

The Doctrine of Sanctification



Part Three

A. W. Pink



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6. Its Nature

7. Its Author

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

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

viewed as complete, at others as incomplete and progressive. These varied phases of our subject will pass under review in later chapters.

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

In order to remove some of the rubbish which may have accumulated in the minds of certain of our readers, and thus prepare the way for their consideration of the truth, let us briefly touch upon the negative side. First, scriptural sanctification is not a blessing which may be and often is separated from justification by a long interval of time. Those who contend for a “second work of grace” insist that the penitent sinner is justified the moment he believes in Christ, but that he is not sanctified until he completely surrenders to the Lord and then receives the Spirit in His fullness—as though a person might be converted without fully surrendering to Christ, or become a child of God without the Holy Spirit indwelling him. This is a serious mistake. Once we are united to Christ by the Spirit and faith, we become “joint heirs” with Him, having a valid title to all blessing in Him. There is no dividing of the Saviour: He is the holiness of His people as well as their righteousness, and when He bestows forgiveness, He also imparts heart purity.

Second, scriptural sanctification is not a protracted process which the Christian is made meet for Heaven. The same work of Divine grace which delivers a soul from the wrath to come fits him for the

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

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

Fourth, scriptural sanctification is not something wholly objective in Christ, which is not in anywise in ourselves. In their revolt against sinless perfectionism, there have been some who have gone to an opposite extreme: Antinomians argue for a holiness in Christ which produces no radical change for the better

in the Christian. This is another deceit of the Devil, for a deceit it certainly is for anyone to imagine that the only holiness he has is in Christ. There is no such thing in reality as a perfect and inalienable standing in Christ which is divorced from heart-purity and a personal walk in righteousness. What a flesh-pleasing dogma is it, that one act of faith in the Lord Jesus secures eternal immunity from condemnation and provides a lifelong license to wallow in sin. *My reader, a faith which does not transform character and reform conduct is worthless.* Saving faith is only proved to be genuine by bearing the blossoms of experimental godliness and the fruits of personal piety.

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

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

holiness is by obtaining a right idea of sin; rather must we first know what holiness is in order for a right knowledge of sin.

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

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

We fully concur with Charnock in making the will of God and the law of God one and the same thing, and that His holiness lies in the conformity of His affections and actions with the same; adding, that the furtherance of His own glory being His design in the whole. Now this concept of the Divine holiness—the sum of God’s moral excellency—helps us to conceive what holiness is in the Christian. It is far more than a “position” or “standing.” It is also and chiefly a moral quality, which produces conformity to the

Divine will or law, and which moves its possessor to aim at the glory of God in all things. This, and nothing short of this, could meet the Divine requirements; and this is the great gift which God bestows upon His people.

What was it that Adam had and lost? What was it which distinguished him from all the lower creatures? Not simply the possession of a soul, but that his soul had stamped upon it the *moral image* and likeness of his Maker. This it was which constituted his blessedness, which capacitated him for communion with the Lord, and which qualified him to live a happy life to His glory. And this it was which he lost at the fall. And this it is which the last Adam restores unto His people. That is clear from a comparison of Colossians 3:10 and Ephesians 4:23: the “new man,” the product of regeneration, is “renewed in knowledge (in the vital and experimental knowledge of God Himself: John 17:3) after the image of Him that created him,” that is, after the original likeness which was bestowed upon Adam; and that “new man” is distinctly said to be “created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24).

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

What is sin? Ah, what man is capable of supplying an adequate answer: “*Who can understand his errors?*” (Psa. 19:12). A volume might be written thereon, and still much be left unsaid. Only the One against whom it is committed can fully understand its nature or

measure its enormity. And yet, from the light which God has furnished us, a partial answer at least can be gathered. For example, in 1 John 3:4 we read, “Sin is the transgression of the law,” and that such transgression is not confined to the outward act is clear from “the thought of foolishness is sin” (Prov. 24:9). But what is meant by “sin is the transgression of the law?” It means that sin is a trampling upon God’s holy commandment. It is an act of defiance against the Lawgiver. The law, being “holy and just and good” it follows that any breach of it is an evil and enormity which God alone is capable of estimating.

All sin is a breach of the eternal standard of equity. But it is more than that: it reveals an inward enmity which gives rise to the outward transgression. It is the bursting forth of that pride and the self-will which resents restraint, which repudiates control, which refuses to be under authority, which resists rule. Against the righteous restraint of law, Satan opposed a false idea of “liberty” to our first parents—“Ye shall be as gods.” And he is still plying the same argument and employing the same bait. The Christian must meet it by asking, Is the disciple to be above his Master, the servant superior to his Lord? Christ was “made under the law” (Gal. 44), and lived in perfect submission thereto, and has left us an example that we should “follow His steps” (1 Pet. 2:21). *Only by loving, fearing, and obeying the law, shall we be kept from sinning.*

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

real character of sin; but after it has been received, an analysis of sin helps us to determine the nature of sanctification.

Sanctification is an integral part of “salvation.” As this point was dwelt upon at length in the third chapter (booklet one), there is less need for us to say much upon it here. Once it be clearly perceived that God’s salvation is not only a rescue from the penalty of sin, but is as well, and chiefly, deliverance from the pollution and power of sin—ultimating in complete freedom from its very presence there will be no difficulty in seeing that sanctification occupies a central place in the process. Alas that while there are many who think of Christ dying to secure their pardon, so few today consider Christ dying in order to renew their hearts, heal their souls, bring them unto obedience to God. One is often obliged to wonder if one out of each ten professing Christians is really experimentally acquainted with the “*so great* salvation” (Heb. 2:3) of God!

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

Let us now combine these four points. What is scriptural sanctification? First, it is a moral quality in the regenerate—the same in its nature as that which belongs to the Divine character—which produces harmony with God’s will and causes its possessor to aim at His glory in all things. Second, it is the moral image of God—lost by the first Adam, restored by the last Adam—stamped upon the heart, which “image” consists of righteousness and holiness. Third, it is the opposite of sin. Inasmuch as all sin is a

transgression of the Divine law, true sanctification brings its possessor into a conformity thereto. Fourth, it is an integral and essential part of “salvation,” being a deliverance from the power and pollution of sin, causing its possessor to love what he once hated, and to now hate what he formerly loved. Thus, it is that which experimentally fits us for fellowship with and the enjoyment of the Holy One Himself.

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

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

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

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

It is greatly to be regretted that so many when thinking or speaking of the "salvation" which Christ has purchased for His people, attach to it no further idea than deliverance from condemnation. They seem to forget that deliverance from sin—the cause of condemnation—is an equally important blessing comprehended in it. "Assuredly it is just as necessary for fallen

creatures to be freed from the pollution and moral impotency which they have contracted, as it is to be exempted from the penalties which they have incurred; so that when reinstated in the favour of God, they may at the same time be more capable of loving, serving, and enjoying Him forever. And in this respect the remedy which the Gospel reveals is fully suited to the exigencies of our sinful state, providing for our complete redemption from sin itself, as well as from the penal liabilities it has brought upon us” (T. Crawford on “The Atonement”). Christ has procured sanctification for His people as well as justification.

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

Now the substitutionary and sacrificial work of Christ has produced for His people a threefold “cleansing.” The first is judicial, the sins of His people being all blotted out as though they had never existed. Both the guilt and the defilement of their iniquities are completely removed, so that the Church appears before God “as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun” (Song of S. 6:10). The second is personal, at “the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” The third is

experimental, when faith appropriates the cleansing blood and the conscience is purged: “purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:9), “having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:22). Unlike the first two, this last, is a repeated and continuous thing: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). We hope to amplify these different points considerably when we take up more definitely our sanctification by Christ.

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

As *His glory* is the end God has in view in all His actions—ordering, disposing, directing everything with this design—so conformity to Him, being holy as He is holy, must consist in setting His *glory* before us as our ultimate aim. Subjective sanctification is that change wrought in the heart which produces a steady desire and purpose to please and honour God. This is not in any of us by nature, for self-love rules the unregenerate. Calamities may drive the unsanctified toward God, yet it is only for the relief of *self*. The fear of Hell may stir up a man to cry unto God for mercy, but it is only that he may be delivered. Such actions are only the workings of mere nature—the instinct of self-preservation; there is nothing spiritual or supernatural about them. But at regeneration a man is lifted off his own bottom and put on a new foundation.

Subjective sanctification is a change or renovating of the heart so

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

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

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

Only as the heart is supernaturally changed and conformed to God is it found that “His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3).

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

In the preceding (portion of this) chapter we asked, “How can it be discovered whether or not *we* have been sanctified, unless we really know what sanctification is?” Now let it be pointed out that our sanctification by the Father and our sanctification by Christ can only be known to us by the sanctification *of the Spirit*, and that, in turn, can only be discovered by its *effects*. And this brings us to the ultimate aspect of *the nature* of our sanctification, namely, that holy walk, or course of outward conduct, which makes manifest and is the effect of our inward sanctification by the Spirit. This branch of our subject is what theologians have designated our “practical sanctification.” Thus, we distinguish between the act and process by which the Christian is set apart unto God, the moral and spiritual state into which that setting apart brings him, and the holy living which proceeds from that state; it is the last we have now reached. As the “setting apart” is both privative and positive—from the service of Satan, to the service of God—so holy living is separation from evil, following that which is good.

Thomas Manton, than whom none of the Puritans are more simple, succinct, and satisfying, says, “Sanctification is threefold. First, *meritorious* sanctification is Christ’s meriting and purchasing for His Church the inward inhabitation of the Spirit, and that grace whereby they may be sanctified: Hebrews 10:10. Second, *applicatory* sanctification is the inward renovation, of the heart of

those whom Christ hath sanctified by the Spirit of regeneration, whereby a man is translated from death to life, from the state of nature to the state of grace. This is spoken of in Titus 3:5: this is the daily sanctification, which, with respect to the merit of Christ, is wrought by the Spirit and the ministry of the Word and sacraments. Third, *practical* sanctification is that by which those for whom Christ did sanctify Himself, and who are renewed by the Holy Spirit, and planted into Christ by faith, do more and more sanctify and cleanse themselves from sin in thought, word, and deed: (1 Pet. 1:15; 1 John 3:3).

“As to sanctify signifieth to consecrate or dedicate to God, so it signifieth both the fixed inclination or the disposition of the soul towards God as our highest lord and chief good, and accordingly a resignation of our souls to God, to live in the love of His blessed majesty and a thankful obedience to Him. More distinctly (1) it implieth a bent, a tendency, or fixed inclination towards God, which is habitual sanctification. (2) A resignation, or giving up ourselves to God, by which actual holiness is begun; a constant using ourselves to Him, by which it is continued; and the continual exercise of a fervent love, by which it is increased in us more and more, till all be perfected in glory.

“As to sanctify signifieth to purify and cleanse, so it signifies the purifying of the soul from the love of the world. A man is impure because, when he was made for God, he doth prefer base trifles of this world before his Maker and everlasting glory: and so he is not sanctified that doth despise and disobey his Maker; he despiseth Him because he preferreth the most contemptible vanity before Him, and doth choose the transitory pleasure of sinning before the endless fruition of God. Now he is sanctified when his worldly love is cured, and he is brought back again to the love and obedience of God. Those that are healed of the over-love of the world are sanctified, as the inclinations of the flesh to worldly things are broken.”

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:23). There was probably a threefold reference in the apostle’s request. First, he

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

Two things are clearly implied in the above passage. First, that the *whole nature* of the Christian is the subject of the work of sanctification, and not merely part of it: every disposition and power of the spirit, every faculty of the soul, the body with all its members. The *body* too is “sanctified.” It has been made a member of Christ (1 Cor. 6:15), it is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). As it is an integral part of the believer’s person, and as its inclinations and appetites affect the soul and influence conduct, it must be brought under the control of the spirit and soul, so that “every one of us should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour” (1 Thess. 4:4), and “as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” (Rom. 6:19).

Second, that this work of Divine grace *will be* carried on to completion and perfection, for the apostle immediately adds, “Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it” (1 Thess. 5:24). Thus the two verses are parallel with “Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you *will finish* it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6). Nothing short of every faculty and member of the Christian being devoted to God is what he is to ever aim at. But the attainment of this is only completely realized at his glorification: “We know that when He shall appear,

we shall be like Him” (1 John 3:2)—not only inwardly but outwardly: “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body” (Phil. 3:21).

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

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

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

Holiness in the heart discovers itself by godly sorrowings and godly aspirations. “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted” (Matt. 5:4): “mourn” because of the swellings of pride, the workings of unbelief, the surging of discontent; “mourn” because of the feebleness of their faith, the coldness of their love, their lack of conformity to Christ. *There is nothing which more plainly evidences a person to be sanctified than a broken and contrite heart—grieving over that which is contrary to holiness.* Rightly did the Puritan John Owen say, “Evangelical repentance is that which carrieth the believing soul through all his failures, infirmities, and sins. He is not able to live one day without the constant exercise of it. *It is as necessary unto the continuance of spiritual life as faith is.* It is that continual, habitual, self-abasement which arises from a sense of the majesty and holiness of God, and the consciousness of our miserable failures.” It is this which makes the real Christian so thankful for Romans 7, for he finds it corresponds exactly with his own inward experience.

The sanctified soul, then, is very far from being satisfied with the measure of experimental holiness which is yet his portion. He is painfully conscious of the feebleness of his graces, the leanness of his soul, and the defilements from his inward corruption. But, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after

righteousness” (Matt. 5:6), or “they that are hungering and thirsting” as the Greek reads, being the participle of the present tense; intimating a *present* disposition of the soul. Christ pronounces “blessed” (in contrast from those under “the curse”) they who are hungering and thirsting after His righteousness imparted as well as imputed, who thirst after the righteousness of sanctification as well as the righteousness of justification—i.e., the Spirit infusing into the soul holy principles, supernatural graces, spiritual qualities, and then strengthening and developing the same. Such has been the experiences of the saints in all ages, “As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?” (Psa. 42:1, 2).

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

Regeneration and sanctification. It may appear to some who read critically our articles on “Regeneration” and who have closely followed what has been said in our discussion of the nature of sanctification, that we have almost, if not quite, obliterated all real difference between what is wrought in us at the new birth and what God works in us at our sanctification. It is not easy to preserve a definite line of distinction between them, because they have a number of things in common; yet the leading points of contrast

between them need to be considered if we are to differentiate them in our minds. We shall therefore occupy the next two or three paragraphs with an examination of this point, wherein we shall endeavour to set forth the relation of the one to the other. Perhaps it will help us the most to consider this by saying that, in one sense, the relation between regeneration and sanctification is that of the infant to the adult.

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

At regeneration a principle of holiness is communicated to us; practical sanctification is the exercise of that principle in living unto God. In regeneration the Spirit imparts saving grace; in His work of sanctification, He strengthens and develops the same. As "original sin" or that indwelling corruption which is in us at our natural birth, contains within it the seeds of all sin, so that grace which is imparted to us at the new birth contains within it the seeds of all spiritual graces; and as the one develops and manifests itself as we grow, so it is with the other. "Sanctification is a constant, progressive renewing of the whole man, whereby the new creature doth daily more and more die unto sin and live unto God. Regeneration is the birth, sanctification is the growth of this babe of grace. In regeneration, the sun of holiness rises; in sanctification it keepeth its course, and shineth brighter and brighter unto the

perfect day (Prov. 4:18). The former is a specific change from nature to grace (Eph. 5:8) the latter is a gradual change from one degree of grace to another (Psa. 84:7), whereby the Christian goeth from strength to strength till he appear before God in Zion” (George Swinnoek, 1660).

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

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

Justification and sanctification. The relation between justification and sanctification is clearly revealed in Romans 3 to 8: that Epistle being the great doctrinal treatise of the New Testament In the 5th

chapter we see the believing sinner declared righteous before God and at peace with Him, given an immutable standing in His favour, reconciled to Him, assured of his preservation, and so rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. Yet, great as are these blessings, something more is required by the quickened conscience, namely, deliverance from the power and pollution of inherited sin. Accordingly, this is dealt with at length in Romans 6, 7, 8, where various fundamental aspects of sanctification are treated of. First, it is demonstrated that the believer has been judicially cleansed from sin and the curse of the law, and that, in order that he may be practically delivered from the dominion of sin, so that he may delight in and serve the law. Union with Christ not only involves identification with His death, but participation in His resurrection.

Yet though sanctification is discussed by the apostle after his exposition of justification, it is a serious error to conclude that there may be, and often is, a considerable interval of time between the two things, or that sanctification is a consequence of justification; still worse is the teaching of some that, having been justified we must now seek sanctification, without which we must certainly perish—thus making the security of justification to depend upon a holy walk. No, though the two truths are dealt with singly by the apostle, they are inseparable: though they are to be contemplated alone, they must not be divided. Christ cannot be halved: in Him the believing sinner has both righteousness and holiness. Each department of the Gospel needs to be considered distinctly, but not pitted against each other. Let us not draw a false conclusion, then, because justification is treated of in Romans 3 to 5 and sanctification in 6 to 8: the one passage supplements the other: they are two halves of one whole.

The Christian's regeneration is not the cause of his justification, nor is justification the cause of his sanctification—for Christ is the cause of all three; yet there is an order preserved between them: not an order of time, but of nature. First we are recovered to God's image, then to His favour, and then to His fellowship. So inseparable are justification and sanctification that sometimes the one is presented first and sometimes the other: see Romans 8:1 and 13:1 John 1:9; then Micah 7:19 and 1 Corinthians 6:11. First, God

quicken the dead soul: being made alive spiritually, he is now capacitated to act faith in Christ, by which he is (instrumentally) justified. In sanctification the Spirit carries on and perfects the work in regeneration, and that progressive work is accomplished under the new relation into which the believer is introduced by justification. Having been judicially reconciled to God, the way is now open for an experimental fellowship with Him, and that is maintained as the Spirit carries forward His work of sanctification.

“Though justification and sanctification are both of them blessings of grace, and though they are absolutely inseparable, yet they are so manifestly distinct, that there is in various respects a wide difference between them. Justification respects the person in a legal sense, is a single act of grace, and terminates in a relative change; that is, a freedom from punishment and a right to life. Sanctification regards him in an experimental sense, is a continued work of grace, and terminates in a real change, as to the quality both of habits and actions. The former is by a righteousness without us; the latter is by holiness wrought in us. Justification is by Christ as a priest, and has regard to the guilt of sin; sanctification is by Him as a king, and refers to its dominion. Justification is instantaneous and complete in all its real subjects; but sanctification is progressive” (A. Booth, 1813).

Purification and sanctification. These two things are not absolutely identical: though inseparable, they are yet distinguishable. We cannot do better than quote from G. Smeaton, “The two words frequently occurring in the ritual of Israel, ‘sanctify’ and ‘purify,’ are so closely allied in sense, that some regard them as synonymous. But a slight shade of distinction between the two may be discerned as follows. It is assumed that ever-recurring defilements, of a ceremonial kind, called for sacrifices which removed, and the word ‘purify’ referred to these rites and sacrifices which removed the stains which excluded the worshipper from the privilege of approach to the sanctuary of God, and from fellowship with His people. The defilement which he contracted excluded him from access. But when this same Israelite was purged by sacrifice, he was readmitted to the full participation of the privilege. He was then sanctified, or holy. Thus the latter is

the consequence of the former. We may affirm, then, that the two words in this reference to the old worship, are very closely allied; so much so, that the one involves the other. This will throw light upon the use of these two expressions in the New Testament: Ephesians 5:25, 26; Hebrews 2:11; Titus 2:14. All these passages represent a man defiled by sin and excluded from God, but readmitted to access and fellowship, and so pronounced holy, as soon as the blood of sacrifice is applied to him.” Often the term “purge” or “purify” (especially in Hebrews) includes justification as well.

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

To sum up. Holiness, then, is both a relationship and a moral quality. It has both a negative and a positive side: cleansing from impurity, adorning with the grace of the Spirit. Sanctification is, first, *a position of honour* to which God has appointed His people. Second, it is *a state of purity* which Christ has purchased for them. Third, it is an *inducement* given to them by the Holy Spirit. Fourth, it is a *course of devoted conduct* in keeping therewith. Fifth, it is a *standard of moral perfection*, at which they are ever to aim: 1 Peter 1:15. A “saint” is one who was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4), who has been cleansed from the

guilt and pollution of sin by the blood of Christ (Heb. 13:12), who has been consecrated to God by the indwelling Spirit (2 Cor. 1:21, 22), who has been made inwardly holy by the impartation of the principle of grace (Phil. 1:6), and whose duty, privilege, and aim is to walk suitable thereto (Eph. 4:1).

7. Its Author

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

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

But so self-sufficient and self-righteous are we by nature it also needs to be pointed out that, the very fact God promises to *work in His people* by His grace both indicates and demonstrates that of

themselves they are quite unable to meet His demands. Ponder for a moment the following: “I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people” (Jer. 31:31), “I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me” (Jer. 32:39, 40), “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes” (Ezek. 36:26, 27). In those blessed assurances, and nowhere else, is contained the guarantee of our sanctification: all turns upon *God’s* power, grace, and operations. He is the alone accomplisher of His own promises.

The Author of our sanctification is the *Triune God*. We say “the Triune God,” because in Scripture the title “God,” when it stands unqualified, is not used with a uniform signification. Sometimes “God” refers to the first Person in the Trinity, sometimes to the second Person, and sometimes to the Third. In other passages, like 1 Corinthians 5:28, for instance, it includes all the three Persons. Each of the Eternal Three has His own distinctive place or part in connection with the sanctification of the Church, and it is necessary for us to clearly perceive this if we are to have definite views thereof. We have now reached that stage in our prosecution of this subject where it behooves us to carefully trace out the particular operations of each Divine Person in connection with our sanctification, for only as these are discerned by us will we be prepared to intelligently offer unto each One the praise which is His distinctive due.

In saying that the Author of sanctification is the Triune God, we do not mean that the Father is the Sanctifier of the Church in precisely the same way or manner as the Son or as the Holy Spirit is. No, rather is it our desire to emphasize the fact that the Christian is equally indebted unto each of the three Divine Persons, that his sanctification proceeds as truly from the Father as it does from the

Holy Spirit, and as actually from the Son as it does from either the Spirit or the Father. Many writers have failed to make this clear. Yet it needs to be pointed out that, in the economy of salvation, there is an *official order* observed and preserved by the Holy Three, wherein we are given to see that all is *from* the Father, all is *through* the Son, all is by the Holy Spirit. Not that this official order denotes any essential subordination or inferiority of one Person to another, but that each manifests Himself distinctively, each displays His own glory, and each is due the separate adoration of His people.

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

This same cooperation by the Holy Three is observable in many other things. It was so in the creation of the world: “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth” (Acts 17:24), where the reference is plainly to the Father; of the Son it is affirmed “All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3); while in Job 26:13 we are told, “By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens.” So with the production of the sacred humanity of our Redeemer: the super-natural impregnation of the Virgin was the immediate effect of the Spirit’s agency (Luke 1:35), yet the human nature was voluntarily and actively assumed by Christ Himself:

“He took upon Him the form of a servant” (Phil. 2:7 and compare with “took part” in Heb. 2:14); while in Hebrews 10:5 we hear the Son saying to the Father, “a body hast *Thou* prepared Me.”

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

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

That the Father is the Sanctifier of the Church is obvious from 1

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

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

Reverting to Jude 1, we would note particularly *the order* of its

statements: the “sanctified by God the Father” comes *before* “preserved in Jesus Christ, called.” This initial aspect of our sanctification antedates our regeneration or effectual call from darkness to light, and therefore takes us back to the eternal counsels of God. There are three things in our verse: taking them in their inverse order, there is first, our “calling,” when we were brought from death unto life; that was preceded by our being “preserved in Jesus Christ,” i.e., preserved from physical death in the womb, in the days of our infancy, during the recklessness of youth; and that also preceded by our being “sanctified” by the Father, that is, our names being enrolled in the Lamb’s book of life, we are given to Christ to be loved by Him with an everlasting love and made joint-heirs with Him forever and ever.

Our sanctification by the Father was *His eternal election of us*, with all that that term connotes and involves. Election was far more than a bare choice of persons. It included our being predestined unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself (Eph. 1:15). It included our being made “vessels unto honour” and being “afore prepared to glory” (Rom. 9:21, 22). It included being “appointed to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:9). It included our being separated for God’s pleasure, God’s use, and “that we should be to the praise of His glory” (Eph. 1:12). It included our being made “holy and without blame before him” (Eph. 1:4). This eternal sanctification by God the Father is also mentioned in 2 Timothy 1:9, “Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

As we pointed out in the last paragraph of the preceding chapter, “Sanctification is, first, a *position of honour* to which God hath appointed His people.” That position of honour was their being “chosen *in Christ* before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4), when they were constituted members of His mystical Body by the eternal purpose of God. O what an amazing honour was that! a place in glory higher than that of the angels being granted them. Our poor minds are staggered before such wondrous grace. Here, then, is the link of connection between John 10:36 and Jude 1:

Christ was not alone in the mind of the Father when He “sanctified” Him: by the Divine decree, Christ was separated and consecrated as the Head of a sanctified people. In the sanctification of Christ, all who are “called saints” were, in Him, eternally set apart, to be partakers of His own holy standing before the Father! This was an act of pure sovereignty on the Father’s part.

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

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

“To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made

us accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:6). The Greek word for “accepted” is “*charitoo*,” and Young’s Concordance gives as its meaning “to make gracious.” It occurs (as a passive participle, rather than in its active form, as in Eph. 1:6) again only in Luke 1:8, where the angel said to the Virgin, “Hail, *highly favoured* one,” which Young defines as “to give grace, to treat graciously,” and in his Index “graciously accepted or much graced.” This, we believe, is the exact force of it in Eph. 1:6: “according as He hath *much graced* us in the Beloved.” A careful reading of the immediate context will show that this was *before* the foundation of the world, which is confirmed by the fact that the elect’s being “much graced in the Beloved” comes *before* “redemption” and “forgiveness of sins” in verse 7!—note too the “hath” in verses 3, 4, 6 and the change to “have” in verse 7!

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

The third of seven booklets.

