

The Doctrine of Sanctification



Part Five

A. W. Pink



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9. Its Securer

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

It is very remarkable to observe the perfect harmony there is between the different operations of the Eternal Three in connection with the making holy of the elect, and the threefold signification of the term "sanctification." In an earlier chapter we furnished proof that the word "to sanctify" has a threefold meaning, namely, to separate, to cleanse, to adorn. First, in Scripture a person or thing is said to be sanctified when it is consecrated or set apart from a common to a sacred use. So in the eternal decree of the Father, the elect were separated in the Divine mind from countless millions of our race which were to be created, and set apart for His own delight and glory. Second,

where those persons and things are unclean, they must be purified, so as to *fit* them for God's pleasure and use. That was the specific work assigned to the Son: His precious blood has provided the means for our purification. Third, the persons or things sanctified need to be beautified and adorned for God's service: this is accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

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

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

that sin had forfeited and deliverance from all that sin had incurred. Thank God that, in the end (when we are glorified), will be perfectly effected.

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

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

paradise, but for an eternity of joy in the immediate presence of God in Heaven.

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

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

disposition of living unto God, wherein the substance or essence, the life and being, of holiness doth consist.”

In an article thereon S. E. Pierce said, “Sanctification, or Gospel-holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, comprehends the whole work of the Spirit of God within and upon us, from our regeneration to our eternal glorification. It is the fruit and blessed consequence of His indwelling us, and the continued effect of spiritual regeneration, i.e., in begetting within us a nature suited to take in spiritual things, and be properly affected by them. Regeneration is the root and sanctification is the bud, blossom and fruit which it produces. In our regeneration by the Holy Spirit we are made alive to God, and this is manifested by our faith in Christ Jesus. Our lusts are mortified because we are quickened together with Christ. And what we style the sanctification of the Spirit, which follows after regeneration hath taken place within us, consists in drawing forth that spiritual life which is conveyed to our souls in our new birth, into acts and exercise on Christ and spiritual things, in quickening our graces, and in leading us to walk in the paths of holiness, by which proof is given that we are alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” This, we believe is preferable to Owens, yet still leaving something to be desired.

Exactly what is the sanctification of the Spirit? Personally, we very much doubt whether that question can be satisfactorily answered in a single sentence, for in framing one, account needs to be taken of the change which is produced in the believing sinner’s relationship to God, his relationship to Christ as the Head of the Church, his relationship to the unregenerate, and his relationship to the Divine law. *Positionally*, our sanctification by the Spirit results from our being vitally united to Christ, for the moment we are livingly joined to Him, His holiness becomes ours, and our standing before God is the same as His. *Relatively*, our sanctification of the Spirit issues from our being renewed by Him, for the moment He quickens us we are set apart from those who are dead in sins. *Personally*, we are

consecrated unto God by the Spirit's indwelling us, making our bodies His temples. *Experimentally*, our sanctification of the Spirit consists in the impartation to us of a principle ("Nature") of holiness, hereby we become conformed to the Divine law. Let us consider each of these viewpoints separately.

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

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

It is axiomatic that those whom God separates unto Himself must be suited to Himself, that is, they must be *holy*. Equally clear is it from the Scriptures that, whatsoever God does He is determined that the crown of honour for it should rest upon the head of Christ, for *He* is the grand Centre of all the Divine counsels. Now both of these fundamental considerations are secured by God's making us partakers of *His own* holiness, through creating us anew in Christ Jesus. God will neither receive nor own any one who has the least taint of sin's defilement upon him, and it is only as we are made new creatures in Christ that we can fully measure up to the unalterable requirements of God. Our *state* must be holy as well as our *standing*; and as we showed in the last three chapters Christ Himself is our sanctification, so now we seek to point out that we are actually sanctified in *Christ*—personally and vitally.

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

The believer *begins* his Christian life by having been perfectly sanctified in Christ. Just as both our standing and state were radically affected by virtue of our union with the first

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

When one of God’s elect is quickened into newness of life a great change is made *relatively*, that is, in connection with his relation to his fellowmen. Previously, he too was both in the world and of it, being numbered with the ungodly, and enjoying their fellowship. But at regeneration he is born unto a new family, even the living family of God, and henceforth his standing is no longer among those who are “without Christ:” “Who hath delivered us from the Power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Col. 1:13). Thus, when one is made alive in Christ by the Holy Spirit, he at once becomes *separated* from those who are dead in trespasses and sins and therefore this is another aspect of the “sanctification of the Spirit.” This was typed out of old. When the Lord was revealed unto Abraham, the word to him was “*Get thee out* of thy country, and from thy kindred” (Gen. 21:1). So again it was with Israel: no sooner were they delivered from the Angel of Death by the blood of the lamb, than they were required to leave Egypt behind them.

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

Amazing, blessed, and glorious fact, the Holy Spirit indwells the regenerate so that their bodies become the temples of the living God. "The Holy Spirit descends on them and enters within them, in *consequence* of their union with Christ. He comes from Heaven to make known this union between Christ and them. He is the Divine *Manifester* of it. He dwells in us as a well of water springing up into everlasting life. He abides with us as our Divine Comforter, and will be our Guide even unto death, and continue His life-giving influences in us and dwell in us, filling us with all the fullness of God in Heaven for ever" (S. E. Pierce).

This indwelling of the Spirit is, in the order of God, subsequent to and in consequence of our being sanctified by the blood of Jesus; for it is obvious that God could not "dwell" in those who were standing under the imputation of their guilt. The Holy Spirit, therefore, from the very fact of making our bodies His temples, attests and evidences the completeness and perpetuity of the sanctification which is ours by the sacrifice of

Christ. He comes to us not to procure blessings which Christ hath already purchased for us, but to make them known to us: “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might *know* the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor. 2:12). He comes to sustain those in whom the life of Christ now is.

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

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

There is a striking analogy between the advent to this earth of

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

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

Yet let it be pointed out that, the blessed Spirit does not allow our hearts to remain in the awful condition in which He first

finds them; and this brings us to our fourth point. In Titus 3:5 we read “according to His mercy He saved us, by the *washing* of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” All that is comprehended in this “washing” we may not be able to say, but it certainly includes the casting of all idols out of our hearts, to such an extent that God now occupies the throne of it. By this “washing of regeneration” the soul is so cleansed from its native pollution that sin is no longer loved, but loathed; the Divine law is no longer hated, but delighted in; and the affections are raised from things below unto things above. We are well aware of the fact that *this* is the particular point which most exercises honest consciences; yet, God does not intend that our difficulties should be so cleared up in this life that all exercise of heart should be at an end.

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

But “the washing of regeneration” is only the *negative* side: *positively* there is “the renewing of the Holy Spirit.” Though this “renewing” falls far short of what will take place in the saint at his glorification, yet it is a very real and radical

experience. A great change and renovation is made in the soul, which has a beneficial effect upon all of its faculties. This “renewing of the Holy Spirit” has in it a transforming power, so that the heart and mind are brought into an obediencial frame toward God. The soul is now able to discern that God’s will is the most “good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:2) of all, and there is a deep desire and a sincere effort made to become conformed thereto. But let it be carefully noted that the present and not the past tense is employed in Titus 3:5—not ye were washed and renewed, but a “washing” and “renewing:” it is a *continual* work of the Spirit.

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

It is of the very first importance that the Christian should be thoroughly clear upon this point. We do not become saints by holy actions—*that* is the fundamental error of all false religions. No, we must first be saints before there can be any holy actions, as the fountain must be pure before its stream can be, the tree good if its fruit is to be wholesome. The order of Scripture is “Let it not be once named among you, as *becometh* Saints” (Eph. 5:3), and “but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8); “in behaviour as *becometh* holiness” (Titus 2:3). God first sets our hearts at rest, before He

bids our hands engage in His service. He gives life, that we may be capacitated to render love. He creates in us a sanctified nature, that there may be sanctified conduct. God presents us spotless in the Holiest of all according to the blood of sprinkling, that, coming forth with a conscience purged from dead works, we may seek to please and glorify Him.

It is the creating of this holy nature within us that we must next consider. “It is something that is *holy*, both in its principle, and in its actions; and is superior to anything that can come from man, or be performed by himself. It does not lie in a conformity to the light of nature, and the dictates of it; nor is it what may go by the name of *moral virtue*, which was exercised by some of the heathen philosophers, to a very great degree, and yet they had not a grain of holiness in them; but were full of the lusts of envy, pride, revenge, etc., nor does it lie in a bare, external conformity to the law of God, or in an *outward reformation* of life and manners: this appeared in the Pharisees to a great degree, who were pure in their own eyes, and thought themselves holier than others, and disdained them, and yet their hearts were full of all manner of impurity.

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

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

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

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

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

Many readers will realize that we are here engaged in grappling with a difficult and intricate point. No man is

competent to give such a clear and comprehensive description of our inward sanctification that all difficulty is cleared up: the most he can do is to point out what it is not, and then seek to indicate *the direction* in which its real nature is to be sought. As a further effort toward this it may be said that, this principle of holiness which the Spirit imparts to the believer consists of spiritual *light*, whereby the heart is (partly) delivered from the darkness in which the Fall enveloped it. It is such an opening of the eyes of our understandings that we are enabled to see spiritual things and discern their excellency; for before we are sanctified by the Spirit we are totally blind to their reality and beauty: such passages as John 1:5; Acts 26:18; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 5:8; Colossians 1:13; 1 Peter 2:9 (read them!) makes this clear.

Further, that principle of holiness which the Spirit imparts to the believer consists of spiritual life. Previous to its reception the soul is in a state of spiritual death, that is, it is alienated from and incapacitated toward God. At our renewing by the Spirit, we receive a vital principle of spiritual life: compare John 5:24; 10:11, 28; Romans 8:2; Ephesians 2:1. It is by this new life we are capacitated for communion with and obedience to God. Once more; that principle of holiness consists of spiritual *love*. The natural man is in a state of enmity with God; but at regeneration there is implanted that which delights in and cleaves to God: compare Deuteronomy 30:6; Romans 5:5; Galatians 5:24. As “light” this principle of holiness affects the *understanding*, as “life” it influences and moves the *will*, as “love” it directs and moulds the *affections*. Thus also it partakes of the very nature of Him who is Light, Life, and Love. “Let *the beauty of the Lord* be upon us” (Psa. 90:17) signifies “let this principle of holiness (as light, life, and love) be healthy within and made manifest through and by us.”

But we must now turn to the most important aspect of all, of the nature of this principle of holiness, whereby the Spirit sanctified us inherently. Our experimental sanctification

consists in *our hearts being conformed to the Divine law*. This should be so obvious that no laboured argument should be required to establish the fact. As all sin is a transgression of the law (I John 3:4), so all holiness must be a fulfilling of the law. The natural man is not subject to the law, neither indeed can he be (Rom. 8:7). Why? Because he is devoid of that principle from which acceptable obedience to the law can proceed. The great requirement of the law is *love*: love to God, and love to our neighbour; but regarding the unregenerate it is written, “ye have not the love of God in you” (John 5:42). Hence it is that God’s promise to His elect is “The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to *love* the Lord thy God with all thine heart” (Deut. 30:6)—for “love is the fulfilling of the law.”

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

Experimental holiness is conformity of heart and life to the Divine law. The law of God is “holy, just and good” (Rom. 7:12), and therefore does it require inward righteousness or conformity as well as outward; and this requirement is fully met by the wondrous and gracious provision which God has made for His people. Here again we may behold the striking and

blessed cooperation between the Eternal Three. The Father, as the King and Judge of all, gave the Law. The Son, as our Surety, fulfilled the Law. The Spirit is given to work in us conformity to the Law: first, by imparting a nature which loves it; second, by instructing and giving us a knowledge of its extensive requirements; third, by producing in us strivings after obedience to its precepts. Not only is the perfect obedience of Christ *imputed* to His people, but a nature which delights in the law is *imparted* to them. But because of the opposition from indwelling sin, perfect obedience to the law is not possible in this life; yet, for Christ's sake, God accepts their sincere but imperfect obedience.

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

The fruit of the Spirit's sanctification of us experimentally, appears in our separation from evil and the world. But because of the flesh within, our walk is not perfect. Oftentimes there is little for the eye of sense to distinguish in those in whom the Spirit dwells from the moral and respectable wordlings; yea, often they put us to shame. “It *doth not yet appear* what we shall be.” “The world knoweth us not.” But the heart is washed from the prevailing love of sin by the tears of repentance which

the Christian is moved to frequently shed. Every new act of faith upon the cleansing blood of Christ carries forward the work of experimental sanctification to a further degree. As Naaman was required to dip in the Jordan again and again, yea, seven times, till he was wholly purged of his bodily leprosy; so the soul of the Christian—conscious of so much of the filth of sin still defiling him—continues to dip in that “fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness.” Thank God, one day Christ will “present to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing” (Eph. 5:27).

The fifth of seven booklets.

