Your Sanctification



Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

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Contents

Sanctification
- I. The Children of God: “Sanctified”
- II. The Sense of Christ’s Perfecting

Threefold Sanctification
- I. Introduction
- II. Set Apart
- III. A Holy Thing
- IV. To Make Holy
- V. Conclusion

Perfect Sanctification
- I. The Eternal Will
- II. The Effectual Sacrifice
- III. The Everlasting Result

Chapel Library Resources

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) was born in Kelvedon, Essex, England, June 19, 1834. Though reared in the knowledge of the Gospel, Spurgeon was not converted to Jesus Christ until a snowy January morning in 1850. In August of the same year, Spurgeon preached his first sermon to a small gathering of farmers. Then in 1854, when he was only nineteen, the New Park Street Chapel, Southwark, London, called him as pastor. This church later became the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Spurgeon’s sermons were published from January 1855 until 1916, twenty-four years after his death. In his later years, pain wracked his body and opponents attacked his ministry. Nevertheless, Spurgeon continued to preach the Gospel faithfully until his death in January 1892.

Sanctification

"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

—Hebrews 10:14

Think of this morning's text, "The Lord *will* perfect that which concerneth me" (Psa 138:8). Is it not very grateful to observe that what is just in one part of Scripture presented to us as a matter of *faith*, is in another place stated as a matter of *fact*? Think of this evening's text, "He *hath* perfected [us] for ever."

This morning we went downwards, from faith to prayer. After having said in confidence, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me," we meekly besought Him: "Forsake not the works of thine own hands"—sinking as it were to a lower note in the scale of music. Then we beheld perfection in the dim obscurity of the future, like the sun veiled behind a cloud. Our faith rested on it as a thing at present unseen, our hearts yearned after it as an inheritance yet in reserve for us.

Now tonight, this perfection is brought nigh to us, I thing accomplished, as an ever-present fact, whose eternal reality shines upon us with unclouded lustre. It is thus I read this verse, "By one offering [our Lord Jesus Christ] *hath* perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

I have been turning this text over, and over, and over in my mind, and praying about it, and looking into it, and seeking illumination from the Holy Spirit; but I was a long time before I could be clear about its exact meaning. It is very easy to select a meaning, and then to say, that is what the text means, and very easy also to look at something which lies upon the surface. But I am not quite so sure that after several hours of meditation, any brother would be able to ascertain what is the Spirit's mind in this particular verse, "By one offering Christ hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

When I was trying to find out what this meant, I thought I would read the chapters before it, and if I should happen to find out any word that should seem to be the key to this verse, I would then under the Spirit's guidance, seek to open this lock and mystery with the pick-lock that was there furnished to me. Well, I read the chapters, and I did find out a word that seemed to me to explain the whole of this verse. You must have patience with me while I try to show you

what I think it means, and then I think it will stand out in a very clear and glorious light.

First, *the condition of the child of God—what he is.* He is a sanctified person, "Them that are *sanctified*." Secondly, *what Christ has done for him*: "He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

I. The Children of God Are the “Sanctified.”

First, then, the children of God are here intended under the term “sanctified”; they are described as sanctified persons. What does this mean? We usually say there are two meanings to the term “sanctified.” One is, “*set apart*.” God has set apart His people from before the foundation of the world, to be His chosen and peculiar inheritance. We are sanctified by God the Father. There is a second signification, which implies not the decree of the Father, but the *work of the Holy Spirit*. We are sanctified in Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit when He subdues our corruptions, imparts to us graces, and leads us onward in the divine walk and life of faith. But the word here, I think, includes both of these senses, and I must try if I can to find a figure which will embrace them both.

And what is the apostle speaking about? In the ninth chapter he is speaking about the tabernacle, and the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread, and the sanctuary, and the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid with gold, and the pot of manna; he is talking about priests, and about priestly things, and holy things; and he is declaring that all these things of which he speaks were sanctified things, but that though they were sanctified things, they wanted[1] to be made perfect by the sprinkling of blood. Now, I believe the “sanctification” of our text is to be understood in this sense.

There were certain golden vessels that were used in the sanctuary, which were never used for anything else but for the service of God. They were set apart, they were made holy, and they were kept strictly to be the vessels of the sanctuary of the Lord God. *They* were sanctified things. Again, in the sanctuary there were persons who did nothing else but wait upon the Lord. These were consecrated to their offices; for God chose the tribe of Levi, and out of the tribe of Levi, He chose the house of Aaron. These persons were chosen, and then they were prepared. They underwent certain ceremonies, and divers washings, and so they were made ceremonially holy. These priests were therefore sanctified persons, because they were set apart, dedicated, and reserved to the special service of the Lord God.

Now, brethren, that is just what you and I are, and what we ought to be. We are sanctified persons: that is to say, we are chosen by God to be the peculiar vessels that He will use in pouring out His mercy, and to be the special priests whom He shall employ in His divine worship in this world. No man had any right to take wine for his own drinking, and drink it out of the golden cups of the

sanctuary. If he did so, he did it to his own destruction. Witness Belshazzar (Dan 5); he took the cups, and the golden candlesticks, and so forth, and used them in his debaucheries—and lo! he was swept away, and the handwriting on the wall foretold his doom.

Even so, beloved brethren, Christian men are not to be used for anything but for God. They are a set-apart people; they are vessels of mercy. They are not for the devil's use, not for their own use, not for the world's use, but for their Master's use. He has made them on purpose to be used entirely, solely, and wholly for Him. Now, that is what is meant in this text by "sanctified." We are sanctified persons, set apart for God's use, consecrated, just as the vessels, the cups, the candlesticks, and the tables, and the altars of the sanctuary, were sanctified unto God and set apart for His service.

And I said, we that are priests are sanctified persons, not because of any holiness in our character, seeing there were some of them that were not holy in their character. My text does not touch character—it touches *position* in the sight of God. We are not perfect in character, any one of us—we are only perfect in position. There were two men who officiated as priests before God, namely the sons of Eli, who committed sin and iniquity before God (1Sa 2:12 ff). And yet they were set apart for God's service, mark you. When they offered the sacrifices as priests, because they had been washed with water and sprinkled with blood, they were officially accepted as being sanctified persons.

Now, brethren, the children of God are sanctified persons, to offer spiritual sacrifices unto God through Jesus Christ, and we have no right to do anything else but serve God. "What!" say you, "have not I to attend to my business?" Yes, and serve God in your business. "Am I not to look after my family?" Assuredly you are, and serve God in your family—but still you are to be a set-apart person. You are not to wear the white robe nor the breastplate, but still you are to think of yourself as being as much a priest as if the breastplate were on your breast, and the white robe about your loins; for ye are priests unto God and his Father. He hath made you a peculiar generation, a royal priesthood, and hath set you apart for Himself (1Pe 2:9).

Now, I think that this first head of my sermon gives you an inkling of what the rest must mean. I have already hinted at what I think is the sense of the text. I have explained, I suppose, clearly enough in what sense God's people are a sanctified people, as understood in this verse. They are chosen, set apart, and reserved to be God's instruments and God's servants, and thus they are sanctified.

II. The Sense of Christ's Perfecting

Now comes the second thing: in what sense are we to understand that Christ has perfected these that are sanctified? Why, just this: When the golden vessels were brought into the temple or into the sanctuary, they were sanctified the very first moment that they were dedicated to God. No one dared to employ them for anything but holy uses. But they were not perfect. What did they need, then to make then perfect? Why, to have blood sprinkled on them; and, as soon as the blood was sprinkled on them, those golden vessels were perfect vessels, officially perfect. God accepted them as being holy and perfect things, and they stood in His sight as instruments of an acceptable worship.

Just so was it with the Levites and the priests. As soon as ever they were set apart to their office—as soon as ever they were born, in fact—they were consecrated; they belonged to God; they were His peculiar priesthood. But they were not perfect until they had passed through divers washings, and had the blood sprinkled upon them. Then God looked upon them in their official priestly character as being perfect persons. They were not perfect in character, I repeat, they were only perfect officially; perfect in the sight of God; and they stood before Him to offer sacrifice as acceptably, as if they had been pure as Adam himself.

Now, then, how does this refer to us, and what is the meaning of this text, that "by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified?" Turn back a moment or two. You will find in the 9th chapter of the Hebrews, at the 6th verse, "Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people." Mark here; the first meaning of my text is this. The child of God is a priest, and as a priest he is sanctified to enter within the veil. He is now permitted to go into the place which was once within the veil, but which is not so now, because the veil is rent in twain. But the high priest could not go within the veil, because he was not perfect; he had to be sprinkled with the blood, and that made him officially perfect. It would not make him perfect merely to put on the breast-plate, or to wear the ephod; he was not perfect till the blood had been sprinkled upon him, and then he went within the veil. But when next year came round he was not fit to go within the veil till blood was sprinkled on him again; and the next year, though he was always a

sanctified man, he was not always, officially, a perfect man. He had to be sprinkled with blood again. And so, year after year, the high priest who went within the veil, needed afresh to be made perfect, in order that he might obtain access to God.

Here is one sense of the text. The apostle says that we who are the priests of God have a right as priests to go to God's mercy-seat that is within the veil; but it were to our death to go there unless we were perfect. But we *are* perfect, for the blood of Christ has been sprinkled on us, and, therefore, our standing before God is the standing of perfection. Our standing, in our own conscience, is imperfection, just as the character of the priest might be imperfect. But that has nothing to do with it. Our standing in the sight of God is a standing of perfection; and when He sees the blood, as of old the destroying angel passed over Israel (Exo 12:12), so this day when He sees the blood, God passes over our sins, and accepts us at the throne of His mercy, as if we were perfect. Therefore, brethren, let us come boldly; let us "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb 10:22).

The apostle brings in, in the twenty-second verse of this tenth chapter, one inference that I have just drawn from my text. In having access to God, perfection is absolutely necessary. God cannot talk with an imperfect being. He could talk with Adam in the garden, but he could not talk with you or with me, even in paradise itself, as imperfect creatures. How, then, am I to have fellowship with God, and access to His throne? Why, simply thus: "The blood of Christ hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"; and consequently we have access with boldness to the throne of the heavenly grace, and may come boldly in all our time of need.

And what is better still, we are always perfect, always fit to come to the throne, whatever our doubts, whatever our sins. I say not this of the priest's character. We have nothing to do with that at present. We come before God in our station, not in our character, and therefore, we may come as perfect men at all times, knowing that God seeth no sin in Jacob, and no iniquity in Israel; for in this sense Christ hath perfected forever every consecrated vessel of His mercy.

Oh! is not this a delightful thought, that when I come before the throne of God, I feel myself a sinner, but God does not look upon me as one? When I approach Him to offer my thanksgivings, I feel that I am unworthy in myself; but I am not unworthy in that official standing in which He has placed me. As a sanctified and perfected thing in Christ, I have the blood upon me; God regards

me in my sacrifice, in my worship, ay, and in myself, too, as being perfect. Oh how joyful this is! And there is no need a second time to repeat this perfecting. It is an everlasting perfection; it allows a constant access to the throne of the heavenly grace. That is one meaning of the text.

Again, a little further on, our apostle, in the 9th chapter of the Hebrews, says, at the 21st verse, “He sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry,” They were all sanctified vessels, you know, but they were not perfect vessels till they were sprinkled with the blood. “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these,” and so forth (Heb 9:22-23).

Now, beloved, the vessels of the sanctuary, as I have said, were sanctified the moment they were put there, but they were not perfect; God could not therefore accept any sacrifice that was touched with the golden tongs or that lay upon the brazen altar, so long as those golden tongs and the brazen altar were imperfect. What was done to make them perfect? Why, they were sprinkled with blood; but they had to be sprinkled with blood ever so many times—once, twice, thrice, multitudes of times, because continually they wanted making perfect.

Now you and I are this day, if we are consecrated persons, like the vessels of the sanctuary. Sometimes we are like the censer—God fills us with joy, and then the smoke of incense ascends from us. Sometimes we are like the slaughter-knife that the priests used; we are enabled to deny our lusts, to deny ourselves, and put the knife to the neck of the victim. And sometimes we are like the altar, and upon us God is pleased to lay a sacrifice of labour, and there it smokes acceptably to heaven. We are made like sanctified things of His house. But, beloved, we, though we are sanctified and He has chosen us to be the vessels of His spiritual temple, are not perfect till the blood is on us. Yet, blessed be His name, that blood has once been put upon us, and we are perfected forever.

Is it not delightful to think that, when God uses us in His service, He could not use unhallowed instruments? The Lord God is so pure that He could not use anything but a perfect tool to work with. “Then surely He could never use me or use you.” Nay, but don’t you see, the blood is on us, and we are the sanctified instruments of His grace; and moreover, we are the perfect instruments of His grace through the blood of Jesus.

Oh! I delight to think that although in preaching the gospel I am in my own estimation, and in yours rightly enough, imperfect; yet when God makes use of

me in conversion, He does not make use of an imperfect man; no, He looks upon me in Christ as being perfect in Him, and then He says, “I can use this tool; I could not put my hand to an unholy thing, but I will look upon him as being perfected forever in Christ, and therefore I can use him.

Oh! Christian, do try to digest this precious thought; it has indeed been precious to my soul since I first laid hold upon it. You cannot tell what God may do with you, because if He uses you at all He does not use you as a sinner—He uses you as a sanctified person; nay more, as a perfect person. I will repeat it: I do not see how a holy God could use an unholy instrument—but He puts the blood on us, and then He makes us perfect, perfects us forever, and then He uses us.

And so I see the work of God tarried on by men whom we think are imperfect; but I never see God doing any of His deeds except with a perfect instrument. And if you ask me how He has done it, I tell you that all His consecrated ones, all whom He has sanctified to His use, He has first of all perfected forever through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

And now we will have one more thought, and then I shall have given you the full meaning of the text. In the seventh chapter, the nineteenth verse, there is a word that is a key to the meaning of my text, and that helped me all through it; and I will give you the key now. “For the law made nothing *perfect*, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*, by the which we draw nigh unto God” (Heb 7:19). Then with this, compare the tenth chapter and first verse, “The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year, continually make the comers thereunto *perfect*.” There is the word “perfect”; and we have got it in the text, “for then,” says He, if they had been perfect, “would they not have ceased to be offered.” Why offer any more, if you are a perfect man? If the sacrifice made is perfect, the worshippers, once purged, should have had no more conscience of sin.

Now mark: The Jewish sacrifice was never intended to make the Jews’ moral character any better, and it did not; it had no effect upon what we call his sanctification. All the sacrifice dealt with was his justification, and the perfection would be sought after; the perfection is not of sanctification, which the Arminian[2] talks about, but the perfection of official standing, as he stood justified before God. Now that is the meaning of the word “perfect” here. It does not mean that the sacrifice did not make the man perfectly holy, and perfectly moral, and so forth; the sacrifice had no tendency to do that; it was quite another

matter. It means that it did not perfectly make him justified in his own conscience and in the sight of God, because he had to come and offer again.

Now, here comes a man who is troubled in his conscience. He comes sighing up the temple, and he must speak to the priest. He says to the priest, “I have committed such-and-such a sin.” “Ah! says the priest, “You will never have any ease to your conscience unless you bring a sin offering. He brings a sin offering, and it is offered, and the man sees it burn and goes away. He has got faith, faith in the great sin offering that is to come, and his conscience is easy. A day or two after, the same feelings arise; and what does he do? He goes to the priest again. “Ah!” says the priest, “you must bring another offering; you most bring a trespass offering.” He does that, and his conscience grows easier for a time; but the more his conscience gets quickened, the more he sees the unsatisfactory character of the offering he brings. At last, he says, “I am so uneasy; oh! that I could have a sacrifice every hour! For do you know,” says he, “while I can put my hand on the head of the victim, I feel so happy: when I come to see it slaughtered, and the blood flowing, I feel so easy; but I do not feel perfect. I will even go up to the temple,” he says, “that there I may live.”

He sees a lamb slaughtered in the morning, and tears of joy are in his eye. “Oh!” says he “I have seen that lamb; and when I saw the blood of that lamb flowing, I felt so rejoiced,” Noon comes. “Ah!” says he, “my sins arise again; I have got a conscience, and where can I get relief for it?” And off he went to the temple; and there was another lamb in the evening, because God well knew that the sacrifices were themselves imperfect, only a shadow of the great substance, and that his people would need to have the service renewed, not only every year, but every day; nay, every morning and every evening.

But now, beloved, behold the glory of Christ Jesus as revealed to us in our text. “Those sacrifices could not make the comers thereunto perfect.” They could not feel in their own conscience that they were perfectly justified, and they wanted fresh offerings; but here today I see the slaughtered Lamb on Calvary, and it was but yesterday I rejoiced in Him, and I can rejoice in Him again today. Years ago I sought Him and I found Him. I do not want another Lamb; I do not want another sacrifice. I can still see that blood flowing, and I can feel continually that I have no more conscience of sin. The sins are gone; I have no more remembrance of them; I am purged from them. And as I see the perpetual flowing blood of Calvary, and the ever rising merits of His glorious passion, I am compelled to rejoice in this fact, that he hath perfected me forever—made me completely perfect through His sacrifice.

And now, Christian, try and lay hold upon this meaning of the text. Christ has made your conscience at ease forever; and if it disturbs you, recollect it has no cause to do so, if you are a believer in Christ—for hath not he given you that which will put away all conscience of sin? Oh! rejoice! It has purged you so entirely that you may sit down and rest. You may sing with the poet,

"Turn, then, my soul, unto thy rest;
The merits of thy great High Priest
Speak peace and liberty.

Trust in his efficacious blood,
Nor fear thy banishment from God,
Since Jesus died for thee."

Look at the text. Once again, I am going to say the same things, lest I should not be quite understood. Dear brethren, we could not have access to God, unless on the footing of perfection; for God cannot walk and talk with imperfect creatures. But we are perfect; not in character, mark, for we are still sinners; but we are perfected through the blood of Jesus Christ—so that God can allow us to have access to Him as perfected creatures. We may come boldly because, being sprinkled with the blood, God does not look on us as unholy and unclean, otherwise He could not allow us to come to His mercy seat; but He looks upon us as being perfected forever through the one sacrifice of Christ. That is one thing.

The other was this. We are the vessels of God's temple; He has chosen us to be like the golden pots of His sanctuary; but God could not accept a worship that was offered to Him in unholy vessels. Those vessels, therefore, were made perfect by being sprinkled with blood. God could not accept the praise that comes from your unholy heart; He could not accept the song that springs from your uncircumcised lips, nor the faith that arises from your doubting soul, unless He had taken the great precaution to sprinkle you with the blood of Christ. And now, whatever He uses you for, He uses you as a perfect instrument, regarding you as being perfect in Christ Jesus. That, again, is the meaning of the text, and the same meaning, only a different phase of it.

And the last meaning is that the sacrifices of the Jews did not give believing Jews peace of conscience for any length of time; they had to come again, and again, and again, because they felt that those sacrifices did not present to them a perfect justification before God. But behold, beloved, you and I are complete in Jesus. We have no need of any other sacrifice. All others we disclaim. He hath

perfected us forever. We may set our conscience at ease, because we are truly, really, and everlastingly accepted in Him. “He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

Now, what have I to do, but to turn to you and ask this one question, and I have done. Are you a sanctified person? I have known a man to say sometimes to a believer, “Well, you look so sanctified: ah! you are one of those sanctified fellows.” Well, if they said so to me, I should say, “I wish you would prove it.” What can be a more holy thing than to be a sanctified man? and what a more happy thing!

Let me ask you then: are you sanctified? Says one, “I feel so sinful.” That I do not ask you; I ask you whether you are set apart to God’s service. Can you say, “Dear Lord, I give myself away, ‘Tis all that I can do?” Take me just as I am, and make use of me; I desire to be wholly thine? Do you feel that for you to live is Christ; that there is not any object you are living for but Christ—that Christ is the great aim of your ambition, the great object of all your labours; that you are like Samson, a Nazarite, consecrated to God? Oh! then, remember that you are perfected in Christ!

But, my hearer, if thou art not sanctified to God in this sense, if thou livest to thyself, to pleasure, and to the world, thou art not perfected in Christ, and what is to become of thee? God will give thee no access to Him; God will not use thee in His service; thou hast no rest in thy conscience, and in the day when God shall come to separate the precious from the vile, He will say, “Those are my precious ones, who have the blood on them. But these have rejected Christ, they have lived to themselves, they were dead while they lived, and they are damned now they are dead.” Take heed of that! May God give you grace to be sanctified to God, and then shall you be forever perfected through Christ.

Sermon No. 232; delivered on Sabbath evening, January 2nd, 1859, by the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon at New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

Threefold Sanctification.

"Sanctified by God the Father."—Jude 1:1

"Sanctified in Christ Jesus."—1 Corinthians 1:2

"Through sanctification of the Spirit."—1 Peter 1:2

I. Introduction

Mark, beloved, the union of the three divine Persons in all their gracious acts. We believe that there is one God, and although we rejoice to recognize the Trinity, yet it is ever most distinctly a Trinity *in Unity*. Our watch-word still is, "Hear O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD" (Deu 6:4). How unwisely do those young believers talk who make preferences in the Persons of the Trinity; who think of Christ as if He were the embodiment of everything that is lovely and gracious, while the Father they regard as severely just, but destitute of kindness.

And how foolish are those who magnify the decree of the Father, or the atonement of the Son, so as to depreciate the work of the Spirit. In deeds of grace none of the Persons of the Trinity act apart from the rest. They are as united in their deeds as in their essence. In their love towards the chosen they are one, and in the actions which flow from that great central source they are still undivided.

Specially I would have you notice this in the case of sanctification. While we may without the slightest mistake speak of sanctification as the work of the Spirit, yet we must take heed that we do not view it as if the Father and the Son had no part therein. It is correct to speak of sanctification as the work of the Father, of the Spirit, and of the Son. Still doth Jehovah say, "Let *us* make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen 1:26), and thus we are "*his* workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10).

My brethren, I beg you to notice and carefully consider the value that God sets upon real holiness, since the Three Persons are represented as co-working to produce a Church without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph 5:27). Those men who despise holiness of heart are in direct conflict with God. Holiness is the architectural plan upon which God buildeth up His living temple.

We read in Scripture of the “beauties of holiness” (Psa 110:3); nothing is beautiful before God but that which is holy. All the glory of Lucifer, that son of the morning, could not screen him from divine abhorrence when he had defiled himself by sin. “Holy, Holy, Holy” (Rev 4:8), the continual cry of cherubim, is the loftiest song that creature can offer, and the noblest that the Divine Being can accept. See then, He counteth holiness to be His choice treasure. It is as the seal upon His heart, and as the signet upon His right hand. He could as soon cease to be, as cease to be holy; and sooner renounce the sovereignty of the world, than tolerate anything in His presence contrary to purity, righteousness, and holiness.

I pray you, ye who profess to be followers of Christ, set a high value upon purity of life and godliness of conversation. Value the blood of Christ as the foundation of your hope, but never speak disparagingly of the work of the Spirit, which is your meetness[3] for the inheritance of the saints in light. Yea, rather, prize it; prize it so heartily that you dread the very appearance of evil. Prize it so that in your most ordinary actions you may be “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, strewing forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1Pe 2:9).

My design was to have entered at large upon the doctrine of sanctification this morning. I intended to use the word “sanctification” in the mode in which it is understood among theologians; for you must know that the term “sanctification” has a far narrower meaning in bodies of divinity than it has in Scripture. But in studying the subject I found myself lost in its ever widening extent, so that I concluded to attempt less, in the hope of efficiently doing more.

On some future occasion we will enter at length into the Spirit’s work, but now I only call attention to the fact that sanctification is treated in Scripture in various ways. I think we may do some service in illuminating the understanding of believers, if we shall this morning draw their attention not to the theological but to the Scriptural uses of the term “sanctification,” and show that, in God’s holy Word, it has a much wider meaning than is accorded to it by systematic divines.

It has been well said that the Book of God, like the works of God, is not systematically arranged. How different is the freedom of nature from the orderly precision of the scientific museum! If you visit the British Museum, you see all the animals there placed in cases according to their respective orders. You go into God’s world and find dog and sheep, horse and cow, lion and vulture, elephant and ostrich, roaming abroad as if no zoology had ever ventured to arrange them in classes. The various rocks are not laid in order as the geologist

draws them in his books, nor are the stars marked off according to their magnitudes. The order of Nature is variety. Science does but arrange and classify, so as to assist the memory.

So systematic divines, when they come to deal with God's Word, find Scriptural truths put, not in order for the classroom, but for common life. The systematic divine is as useful as the analytical chemist, or the anatomist, but still the Bible is not arranged as a body of divinity. It is a handbook to heaven; it is a guide to eternity, meant for the man at the plough, as much as for the scholar at his table. It is a primer for babes, as well as a classic for sages. It is the humble, ignorant man's book, and though there are depths in it in which the elephant may swim, yet there are shallows where the lamb may wade. We bless God that He has not given us a body of divinity in which we might lose ourselves, but that He has given us His own Word, put into the very best practical form for our daily use and edification.

II. Set Apart

It is a recognised truth among us, that the Old Testament very often helps us to understand the New, while the New also expounds the Old. With God's Word, self-interpretation[4] is the best. "Diamond cut diamond" is a rule with a goldsmith; so must it be with a scriptural student. They who would know best God's Word must study it in its own light.

Now, in the Old Testament we find the word "sanctify" very frequently indeed, and it is used there in three senses. Let me call your attention to the *first* one.

The word "sanctify" in the Old Testament frequently has the meaning of *setting apart*. It means the taking of something that was common before, which might legitimately have been put to ordinary uses, and setting it apart for God's service alone. It was then called *sanctified* or *holy*. Take, for instance, the passage in the 13th chapter of Exodus at the 2nd verse. "Sanctify unto me all the firstborn." On account of the destruction of the firstborn of Egypt, God claimed the first-born of men and the first-born of cattle to be His. The tribe of Levi was set apart to be the representatives of the first-born, to stand before the Lord to minister day and night in His tabernacle and in His temple, hence those who were thus set apart to be priests and Levites were said to be "sanctified."

There is an earlier use of the term in the 2nd chapter of Genesis, at the 3rd verse. It is said, "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." It had been an ordinary portion of time before, but He set it apart for His own service, that on the seventh day man should do no work for himself, but rest and serve his Maker.

So in Leviticus 27:14 you read, "And when a man shall sanctify his house to be holy unto the Lord," etc., which was meant as a direction to devout Jews who set apart a house or field to be God's—intending that either the produce of the field or the occupation of the house should be wholly given either to God's priests or Levites, or in some other way set apart to holy uses. Now, nothing was done to the house; there were no ceremonies; we do not read that it was cleansed or washed or sprinkled with blood; but the mere fact that it was set apart for God was considered to be a sanctification.

So in the most notable of instances in the Book of Exodus 29:44, we read that God said, "I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar,"

by which plainly enough was meant that He would set it apart to be His house, the special place of His abode—where between the wings of the cherubim the bright light of the Shekinah might shine forth, the glorious evidence that the Lord God dwelt in the midst of His people.

To the same effect are such as the following. The sanctification of the altar, instruments and vessels, in Numbers 7:1; the setting apart of Eleazer the son of Abinadab, to keep the ark of the Lord while it was at Kirjathjearim, 1 Samuel 7:1; and the establishment of cities of refuge in Joshua 20:7, where in the original we find that the word rendered "appointed" is the same which elsewhere is translated "sanctified."

It plainly appears from the Old Testament that the word "sanctify" sometimes has the meaning simply and only of setting apart for holy uses. This explains a text in John 10:36, "Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, 'thou blaspheme,' because I said I am the Son of God?" Jesus Christ there speaks of Himself as "sanctified" by His Father. Now He was not purged from sin, for He had none. Immaculately conceived, gloriously preserved from all touch or stain of evil, he needed no sanctifying work of the Spirit within Him to purge Him from dross or corruption. All that is here intended is that He was set apart.

So in that notable and well known passage in John 17:19, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth;" by which again He meant only that He gave up Himself specially to God's service, to be occupied only with His Father's business. He could say, "It is my meat and my drink to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work" (Joh 4:34).

Brethren, you understand now the text in Jude, "Sanctified by God the Father" (1:1). Surely it means that God the Father has specially set apart His people, or sanctified them. Not that God the Father works operatively in the believer's heart (although Paul tells us it is God that worketh in us to will and to do, Phi 2:13), that belongs immediately and effectively to the Holy Spirit; but He in the decree of election separated unto Himself a people who were to be sanctified to Himself forever and ever. He by the gift of His Son for them redeemed them from among men that they might be holy; and He by continually sending forth the Spirit fulfils His divine purpose that they should be a separate people sanctified from all the rest of mankind.

In this sense every Christian is perfectly sanctified already. We may speak of believers as those who are sanctified by God the Father, that is to say, they are set apart. They were set apart before they were created, they were legally set

apart by the purchase of Christ, they are manifestly and visibly set apart by the effectual calling of the Spirit of grace. They are, I say, in this sense at all periods sanctified; and speaking of the work as it concerns God the Father, they are completely sanctified unto the Lord forever.

Is not this doctrine clear enough to you all? Leave the doctrine a moment, and let us look at it practically. Brothers and sisters, have we ever realized this truth as we ought to do? When a vessel, cup, altar, or instrument was set apart for divine worship, it was never used for common purposes again. No man but the priest might drink out of the golden cup; the altar might not be trifled with; God's brazen laver was not for ordinary ablution;[5] even the tongs upon the altar and the snuffers for the lamps were never to be profaned for any common purpose whatsoever. What a suggestive and solemn fact is this! If you and I be sanctified by God the Father, we ought never to be used for any purpose but for God.

"What," say you, "not for ourselves?" My brethren, not for ourselves! Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price (1Co 6:19-20). "But must we not work and earn our own bread?" Verily ye must, but still not with that as your object. You must still be diligent "in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (Rom 12:11). Remember, if ye be servants, ye are to serve not with eye service as men pleasers, but serving the Lord. If any man shall say "I have an occupation in which I cannot serve the Lord"—leave it, you have no right in it! But I think there is no calling in which man can be found, certainly no lawful calling, in which he may not be able to say, "Whether I eat or drink, or whatsoever I do, I do all to the glory of God" (1Co 10:31).

The Christian is no more a common man than was the altar a common place. It is as great a sacrilege for the believer to live unto himself, or to live unto the world, as you and I could have profaned the most Holy Place, used the holy fire for our own kitchen, or the censer for common perfume, or the candlestick for our own chamber. These things were God's; none might venture to appropriate them; and we are God's and must be used only for Him.

Oh, Christians, would that ye could know this! Ye are Christ's men, God's men; servants of God through Jesus Christ. Ye are not to do your own works; ye are not to live for your own objects. Ye are to say at all times, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus" (Gal 6:14); you are practically to take this for your motto, "For me to live is Christ and to die in gain" (Phi 1:21).

I fear me, nine out of ten of professing Christians have never recognized this

fact. They think if they were to devote a part of their substance, that would do, or a part of their time will suffice. Oh! Christ did not buy a part of you; men and brethren, Jesus Christ did not purchase a part of you! He bought you entire, body, soul, and spirit, and He must have you, the whole man. Oh, if ye are to be partly saved by Him and partly by yourselves, then live to yourselves; but if God hath wholly set you apart to be vessels of mercy fitted for His use, oh, do not rob the Lord. Treat not as common cups those things which are as the bowls of the altar.

There is another practical thought here. It was a crime that brought destruction upon Babylon when Belshazzar in his drunken frolic cried, Bring forth the cups of the Lord, the goodly spoil of the temple at Jerusalem (Dan 5:2). They brought the golden candlestick, and there it stood flaming high in the midst of the marble hall. The despot, surrounded by his wives and his concubines, filled high the bowl with the foaming draught and, bidding them pass round the cups of Jehovah, the heathen, the worshippers of idols, drank confusion to the God of heaven and earth. In that moment, just as the sacred vessel touched the sacrilegious lip, a hand was seen mysteriously writing out his doom: “Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting” (Dan 5:27). This was the crime that filled up the ephah[6] of his sin. Now was the measure of his iniquity fully accomplished. He had used for lascivious and drunken purposes vessels that belonged to Jehovah, the God of the whole earth.

Oh, take heed, take heed, ye that profess to be sanctified by the blood of the covenant, that you reckon it not to be an unholy thing. See to it that ye make not your bodies, which ye profess to be set apart to God’s service, slaves of sin, or your members servants of iniquity unto iniquity; lest, O ye professors, ye should hear in that hour the voice of the recording angel as he cries, “Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting.” Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord; and ye beloved who hope that ye are Christ’s, and have a humble faith in Him this morning. See that ye walk circumspectly, that by no means ye prostitute to the service of sin that which was set apart in the eternal covenant of grace[7] to be God’s alone.

If you and I are tempted to sin, we must reply, “No! let another man do that, but I cannot; I am God’s man; I am set apart for Him. How shall ‘I do this great wickedness and sin against God’ (Gen 39:9)?” Let dedication enforce sanctification. Think of the dignity to which God has called you: Jehovah’s vessels, set apart for the Master’s use.

Far hence, far hence be everything which would make you impure. When

Antiochus Epiphanes offered a sow on the altar of the Lord in the temple at Jerusalem,[8] his awful death might have been easily foretold. Oh! how many there are who make a high profession who have offered unclean flesh upon the altars of God; have made religion a stalking-horse to their own emolument; and espoused the faith to gain esteem and applause among men! What saith the Lord concerning such? “Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense saith the Lord” (Heb 10:30). Their god was their belly; they gloried in their shame; they minded earthly things; they die justly accursed. Spots are they in your solemn feasts; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever (Jude 1:13). But ye, beloved, be not carried away with the error of the wicked, but keep yourselves unspotted from the world (Jam 1:27).

III. A Holy Thing

Secondly, in the Old Testament, the word “sanctify” is now and then used in another sense, one which I do not perceive to be hinted at in our biblical encyclopoedias, but which is needed to make the subject complete. The word “sanctify” is used, not only to signify that the thing is set apart for holy uses, but that it is to be regarded, treated, and declared as a *holy thing*. To give you an instance, there is a passage in Isaiah 8:13 that is to the point when it is said, “Sanctify the Lord of Hosts, himself.” You clearly perceive that the Lord does not need to be set apart for holy uses; and again, that the Lord of Hosts needs not to be purified, for He is holiness itself. It means, adore and reverence the Lord, with fear and trembling approach His throne, regard Him as the Holy One of Israel.

But let me give you other instances. When Nadab and Abihu, as recorded in the tenth of Leviticus, offered sacrifice to God and put strange fire on the altar, the fire of the Lord went forth and consumed them, and this was the reason given: “I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me”—by which He did not mean that He would be set apart, nor yet that He would be made holy by purification, but that He would be treated and regarded as a most Holy Being with whom such liberties were not to be taken.

And again in Numbers 20:12, on that unfortunate occasion when Moses lost his temper and smote the rock twice, saying, “Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?” The Lord said that he should see the promised land but should never enter it, the reason being, “Because ye believed me not to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel”—by which He meant that they had not so acted as to honor God’s name among the people.

A yet more familiar instance, occurs in what is commonly called “The Lord’s Prayer,” “Our Father which art in heaven, [sanctified] be thy name.” The word “hallowed” is simply an English variation, the Greek is “*sanctified* be thy name.” Now we know that God’s name does not need purifying, or setting apart; so that the sense here can only be, “Let Thy name be reverenced and adored throughout the whole earth, and let men regard it as being a sacred and holy thing.”

My beloved brethren, have we not some light here concerning our second text, “Sanctified in Christ Jesus” (1Co 1:2). If the word “sanctified” may mean “regarded as holy and treated as such,” can you not see how in Christ Jesus the saints are regarded by God as being holy, and treated as such? Mark, we do not

lay that down as being the only meaning of the text, for we shall have to show that another sense may be attached to it. There are brethren who have enlarged upon our being sanctified in Christ, and have almost forgotten the work of the Spirit. Now, if they only speak of our being sanctified in Christ in the sense of being treated as holy, in fact as being justified, we have no quarrel with them; but if they deny the work of the Spirit, they are guilty of deadly error.

I have sometimes heard the term used *imputed sanctification*, which is sheer absurdity. You cannot even use the term *imputed justification*. "Imputed righteousness" is correct enough, and implies a glorious doctrine; but justification is not imputed, it is actually conferred. We are justified through the imputed righteousness of Christ, but as to being imputedly sanctified, no one who understands the use of language can so speak. The term is inaccurate and unscriptural. I know it is said that the Lord Jesus is made of God unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1Co 1:30); but this sanctification is not by imputation, nor does the text say so. Why, you might as readily prove imputed wisdom or imputed redemption by this text, as force it to teach imputed sanctification. It is a fact that for the sake of what Jesus Christ did, God's people—though in themselves but partially sanctified, as being yet subject to sin—are for Christ's sake treated and regarded as if they were perfectly holy; but this, according to theological definitions, is rather justification than sanctification. (It must however be admitted that the Scripture sometimes uses the word "sanctification" in such a manner as to make it tantamount to justification.)

This, however, we can clearly see: that God's people have access with boldness to the Lord because they are regarded through Christ as though they were perfectly holy. Oh! brethren, think of this for a moment. A holy God cannot have dealings with unholy men. A holy God—and is not Christ Jesus God?—cannot have communion with unholiness, and yet you and I are unholy. How then does Christ receive us to His bosom? How does His Father walk with us and find Himself agreed? Because He views us, not in ourselves, but in our great federal Head, the Second Adam (Rom 5:12 ff.). He looks at us,

"Not as we were in Adam's fall,
When sin and ruin covered all;
But as we'll stand another day,
Fairer than sun's meridian ray."

He looks on the deeds of Christ as ours; on His perfect obedience and sinless

life as ours, and thus we may sing in the language of Hart,

"With thy spotless garments on,
Holy as the Holy One,"

We may boldly enter into that which is within the veil, where no unholy thing may come, yet where we may venture because God views us as holy in Christ Jesus. This is a great and precious doctrine.

But still, since the use of the term "sanctification" in any other sense than that in which it is commonly employed as meaning the work of the Spirit, tends to foster confused notions, and really does I fear lead some to despise the work of the Spirit of God, I think it is better in ordinary conversation between Christians, for them to speak of sanctification without confounding it with what is quite a distinct act, namely, justification through the imputed righteousness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Yet, if we hear a brother so talk, we must, not be too severe upon him, as though he assuredly erred from the faith, for in Scripture the terms "sanctification" and "justification" are frequently used interchangeably, and Christ's righteousness made the subject-matter of both works of grace.

IV. To Make Holy

We now come to the usual sense in which the word “sanctification” is employed. It means actually to purify or make holy; not merely to set apart, nor to account holy, but to *make* really and actually so in nature. You have the word in this sense in many places in the Old Testament.

You will find it in Exodus 19:10-12. On the third day, God was about to proclaim on the top of Sinai His holy Law, and the mandate went forth, “Sanctify the people today and tomorrow,” which sanctification consisted in certain outward deeds by which their bodies and clothes were put into a cleanly state, and their souls were brought into a reverential state of awe.

In the third of Joshua you find when the children of Israel were about to pass the Jordan, it was said, “Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.” They were to prepare themselves to be beholders of a scene so august, when Jordan was driven back and the river was utterly dried up before the feet of the priests of God. There was in this case an actual purification. Men in the old times were sprinkled with blood, and thus sanctified from defilement, and considered to be pure in the sight of God.

Now this is the sense in which we view our third text, “Through sanctification of the Spirit” (1Pe 1:2), and this, I repeat, is the general sense in which we understand it in common conversation among Christian men.

Sanctification begins in regeneration. The Spirit of God infuses into man the new principle called the spirit, which is a third and higher nature, so that the believing man becomes body, soul, *and spirit*, and in this he is distinct and distinguished from all other men of the race of Adam. This work, which begins in regeneration, is carried on in two ways: by vivification and by mortification; that is, by giving life to that which is good, and by sending death to that which is evil in the man—mortification, whereby the lusts of the flesh are subdued and kept under; and vivification, by which the life which God has put within us is made to be [a] well of water springing up unto everlasting life. This is carried on every day in what we call perseverance, by which the Christian is preserved and continued in a gracious state, and is made to abound in good works unto the praise and glory of God. It culminates or comes to perfection in “glory,” when the soul being thoroughly purged is caught up to dwell with holy beings at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

Now, this work, though we commonly speak of it as being the work of the

Spirit, is quite as much the work of the Lord Jesus Christ as of the Spirit. In looking for texts on the subject, I have been struck with the fact that where I found one verse speaking of it as the Spirit's work, I found another in which it was treated as the work of Jesus Christ. I can well understand that my second text, "Sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1Co 1:2), has as great a fullness of meaning as the third, "Through sanctification of the Spirit." Lend me your attention. I fear that not many of you will be interested, except those of you who have a share in this precious work, others may think the subject too dry for them. Oh that they may yet know how precious to believers is the purifying work of sanctification.

Sanctification is a work *in* us, not a work *for* us. It is a work in us and there are two agents: one is the Worker who works this sanctification effectually, that is the Spirit; and the other, the agent, the efficacious means by which the Spirit works this sanctification is, Jesus Christ and His most precious blood. Suppose, to put it as plainly as we can, there is a garment which needs to be washed. Here is a person to wash it, and there is a bath in which it is to be washed—the person is the Holy Spirit, but the bath is the precious blood of Christ. It is strictly correct to speak of the person cleansing as being the sanctifier: it is quite as accurate to speak of that which is in the bath and which makes it clean as being the sanctifier too.

Now, the Spirit of God sanctifies us; He works it effectively; but He sanctifies us through the blood of Christ, through the water that flowed with the blood from Christ's side. To repeat my illustration, here is a garment that is black; a fuller,[9] in order to make it white, uses nitre and soap, both the fuller and the soap are cleansers—so both the Holy Spirit and the atonement of Christ are sanctifiers. I think that will be plain enough.

Let us enlarge upon the doctrine. The Spirit of God is the great worker by whom we are cleansed. I shall not, this morning, quote the texts. Most of you have the "Baptist Confession of Faith,"[10] published by Passmore and Alabaster, price 4d., and the "Catechism,"[11] which are generally distributed among the families of the church. They will furnish you with abundance of texts on that subject, for this is a doctrine which is generally received among us: that it is the Spirit of God who creates in us a new heart and a right spirit, according to the tenor of the covenant.

"A new heart also will I give you," and "a right spirit" will I put within (see Jer 31:31-34; Eze 36:26; Heb 8:10; 10:16-17; Psa 51:10). "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes" (Eze 36:27). He renews and changes the nature, turns the bias of the will, makes us seek after that which is

good and right; so that every good thing in us may be described as “the fruit of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22; Eph 5:9). All our virtues and all our graces are efficiently worked in us by the Spirit of the living God.

Never, I pray you, brethren, never, never forget this. Oh, it will be an ill day for any church when the members begin to think lightly of the work of the Holy Spirit within us! We delight to magnify the work of Christ *for* us, but we must not depreciate the work of the blessed Spirit *in* us. In the days of my venerable predecessor, Dr. Gill,[12] who was, in the opinion even of ultra-Calvanists, sound to the core, this pernicious evil broke out in our church. There were some who believed in what was called “imputed sanctification” and denied the work of the blessed Spirit. I was reading last night in our old Church-book a note written there in the doctor’s own hand-writing, as the deliberate opinion of this church:

> “Agreed: That to deny the internal sanctification of the Spirit, as a principle of grace and holiness wrought in the heart, or as consisting of grace communicated to and implanted in the soul—which, though but a begun work, and as yet incomplete, is an abiding work of grace, and will abide, notwithstanding all corruptions, temptations, and snares, and be performed by the Author of it until the day of Christ, when it will be the saints meetness for eternal glory—is a greivous error, which 1) highly reflects dishonor on the blessed Spirit and His operations of grace on the heart, 2) is subversive of true religion and powerful godliness, and 3) renders persons unfit for church communion. Wherefore, it is further agreed, that such persons who appear to have embraced this error be not admitted to the communion of this Church; and should any such who are members of it appear to have received it and continued in it, that they be forthwith excluded from it.”

Two members then present declaring themselves to be of the opinion condemned in the above resolution, and also a third person who was absent, but who was well known to have been under this awful delusion, were consequently excluded that evening. Nay, more, a person of another church who held the opinion thus condemned was forbidden to commune at the table, and his pastor at Kettering was written to upon the subject, warning him not to allow so great an errorist to remain in fellowship. So that the Doctor [Gill] thought the error to be so deadly, that he used the pruning knife at once; he did not stop till it spread, but he cut off the very twigs; and this is one of the benefits of church discipline

when we are enabled to carry it out under God, that it does nip error in the very bud, and thus those who as yet are not infected are kept from it by the blessed providence of God through the instrumentality of the church. We have always held, and still hold and teach, that the work of the Spirit in us, whereby we are conformed unto Christ's image, is as absolutely necessary for our salvation, as is the work of Jesus Christ, by which He cleanses us from our sins.

Pause here one moment, and let me not distract your minds, while I say that while the Spirit of God is said in Scripture to be the author of sanctification, yet there is a visible agent, which must not be forgotten. "Sanctify them," said Christ, "through thy *truth*. Thy word is truth" (Joh 17:17). Young men of the Bible class, look out the passages of Scripture which prove that the instrument of our sanctification is the Word of God. You will find that there are very many. It is the Word of God that sanctifies the soul. The Spirit of God brings to our minds the commands and precepts and doctrines of truth, and applies them with power. These are heard in the ear, and being received in the heart, they work in us to will and to do of God's good pleasure (Phi 2:13).

How important then that the truth should be *preached*. How necessary that you never tolerate a ministry which leaves out the great doctrines or the great precepts of the Gospel. The truth is the sanctifier; and if we do not hear the truth, depend upon it, we shall not grow in sanctification. We only progress in sound living as we progress in sound understanding. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psa 119:105).

Do not say of such-and-such an error, "Oh, it is a mere matter of opinion." If it be a mere matter of opinion to-day, it will be a matter of practice tomorrow. No man has an error of judgment, without sooner or later having an error in practice. As every grain of truth is a grain of diamond dust, prize it all. Hold fast the truth that ye have received and that ye have been taught. "Hold fast the form of sound words" (2Ti 1:13); and in this day when articles are ridiculed, when creeds are despised, hold fast to that which ye have received, that ye may be "faithful among the faithless found"; for by so holding the truth shall ye be sanctified by the Spirit of God. The agent, then, is the Spirit of God working through the truth.

But now let me bring you back to my old figure. In another sense we are sanctified through Christ Jesus, because it is His blood and the water that flowed from His side in which the Spirit washes our heart from the defilement and propensity of sin. It is said of our Lord, "Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by

the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing" (Eph 5:25-27) Remember again, "Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb 13:12). "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb 2:11).

I say, again, there are hundreds of texts of this kind. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins" (Mat 1:21). "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world" (Gal 6:14). In that memorable passage where Paul, struggling with corruption, exclaims, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom 7:24), the answer is not concerning the Holy Spirit; but he says, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 7:25). Space forbids the multiplication of texts; but there are many passages to the effect that our sanctification is the work of Jesus Christ.

He is our sanctifier, for He filled the sacred laver of regeneration in which we are washed, filled it with the blood and with the water that flowed from His side, and in this by the Holy Spirit we are washed. There is no being sanctified by the Law; the Spirit does not use legal precepts to sanctify us. There is no purification by mere dictates of morality; the Spirit of God does not use them. No, just as when Marah's waters were bitter, Moses to make them sweet commanded them to take a tree and cast it into the waters, and they were sweet (Exo 15:23-25); so the Spirit of God, finding our natures bitter, taketh the tree of Calvary, casteth it into the stream, and everything is made pure. He finds us lepers, and to make us clean He dips the hyssop of faith in the precious blood, and sprinkles it upon us and we are clean. There is a mysterious efficacy in the blood of Christ not merely to make satisfaction for sin, but to work the death of sin (Rom 6).

The blood appears before God and He is well pleased; it falls on us, lusts wither, and old corruptions feel the death-stroke. Dagon falls before the ark (1Sa 5:2-4), and although the stump thereof is left, and corruptions still remain, yet Christ shall put an end to all our inbred sins, and through Him we shall mount to heaven perfect even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Just as the Spirit only works through the truth, so the blood of Christ only works through *faith*. Young men of the Catechumen and Bible classes, again I say, turn to your Bibles at your leisure, and find out the many passages that speak of faith as sanctifying the soul and purifying the mind. Our faith lays hold on the precious atonement of Christ. It sees Jesus suffering on the tree, and it

says, “I vow revenge against the sins which nailed him there”; and thus His precious blood works in us a detestation of all sin, and the Spirit through the truth, working by faith, applies the precious blood of sprinkling—and we are made clean, and are accepted in the beloved.

V. Conclusion

I am afraid that I have confused and darkened counsel with words; but yet, I think, I may have suggested some trains of thought that will lead you to see that Holy Scripture teaches us a sanctification, not narrow and concise so as to be written down with a short definition as in our creed-books, but wide, large, and expansive. A work in which we are sanctified by God the Father, sanctified in Christ, and yet have our sanctification through the Spirit of God.

Oh! my dear hearers, strive after practical holiness. You that love Christ, do not let any say of you, "There is a Christian, but he is worse than other men." It is not our eloquence, our learning, our fame, our wealth, that can ever commend Christ to the world; it is the holy living of Christians.

I was speaking, the other day, to a brother minister about this Bi-centenary movement,[13] which I fear will be an immense injury to Christ's Church. I feared lest it should be made an opportunity for strife among brethren. Error must be corrected, but love must not be wounded. He remarked, and I thought it was so truthful, that the only way by which Dissent flourished of old was by the then superior holiness of its ministers, so that whilst the Church [of England] clergyman was hunting, the Dissenting minister was visiting the sick, and said he, "This is the way in which we shall lose power, if our ministers become political and worldly, it will be all over with us."

I have never shunned to rebuke, when I thought it necessary, but I hate contention. The only allowable strife is to labor who can be the most holy, the most earnest, the most zealous, who can do the most for the poor and the ignorant, and who can lift Christ's cross the highest. This is the way to lift up the members of any one particular denomination: by the members of that body being more devout, more sanctified, more spiritual-minded than the others. All mere party fightings will only gender strife, and animosities, and bickerings, and are not of the Spirit of God. But to live unto God and to be devoted to Him, this is the strength of the Church; this will give us the victory, God helping us, and unto His name shall be all the praise.

As for persons here who are not converted, and are unregenerate, I cannot address them about sanctification. I have opened a door this morning, but you cannot enter. Only remember, that if you cannot enter into this, you cannot enter into heaven, for,

"Those holy gates for ever bar,

Pollution, sin, and shame;
None shall obtain admission there,
But followers of the Lamb."

May it be yours, to come humbly and confess your sin, and ask and find forgiveness, and then, but not till then, there is hope that you may be sanctified in the Spirit of your mind. The Lord bless you for Jesus' sakes.

No. 434; A Sermon Delivered on Sunday Morning, February 9th, 1862, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington.

Perfect Sanctification

"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

—Hebrews 10:10

Dear friends, ever since the Lord has quickened us by His grace, we have begun to look into ourselves and to search our hearts to see our condition before God. Hence many things that once caused us no disquietude, now create in us great anxiety. We thought that we were all right, and felt it to be enough to be quite as good as others. We dreamed that if we were not quite as good as we should be, we should certainly grow better, though we did not stop to enquire how or why. We took stock of our condition and concluded that we were rich and increased with goods, and had need of nothing (Rev 3:17).

A change has come over the spirit of the scene; the grace of God has made us thoughtful and careful. We dare not take things at haphazard now. We test and prove things, for we are very anxious not to be deceived. We look upon eternal realities as being of the utmost consequence, and we dare not take them for granted as being certain to be right. We are afraid of being presumptuous; we long to be sincere. We hold an assize[14] within our spirits; and we are so afraid that we may be partial, as probably we shall be, that we ask the Lord to search us and try us, to see if there be any wicked way in us, that He may lead us out of such a way into the way everlasting (Psa 139:23-24).

This is all very wise and very proper, and I would not for a moment try to take off the people of God from a proper measure of this state of heart; and yet let it never be forgotten that we are in the sight of God other, in some respects, than we shall ever see ourselves to be if we look through the glass of feeling and consciousness. There are other matters to be taken into consideration, matters that our anxiety may lead us to overlook, and our inward search may cause us to forget.

Faith reveals to us another position for the people of God besides that which they occupy in themselves. Some call it an "evangelical fiction" and the like; but, thank God, it is a blessed fact that, sinners as we are in ourselves, yet believers are *saints* in God's sight; and that sinful as they feel themselves to be, yet they are washed, cleansed, and sanctified in Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding all

that we mourn over, the very fact that we do mourn over it becomes an evidence that we are no longer what we once were, and do not stand now where we once stood.

We have passed from death unto life. We have escaped from under the dominion of Law into the kingdom of grace (Rom 6:14). We have come from under the curse, and we dwell in the region of blessing. We have believed on Him that justifieth the ungodly, and our faith is counted for righteousness (Rom 4:5). There is therefore now no condemnation to us, for we are in Christ Jesus our Lord, and walk no longer after the flesh but after the Spirit (Rom 8:1). That your hearts may be gladdened, I want you to think of the noble position into which the grace of God has lifted all believers—the condition of sanctification that is spoken of in the text: for by the "will of God we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

We shall, *first*, speak of the eternal will; *secondly*, of the effectual sacrifice by which that will has been carried out; and, *thirdly*, of the everlasting result accomplished by that will through the sacrifice of the body of Christ. May the Holy Spirit, who has revealed the grand doctrine of justification, now enable us to understand it and to feel its comforting power.

I. The Eternal Will

First, then, *the eternal will*—"By the which will we are sanctified."

A. The Father

This will must, first of all, be viewed as the will ordained of old by the Father, the *eternal* decree of the infinite Jehovah, that a people whom He chose should be sanctified and set apart unto Himself. The will of Jehovah stands fast forever and ever, and we know of it that it is altogether unchangeable, and that it has no beginning. It is an eternal will: we have no vacillating deity, no fickle God. He wills changes, but He never changes His will. "He is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth" (Job 22:13).

The will of God is *invincible* as well as eternal. We are told in Ephesians that He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph 1:11). "Who can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?" (Dan 4:35). The good pleasure of His will is never defeated: there cannot be such a thing as a vanquished God. His purpose shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure.

In fact, the will of God is the *motive force* of all things. "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psa 33:9). His Word is omnipotent because His will is at the back of it, and it puts force into it. He said "Let there be light," and there was light (Gen 1:3), because He willed that there should be light. He bade creatures come forth, numerous as the drops of dew, to people the world that he had made—and forth they came, flying, leaping, swimming, in varied orders of life, because of His own will He did create them. His will is the secret power that sustains the universe and threads the starry orbs, and holds them like a necklace of light about the neck of nature. His will is the Alpha and the Omega of all things.

It was according to this eternal, invincible will of God that He chose, created, and set apart a people that should show forth the glory and riches of His grace, a people that should bear the image of His only-begotten Son, a people that should joyfully and willingly serve Him in His courts forever and ever, a people who should be His own sons and daughters, to whom He would say, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and "they shall be my people, and I will be their God" (Eze 11:20). Thus stood the eternal will of old. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom 8:29).

But the people concerning whom this will was made were dead in sin, defiled with evil, polluted by transgression. The old serpent's venom was in their veins. They were fit to be set apart for the curse, but not to be set apart for the service of the thrice holy God. And the question was, how then should the will of the Immutable Invincible ever be carried out? How shall these rebels become absolved? How shall these fountains of filth become clear as crystal, pouring forth floods of living water and divine praise? How shall these unsanctified and defiled ones become sanctified unto the service of God? It must be—but how shall it be?

Then came the priests, with smoking censers, and with basins full of blood, steaming as it came fresh from the slaughtered victims, and they sprinkled this blood upon the book and upon the people, upon the altar, and upon the mercyseat, and upon all the hangings of the tabernacle, and all the ground whereon the worshippers walked, for almost all things under the Law were sanctified by blood. Everywhere was this blood of bulls and of goats. Fresh every morning and renewed every evening.

Still, God's will was not done; the chosen were not thus sanctified—and we know they were not, because it is written, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not" (Heb 10:5). His will was not fulfilled in them; it was not His will that they should sanctify the people. They were inefficacious to such an end, for, as the Holy Ghost has said, it was "not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb 10:4). And so, if these offerings had been all, centuries of the house of Aaron and of the priests of the tribe of Levi might have come and gone, and yet the will decreed by the eternal Father would not have been an accomplished fact.

B. The Son

Thus we are landed at our second point, which is that this will by which we are sanctified was performed of the ever blessed Son. It was the will of God the Father, but it was carried out by the divine Son when He came into the world. A body was prepared for Him (Heb 10:5), and into that body, in a mysterious manner that we will not attempt even to conceive of, He entered, and there He was the incarnate God!

This incarnate God—by offering His own blood, by laying down His own life, by bearing in His own body the curse, and in His own spirit enduring the wrath—was able to effect the purpose of the everlasting Father in the *purging* of His people, in the *setting of His chosen apart*, and making them henceforth

holiness unto the Lord.

Do you not see what the will of the Father was, that He should have a people that should be sanctified unto Himself ? But that will could not be carried out by the blood of bulls and of goats; it must be achieved by the offering up of the body of Jesus Christ once for all! Our Lord Jesus Christ has done whatsoever that will of the Father required for its perfect achievement. This is our satisfaction.

We will not enter at this time into a detailed account of our Lord's active and passive obedience by which He magnified the Law and set apart His people. I pray you, however, never fall into the error of dividing the work of Christ, as some do, and saying, "Here He made atonement for sin, and there He did not." In these modern times certain brethren have invented refinements of statement of so trivial a character that they are not even worth the trouble of thinking over, and yet, like babes with a new rattle, they make a noise with them all day long. It is amusing how these wise professors make grave points out of mere hairsplitting distinctions, and if we do not agree with them they give themselves mighty airs, pitying our ignorance, and esteeming themselves as superior persons who have an insight into things that ordinary Christians cannot see. God save us from having eyes which are so sharp that we are able to spy out new occasions for difference, and fresh reasons for making men offenders for mere words. I believe in the life of Christ as well as in His death, and I believe that He stood for me before God as much when He walked the acres of Palestine as when He hung on the cross at Jerusalem. You cannot divide and split Him in sunder and say, "He is so far an example, and so far an atonement," but you must take the entire Christ, and look at Him from the very first as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (Joh 1:29).

"Oh, but," they say, "he made no atonement except in His death," which is, let me tell you, an absurdity in language. Listen a minute. When does a man die? I cannot tell you. There is the minute in which the soul separates from the body; but all the time that a man may be described as dying, he is alive, is he not? A man does not suffer when actually dead. What we call the pangs of death are truly and accurately pangs of life. Death does not suffer; it is the end of suffering. A man is in life while he suffers; and if they say, "It is Christ's death that makes an atonement, and not his life," I reply that death, alone and by itself, makes no atonement. Death in its natural sense, and not in this modern non-natural severance from life, does make atonement; but it cannot be viewed apart from life by any unsophisticated mind.

If they must have distinctions, we could make distinctions enough to worry them of such an unprofitable business, but we have nobler work to do. To us our Lord's death seems to be the consummation of His life, the finishing stroke of a work that His Father had given Him to do among the sons of men. We view Him as having come in a body prepared for Him to do the will of God once, and that "once" lasted throughout His one life on earth. We will not, however, dwell on any moot point, but unfeignedly rejoice that whatever was wanted[15] to make God's people wholly sanctified unto God, Christ has wrought out.

"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once" (Heb 10:10). It is finished. Does the divine Law require for our acceptance perfect submission to the will of the Lord? He has rendered it. Does it ask complete obedience to its precepts? He has presented the same. Does the fulfilled will of the Lord call for abject suffering, a sweat of blood, pangs unknown, and death itself? Christ has presented it all, whatever that "all" may be. As when God created, His word effected all His will; so when God redeemed, His blessed and incarnate Word has done all His will. In every point as God looked on each day's work and said, "It is good" (Gen 1), so as He looks upon each part of the work of His dear Son, He can say of it, "It is good." The Father joins in the verdict of His Son, that "it is finished" (Joh 19:30): all the will of God for the sanctification of His people is accomplished!

C. The Holy Spirit

Beloved, this work must be *applied* to us by the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Ghost who brings us to know that Jesus Christ has sanctified us, or set us apart, and made us acceptable with God. It is the Holy Spirit who has given us the New Testament, and shed a light upon the Old. It is the Holy Spirit who speaks to us through the ministers of Christ when He blesses them to our conversion. Especially is it the Holy Ghost who takes away from us all hope of being sanctified before God by any means of our own, brings us to see our need of cleansing and reconciliation, and then takes of the things of Christ and reveals them unto us. Not without the going forth of His sacred power are we made to take the place of separation, and dedication, to which the Lord of old ordained us.

Thus it is by the will of the Father, carried out by the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit, that the church of God is regarded as sanctified before God, and is acceptable unto Him.

I do not tarry longer on any one point, because these great things are best

spoken of with few words; they are subjects better fed upon by quiet thought than exhibited in speech.

II. The Effectual Sacrifice

I invite you, dear friends, in the second place, to consider the effectual sacrifice by which the will of God with regard to the sanctity of His people has been carried out. “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.”

This implies, first, *His incarnation*, which of course includes His eternal deity. We can never forget that Jesus Christ is God. The church has given forth many a valiant confession to His deity, and woe be to her should she ever hesitate on that glorious truth! Yet sometimes she has great need earnestly to insist upon His humanity. As you bow before your glorious Lord, and adore Him with all the sanctified, yet remember that He whom you worship was truly and really a *man*. The gospel of His incarnation is not a spiritual idea, nor a metaphor, nor a myth. In very deed and truth the God that made heaven and earth came down to earth, and hung upon a woman’s breast as an infant.

That child, as He grew in stature and wisdom, was as certainly God as He is at this moment in glory. He was as surely God when He was here hungering and suffering, sleeping, eating, drinking, as He was God when He hung up the morning stars and kindled the lamps of night, or as He shall be when sun and moon shall dim at the brightness of His coming. Jesus Christ, very God of very God, did certainly stoop to become such as we are, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. It is a truth you all know, but I want you to grasp it and realize it. It will help you to trust Christ if you clearly perceive that, divine as He is, He is bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh—your kinsman, though the Son of God.

All this is implied in the text, because it speaks of the offering of the body of Christ. But why does it specially speak of the body? I think to show us the reality of that offering; His soul suffered, and His soul’s sufferings were the soul of His sufferings. But still, to make it palpable to you, to record it as a sure historical fact, he mentions that there was an offering of the body of Christ.

I take it, however, that the word means the whole of Christ—that there was an offering made of all of Christ, the body of Him, or that of which He was constituted. It is my solemn conviction that the deity co-worked with His humanity in the wondrous passion by which He has sanctified His elect. I am told that deity cannot suffer. I am expected to subscribe to that because theologians say so. Well, if it be true, then I shall content myself with believing

that the deity helped the humanity by strengthening it to suffer more than it could otherwise have endured.

But I believe that deity can suffer, heterodox as that notion may seem to be. I cannot believe in an impassive God as my Father. If He pities and sympathizes, surely He must have some sensibilities. Is He a God of iron? If He wills it He can do anything, and therefore He can suffer if He pleases. It is not possible for God to be *made* to suffer, that would be a ridiculous supposition; yet if He wills to do so, He is certainly capable of doing that as well as anything else, for all things are possible to Him (Mat 19:26). I look upon our Lord Jesus as in His very Godhead stooping down to bear the weight of human sin and human misery, sustaining it because He was divine, and able to bear what else had been too great a load. Thus the whole of Christ was made a sacrifice for sin. It was the offering, not of the spirit of Christ, but of the very body of Christ—the essence, subsistence, and most manifest reality and personality of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High.

And this was *wholly* offered. I do not know how to bring out my own thought here; but to accomplish the will of God in sanctifying all His people, Christ must be the offering, and He must be wholly offered. There were certain sacrifices that were only presented to God in part, so far as the consumption by fire was concerned. A part was eaten by the priest or by the offerer, and so far it was not a whole burnt offering. In this there was much precious truth set forth, of which we will not speak at this present. But as our sin-offering, making expiation for guilt, our blessed Lord and Master gave Himself wholly for us, as an atoning sacrifice and offering for sin—and that “Himself ” sums up all you can conceive to be in and of the Christ of God.

The pangs and griefs that like a fire went through Him did consume Him, even to the uttermost of all that was in Him. He bore all that could be borne, stooped to the lowest to which humility could come, descended to the utmost abyss to which a descent of self-denial could be made. He made Himself of no reputation: He emptied Himself of all honor and glory (Phi 2). He gave up Himself without reserve. He saved others; Himself He could not save. He spares us in our chastisements, but Himself He spared not. He says of Himself, in the twenty-second Psalm, “I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people” (22:6).

You do not know, you cannot imagine, how fully the sacrifice was made by Christ. It was not only a sacrifice of all of Himself, but a complete sacrifice of every part of Himself for us. The blaze of eternal wrath for human sin was

focussed upon His head! The anguish that must have been endured by Him—who stood in the place of millions of sinners to be judged of God and smitten in their stead—is altogether inconceivable. Though Himself perfectly innocent, yet in His own person to offer up such a sacrifice as could honor the divine justice on account of myriads of sins of myriads of the sons of men, was a work far beyond all human realization. You may give loose to your reason and your imagination, and rise into the seventh heaven of sublime conception as with eagle wing, but you can never reach the utmost height. Here is the sum of the matter—"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2Co 9:15), for unspeakable, inconceivable it certainly is when we view the Lord Jesus as a sacrifice for the sins of men.

This offering was made once, and only once. The pith of the text lies in the finishing words of it, "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*." Those words "for all" are very properly put in by the translators; but you must not make a mistake as to their meaning. The text does not mean that Christ offered Himself up once for all, that is, for all mankind. That may be a doctrine of Scripture, or it may not be a doctrine of Scripture, but it is not the teaching here. The passage means "once for all" in the sense of "all at once," or "only once." As a man might say, "I gave up my whole estate once for all to my creditors, and there was an end of the matter," so here our Lord Jesus Christ is said to have offered Himself up as a sacrifice once for all—that is to say, only once, and there was an end of the whole matter. His sacrifice on behalf of His people was for all the sins before He came.

Think of what they all were. Ages had succeeded ages, and there had been found amongst the various generations of men criminals of the blackest dye, and crimes had been multiplied; but the prophet said in vision concerning Christ, as he looked on all the multitude, "All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa 53:6). That was before He came. Reflect that there has been no second offering of Himself ever since, and never will be, but it was once, and that once did the deed. Let your mind conceive of this, nearly two thousand years have passed since the offering, and if the prophet were to stand here to-night and look back through those eighteen hundred years and more, he would still say, "All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Oh! it is a wonderful conception—the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus was the reservoir into which all the sin of the human race ran, from this quarter, and that,

and that, and that, and that. All the sin of His people rolled in a torrent unto Him, and gathered as in a great lake. In Him was no sin, and yet the Lord made Him to be sin for us. You may have seen a deep mountain tarn[16] that has been filled to the brim by innumerable streamlets from all the hillsides round about. Here comes a torrent gushing down, and there trickles from the moss that has overgrown the rock a little drip, drip, drip, which falls perpetually: great and small tributaries all meet in the black tarn, which after the rain is full to the brim, and ready to burst its banks. That lone lake pictures Christ, the meetingplace of the sin of His people. It was all laid on Him, that from Him the penalty might be exacted. At His hands the price must be demanded for the ransom of all this multitude of sins.

And it is said that He did this *once for all*. I have no language with which to describe it, but I see before me the great load of sin, the huge, tremendous world of sin. No, no, it is greater than the world. Atlas might carry that, but this is a weight compared with which the world is but as a pin's head. Mountains upon mountains, alps on alps, are nothing to the mighty mass of sin that I see before my mind's eye; and lo, it all falls upon the Well-beloved.

He stands beneath it and bows under it, till the bloody sweat starts from every pore, and yet He does not yield to its weight so as to get away from the burden. It presses more heavily; it bows Him to the dust; it touches His very soul; it makes Him cry in anguish, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mat 27:46), and yet at the last He lifts Himself up and flings it all away, and cries, "It is finished!" (Joh 19:30)—and it is *gone*!

There is not a wreck of it left; no, not an atom of it left. It is all gone at once, and once for all. He has borne the immeasurable weight and cast it off from His shoulders forever; and as it lies no more on Him, so also it lies no more on them. Sin shall never be mentioned against His people anymore forever. Oh, wondrous deed of Deity! Oh, mighty feat of love accomplished once for all. The Redeemer never offered Himself to death before. He never will do it again.

Look this way, my brethren: the reason why it never will be done again is because there is no need for it. All the sin that was laid upon Jesus is gone; all the sin of His people is forever discharged. He has borne it; the debt is paid. The handwriting of ordinances against us is nailed to His cross; the accuser's charge is answered forever.

What then shall we say of those who come forward and pretend that they perpetually present the body of Christ in the unbloody sacrifice of the mass? Why, this: that no profane jest from the lip of Voltaire[17] ever had even the

slightest degree of God-defiant blasphemy in it compared with such a hideous insult as this horrible pretense. It is infernal. I will say no less. There can be nothing more intolerable than that notion, for our Lord Jesus Christ has offered Himself for sin once, and once for all; and he who dares to think of offering Him again insults Him by acting as if that once were not enough. I cannot believe any language of abhorrence to be too strong if the performers and attendants at the mass really knew what is implied in their professed act and deed. In the judgment of Christian charity we may earnestly pray, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luk 22:34).

Our words fail and our conceptions faint at the thought of the great Substitute with all the sins of His people condensed into one black draught and set before Him. How shall we think of Him as putting that cup to His lip, and drinking, drinking, drinking all the wrath till He had drained the cup to the bottom, and filled Himself with horror? Yet see, He has finished the death-drink and turned the cup upside down, crying, "It is finished." At one tremendous draught the loving Lord has drained destruction dry for all His people, and there is no dreg nor drop left for any one of them; for now is the will of God accomplished—by the which will we are sanctified "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10). Glory be to God! And yet again, glory be to God!

"He bore on the tree the sentence for me,
And now both the Surety and sinner are free.
In the heavenly Lamb thrice happy I am;
And my heart doth rejoice at the sound of His name."

III. The Everlasting Result

Now I close with our third head, and that is the everlasting result. The everlasting result of this effectual carrying out of the will of God is that now God regards His people's sin as *expiated*,[18] and their persons as sanctified. Our sin is removed by expiation. Atonement has been offered, and its efficacy abides forever. There is no need of any other expiation. Believers repent bitterly, but not in the way of expiation. There is no penance to be exacted of them by way of putting away guilt. Their guilt is gone; their transgression is forgiven. The covenant is made with them, and it runs thus: "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more for ever" (Heb 8:12). Their sins have, in fact, been ended, blotted out, and annihilated by the Redeemer's one sacrifice.

Next, they are *reconciled*. There is no quarrel now between God and those who are in Christ Jesus. Peace is made between them twain. The middle wall that stood between them is taken away. Christ by His one sacrifice has made peace for all His people, and effectually established an amity that never shall be broken.

"Lord Jesus, we believing
In thee have peace with God,
Eternal life receiving,
The purchase of thy blood.

Our curse and condemnation
Thou bearest in our stead;
Secure is our salvation
In thee, our risen Head."

Moreover, they are not only accepted and reconciled, but they are *purified*; the taint that was upon them is taken away. In God's sight they are regarded no more as unclean. They are no longer shut without the camp; they may come to the throne of the heavenly grace when they will. God can have communion with them. He regards them as fit to stand in His courts and to be His servants, for they are purified, reconciled, expiated through the one offering of Christ. Their admission into the closest intimacy with God could never be allowed if He did not regard them as purged from all uncleanness, and this has been effected not at all by themselves, but alone by the great sacrifice.

"Thy blood, not mine, O Christ,

Thy blood so freely spilt,
Has blanched my blackest stains,
And purged away my guilt.

"Thy righteousness, O Christ,
Alone does cover me;
No righteousness avails
Save that which is in Thee."

Now, what has come of it? That is the point. I want you now just to let me leave the doctrine and try and bring out the experience arising from it. What Christ has done in the carrying out of the great will of God has effected salvation for all His chosen; but this is applied to them actually and experimentally by the Holy Ghost's dwelling in them, by which indwelling they know they are now God's people. The Israelites were God's people after a fashion; the Levites were more peculiarly so, and the priests were still more especially so, and these had to present perpetual sacrifices and offerings that God might be able to look upon them as His people, for they were a sinful people.

You and I are not typically,[19] but truly and really His people. Through Jesus Christ's offering of Himself once for all we are really set apart to be the Lord's people henceforth and forever, and He says of us—I mean, of course, not of us all, but of as many as have believed in Jesus, and to whom the Holy Ghost has revealed His finished work—"I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2Co 6:16). You, believers, are sanctified in this sense: that you are now the set-apart ones unto God, and you belong wholly to Him.

Will you think that over? "I am now not my own. I do not belong now to the common order of men, as all the rest of men do. I am set apart. I am called out. I am taken aside. I am one of the Lord's own. I am His treasure and His portion. He has through Jesus Christ's death made me one of those of whom He says, they "shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num 23:9). I want you to feel it so that you may live under the power of that fact; that you may feel, "My Lord has cleansed me. My Lord has made expiation for me. My Lord has reconciled me unto God, and I am God's man, I am God's woman. I cannot live as others do. I cannot be one among you. I must come out. I must be separate. I cannot find my pleasure where you find yours. I cannot find my treasure where you find yours. I am God's, and God is mine. That wondrous transaction on the cross of which our minister has tried to speak, but of which he could not speak as he ought—that wondrous unspeakable deed upon the cross,

that wonderful life and death of Jesus—has made me one of God's people, set apart unto Him, and *as such I must live*."

When you realize that you are God's people, the next thing is to reflect that God in sanctifying a people set them apart for His service, and He made them fit for His service. You, beloved, through Christ's one great offering of His body for you, are permitted now to be the servants of God. You know it is an awful thing for a man to try and serve God—until God gives him leave, there is a presumption about it. Suppose that one of the Queen's enemies, who has sought her life and has always spoken against her, were to say, "I mean to be one of her servants; I will go into her palace and I will serve her," having all the while in his heart a rebellious, proud spirit. His service could not be tolerated; it would be sheer impudence. Even so, "Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?" (Psa 50:16).

A wicked man, pretending to serve God, stands in the position of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, trying to offer incense; because he is not purified and not called to the work, and has no fitness for it. But now, beloved, you that are in Christ are called to be His servants. You have permission and leave to serve Him. It ought to be your great joy to be accepted servants of the living God. If you are only the Lord's shoeblack you have a greater privilege than if you were an emperor. If the highest thing you ever will be allowed to do should be to loose the latchet of your Master's shoe, or to wash His servants' feet, if that master be Christ, you are favored above the mightiest of the mighty. Men of renown may envy you: their orders of the Garter or the Golden Fleece are nothing compared with the high dignity of being servitors of King Jesus.

Look upon this as being the result of Christ's death upon the cross, that such a poor, sinful creature as you are, that were once a slave of the devil, are now suffered to be the servant of God. On the cross my Master bought for me the privilege to preach to you at this time; and He bought for you, dear mother, the privilege to go home and train your little child for the great Father in heaven. In fact, He bought for us a sanctification that has made us the Lord's people, and has enabled us to engage in His service. Do we not rejoice in this?

Next to that we have this privilege, that what we do can now be accepted. Because Jesus Christ by the offering of His body once has perfected the Father's will and has sanctified us, therefore what we do is now accepted with God. We might have done whatever we would, but God would not have accepted it of a sinner's hands—of the hands of those that were out of Christ.

Now He accepts anything of us. You dropped a penny into the box; it was all

that you could give, and the Lord accepted it. It dropped into *His* hand. You offered a little prayer in the middle of business this afternoon because you heard an ill word spoken, and your God accepted that prayer. You went down the street and spoke to a poor sick person; you did not say much, but you said all you could—the great God accepted it. Acceptance in the Beloved, not only for our persons, but for our prayers and our work, is one of the sweetest things I know of. We are accepted. That is the joy of it. Through that one great, bloody sacrifice, once for all offered, God's people are forever accepted, and what His people do for Him is accepted too; and now we are privileged to the highest degree, being sanctified—that is to say, made into God's people, God's servants, and God's accepted servants.

Every privilege that we could have had, if we had never sinned, is now ours; and we are in Him as His children. We have more than would have come to us by the covenant of works. And if we will but know it and live up to it, even the very privilege of suffering and the privilege of being tried, the privilege of being in want, should be looked upon as a great gift. Methinks an angel spirit, seated high alone there, meditating and adoring, might say within himself, "I have served God: these swift wings have borne me through the ether on His errands, but I never suffered for Him. I was never despised for Him. Drunkards never called me ill names. I was never misrepresented as God's servant. After all, though I have served Him, it has been one perpetual joy. He hath set a hedge about me and all that I have." If an angel could envy anybody, I think he would envy the martyr who had the privilege of burning quick to the death for Christ, or such as Job, who, when stripped of everything and covered with sores, could sit on a dunghill and yet honor His God—because such as these achieved a service unique within itself, which has sparkling diamonds of the first water glittering about it, such as cannot be found in an unsuffering ministry be it as complete as it may. You are favored sons of Adam, you who have become sons of God. You are favored beyond cherubim and seraphim in accomplishing a service for the manifestation of the riches of the grace of God, which unfallen spirits never could accomplish. Rejoice and be exceeding glad that this one offering has put you there.

And now you are eternally secure. No sin can ever be laid to your door, for it is all put away, and sin being removed, every other evil has lost its fang and sting. Now you are eternally beloved, for you are one with Him who can never be other than dear to the heart of Jehovah. That union never can be broken, for nothing can separate us from the love of God, and hence your security can never

be imperilled. Now are you in some measure glorified, for the spirit of glory and of Christ doth rest upon you (1Pe 4:14), and our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus, who hath already raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies (Eph 1). Heaven is already ours in promise, in price, and in principle, and the preparation for it also has begun. I feel at this hour that,

"All that remains for me
Is but to love and sing,
And wait until the angels come
To bear me to their King."

In such a spirit would I always live. Brethren and sisters, are you dispirited at this time? Have you a great trouble upon you? Are you alone in the world? Do others misjudge you, or does the iron of scandal pierce your very soul? Do fierce coals of juniper await those vicious tongues that wrong you? Do you feel bowed into the dust? Yet, what art thou at to be despairing? Child of God and heir of all things, why art thou cast down? Joint heir with Christ, why grovellest thou? Why liest thou among the pots when thou hast already angels' wings about thee?

Up, man, up! Thy heritage is not here among the dragons and the owls. Up! Thou art one of God's eagles, born for brighter light than earth could bear—light that would blind the blear-eyed sons of men if they were once to get a veiled glimpse of it. Thou, a twice-born man, one of the imperial family, one that shall sit upon a throne with Christ as surely as Christ sits there, what art thou at to be moaning and groaning? Wipe thy eyes and smooth thy brow, and in the strength of the Eternal go to thy life-battle!

It will not be long. The trumpet of victory almost sounds in thy ears. Wilt thou now beat a retreat? No. Play the man and win the day. "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed" (Psa 37:3), till He comes to catch thee away where thou shalt see what Jesus did for thee when He made His body once for all a sacrifice, that He might fulfill the will of the eternal Father, and sanctify thee and all His people unto God forever and ever. May the best of blessings rest upon all who are in Christ Jesus.

Sermon No. 1527; Delivered at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington.

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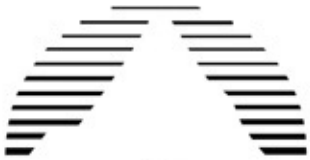

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[1] **wanted** – lacked; still needed.
[2] **Arminian** – a follower of Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), Dutch theologian, born in Oudewater, the Netherlands. Arminius taught that the believer could lose his salvation by sinning.
[3] **meetness** – appropriateness; suitableness.
[4] **self-interpretation** – the hermeneutical principle that "Scripture interprets Scripture," in which a clearer passage is used to shed light upon a less clear passage.
[5] **ablution** –act of washing the body; purification by water.
[6] **ephah** – a large measure of grain; any large portion.
[7] **covenant of grace** – God's gracious, eternal purpose of redemption, conceived before the creation of the world, first announced in Genesis 3:15, progressively revealed in history, accomplished in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, and appropriated by faith in Him.
[8] **Antiochus Epiphanes** (c. 215 – 164 BC) – Syrian king who conquered Jerusalem in 167 BC and attempted to adopt Greek culture in Judea. He set up an altar to Zeus in the Temple and strictly prohibited the religious practice of Judaism. The Jews under the Maccabaeans retook the Temple three years later.
[9] **fuller** – one who makes his living doing laundry.
[10] **London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689** – adopted by the Baptist churches of the time to express their agreement with the orthodox doctrines of the Christian faith. It is 95% the same as the Westminster Confession of Faith, differing in two chapters: congregational church government (vs. presbyterianism) and believer's baptism (vs. infant baptism). Available from Chapel Library.
[11] **A Catechism with Proofs** – Baptist catechism written in 1693 by Benjamin Keach for teaching the doctrines of the *London Confession.* By 1738, this catechism was adopted by the Philadelphia Association of Baptists in America, the spiritual parent of all Baptist churches in the USA. Spurgeon edited and reprinted it in 1855 for his own congregation, shortening the expositions of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. The catechism has been in continual use by Baptists in English-speaking countries to train their families for 300 years. Available from Chapel Library.
[12] **John Gill** (1697-1771) – Baptist minister, theologian, and biblical scholar, who preceded Spurgeon in the pulpit of the New Park Street Church by 100 years.
[13] **Bi-centenary movement** – movement observing the 200th anniversary of the ejection of 2,000 dissenting ministers from the Church of England.
[14] **assize** – court of judgment.
[15] **wanted** – lacked.
[16] **tarn** – a lake formed from drainage from the hillsides, with no feeding nor draining tributary.
[17] **Voltaire** (1694-1778) – French writer and poet; a leading figure of the Enlightenment.
[18] **expiated** – to have made satisfaction for an offense by which guilt is done away.
[19] **typically** – pertaining to a type, form, or figure that illustrates a spiritual truth.