to be erased from the soul's surface by a few simple touches, if pardon be a mere figure of speech—meaning God's wide benevolence or good-natured indifference to evil—why tell of wrath, fire, judgment, the never-dying worm, and the ever-rising smoke? Does God love to torment His creatures by harsh words or fill their imaginations with images of woe that He does not intend to realize? Or why did the Son of God suffer, weep, and grieve? If error be but a trifle, a foible, a freak at worst, or if it be a display of honest purpose and the inevitable result of free thought, why is the “strong delusion” (literally, “the energy of error”) spoken of so awfully, “that they all might be damned who believed not the truth” (2Th 2:12)? Why did the Lord Himself say once and again in reference to false doctrine, “Which thing I hate” (Rev 2:15)?

As the strongest yet calmest thing in the world is light, so should a Christian life be the strongest and greatest, as well as the calmest and brightest. As the only perfectly straight line is a ray of light, and as the only pure substance is sunshine, so ought our course to be, and so should we seek to shine as lights in the world—reflections of Him Who is its light—the one straight, pure thing of earth.

Let us then shine! Stars indeed, not suns; but still stars, not tapers nor meteors. Let us shine! Giving perhaps slender light, but that light certain and pure—enough to say to men, “It is night,” lest they mistake, but not enough to bring day; enough to guide the seeking or the erring in the true direction, but not enough to illuminate the world. The sun alone can do that. The sun shows us the landscape; stars show but themselves. Let us then show ourselves beyond mistake. The day when all things shall be seen in full, warm light is the day of the great sun rising.

“The night is far spent; the day is at hand” (Rom 13:12). We shall not set nor be clouded: we shall simply lose ourselves in light. And we need not grudge thus losing ourselves, when we call to mind that the splendor in which our light is to be absorbed is that of the everlasting Sun. It is His increasing that is to be our decreasing, and shall we not say, “This my joy therefore is fulfilled” (Joh 3:29)?

From *God's Way of Holiness*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889): Scottish Presbyterian minister whose poems, hymns, and religious tracts were widely popular during the 19th century; born in Edinburgh, Scotland.