

Of Sanctification.

by John Gill

Sanctification is a work of God, a good work, an internal work, and a work of faith, which appears in a person's life through their holy actings, such as a holy reverence of God, love to God, submission to God's will, and a desire to live and walk in the Spirit.

Scripture: Psalm 119:97, Matthew 5:8, John 3:6, Romans 8:5, 1 Corinthians 1:30, Ephesians 4:22-24, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, Hebrews 12:14, Hebrews 13:12

Topics: "Holiness", "Sanctification"

Description

John Gill preaches on the doctrine of sanctification, emphasizing that it is a progressive work initiated by regeneration and carried out by the Holy Spirit. He explains that true sanctification is distinct from mere moral virtue or external conformity, as it involves a transformation of the heart and mind, leading to a life that reflects God's holiness. Gill highlights that sanctification is essential for salvation, as it prepares believers for communion with God and is a mark of their election and redemption. He also discusses the roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the sanctification process, underscoring that it is ultimately God's work in the believer's life.

Transcript

A Body of Doctrinal Divinity

Book 6--Chapter 14

OF SANCTIFICATION

The foundation of "sanctification" is laid in "regeneration"; as it is a holy principle, it is first formed in that; the new creature, or new man, is created in righteousness and true holiness; and it appears in "effectual calling", which is an "holy calling"; and is to be seen in conversion, which is a turning of men "from their iniquities": and that holiness which is begun in regeneration, and is manifest in effectual calling and conversion, is carried on in sanctification, which is a gradual and progressive work, and issues and is finished in glorification; so that it may, with propriety, be distinguished from regeneration, effectual calling, and conversion, and be separately treated of.

There is a sanctification which is more peculiarly ascribed to God the Father; and which is no other than his eternal election of men to it: under the law, persons and things separated and devoted to holy uses, are said to be "sanctified"; hence those who are set apart by God for his use and service, and are chosen

by him to holiness here and hereafter, are said "to be sanctified by God the Father" (Jude 1:1). There is a sanctification also that is more peculiar to Christ the Son of God; not only as he is the representative of his people, and is "holiness to the Lord" for them; which the high priest had upon his forehead, who was a type of him, and the representative of Israel; and as he has the whole stock of grace and holiness in his hands, which is communicated to the saints as is necessary; and as the holiness of his human nature, is, with his active and passive obedience, imputed to their justification, and so makes a part of that; hence he is said to be made to them "sanctification" (1 Cor. 1:30), but as the expiation of their sins is made by his blood and sacrifice; this is called a sanctification of them; "Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12).

But there is another sanctification, which is more peculiar to the Holy Spirit of God, and is called "the sanctification of the Spirit" (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 2:2) and this is the sanctification to be treated of. Concerning which may be inquired, 1. First, what it is, and the nature of it. It is something that is "holy", both in its principle and in its actings; and is superior to anything that can come from man, or be performed by him of 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, ambition, pride, revenge, &c. 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 what is called "restraining grace", sanctification; persons may be restrained by the injunctions 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, and yet not a holy man.

Gifts are not grace; 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 a reparation and an amendment of that image marred by the sin of man; or a new vamping up the old principles of nature: but it is something entirely new; a new creature, a new man, a new heart, and a new spirit; and the conformity of a man to another image, even to the image of the second Adam, the Son of God.

Some make sanctification to lie in the deposition, or putting off, of the old man, and in the putting on of the new man. This has a foundation in the word of God (Eph. 4:22, 24) and belongs to sanctification, and may be admitted, if understood of the actings of it, as these are, which suppose a previous principle from which they arise. By the "old man", is meant corrupt nature; which is as old as a man is in whom it is, and which he brings into the world with him; and by the putting of it off, is not meant the removal of it from him; for it continues with him, even with a sanctified person, as long as he is in the world; nor any change in the nature of it, which always remains the same; much less a destruction of it, which will not be till this earthly house is dissolved: but a dispossession of it, of its power, a displacing it from its throne, so as not to yield obedience to the lusts of it; nor walk according to the dictates of it; nor have the conversation according to it.

By the new man, is meant the new principle of grace and holiness, wrought in the soul in regeneration: and by the putting on of that, the exercise of the several graces of which it consists; see Colossians 3:12, 13. Others distinguish sanctification, into "vivification" and "mortification": and both these are to be observed in sanctification. Sanctification, as a principle, is a holy, living principle, infused; by which a man that was dead in trespasses and sins, is quickened; and from whence flow living acts; such as living by faith on Christ; walking in newness of life; living soberly, righteously, and godly: all which belong to sanctification.

And there is such a thing as mortification; not in a literal and natural sense, of the body, by fasting, scourging, &c. Nor is it the abolition of the body of sin, by the sacrifice of Christ; nor the destruction of the principle and being of sin in regenerate and sanctified persons; for though they do not live in sin, yet sin lives in them, and is sometimes very active and powerful: but the weakening of the power of sin, and a mortification of the deeds of the body, and of the members on earth; so that a course of sin is not lived in, but men are dead unto it; and to which the Spirit of God, and his grace, are necessary (Col. 3:5; Rom. 8:13).

But leaving these things, I shall more particularly consider sanctification as an holy principle, and the holy actings of it. 1a. First, as an holy principle. The first rise of which is in regeneration; there it is first formed, as before observed. And this is no other than the good work of grace begun in the hearts of regenerate ones. It is a "work", not of men; for as regeneration is not of the will of men; nor conversion by might or power of men: so neither is sanctification; none can say, "I have made my heart clean", or have sanctified myself: it is the work of God; "We are his workmanship", and a curious piece of workmanship sanctification is; too curious for a creature to perform; it is done "in the name" of the Lord Jesus, and "by the Spirit of our God".

It is a "good" work; the efficient cause is good, God himself; the moving cause good, his love, grace, kindness, and good will; the matter good, some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel; the instrumental cause or means, the good word of God: and it is good in its effects; it makes a man a good man, and fits him for the performance of good works, and is the source of them. It is commonly called "a work of grace", and with great propriety; since it flows from the free, sovereign, and abundant grace of God in Christ; and is an implantation of all grace in the heart.

And in scripture it is called "the work of faith", because faith is a principal part of it; and in the exercise of which sanctification much lies; hence saints are said to be "sanctified by faith, which is in Christ" (Acts 26:18). It is an internal work; it is a work "begun in" the soul, which the Spirit of God works in the hearts of his people, by putting the fear of God, and every other grace, there; hence it goes by various names, which show it to be something within a man, and not anything external; see Romans 2:28, 29.

It is called "the inward man, and the hidden man of the heart", which has its place there, and is not obvious to everyone (Rom. 7:22; 1 Pet. 3:4), and not only from the author of it, the Spirit of God; and from the nature of it, being spiritual, and conversant with spiritual things; but from the seat and subject of it, the spirit or soul of man; it is called "spirit", being wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God (John 3:6). It has also the name of "seed", which sometimes signifies the word; which being cast into the heart, and taking place there, becomes the "engrafted word"; and sometimes grace itself, which is like seed sown in the earth, which lies hid in it awhile, and then springs and grows up, a man knows not how; and this is that "seed" which remains in the heart of believers, and is never lost (1 John 3:9).

Sometimes it is compared to a "root", which lies under ground, is not seen, and is the cause of fruit being brought forth upwards; and may be what Job calls, "the root of the matter" in him; and which the stony ground hearers being without, withered, and came to nothing (Job 19:28; Matthew 13:21). It is called, "truth in the inward parts"; which is expressive of the integrity and uprightness of the heart, of a true and right spirit created there, and of the truth and reality of grace and holiness, or true holiness, in which the new man is created (Ps. 50:6, 10; Eph. 4:24).

Once more, it is signified by "oil in the vessel" of the heart, had with the "lamp" of an external profession (Matthew 25:4), by "oil" is meant grace, so called for its illuminating nature, grace is spiritual light in the understanding; and for its supple, softening nature, it takes off the hardness of the heart, and the stubbornness of the will; and because it will not mix with other liquids, as grace will not mix with sin; and which is had, held, and retained in the heart, as in a vessel; and from which the lamp of profession is distinct, which is more visible.

I proceed, 1b. Secondly, To consider sanctification in its holy actings. 1b1. With respect to God; which appear in the disposition of the mind, the motions of the heart Godwards, and in the behavior and conduct of a saint before him, and with regard unto him; and which become manifest, 1b1a. In a holy reverence of him, on account of his nature, perfections, works, and blessings of goodness. In an unsanctified man, there is no fear of God before his eyes; but where a principle of grace and holiness is wrought, the fear of God soon appears; it is the beginning of wisdom; and is one of the first things that appear in a regenerate man; he cannot do what he before did, and others do; "so did not I, because of the fear of God", said Nehemiah (Neh. 5:15), such an one will serve the Lord with reverence and godly fear. 1b1b.

Sanctification shows itself in love to God, and delight in him. An unsanctified man cannot love God, who is pure and holy; nor take any delight in him, in his word, his ways, and worship; "The carnal mind is enmity to God", and desires him to depart from him, and chooses not the knowledge of his ways; nay, one that has taken on him the mask of religion, and is not sincere, can have no true affection for God, nor pleasure in the things of God. Job says of the hypocrite, "Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?"

No, he will not (Job 27:10). But in regeneration and sanctification, the Lord circumcises the heart, or regenerates and sanctifies it, "to love the Lord with all the heart and with all the soul!" that is, sincerely and cordially. 1b1c. It appears in submission to the will of God in all things, even in the most adverse dispensations of providence; as the instances of Aaron, Eli, David, and others show; who murmured not, nor complained, but were still and quiet, and resigned to the divine will, under some severe rebukes of providence.

Much of sanctification lies in the conformity of our wills to the will of God. That holy man Bishop Usher said of it, "Sanctification is nothing less than for a man to be brought to an entire resignation of his will to the will of God, and to live in the offering up of his soul continually in the flames of love, as a whole burnt offering to Christ." 1b1d. It is to be seen in religious exercises, and in acts of devotion to God, and in the exercise of grace in them as in an affectionate attendance on the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances; and in fervent prayer, which is the breath of a sanctified soul towards God.

Holiness only appears in these things, or is real, when grace is in exercise in them; for otherwise, there may be an outward performance of them, and yet no true holiness. 1b1e. The holy actings of sanctification may be discerned in the earnest pantings and eager desires of the soul after communion with God, both in

private and public; when a soul cannot be content with ordinances without enjoying God in them; when it pants after him, as the heart pants after the water brooks; and when without him, seeks everywhere for him, till it finds him, and then exults in its fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ. 1b1f.

A soul that is sanctified by the Spirit of God, seeks the glory of God in all it does, whether in things civil or religious: one that is unsanctified, and only makes a show of religion, and of good works, he does all to be seen of men, and seeks his own glory therein; whatever show of devotion and holiness may be made by such persons, there is not a grain of holiness in them. Whereas he that seeks the glory of God in all, "the same is true", hearty and sincere, a real saint, "and no unrighteousness is in him", no insincerity and dissimulation (John 7:18). 1b2.

Sanctification discovers itself in its holy actings, with respect to Christ. 1b2a. In applying to him for cleansing; as in a view of its guilt, it applies to blood for pardon; and to his righteousness for justification: so under a sight and sense of its pollution, and of the spreading leprosy of sin all over it; it goes to him as the leper did, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean!" and such deal with his blood for the purification of their souls, as well as for the remission of their sins; and have their hearts purified by faith in it. 1b2b.

In subjection to him, as King of saints; they not only receive him as their Prophet, to teach and instruct them, and embrace his doctrines; and as their Priest, by whose sacrifice their sins are expiated; but as their King, to whose laws and ordinances they cheerfully submit; esteeming his precepts, concerning all things, to be right, none of his commandments grievous; but, from a principle of love to him, keep and observe them. 1b2c. In setting him always before them, as an example to copy after; being desirous of walking even as he walked; both in the exercise of the graces of faith, love, patience, humility, &c. and in the discharge of duty. 1b2d.

In a desire of a greater degree of conformity to the image of Christ, which is what they are predestinated unto; which first appears in regeneration, and is increased by every believing view of Christ and his glory, and will be completed in the future state; hence sanctified souls desire to be with Christ, that they might be perfectly like him, as well as see him as he is. 1b3. Sanctification is discovered in its actings, with respect to the Holy Spirit. 1b3a. In minding, savoring, and relishing, the things of the Spirit of God.

"They that are after the flesh", carnal, unregenerate, unsanctified ones, "mind the things of the flesh", carnal and sensual lusts and pleasures; "but they that are after the Spirit", who are regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit of God, "mind the things of the Spirit", which he reveals, recommends, and directs to; these they savor, relish, highly value, and esteem (Rom. 8:5). 1b3b. In walking after the dictates, directions, leadings, and teachings of the Spirit; so sanctified persons are described as such "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1). 1b3c.

In a desire and carefulness not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom they have their present grace and experience, joy and comfort, and by whom they are sealed to the day of redemption, by any disagreeable behavior to him, to one another, and in the world (Eph. 4:30). 1b3d. In a desire "to live and walk in the Spirit"; to live in a spiritual manner, under his influence, to exercise every grace, and abound therein, through his power; to perform every duty by his assistance; and to wait, through him, for the hope of righteousness by faith (Gal. 5:5, 25; Rom. 12:11; 15:13). 1b4.

The holy actings of sanctification are apparent, with respect to sin. 1b4a. In approving, loving, and delighting in the law of God, which forbids it, and condemns for it. An unsanctified man cannot brook the

law of God on this account; he is not subjected to it; nor can he be, without efficacious grace exerted on him; he despises it, and casts it behind his back: whereas, a man sanctified by the Spirit of God, approves of the law of God, as holy, just, and good, and loves it exceedingly; "How love I thy law!" says David; and he delights in it, after the inward man, and serves it with his mind and Spirit (Ps. 119:97; Rom. 7:12, 22, 25). 1b4b.

In a dislike of sin, and a displicency at it; it is displeasing to him, as it is contrary to the holy nature of God, a breach of his righteous law, and is in its own nature exceeding sinful, as well as disagreeable in its effects and consequences. 1b4c. In a loathing sin, and in an abhorrence of it. An unsanctified man chooses his own ways, and delights in his abominations; he takes pleasure in committing sin himself, and in those that do it; sin is a sweet morsel, which he rolls in his mouth, and keeps under his tongue; but one that has the principle and grace of holiness, loaths his sin, and himself for it; and, with Job, abhors himself, and repents in dust and ashes. 1b4d.

In an hatred of sin; unholy persons, hate the good and love the evil; but an holy man, loves righteousness and hates iniquity: such that love the Lord, cannot but hate evil; it being so extremely opposite to him: he hates, not only sinful actions, and even what he himself does, though he would not do them, but vain thoughts also (Rom. 7:15; Ps. 119:113). 1b4e. In an opposition to sin: a sanctified man, not only does not make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts of it; does not regard it in his heart, so as to encourage, nourish, and cherish it; but he acts the part of an antagonist to it, "striving against sin; the spirit lusteth against the flesh"; grace opposes sin, upon the first motion of it, and temptation to it; he has that principle within him that argues thus, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" 1b4f.

In an abstinence from it, even from every appearance of it, a passing by the ways of it, and avoiding every avenue that leads to it, as being what wars against the soul, and is dangerous and hurtful to it. The grace of God implanted in the heart, as well as displayed in the word, "teaches to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts" (Titus 2:11, 12). 1b4g. Sanctification appears in lamenting sin, in deploring the corruption of nature, bewailing indwelling sin, as well as all sinful actions, of thought, word, and deed; sanctified persons are like doves of the valley, everyone mourning for his own iniquities, and for those of others, and the sad effects of them. 1b4h.

In earnest desires to be wholly freed from sin; uneasy that vain thoughts should so long lodge within them, weary of a body of sin and death, they groan under the burden of it, and cry, O wretched men that we are! who shall deliver us from it? they long to be with Christ, and to be in heaven; for this reason greatly, among others, that they may be entirely free from sin, and be perfectly holy. Now can such actings in the mind, and in life, spring from nature? must they not arise from a principle of holiness in the heart? can there be such reverence of God, love to him, resignation to his will, affectionate and fervent devotion to him, desires of communion with him, and a concern in all things for his glory, without a supernatural principle of grace and holiness in the soul?

Is it possible, that an unsanctified man should ever apply to Christ for cleansing, be subject to him as King, be desirous of walking as he walked, and of being wrought up to a conformity to him? or be concerned to mind the things of the Spirit, and to walk after the Spirit, and to live in him, and be careful not to grieve him? can there be such actings in the mind concerning sin, as to love the law, which forbids it; to dislike sin, abhor it, and hate it; engage in an opposition to it, abstain from it, lament it, and earnestly desire to be rid of it; can these be the produce of nature? or be without being internally sanctified by the Spirit of God?

2.

Secondly, the subjects of sanctification are next to be inquired into; who they are that are sanctified, and what of them. 2a. First, who are sanctified? not all men; all men are unholy, and need sanctification; but all are not made holy; some are filthy, and remain filthy still. 2a1. They are the elect of God; and all of them, whom God chose in eternity, he sanctifies in time; those who are a chosen generation, become an holy people; whom God chose, he chose to holiness, as an end which is always answered, and he chose them through sanctification, as a means in order to a further end, salvation; conformity to the image of the Son of God, in which sanctification lies, is what the chosen are predestinated unto; and, in consequence of their predestination, are made partakers of it.

Faith, which is a part of sanctification, flows from electing grace, and is insured by it; as many as are ordained to eternal life believe, and are everlastingly glorified, which is their perfect sanctification. 2a2. They are the redeemed ones; the subjects of election, redemption, and sanctification, are the same persons. In order, they are first chosen, then redeemed, and then sanctified; those who are chosen by the Father, and redeemed by the Son, are sanctified by the Spirit.

One end of Christ's redemption of them, was to sanctify and purify them, a peculiar people to himself, zealous of good works; and that they being dead to sin, and that to them, through his sacrifice for sin, they might live unto righteousness; hence of the same persons it is said, "They shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord!" (Isa. 62:12). 2b. Secondly, what of those persons is sanctified? The whole of them; "The God of peace sanctify you wholly"; that is, as next explained, in soul, body, and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). 2b1.

The soul, or spirit, is the principal seat, or subject of sanctification, in all the powers and faculties of it; "Be renewed in the spirit of your minds" (Eph. 4:23). It is the heart into which the fear of God is put, and which is circumcised to love the Lord, and which is purified by faith: it is the understanding that is enlightened, to discern holy and spiritual things; and so to mind them, approve of them, and gaze at them, with wonder and delight: the will is bowed to the will of God, and made willing in the day of his power, to serve him, as well as to be saved by him; and which is resigned to all the dispensations of divine providence: the affections are made spiritual, holy, and heavenly; from whence springs a cheerful obedience to the commands of God and Christ: and the mind and conscience, which were defiled with sin, are purged from dead works to serve the living God. 2b2.

The body also is influenced by sanctifying grace. As, though the heart is the principal seat of sin, out of which all manner of wickedness flows, and spreads itself, not only over the powers and faculties of the soul, but also over the members of the body; so that there is no part nor place clean: thus, though the soul is the principal seat of sanctification, yet it diffuses its influence, as over all the powers of the soul, so over all the members of the body; its sensual appetite and carnal lusts are checked and restrained by sanctifying grace; so that sin reigns not in our mortal bodies, as to obey the lusts thereof, and to yield our members, as instruments of unrighteousness, unto sin (Rom. 6:12, 13). 2c.

Thirdly, the causes of sanctification, by whom it is effected, from whence it springs, and by what means it is carried on, and at last finished. 2c1. The efficient cause is God, Father, Son, and Spirit. Sometimes it is ascribed to the Father, the God of all grace, who will make us perfect, perfectly holy; the very God of peace, with whom we have peace, through Christ, will sanctify us wholly; the Father, on whom we call, the Father of Christ, and of us, says, "Be ye holy, as I am holy", and who only can make us so (1 Pet. 1:15, 16; 5:10; 1 Thess. 5:23).

And Christ is not only our sanctification, but our sanctifier; "He that sanctifieth" is Christ, "and they who are sanctified" are his chosen and redeemed ones; and these "are all of one" (Heb. 2:11), of one and of the same nature; he partakes of their nature, and they are made partakers of his; all that holiness which they have, they have from him; from that fulness of it which is in him. Though this work of sanctification is more commonly ascribed to the Holy Spirit, who is therefore called, "the Spirit of holiness"; not only from his own nature, but from his being the author of holiness in the hearts of God's people, and which is therefore called, "the sanctification of the Spirit"; it is he that begins, and carries on, and finishes this work; every grace is from him, faith, hope, and love, and every other; and which are supported and maintained, and drawn forth into exercise, and brought to perfection by him. 2c2.

The moving cause, is the grace and good will of God; the same grace which moved God to choose any to holiness, moves him to work it in them: the same grace which moved him to send his Son into the world to redeem men, moves him to send his Spirit into their hearts to sanctify them: the same great love, and abundant mercy, that moves him to regenerate and quicken them, moves him to sanctify them: as of his own good will he begets them again, it is of his own good will that he sanctifies them; "This is the will of God", not only his will of precept, and his approving will; but the purpose and counsel of his will, what flows from his sovereign will; "Even your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4:3).

The state and condition of the people of God, before their sanctification, clearly shows that it must arise, not from any merit or motive in them; but from the free favour and good will of God (1 Cor. 6:9-11). 2c3. The instrumental cause, or means, is the word of God; both the written word, the scriptures, which are holy scriptures; the author holy, the matter holy, and, when attended with a divine power and influence, are the means of making men holy, and of fitting and furnishing them for every good work; and also the word preached, when accompanied with the same power; "Faith comes by hearing", and is increased thereby; the doctrines of the gospel are according to godliness; and with a divine blessing, influence both the heart and life to godliness and holiness; the ordinances are made and continued, for the perfecting of the saints, for the carrying on, and perfecting the work of holiness in them; and various providences of God, even afflictive ones, are designed of God, and are means, in his hand, of making his people more and more "partakers of his holiness" (Heb. 12:10), of this use afflictions were to holy David (Ps. 119:67, 71). 2d.

Fourthly, the adjuncts or properties of sanctification. 2d1. First, it is imperfect in the present state, though it will most certainly be made perfect; where the work is begun it will be performed: sanctification in Christ is perfect, but sanctification in the saints themselves is imperfect; it is perfect with respect to parts, but not with respect to degrees. Sanctification, as a principle, which is the new creature, or new man, has all his parts; though these are not grown up to the measure of the fulness of the stature of Christ, as they will do; where there is one grace, there is every grace, though none perfect; there is a comparative perfection in the saints, when compared with what they themselves once were, and others are; and when compared even with other saints, for one saint may have a greater degree of grace and holiness than another; "let us therefore, as many as be perfect"; and yet the greatest of those was not absolutely perfect, even the apostle himself, who so said (Phil. 3:12, 17), all the saints may be said to be perfect, as perfection denotes sincerity and truth; so their faith, though imperfect, is unfeigned; their hope is without hypocrisy, and their love without dissimulation; but otherwise sanctification in the best of men is imperfect; this appears, 2d1a.

From the continual wants of the saints; they are always "poor and needy", as David says of himself; which could not be true of him as to things temporal, but as to things spiritual: the best of saints continually stand in need of more grace to oppose sin, resist temptations, perform duty, and persevere in faith and holiness;

the grace of God is sufficient for them, but then that must be daily communicated to them; God has promised to supply, and he does supply all their need, as it returns upon them; but then it cannot be said that they are "perfect and entire, wanting nothing"; since they are continually in want of more grace. 2d1b.

This appears from their disclaiming perfection in themselves, and their desires after it. Job, David, the apostle Paul, and others, have in express words declared they were not perfect, nor thought themselves so, but far from it; and yet expressed strong desires after it, which showed they had it not; the apostle Paul has fully set forth both in those words of his, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect" &c.(Phil. 3:12-14). 2d1c. That sanctification is imperfect, is abundantly manifest from indwelling sin in the saints, and the sad effects of it; the apostle Paul speaks of "sin dwelling in him" (Rom. 7:18, 19), and the apostle John says, "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 John 1:8), and the experience of the saints in all ages testifies the same: this is clear from their ingenuous confessions of sin, such as made by Jacob, David, Isaiah, Daniel, and others; from their groans and complaints under the weight of sin, as an heavy burden, too heavy to bear; from the continual war in them between flesh and spirit, the law in their members and the law in their minds; from their prayers for the manifestation of the pardon of their sins, and for cleansing from them, and to be kept from the commission of them; from the many slips and falls which the best are subject to in one way or another; and from backwardness to duty, remissness in it, and that coldness and lukewarmness which too often attend it. 2d1d.

This is also evident from the several parts of sanctification, and the several graces of which it consists, being imperfect. Faith is imperfect; there are deficiencies in faith to be made up; the best of saints have had them, and their failings in the exercise of that grace have been manifest, as in Abraham, Peter, and others; and they have been sensible of their imperfection in it, as the apostles of Christ were when they said, "Lord increase our faith", or "add" to it (Luke 17:5), hope sometimes is so low as that it seems to be "perished from the Lord", and only the mouth is put in the dust with an "if so be there may be hope" (Lam. 3:18, 29).

Love, however warm and fervent at first, remits and abates; its ardour is left, though that is not lost; the love of many waxes cold. Spiritual, experimental, sanctified knowledge is but in part, and will remain so until that which is perfect is come. 2d2. Secondly, though sanctification is imperfect, it is progressive, it is going on gradually till it comes to perfection; this is clear from the characters of the saints, who are first as little children, infants newly born; are in a state of childhood, and by degrees come to be young men, strong and robust, and overcome the evil one, and at length are fathers in Christ (1 John 2:13, 14), and from the similies by which the work of grace is illustrated; as that in general by seed sown in the earth, which springs up first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear; and faith in particular by a grain of mustard seed, which when first sown is small, the least of all seeds, but when it grows up, it becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out great branches (Mark 4:28, 31, 32), so spiritual light and knowledge at first is very dim and obscure, like the sight that the man had whose eyes Christ opened; first he saw men like trees walking, and after that all things clearly; so the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day (Mark 8:23; Prov. 4:18), there is such a thing as growing in grace, in the grace of faith, and abounding in hope and love, and increasing in the knowledge of divine things which there would be no room for, if sanctification was perfect.

Yet, 2d3. Thirdly, though it is imperfect, it will certainly be perfected; grace in the soul is a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life; it is always running to, and will issue in eternal life: it is certain, from election and redemption, the ends whereof would not be answered, if this was not completed; and from its being the work of the Holy Spirit, who having begun it, will finish it; he is a rock, and his work is

perfect; having undertaken it, he will not leave it till it is done; and when he works, none can let; he will perfect that which concerneth his saints, and will fulfil the good pleasure of his will in them, and the work of faith, with power. 2d4.

Fourthly, sanctification is absolutely "necessary" to salvation. It is necessary for many things; it is necessary to the saints, as an evidence of their election and redemption; this is the closing work of grace, and is the evidence of all that goes before. It is necessary to church fellowship, to the communion of saints in a social manner. Members of churches are described as holy brethren, saints, and faithful in Christ Jesus, and none are meet to be admitted among them but such who are so; for "what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" &c. (2 Cor. 6:14-16).

Sanctification is necessary as a meetness for heaven; for the inheritance of the saints in light; without regeneration, in which sanctification is begun, no man shall see, nor enter, into the kingdom of God. It is absolutely necessary for the beatific vision of God in a future state; "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord"; but being possessed of that, shall see him, and enjoy uninterrupted communion with him for ever (Heb. 12:14; Matthew 5:8; Ps. 17:15). To say no more, it is necessary for the work of heaven, which is singing songs of praise, songs of electing, redeeming, regenerating, calling, and persevering grace; how can unholy persons join with the saints in such work and service as this? yea, it would be irksome and disagreeable to themselves, could they be admitted to it, and were capable of it; neither of which can be allowed.

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