

# A simple paper on sanctification

## Introduction

I have written on this matter extensively in a number of papers, incorporating an exposition of the doctrine within different subject matters. I have also explained the doctrine in some simple expositions, such as in my catechism or my discipleship manual. Despite this I continually find that people who have received this doctrine, and understand the basics, still have difficulty in explaining it and often get confused. Since it is very common for people to misunderstand sanctification, and since even some systematics get this wrong, I will try here to explain the issues as simply as I possibly can, but also covering them extensively. I will no doubt repeat much of what I have said in earlier papers.

### **The wide variety of explanations**

Firstly, Bible students need to understand that there are a wide variety of explanations of this doctrine, with very many errors and a great deal of confusion even among good men. Added to this are the very serious errors made by heretics and false teachers. This means that any given book on the subject could be good, average, poor or just plain dangerous. I would say that the majority of popular expositions of this doctrine are either incomplete or wrong; therefore, a warning has to be sounded to be careful what you read.

### **Errors of good men**

There have been some very good theologians and preachers who write books about sanctification but who come from a certain theological agenda which colours their teaching. For instance, the focus of Puritans on the Old Testament, on Covenant Theology and on Erastianism (the idea of a state church) led to an over-exaggeration of the objective Mosaic Law as the standard of Christian righteousness with a tendency towards legalism. Much as I love the Puritans, on this some were wrong.

AW Pink noticed this when he wrote a book on sanctification,

Why is there so much diversity of opinion upon these points, scarcely any two writers treating of this subject in the same manner. ... Others have superficially examined this subject through the coloured glasses of creedal attachment. ... On some aspects of *this* subject he has found the Plymouth Brethren much more helpful than the Reformers and the Puritans. [AW Pink; *The Doctrine of Sanctification*, p4.]

Romans 6 is crucial to understanding the doctrine of sanctification, but even so good a preacher as D Martyn Lloyd-Jones utterly failed to understand what this is teaching and thus fails to properly apply the doctrine. His denial of the two natures of the Christian leads him to make a number of fundamental errors. [See my paper, '*The problem of sin*'.]

The lesson is that you cannot necessarily trust even a good man, who is sound on most things, on the issue of sanctification. You must check, evaluate and confirm whether it is Biblical before accepting what he says.

### **The need to understand human identity**

A key problem is the divergence of opinion regarding the make up of human beings, which is crucial to understanding what the Bible teaches about sanctification. It is my view that unless you correctly understand what the Bible teaches about man you cannot properly teach what the Bible says about sanctification.

It is also my view that Scripture plainly teaches us that, though man is a complex being with many parts and systems from one point of view and a simple organism from another, the Bible informs us that there are three chief organs of interest to God: spirit, soul and body. Now most (not all) Reformed theologians teach that man is only composed of two chief organs, body and soul (or material and immaterial substances). Without going into a long explanation of the fight between these two points of view, clearly there are going to be differences on any theological subject affecting man's nature, and this is another area where good men fall down. I rest my stance on the fact that when God makes a clear statement about his will for man to be sanctified, he immediately states that it affects these three areas of his life,

**Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thess 5:23**

Here Paul clearly says that to be sanctified completely, we need to be preserved blameless in spirit, soul and body and that this is completed at the Second Coming. We will look at this more carefully later on.

### **Now or later?**

Having mentioned 1 Thess 5:23 we can also refer to another dividing line in the teaching of sanctification.

There are those who claim that sanctification can be perfected on earth now before the end. These are called 'Perfectionists' and there are various forms. Wesleyans taught a form of perfectionism called 'sinless perfection' or 'entire sanctification'. This follows a crisis experience, later called a 'baptism of the Spirit' by Fletcher (Wesley's appointed successor), which resulted in the obliteration of the inner disposition to sin and the rule of perfect love. Movements influenced by Wesley developed further forms of this perfectionism, such as the Holiness Movement or the Higher life Movement. Oberlin theology (Charles Finney) also taught sinless perfection.

Now 1 Thess 5:23 shows us that the fulness of sanctification only occurs at the Second Coming and this is because only at that time are certain aspects of salvation consummated. Chiefly, this is the provision of a new, holy, spiritual body like Christ's which cannot sin; but also at this time sanctification is completed and the old nature removed forever. There can be no sanctification before these events and thus the idea of perfectionism is false.

**He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints. 1 Thess 3:13**

Consequently, perfectionists adjust the severity of sin and redefine righteousness to enable men to comply more easily; perfectionism is not an elevation to God's holiness but a diminishing of what is considered as holy behaviour. Finney taught, for instance, that God's law is adjusted to man's ability. Perfectionists claim that man can obey the law as a man now and yet some (e.g. Wesley) also claim that man can still make mistakes (which are not classed as sin).

Clearly, Perfectionism is both wrong and confusing; yet many popular church movements teach this and some very esteemed men, such as J Sidlow Baxter, are perfectionists.

### **Interim conclusion**

Already we have seen that this subject is a minefield because so many men have erred from Biblical teaching and twisted texts to suit their own presuppositions. As we investigate this subject we will see that there are many versions on this and that aspect of the doctrine and that to be safe we must be absolutely Biblical in our approach, avoiding the errors of men.

This means that some of us must shed long cherished ideas that belong to a certain denominational statement or the ideas of an esteemed teacher.

## What is sanctification?

### The word – ‘sanctify’

Though there is some variety in the meaning of this word, for our purposes both the Hebrew and Greek words translated ‘sanctify’ emphasise separation, and in particular a separation from profane things in order to be dedicated to God. Thus we have peripheral meanings such as ‘consecrate’, ‘dedicate’, ‘to treat as sacred’ etc. Sanctification is a separation of things from a state of uncleanness to have a holy purpose. So, the doctrine of sanctification has to do with separating men from sin, the world and Satan in order to consecrate them to God. It involves making us fit for God and separated unto his purposes.

Now there is a word that summarises being set apart from sin and made fit for God, and that is ‘holy’. The word ‘holy’ derives from the same root word as the word ‘sanctify’ [in Greek ‘holy’ is *hagios* and ‘sanctify’ is *hagiazō*]. A valid definition of ‘sanctify’ is ‘to make holy’.

‘Sanctify’ can be applied to inanimate objects without any moral force (e.g. Ex 29:36-37) or sometimes God uses the word ‘sanctify’ to refer to people chosen by him to do his will in a certain situation, and these people may not be holy. For example, in Isaiah 13:3 where the Medes were used by God to overthrow the Babylonian Empire. Or it can be applied to people separating themselves to something with no reference to God, as in Isaiah 66:17. Sometimes it is used of God where it refers to his majesty, separated from, and high above, the world of men. These are all more technical uses of the word. However, in its application to the elect it has a moral force that leads to holiness. People who are separated unto God become holy.

Holiness is the opposite of iniquity, ‘just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness ... now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness’, (Rm 6:19). Thus sanctify has the implication of washing away, or cleansing from corruption (Eph 5:26; 2 Tim 2:21; Heb 9:13); therefore, sanctification also has the associated meaning of purification.

### Summary

So, regarding elect persons, sanctification is the separating of them from sin and consecrating them to God by a process of purification and cleansing which makes them holy and fit for God’s purposes.

A more extensive definition by AW Pink may be helpful here,

What is scriptural sanctification?

**First**, it is a moral quality in the regenerate—the same in its nature as that which belongs to the Divine character—which produces harmony with God’s will and causes its possessor to aim at His glory in all things.

**Second**, it is the moral image of God—lost by the first Adam, restored by the last Adam—stamped upon the heart, which “image” consists of righteousness and holiness.

**Third**, it is the opposite of sin. Inasmuch as all sin is a transgression of the Divine law, true sanctification brings its possessor into a conformity thereto.

**Fourth**, it is an integral and essential part of “salvation,” being a deliverance from the power and pollution of sin, causing its possessor to love what he once hated, and to now hate what he formerly loved. Thus, it is that which experimentally fits us for

fellowship with and the enjoyment of the Holy One Himself. [AW Pink; *The Doctrine of Sanctification*, p63.]

### **The need for sanctification**

Sanctification is required as a result of sin. At the fall of Adam all men were rendered totally depraved and mired in sin. This produced two chief problems: the first is that man was thoroughly guilty for his sins before God; the second is that man was corrupted and made filthy. The remedy for this was also twofold: first man had to be justified in order to enable him to stand before God without condemnation; justification deals with the guilt of sin and declares the believer to be legally righteous in Christ. Secondly, sanctification is God's means of making a man clean; it removes the corruption of sin and makes a man holy before God.

This is typified in many places. The whole Tabernacle system of worship centred upon two sanctifying agents: blood and water. There was the blood of the sacrificial offerings to deal with all forms of sin and there was the washing with water, e.g. of the priests, to deal with daily corruption. There needed to be a laver to wash the body as well as the altar to atone for sins. It is also typified in the cross when the spear entered Jesus' heart producing both blood and water (Jn 19:34). Both cleansing from, and forgiveness of, sins is vital. The salvation God gives us through Jesus not only delivers us from the penal consequences of sin but also cleanses us from its moral pollution and frees us from its corrupting power. Sinners need forgiveness for what they done wrong and deliverance from what they are by nature.

We will examine the relationship between justification and sanctification later, but here we can simply say that though they are not to be confused, the one naturally leads to the other. All men who are justified are sanctified. The chief difference between the two is that in justification righteousness is imputed (accounted) but in sanctification righteousness is imparted; in justification a sinner is declared righteous, but in sanctification a sinner is made righteous.

### **The origin of sanctification – the decree of God**

I, the LORD, sanctify Israel. Ezek 37:28

This verse is set within the eschatological purposes of God to establish an eternal covenant with his people and an everlasting sanctuary, where David is king and God is in the midst of the people. God goes on to say, 'They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their God.' (Ezek 37:23). The fulfilment of God's purposes with his elect people, symbolised by the term 'Israel', involves a cleansing from sin and idolatry and the removal of all transgressions. Thus God says, 'I will sanctify Israel'. It is God's will that we should be sanctified,

By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

Heb 10:10

The origin of sanctification is the decree of God to save his people by his grace.

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Eph 1:4

In this decree God elected his chosen people and then purposed to send Christ to be the Saviour of this people, to atone for their sins, and then pour out the Holy Spirit to be the agent who applies that salvation to his people. The purpose was to produce a people to be the bride of Christ and a nation that will express the glorious works of God. All that

sanctification achieves is the result of the eternal decree of God to save his own precious people.

**Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. Col 1:12**

**To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ. Jude 1:1**

The Westminster Confession calls God's grace the 'moving cause of sanctification' (Titus 3:5). The 'meritorious cause' is the blood and righteousness of Christ (Titus 2:14).

### **The achiever of sanctification – the Lord Jesus Christ**

The atonement of Christ was necessary to deal with the great problem in the world of men – sin. Sin alienates men from God, and makes them his enemies; corrupts their natures making them a polluted vessel; but also results in condemnation by God, making men the recipients of his wrath against sin. To save men from sin one must reconcile them to God, change them and turn away divine wrath against sin. These, in turn, necessitate forgiveness of sins and cleansing of the human nature from the effect of sins. Thus salvation from sin requires a series of actions by God which together make up this salvation: regeneration, redemption, reconciliation, propitiation, justification, adoption and sanctification.

**For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ... Of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God -- and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. 1 Cor 1:18, 30**

The cross of Christ was the effecting of such a complete salvation; a salvation that incorporated a number of processes to secure the people intended to receive it. Thus the source of sanctification is in the blood and work of Christ to save his people from their sins.

**For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. Heb 10:14**

**Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Heb 13:12**

**And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight. Col 1:21-22**

The cross is the means whereby sinful men are dealt with in order to bring them back into relationship with a holy God. The basis of sanctification is the work of Christ to fulfil the decree of God. Sanctification is not achieved by the work of men, nor the faith of men, but the work of Christ.

### **The goal of sanctification – to be like Christ**

The end of sanctification is not some rule, law or standard; it is a person. The purpose of sanctification is to separate men from sin, and even from ordinary humanity, and unify them in Christ. By doing this God not only redeems the elect from their sins but also joins them into his own family. The specific method of bringing the elect into the family is the result of adoption, in itself a corollary of justification; but the separation of the elect from sin and the purification of them into a holy being, fit to be a son, is the work of sanctification.

Any system of sanctifying, or making holy, has to have a pattern; what is it that the process is modelling the perfect person on? That person is Christ; he is the measure of the standard of holiness that sons are being made into.

**Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Eph 4:13**

That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Col 1:28

Sanctification is the means whereby God's people are made to be like Christ; when it is complete all the elect are fully like Christ:

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him. 1 Jn 3:1-2

Thus any teacher who claims that something less than the perfect holiness of Christ is the end of sanctification is a liar. This means that those perfectionists who claim to be entirely sanctified but who still sin are heretics. It also means that theologians like Finney who reduce the claims of God's moral law to the level that we can obey in the flesh are also heretics. Nothing less than the perfect holiness of Christ himself is a satisfactory result of sanctification. It is the work of God not man.

Sanctification is reversing the effects of sin and one principal effect of sin is lawlessness. Therefore, sanctification will result in obedience to divine law. Now God's law is his will for mankind on earth and obeying God's law is just another way of saying 'doing God's will'. We will explain what this means for us in a later section.

The root principle of sin is selfishness and pride; it is the elevation of man in rebellion to God and subjecting all one's powers to satisfying one's own desires. It is self-pleasing, self-love, self-gratification, self-satisfaction. Therefore, the impact of sanctification on a person will be the reversal of this also, resulting in selflessness. The result of selflessness is disinterested love (that is a love which does not result from personal interest or for personal gain; unselfish love). Love is the fulfilling of the law (Rm 13:10).

Now both these results of sanctification, obeying God's law and manifesting selfless love to God and men, are the principal features of the life of Christ. Thus when Christians manifest a sanctified life by the Spirit they are said to be bearing the fruit of the Spirit, which is the character of Christ.

The goal of sanctification is Christ-likeness.

### **The principal agent in sanctification – the Holy Spirit**

The symbols used to depict the Holy Spirit vary, but they include several which have reference to dealing with sin and purification. Fire is a symbol of the Spirit in burning up sin and iniquity. Water is a symbol of the Spirit in washing away sins and making clean. Oil is a type of the Spirit; it was used to refresh the skin, to clean hair and act as medication in healing from corruption and soothing wounds and thus symbolises healing and cleansing from sin. The reason for such symbols is that it is the Holy Spirit who is the agent responsible for applying the benefits of redemption to God's people and thus deals with them to purify them from sin. Thus the elect are sanctified as a result of the work of the Spirit; it is not a work of man unaided.

By the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body. Rm 8:13

Sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Rm 15:16

God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit. 2 Thess 2:13

Sanctification of the Spirit. 1 Pt 1:2

We could sub-divide the works of the Holy Spirit in a believer in many ways, but the principal actions are:

1. *Regeneration*: the creation of the new man in the human spirit/heart. Regeneration is both a washing and a renewal (Titus 3:5).
2. *Definitive sanctification*: the sanctifying of the human spirit to enable God to dwell in man.
3. *Unification with Christ*: the baptism of the Spirit to bring all the elect into one body in Christ, sharing in his death and resurrection.
4. *Communion*: From God to man - the communication of the things of God and the resurrection life of Christ to the believer. From man to God - the cleansing of prayers and praise in the virtues and blood of Christ so that God can receive them.
5. *Transformation*: the action to bring the human heart into conformity with divine law and Christ-likeness. As sin is the transgression of divine law, so holiness is obedience to it.

The essence of the Spirit's work in us is to effect the application of the work that Christ has performed in our salvation to us personally. All the benefits that the Spirit brings to us for us to enjoy are the outworking of that which Christ secured in redemption. The peace we have by the Spirit results from the peace with God secured by Christ in reconciliation and justification. The life we have by the Spirit results from being raised with Christ. The fellowship we have with God by the Spirit results from the propitiation Christ made to turn away God's wrath from us. The feelings of sonship we have by the Spirit in us, and being able to call God 'Father', arise from the adoption by which Christ made us legal sons of God. Just as Christ was made unto us sanctification, so the Spirit makes us holy through Christ.

The Westminster Confession calls this aspect of the Spirit's work, the 'efficient cause' of sanctification.

### **The denial of God as the cause of sanctification**

There are three chief groups of supposed Christians who deny that God is the prime mover in sanctification and each one avers that man has the ability to purify himself to a lesser or greater degree; many variants of these teach forms of Perfectionism. These three groups are Pelagians, Romanists and Arminians.

#### *Pelagianism*

Pelagians are thoroughly unbiblical and unchristian in teaching that man has the complete ability to live righteously according to moral law by his own strength. They deny that all men are steeped in sin in every part, including inner dispositions, claiming that sins are just external acts. Though developed by a Celtic monk in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, who denied the doctrine of original sin and the inability of man (total depravity), many groups have taken on similar teachings throughout church history. The most notable case influencing modern Christians is Charles Finney whose teachings on sanctification come very close to outright Pelagianism. God only requires what man can actually do; there is no absolute standard of righteousness; sanctification is mere personal reformation according to human ability.

#### *Roman Catholicism*

Romanists claim that water baptism takes away the problem of original sin and human depravity which then enables man to perform works of righteousness, which is a lowered standard of God's requirement. This is similar to Finney's ideas that God would not ask man to do that which he could not perform. It denies that our righteousness must be perfect and must be like Christ; that we must be holy as God is holy.

*Arminianism*

Arminians make statements which appear to be sound, such as that sanctification is not effected through the natural merits of man but by grace in Christ. However, these statements are negated by their claim that faith is entirely the work of man; it is not a gift of God. This human faith enables Arminians to produce a salvation by free will that is not the result of sovereign grace at all. Unlike Pelagians and Romanists, Arminians do not teach that God's standard of righteousness can be lowered to suit man, but still claim that God does not insist on man doing what he cannot do. Instead they claim that God requires faith and obedience as believers and accepts that level of obedience as a faith work.

*Arminian perfectionism*

As we mentioned earlier, the 'perfection' of Arminians like John Wesley is not God's holiness but a mystical experience of 'perfect love' filling the heart, attained by a single act of faith. Despite this, the person, can still manifest 'infirmities' (i.e. sins). In an act of supreme contradiction, Wesley taught that this perfection was not a perfect fulfilling of the law, nor did it exclude fleshly mistakes which needed to be confessed; yet the believer is inwardly sanctified and external commission of sin is eradicated. Surely, all can see this is arrant nonsense! This is a refusal to call sin, 'sin' and is typical of all Higher Life perfectionism.

All these positions fail to see that God is the author and finisher of salvation and that sanctification is entirely the work of the triune God to make us holy like Christ.

## The problem of sanctification

### The insoluble problem for many Reformed

As I mentioned earlier, most Reformed theologians claim that man is only soul and spirit; that is, that he is bipartite in nature (called 'dichotomy'). On the other hand others, (including myself) aver that man is body, soul and spirit; that he is tripartite in nature (called 'trichotomy'). The defence of dichotomy is sincere in that it seeks to avoid neo-Platonism, however, neo-Platonism is actually a bipartite system.<sup>1</sup>

The real problem with dichotomy is that it is utterly unbiblical. Not only are there verses stating that man is tripartite (1 Thess 5:23), not only is there are verse that states that spirit and soul can be separated (Heb 4:12), but there are hundreds of verses mentioning a man's spirit, and thousands mentioning a man's soul. Furthermore, all Reformed dichotomists always end up needing to make a division in the soul and invent terms such as, 'the higher mind' or 'the rational soul' because their version of the soul has properties related to spiritual communication, but also to man's earthly mind, will and emotions.

Now a further defence of trichotomy is not suited here and we will concentrate upon the matter of sanctification.

Dichotomists have a serious problem. There are verses which state that a believer's sanctification was finished in the past; such as:

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<sup>1</sup> What Reformed theologians are trying to avoid is the Greek concept of dualism. Dualism (common in Gnosticism) teaches that the body and the soul are in constant tension and opposed to each other. Soul (being spiritual) is good, the body (being matter) is bad. Redemption is getting rid of the body and being pure spirit. This results from Plato's teaching about the world of ideals; that is, good is spiritual and matter is evil. Instead, Reformed theology teaches a duality (soul/body) that is not a dualism; they are trying to avoid saying that the material world is evil, rather it is to be brought under God's control in righteousness. The physical body was created good and is not inherently evil but is corrupted by evil thoughts.

So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified [perfect tense]. Acts 20:32

Those who are sanctified [perfect tense] by faith. Acts 26:18

To those who are sanctified [perfect tense] in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints. 1 Cor 1:2

And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified [aorist tense]. 1 Cor 6:11

He might sanctify and cleanse her [aorist tense]. Eph 5:26 [Literally: 'having cleansed her'.]

An aorist tense refers to a past event, completed once only in the past, but which has an ongoing effect into the present time. A perfect tense is also a past event which denotes a completed action or condition that has some implication for the present, or an action which extends from the past into the present.

We who died to sin ... our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. Rm 6:2, 6

Having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. Rm 6:18

You also have become dead to the law ... we were in the flesh ... But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit. Rm 7:4-6

We, having died to sins, might live for righteousness. 1 Pt 2:24

To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ. Jude 1:1

All these verses declare that an event has occurred in the past which has rendered the Lord's people fully sanctified once-for-all. Believers are sanctified already; they have been washed and purified. This sanctification occurs before believers are preserved in Jesus Christ.

There are verses which also relate to this problem but stated in a different way, such as:

For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. Heb 10:14

Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. 1 Jn 3:3

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ... Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Whoever has been born of God does not sin. 1 Jn 1:8, 3:6, 9

If I'm perfected forever, how can I be further sanctified? Why must I purify myself if I am already pure? How can it be true that I do not sin and yet if I say I have no sin I deceive myself? Clearly there is a fully sanctified aspect in the believer but also another aspect which needs sanctification.

Now where is this sanctified part of the human nature? According to dichotomists it has to be in the soul, there is nowhere else. Yet the essential basic premise of sanctification for Reformed theologians is that sanctification is not like justification (a once only past event in heaven) but is an ongoing process called 'progressive sanctification'. This is a continual perfecting of the human heart over time.

So most Reformed theologians insist in their systematics that sanctification is only a progressive, continual sanctification over time, completed at the end. A legal, definitive, completed aspect of sanctification is mostly ignored.

It is *this* blessed aspect of [definitive] sanctification which the denominational creeds and the writings of the Puritans almost totally ignored. [AW Pink; *The Doctrine of Sanctification*, p98.]

But Scripture tells us that there is a completed sanctification that occurred in the past. A few more modern theologians (such as John Murray, A Hoekema or Robert L Reymond) understand that there is a past sense of sanctification but do not explain where this is.

Most Reformed theologians cannot explain this problem; in fact do not even see that the problem exists.

The answer to the problem is to see the relationship of the various stages of sanctification with the tripartite nature of man. God deals perfectly with all the organs of man in their own time and order according to his plan.

## The tenses of sanctification and the nature of man

### Introduction

Some clarification on the nature of man may be needed for some readers at this point, without digressing into a full-blown exposition.

Though man's nature could be sub-divided into many organs, from God's perspective man is chiefly divided into three: spirit, soul and body. In the same way, though man's physiology could be endlessly sub-divided to the point of molecules, DNA and genes, doctors use a rough breakdown to teach medical students; thus the body is described in its skeletal structure, vascular structure, neurological structure and the chief organs.

The spirit, soul and body are the three organs by which man communicates: the spirit deals with spiritual matters, the soul with personal issues, and the body is the expression to, or communication with, the world outside.

The spirit is the innermost man symbolised by the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. It is hidden away and unseen. In the spirit are the human conscience, the new man (facilitating divine communion) and the intuitive faculty for receiving spiritual things from God. God intends that the spirit should direct the man through the soul. In unbelievers this organ is dead towards God.

The soul is the executive office of the personality and all decisions pass through it. It is symbolised in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle, being the place where priestly ministry occurs, where light is shed, where prayers arise and where food is placed. The soul comprises of the will, feelings and mind; or volition, emotions and intellect. The soul chooses what the man expresses in the body.

The heart is the seat of the human personality and is the gateway between the spirit and the soul. It chiefly comprises the conscience, which is in the spirit, and the higher mind, which is in the soul. The heart is symbolised in the Tabernacle by the Ark set in the Holy of Holies where God dwelt. In the Ark were the tables of the commandments (representing the conscience), the manna (representing God's word, spiritual feeding, communion) and Aaron's rod that budded (representing resurrection life or the new man).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Aaron's rod yielded almond buds. Almond trees blossom before the leaves appear in winter; thus they can represent speed and something approaching, e.g. the promise of early fruit. In Jer 12:11-16 it symbolises

The body is the means of communication with the outside world and is symbolised by the court of the Tabernacle in the open air. It responds to the decisions made by the soul.

The old nature resides somewhere in the old heart but is amorphous rather than a physical organ. When the soul is tempted to follow the old nature, the soul becomes flesh, or the life principle of the sinful Adamic life. A fleshly (carnal) Christian is a person who is dominated by the soul following the sinful desires of the old nature. Thus lust in the old nature gives birth to sinful desires in the soul which wills the body to commit sinful acts. When the old nature is put off then the heart is pure.

Sanctification has to purify and cleanse all these three organs.

### **The past tense of sanctification in the human spirit**

We have already noted a number of verses which plainly speak of a sanctification that occurred in the past, that was final and complete. This is 'definitive sanctification', 'positional sanctification', 'legal sanctification' or 'judicial sanctification'. Though ignored completely by many systematic theologies, there is no doubt that the Bible teaches this (e.g. Berkhof's standard systematic theology does not mention it).

But where does this sanctification take place in the man? It occurs in the human spirit and is the home of the new nature, or new man. In regeneration, working with definitive sanctification, the believer is given a new nature which is perfect and which is like Christ,

**Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Eph 4:23-24**

**The new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him. Col 3:10**

Here the new man is said to grow in knowledge not that it grows in holiness. The new nature is given in perfection but it is like a perfect baby, which grows into maturity. It was created in holiness according to Ephesians and is a spiritual entity. The beginning of the sanctification of the human spirit is the regeneration of it to create a new spirit alive towards God. It is then cleansed with a new heart. [Note that there is no provision of a new soul, the soul is gradually saved.]

The past tense of sanctification is that God has made us actually holy and fit for heaven in the new man within the human spirit. Thus the believer can pray and approach God's throne with boldness and even sit with Christ – all in the spirit. To do this his spirit must have been made holy and fit for God's company.

**Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us. Heb 10:19-20**

**[He] raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus. Eph 2:6**

For this reason Christians are called saints (1 Cor 1:2); despite the fact that they may actually sin grievously and be condemned for it (1 Cor 5:1-5).

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approaching judgment. In the lampstand of the Tabernacle there were bowls shaped like almond blossoms (Ex 25:33-35). The lampstand represents the light of God's word brought by the activity of the Holy Spirit (oil). Thus the general picture, regarding almonds, is one of an early approach of fruit associated with God's word; a promise of hope; a taste of the future blessing. The main picture in the miracle of Aaron's rod is, of course, resurrection – a dead staff bore fruit and came to life. Thus the rod with almonds speaks of resurrection life, that which was dead in sin and fruitless is regenerated, it is the new man with the promise of glorification.

The basis of definitive sanctification is that the believer has actually been co-crucified with Christ and has shared in his death and resurrection leading to a new principle of resurrection life within him. There is a part of him that has died to sin and that walks in newness of life. It is as a result of this inner work that the believer can then yield his body to God and not to sin. The believer does not try to patch up his old life to be holy but works from the basis that he has a new life. Thus the past tense of sanctification leads directly to daily progressive actual sanctification.

Definitive sanctification is a past event that occurred in us when we were converted and which gave us a new nature in our spirit. This also has connection with the standing of the believer in heaven. There is a difference between the believer's standing and his state; in his standing before God the believer is holy and a son; in his actual state on earth the believer may be a sinner.

### **The present tense of sanctification in the human soul**

The present tense of sanctification is the working of the Holy Spirit within us now to gradually make us more holy in character. It is called 'progressive sanctification' and most of the NT references about sanctification refer to this process (it could also be called 'practical sanctification'). It is also called 'the salvation of the soul' in Scripture because this is the human organ that is gradually being changed by a process of increased knowledge of the truth followed by repentance. It is also denoted as the present 'state' of the Christian.

Whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end [goal] of your faith -- the salvation of your souls. 1 Peter 1:8-9

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart. 1 Pet 1:22

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. 1 Pet 4:19

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. Jm 1:21

These verses are not talking about salvation generally because they teach that this salvation is the result of direct human agency; e.g. we purify our souls in obeying the truth and loving the brethren. Salvation, per se, is by faith in Christ and even this faith is the gift of God; there is no human agency or meritorious works in being redeemed. But here we see a salvation of the soul resulting from human works. This is the process of progressive sanctification.

God uses this process to determine who will be faithful to his instructions. The faithful believer will grow in holiness as he is renewed in the spirit of his mind and transforms himself in response to the Spirit's leading. The essence of progressive sanctification is growth in grace, knowledge and faith.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Rm 12:1-2

The variations in how far this process is developed in a man, how far the person saves his soul, determines what rewards are received at the end; and in turn these determine what positions of authority people have in the new world. [See my paper on 'Rewards'.]

The basis of this progressive sanctification involves two choices or activities: the putting off of the old nature and the putting on of the new nature. Puritans called this process ‘the mortification of sin’.<sup>3</sup> The believer is called, on the basis of definitive sanctification, to put off his old man. That is, since the believer is dead to sin in his spirit, he is called to make this good in practice and continually deny his soul from expressing sin. This is a choosing to deny his old way of life and live a life of repentance, that is following a new way of thinking, a new mind. This is called renewing the mind.

Thus we are commanded to:

**If by the Spirit you put [lit. ‘you are putting’] to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Rm 8:13**

**Put to death your members which are on the earth. Col 3:5**

These instructions follow Paul’s earlier teaching that the believer has died to sin (Rm 6:6-7; Col 3:3). In other words, the definitive sanctification that has already occurred in the past must result in ongoing, obedient action in the present. We put to death the old nature in practice, because it has already been legally sentenced to death.

In the same way the Lord Jesus continually commanded that his disciples deny themselves and take up the cross; that is, (in Paul’s parlance) to consider themselves dead. The repentant life is a life of self-denial. It denies the temptation to sin, which arises in the old nature which colludes with Satan, and follows the new mind which obeys the truth of God. Filling the mind with Scripture helps to teach the conscience and leads to correct living. [See later on ‘Practical sanctification’. For more theological details on this see my paper, ‘*The problem of sin*’.]

The corollary of dying with Christ in practice (putting off the old nature) is putting on the new nature, being transformed by renewal of the mind to be more like Christ in practice.

**Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Rm 12:2**

**We all ... are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Cor 3:18**

**[We] may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ. Eph 4:15**

**Walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. Col 1:10**

**Your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other. 2 Thess 1:3**

**Desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby. 1 Pt 2:2**

**Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 Pt 3:18**

The truth of God’s word is to impact us so that we are changed by it to be more like Christ in our soul (that is our thinking, our emotions and our volition) resulting in external acts of righteousness.

The present tense of sanctification is soul salvation, progressive sanctification.

[Certain Hyper-Calvinist Reformed Baptists, from the Strict Baptist tradition, deny that there is anything called ‘progressive sanctification’ as a result of their focus on everything being completed for the believer in eternity, such as eternal justification and adoption.

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Sanctification is the work of God’s free grace, whereby we are ... enabled more and more to die unto sin, and to live unto righteousness’. *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Question 35.

They also confuse regeneration, justification and definitive sanctification (though they are closely related) emphasising that believers are not seen as sinful before God. Thus many in the past were led into Antinomianism. By denying that there is any progressive sanctification they necessarily deny that there are any rewards for obedience and faithfulness, despite scores of Scriptures making this plain. Historically this led many adherents to do nothing and their movement all but died out in the UK; a small handful remain.]<sup>4</sup>

### **The future tense of sanctification – transformation of the human body**

The future tense of sanctification is when the process of sanctification is completed and finalised at the end when Christ returns. This is also called 'glorification'.

**Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thess 5:23**

**Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. Phil 1:6**

Dying believers before the end must wait for a glorified body, but their sanctification is complete at death '[the] church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect' (Heb 12:23).

The desire of God is that we are holy as he is holy (1 Pt 1:16); no lesser standard of holiness is sufficient. This is impossible on earth now as every believer has an old nature which causes a propensity to sin. However, at the end the believer is able to be as holy as the Lord himself is because salvation is consummated in three events:

1. The believer is given a body which is like that of Christ (Phil 3:21; 1 Jn 3:2). Though human, it is also spiritual and thus has special properties (1 Cor 15:44).
2. Sanctification is finalised and completed (1 Thess 5:23).
3. The old nature is removed and the sentence of death (separation) is completed (Rm 6:4-6; Col 2:11-13).

These events enable a believer to be glorified; that is to share the glory of God in a physical way. Until the finalisation of sanctification, a believer knows the glory of God potentially in his spirit but cannot manifest that glory physically or in his soul (e.g. in mental capacities without sin). At the end the sanctified believer knows the fulness of the glory of God (but is not God, is not infinite and expresses God's glory with limitations). The glorified believer shares God's glory, but only within the capacity of the spiritual body. The capacity of God's glory is infinite.

**For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Rm 8:18**

**A partaker of the glory that will be revealed. ... you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. 1 Pt 5:1, 4**

**Afterward receive me *to* glory. Ps 73:24**

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<sup>4</sup> The strongest modern proponent of this tradition is 'Reformed' Baptist Don Fortner. Though Don can produce some extremely good and helpful teaching, especially on his focus upon Christ in Scripture, he is confused about the relationship between justification and sanctification and mired by his belief in eternal justification / adoption. He also fails to see definitive sanctification as separate from regeneration, implies a Roman type of infused righteousness in regeneration, denies progressive sanctification, implies Antinomianism by his lack of clarity (though he denies this), denies rewards, denies duty faith, and condemns (and misunderstands) Reformed theology. There was once a Strict Baptist chapel in every town in England, now there are only about 200, with most only having a congregation of a handful of old people.

### Interim conclusion

I believe this to be the simplest way to understand the aspects of sanctification and the one that most accords with God's word.

However, it must be said that good Reformed writers use a variety of expressions in breaking down sanctification, and often these are at variance with one another. Thus Thomas Manton spoke of: 'meritorious sanctification' (the indwelling Spirit and inner sanctifying grace) by which he means definitive sanctification; 'applicatory sanctification' (renovation of the heart) by which he means regeneration and which he also (confusingly) means daily sanctification; and 'practical sanctification' which is actual cleansing from sins of thought, word and deed. I find this confusing.

Others speak of 'judicial sanctification', by which they sometimes means definitive sanctification and sometimes something else. Then there is 'subjective sanctification', which sometimes means progressive sanctification and sometimes definitive sanctification. Then 'practical sanctification' is sometimes used but differently to progressive sanctification. Some writers distinguish five types of sanctification. Pink uses 'judicial', 'subjective', 'personal' and 'experimental' as terms to break down sanctification; but also 'objective', 'relative' and 'absolute' sanctification (for definitive sanctification) as well as 'practical' for progressive sanctification; then he breaks it down into: 'positional', 'relative', 'personal' and 'experimental'! Others make an unnecessary formal distinction between purification and sanctification while yet others make a distinction within progressive sanctification of subjective (inner thoughts) and objective (external acts) cleansing. All this leads to further confusion and is often the result of an over-analytical mind leading to rational distinctions that have little basis in Scripture.

Few understand the tenses of sanctification (AW Pink is one, though he does not expand this theme properly) and none, that I know of, tie these in to the threefold division of man's nature. I believe my analysis to be Biblical, understandable, logical and sensible.

## Justification and sanctification

As we stated earlier, justification and sanctification are closely connected but are separate and must not be confused. An example of a heresy resulting from such confusion is to state (correctly) that justification is by faith and so we are declared righteous by God; but then to aver that sanctification is also by faith (incorrect) and so we are made righteous by faith. This is a perfectionist error that is common in forms of Higher Life teaching. Scripture makes it quite plain that progressive sanctification involves effort and striving, not just faith (e.g. Acts 24:16; Heb 12:4; Col 1:29); the believer has faith in God's word and then applies that in his life with self-denial and repentance.

So, if we confuse justification and sanctification the result is error; however, the one is inseparable from the other.

Though absolutely inseparable, yet these two great blessings of Divine grace are quite distinct. In sanctification something is actually *imparted* to us, in justification it is only *imputed*. Justification is based entirely upon the work Christ wrought *for* us, sanctification is principally a work wrought *in* us. Justification respects its object in a legal sense and terminates in a relative change—a deliverance from punishment, a right to the reward; sanctification regards its object in a moral sense, and terminates in an experimental change both in character and conduct—imparting a love for God, a capacity to worship Him acceptably, and a meetness for heaven. Justification is by a righteousness without us, sanctification is by a holiness wrought in us. Justification is by Christ as Priest, and has regard to the penalty of sin; sanctification is by Christ as

King, and has regard to the dominion of sin: the former cancels its damning power, the latter delivers from its reigning power.

They differ, then, in their *order* (not of time, but in their nature), justification preceding, sanctification following: the sinner is pardoned and restored to God's favour before the Spirit is given to renew him after His image. They differ in their *design*: justification removes the obligation unto punishment; sanctification cleanses from pollution. They differ in their *form*: justification is a judicial act, by which the sinner is pronounced righteous; sanctification is a moral work, by which the sinner is made holy: the one has to do solely with our standing before God, the other chiefly concerns our state. They differ in their *cause*: the one issuing from the merits of Christ's satisfaction, the other proceeding from the efficacy of the same. They differ in their *end*: the one bestowing a title to everlasting glory, the other being the highway which conducts us thither. [AW Pink; *The Doctrine of Sanctification*, p10-11.]

The important matter to understand is that in justification the believer is declared to be righteous and has a legal standing in heaven. Justification does not make the believer actually righteous on earth.

Many people have made serious mistakes in this. By emphasising what the Bible says about justification, i.e. that all our sins are forgiven by Christ's blood, they foolishly then say that we can continue in sin because it is all forgiven. Paul himself warns about this mistake in Rm 6:1-2. Despite realising this danger, many other teachers, over influenced by Higher Life ideas, so emphasise grace resulting in justification that they give inadequate warnings about the danger of sin, and the result in their followers is Antinomianism (lawlessness). Many Charismatics are Antinomian without knowing either the word or the Higher Life and perfectionist teachings that are the root of their error.

It is important to understand that justification is neither regeneration nor sanctification. Justification involves several actions by God acting as Judge in declaring that we are righteous: pardon from all sins; satisfaction of the law's demands; reconciliation with God; a new righteous standing before God and peace with God.

Another set of errors involves the mistake in confusing justification with regeneration. This is evidenced by some Reformed Baptists who teach that justification changes a person's state and that it actually makes a person righteous. In other words, man's moral nature is renovated by justification. Romanists also teach this in their idea of justification being a infusion of righteousness which leads to meritorious works.

Justification does not change a person's moral character, but declares him 'not guilty' on the basis of another's righteousness. It is objective and forensic (related to open law courts), not subjective and hidden. God and the Lord Jesus are both said to be justified (Lk 7:29; 1 Tim 3:16) but clearly no moral change is indicated, rather it refers to a public declaration of righteousness. Notice also that justification is the opposite of condemnation. Since condemnation does not mean making a good man bad but is the legal sentence of punishment by a judge, neither does justification mean the process of making a bad man good; it is the formal sentence of acquittal by a judge. Confusing these doctrines leads to a host of problems.

Justification is also effected in us personally in time; we are justified by a faith given to us by God at regeneration, not before. Our life previous to justification is one of sin, alienation and enmity to God, 'just like the others' (Eph 2:1-2). Some Reformed Baptists teach the error of eternal justification, claiming that everything in salvation was done for us in eternity, including justification and adoption. This removes all responsibility from man and is evidenced in the lack of works, evangelism and denial of rewards in such people.

A smaller minority of Reformed Baptists claim that the faith which is exercised for justification is not their own expression of faith (given by God), but is the personal faith of Christ. This is a very foolish and odd idea, only held by a few. The ground of justification is not Christ's faith but his righteousness. We are not justified because Christ believed for us, but because he suffered for our sins as our substitute and then gave us his own righteousness.

This leads to another important feature of justification; the righteousness that is imputed to the believer is not the personal righteousness of the divine life of Christ, which is infinite in quality and which we could not sustain, but is the perfect obedience to the law by Christ as a man. This is sometimes described by theologians as Christ's 'active obedience'. Again, a few Reformed Baptists falsely teach that the righteousness is Christ's own divine righteousness as God. Paul makes it clear that this is false when he says that it is Christ's work which results in our justification, not his faith or his divine personal righteousness:

Therefore, as through one man's offence *judgment* came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Rm 5:18-19

Christ's obedience leads to our justification, and is the ground of it, not his faith or his personal righteous character as God.

Finally, the Bible explains that if good works do not follow justification, then there are grounds for believing that the person is not saved at all. Justification always results in sanctification and thus a true believer will grow in holiness. Failure to do this shows that the conversion was false.

[For more information on this subject, see my paper, 'The means of justification'.]

## Sanctification and the law

We should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not *in* the oldness of the letter. Rm 7:6

Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace. Eph 2:15

The process of making a man holy will necessarily involve making the man comply with divine, moral law. All men are always under law in some form because the law is God's will for man in the world. Natural men are lawbreakers; they continually break the moral law of God and this confirms their sin as being lawlessness.

Now many believers, especially Reformed Christians, teach that we are to obey the Mosaic Law, especially that found in the Ten Commandments. Now, while these are an excellent summary of the moral law, they are not given as the rule of Christian living by the apostles. Indeed, we are commanded to break one of these laws in meeting on Sunday instead of the Sabbath. Furthermore, the Mosaic Law does not go far enough; the believer is to deal with hate in his heart or lust as well as murder or adultery. Moses did not tell the Israelites to take every thought captive.

The believer must follow what Paul calls 'the Law of Christ' (Gal 6:1). This is the application of the moral law enabled by the indwelling Holy Spirit to give power to comply to live like Christ did. Thus thoughts can be taken captive and dealt with. The Mosaic Law has no power to enable people to obey it and was designed as a temporary institution in a

Jewish theocracy in order to magnify sin and point people to the need for a divine deliverer (Gal 3:19).

Furthermore, the moral aspects of the Mosaic Law are completely intertwined with the civil and ceremonial aspects; sometimes even within a single verse. It is false to say, as many Reformed, that only the civil and ceremonial aspects have been annulled, something never expressed in Scripture; the whole thing was temporary and abolished as only applicable to the theocratic state of Israel. The Mosaic Law is also at the centre of the Old Covenant, which is said to be abolished. It cannot function outside a theocracy.

Christians today do not ignore the principle of law, a mistake made by many Charismatics and Higher Life teachers. Being dead to the law means not living under the code of Moses, which focused on external issues. Paul tells us that we serve in newness of life by the Holy Spirit; we do not serve by trying to observe external legal codes (Rm 7:6). By walking in the Spirit we will produce the fruit of the Spirit and this is following the law of Christ. This law reaches down into thoughts and aspirations, which we must obey by the Spirit. The Christian is not outside law but inside law in Christ (1 Cor 9:21)<sup>5</sup>. The Christian fulfils the law in Christ by the power of the Spirit.

Thus the process of sanctification makes a person holy by enabling him to fulfil the law of Christ more and more in every department of his personality. [See my paper, *'The believer's relationship to the law'*.]

## Practical sanctification

So having looked at the breadth of the doctrine of sanctification, what do we actually do, day-to-day?

### Preparation – study God's word

The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you. Phil 4:9

I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. Acts 20:32

It is the truth that makes us free (Jn 8:32) and so we need to fill our minds with the truth. This is not an abstract thing, as if the mere reading of the Bible gives us liberty, but we need to understand the doctrines taught by Scripture and thus learn more about God and ourselves.

The people who understand the teachings of Scripture will gradually learn more and more in order to be able to judge what is good and what is evil (Heb 5:12-14). By learning what God teaches in doctrinal form, we prepare ourselves for the fight against sin, the world and the devil. If we do not understand these doctrines, we will have no weapons to defeat our enemies.

Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth. Jn 17:17

We must also understand the basis of Biblical sanctification so that we can act in accordance with God's word and not in disobedience to it. Many teachings by men on sanctification are errors; we can never progress in holiness by following error. For example, John Wesley taught errors about sanctification (and many other matters). His followers thus claimed to be entirely sinless (he was more cautious). Despite this he

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<sup>5</sup> 'Under law toward Christ' is literally 'in-lawed in Christ'.

committed some very serious sins, indeed crimes. He was guilty of plagiarism and fraud when this was a treasonable offence that could result in the death penalty. He publicly slandered innocent people who opposed his errors, such as Augustus Toplady, even stating that he died denying his faith when he did not. He denied his vows to the Anglican Church and founded a new movement (though he never left the Anglican Church himself). He had very inappropriate relationships with women and treated his wife badly. He also taught multiple errors, including a hatred of God's sovereign election and championing Arminianism. Clearly Wesley's ideas about sanctification did not do him any favours because his ideas were unbiblical.

Unless we are steeped in God's word we will not grow in holiness.

### **Pray**

This seems simple and obvious yet it is often overlooked. We should constantly pray that God will help us deal with our character flaws and teach us how to behave in a holy manner. James told his readers that they lacked wisdom because they did not ask God for it; today many Christians fail to ask God to show them how to be holy.

### **Believe**

Faith is active in progressive sanctification; it is by faith that the work of the Spirit in us is established and secured. What begins with faith ends in action.

However, again we must warn readers that those groups who teach that faith is all that is needed for sanctification, and that there is no striving, are wrong. Faith is not the be-all and end-all of sanctification but the mere instrument to establish the heart in the truth. It is by faith that Christ dwells in the hearts of believers (Eph 3:17). He is certainly dwelling in the heart of all regenerated Christians but unless you believe this you will doubt your conversion.

Faith secures the truth in us; we learn the truth of God through reading his word but those who believe it and apply it to themselves are those who grow in grace, 'you have purified your souls in obeying the truth' (1 Pt 1:22). We are sanctified by the truth (Jn 17:17) but the word of God must be mixed with faith. Hearing the word has no benefit unless it is mixed with faith (Heb 4:2).

Faith believes that we are dead to sin; faith believes that we are united with Christ; faith believes that we are raised with Christ; faith believes that the Holy Spirit is in us to bring the things of Christ to us and empower us to live like him. Unless one has faith like this one will never grow in holiness. Grace flows through the channel of faith. As love is the fulfilling of the law (Rm 13:10), this is a work of faith (Gal 5:6).

Faith is vital in securing sanctification in us because it has to stand every day against the fact that our old nature grows in corruption and we continue to sin, making many mistakes and frequently stumble (Jm 3:2). Despite this weakness, we must believe that God has sanctified us; that Jesus dwells in us; that the Holy Spirit is working for us and that we can know victory, despite our errors. Every failure is an opportunity for faith in God's word. Those who have faith persevere, despite problems, and it is those who persevere who are truly Christ's disciples.

Those who never have any problems, never suffer, are never troubled, are never grieving, are always jolly, always excited and always victorious are the one's whose Christian life is suspect. The believer always has tribulation in this world (Acts 14:22), always faces spiritual warfare (Eph 6:12) and is always called to suffer for Christ; indeed the sufferings

of Christ abound in us (2 Cor 1:5). Thus the believer must live by faith (Rm 1:17) because his circumstances rarely offer any comfort or strength.

### **Be an active part of the Biblical church**

The truly Biblical church is one where the sacraments are properly practised and where mutual edification takes place under the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. This means that the Lord's Supper is the centre-point of the church meeting in a home, where God is worshipped with thanksgiving; and where the church, as a family, edifies one another in Scripture reading, teaching and admonition in encouragements and singing.

As a believer finds his gift and place in such a meeting, and fulfils his particular ministry, he will grow in grace and knowledge along with everyone else.

Speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head -- Christ -- from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. Eph 4:15-16

### **Keep short accounts**

It is important to call sin, sin and to deal with it quickly and effectively. Sins must be grieved over, confessed as guilty to God our Father, forgiveness sought in the name of Christ and then repentance must follow, determining to walk like Christ and not ourselves. This must be done as quickly as possible to prevent the enemy controlling you with a weight of un-confessed guilt. If we fail to deal effectively with sins, then God will bring us into fatherly discipline to chasten us. [See my paper, *'The problem of sin'*.]

Few these days mention the need for grieving over our sin and mourning for our weakness and mistakes, yet this is a significant feature of the Christian life,

There is nothing which more plainly evidences a person to be sanctified than a broken and contrite heart—grieving over that which is contrary to holiness. [AW Pink; *The Doctrine of Sanctification*, p73.]

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus stated, 'Blessed are those who mourn' (Matt 5:4). Mourning for sin is a crucial part of Christian living. Grieving for sins leads the believer into repentant living and there is no repentance without mourning. In Jesus' sermon mourning is followed by meekness; that is, the believer who grieves for his sins becomes a humble person and this is followed by thirsting for righteousness, 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled' (Matt 5:6). If we want to live righteously, we must deal with known sins and grieve over our failures, which leads to desiring to live right.

Teachers whose doctrine leads to people not treating sin properly are to be condemned as false. There are many, in the Charismatic churches and others, who follow perfectionist and Higher Life errors whose obedience to false teaching on grace results in failing to treat sin seriously and not living in repentance; such will never grow in grace. This is Antinomianism, which characterises a great many Charismatics today; people who never grieve over sin and commit sin easily thinking that they are freed from its consequences because they are justified. [See my paper, *'Are Christians ever guilty before God?'*]

### **Understand how to put off the old nature**

After understanding the statements of God's word on progressive sanctification we must then apply them by faith and by action. Perfectionists only apply faith; legalists only apply action. Growing in holiness is the complement of believing what God says and striving to apply it in obedience.

Jesus summarised this when he said (several times)

**If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.**

**Matt 16:24-25**

If we want to be like Jesus, we must:

1. Deny ourselves.
2. Take up our cross – be willing to lose your life.
3. Follow Christ.

### *Self denial*

What this means is: firstly, that we must live a life of self-denial; we must not follow our own ideas, our own strategies, our own plans or live in our own strength. We must become completely dependent upon God for all things. We must become reliant upon God for the power to do all things. This first means understanding the truth that this power is available. For instance, the glorious might of God is available for us to be thoroughly patient and long-suffering with joy (Col 1:10-12).

When faced with a situation where we would explode in anger, God has power ready to give us to be patient and joyful – but we must first believe this is true and then act upon it. If we do not know this truth – we will explode with anger. If we know this truth but don't believe it – we will explode with anger. Only when we know this truth, believe that it is available for me now and then walk in trust and obedience applying it, only then will we know the grace and power of God to be long-suffering with joy at a time when we would explode.

### *Take up our cross – consider ourselves crucified with Christ*

We must also take up our cross – the cross means death and we are co-crucified with Christ (Gal 2:20). This means that we must consider ourselves to be dead; as Paul explains, 'Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord', Rm 6:11. Now this means understanding the truth of our identification with Christ in death and resurrection, which Paul explains in Romans 6. There is a whole doctrine to be understood first before you can take up your cross.

This involves realising that your old life is considered by God to be dead; that your old life of sin is dead, and that you are now alive in Christ, that you are indeed a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). Now 'dead' does not mean annihilated or vaporised just as 'new creation' does not mean that we have a spiritual body now. Death in Scripture always has the meaning of separation from something, such as the soul from the body or the sinner from God's presence in hell. We have the beginning of this in our spirit and heart only.

**Our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. Rm 6:6**

When Paul says that the body of sin was 'done away with' (NKJV) or 'destroyed' (AV) the Greek word means 'to be made unemployed or inoperative'. It is still there but God has enabled you to make it inoperative. Many teachers make a mistake in claiming that the old nature has vanished and gone; this is a very serious error. We all know that the old nature still raises itself in response to temptation and that if we follow its leading we will sin. We still sin because the old nature is still present within us.

What God has done is to enable us to put off the old nature by crucifying us with Christ and giving us the power to apply that, first by faith and then by choice in action. The full effect of the sentence of death upon the old nature is not consummated until the end when we

are transformed to be like Christ. Only then is the old nature finally removed from us forever (the sentence of death applied) and only then do we receive a new spiritual body.

The old nature is not patched up by God but is put away by death. We do not try to improve the old life but we deny it as being dead to us. You can't put a new patch on an old cloth, said Jesus, or put new wine into old wineskins; likewise you cannot make the old nature holy; it must be crucified. And God has done this for believers. The old nature is fully depraved and can do no good work at all. Only in the new man can we please God.

#### *Following Christ – the repentant life*

So, the corollary of putting off the old nature is putting on the new nature, the resurrection life of Christ.

**Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Eph 4:22-24**

This is the same thing as following Christ, the third command of the Lord. It is also the same as living a life of repentance – changing your mind from following Satan to following Christ; setting a new course.

This action has a number of parallels in Scripture given in order to make us see the truth of it. This putting on the new man is the same as walking in the Spirit. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ and walking in him is putting on Christ. It is also the same thing as abiding in Christ; by putting on the new man we abide in Christ. When we are doing this we bear the fruit of the Spirit, which are expressions of the life of Christ; the character of Christ. The principle of all this is living in resurrection power, the life of Christ, and not our own which we must consider to be dead.

#### *Faith leading to works*

The process of progressive sanctification is chiefly achieved by these three actions: denying ourselves, taking up our cross and following Christ. It is achieved by knowing doctrine, believing doctrine and applying doctrine in obedience. Knowing the truth is not enough. Knowing the truth and having faith in it is not enough. We must know the truth, believe the truth and then apply the truth. This involves hard work, effort, battle and striving.

**Striving against sin. Heb 12:4**

**Let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ ... striving together for the faith of the gospel. Phil 1:27**

**To this *end* I also labour, striving according to His working which works in me mightily. Col 1:29**

**Flee sexual immorality. 1 Cor 6:18**

**Flee from idolatry. 1 Cor 10:13**

**Flee these things and pursue righteousness. 1 Tim 6:11**

**Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness. 2 Tim 2:22**

**I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 2 Tim 4:7**

Those people who tell you that there should be no striving against sin or struggling to be more holy are lying to you. It is false teaching to say that there is no work in growing in holiness. Those people who tell you that to just 'let go and let God', (i.e. believe and stop striving – viz. Higher Life teaching) are only telling you half of the story, and you will fail. We must not only believe that we are a new creation in Christ, but must flee from

temptation when it occurs. We must not only consider ourselves dead but must pursue righteousness. We must fight the good fight and strive against sin with fear and trembling.

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure. Phil 2:12-13

If your teacher never tells you to strive against sin, then he is failing you.

### **Focus on good things, avoid evil things**

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy -- meditate on these things. Phil 4:8

Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.' 1 Cor 15:33

This is a simple matter and easily understood by all. The believer should learn more and more, by experience and trust, what is good to be involved with and what is bad.

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food ... solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Heb 5:12-14

If you get involved with wicked works you will be damaged. Learn what is acceptable to God and what is unacceptable. This requires great discernment. I especially urge parents to do this on behalf of growing children, I am continually shocked by what Christian parents allow their children to watch on television, listen to on Ipods, play on Playstations, and read in books. Association with evil corrupts.

## **What sanctification does not do**

There are so many errors made in teaching this doctrine that it sometimes causes amazement. Pink stated that he was aware of people who had got into such as state trying to comply with erroneous teaching about becoming perfectly holy, and miserably failing, that they committed suicide. He then said that he was surprised more did not do that considering the awful demands made on people by these false teachers. This leads us to consider what sanctification is not.

### **Sanctification is not the eradication of sin in this life.**

Let me put it bluntly – you are going to fall into sin at some point very soon. If you think you will not then you have just committed sin already. I have met people influenced by John Wesley who openly claimed to have not sinned at all for six months; in fact they sinned the moment they said that. If we saw ourselves as God sees us we would understand that almost every other thought is a sin in itself.

Sanctification in our life today is an ongoing process that gradually makes us more and more practically holy, but this process is not complete until Christ returns. Only when the old nature is removed can we be sinless, and this only happens when we receive a new glorious body like that of Christ.

All teaching on sanctification which talks about the complete removal of sin now is a lie; as is all teaching which claims that we can become oblivious to our own sins and filled with peace about our lives.

The truth is that as we really become more holy in character, through the grace of Christ and the work of the Spirit in us, we actually become more sensitive to sin and more

shocked by our own wretchedness (this is why Paul wrote Romans 7). Sins that did not bother us years ago now fill us with dread that we could have behaved so.

### **Sanctification is not the purification of the old nature**

We do not become more holy by trying to patch up our old nature with grace. Grace does not touch our old nature, except to condemn it to death. The old nature is never renovated and never made holy by degrees. The old nature is taken with Christ to the cross where it is judicially sentenced to death and it is made inoperative in the believer who acts in faith in God's word. It is finally removed from the believer at the coming of Christ.

The soul is a neutral organ in the human being, which chooses what to express in the human body. It is not wicked in and of itself, it is a vessel. The body too is a neutral vessel expressing what the soul directs. When the soul chooses to express the old nature, the person becomes flesh and the expression of his life is flesh, that is the sinful Adamic type of life. When the soul chooses to obey the word of God in the human spirit, it is a vessel of holiness and directs the man to glorify God.

The gradual purification of the man is the growing inclination of the soul to put off the old nature and put on the new, to express God's will as directed by the Holy Spirit in the human spirit. The more the soul chooses this, the more holy the person becomes.

Meanwhile the old nature continues to grow in corruption (Eph 4:22-24). It is not purified but gets worse and worse. It lies in the old fleshly heart.

### **Sanctification is not the result of a special experience or second work of grace**

Many perfectionists, especially Wesleyans and thence the Holiness Movement, claim that a special crisis experience after a gradual enlightenment, results in entire sanctification. We have shown, in several places in this paper, that these ideas are false. Others claim that justification follows belief in Christ but sanctification only occurs a long time after this when the believer has finally submitted to Christ's Lordship, i.e. 'complete surrender' followed by a receiving of the Spirit.

Firstly, a person is not converted if he does not surrender to Christ. Submission to Christ as Lord is part of receiving Christ, believing in Christ. Secondly, the Spirit always immediately indwells a convert upon his confession of faith in Christ. You cannot be a believer without receiving the Spirit.

Once we are united to Christ by the Spirit and faith, we become "joint heirs" with Him, having a valid title to all blessing in Him. There is no dividing of the Saviour: He is the holiness of His people as well as their righteousness, and when He bestows forgiveness, He also imparts heart purity. [AW Pink, *The Doctrine of Sanctification*, p57.]

There is no teaching in Scripture that a special second blessing, a second work of grace, is required to make the believer either 'baptised in the Spirit' (to have Charismatic gifts) or baptised into holiness (Perfectionism). When you receive Christ you are complete in him (Col 2:10) and receive the potential of all the inheritance of Christ. However, you receive it as a little baby and must grow, over time, into maturity. As you grow in the knowledge of God's grace, you grow in your experience of it. This is why the study of God's word is so vital in developing to spiritual maturity.

### **Sanctification does not put the flesh to sleep**

Some false teachers claim that sanctification makes the flesh 'sleep' and become ineffective, thus giving the believer victory over sin. Scripture says nothing about this but does state that the old nature grows in corruption. If the old nature continues to be active,

what results is continual warfare between the flesh and the Spirit in the believer (Rm 8:6, 13; Gal 5:17); this is hardly being put to sleep.

### **Sanctification does not stop the attacks of Satan**

The continual attack by Satan on the Christian in order to tempt him to lust in his heart and then sin in his person never ceases. The battle for faith carries on to the very end, either of a person's life or until the Lord returns.

Those who say that they have experienced a type of sanctification whereby all satanic attacks have ceased against them are actually parroting satanic deception; they are liars.

### **Sanctification is not a one-off event**

Some false teachers claim that since Christ is our sanctification (1 Cor 1:30), the believer has a surety of personal holiness in Christ and need do nothing but believe it. This fails to understand the tenses of sanctification and confuses definitive sanctification with progressive sanctification, as well as ignoring a host of Scriptures telling us to be active in dealing with the fight against sin.

### **Sanctification is not achieved by demonic deliverances**

Charismatics claim to make believers more holy by ridding them of demons which cause certain personality faults, such as exorcising an unclean demon to rid a person of a desire to watch pornography. There is not an ounce of truth in this but it is a heresy arising from a Pentecostal sect called Latter Rain, which was operative in the late 1940s, was outlawed, and then manifested itself in the later Charismatic Movement.

There is no apostolic teaching that a believer requires exorcism and none teaching that a believer can be demonised. No Christian in the NT was told to seek exorcism in order to improve his character and no one had a ministry of demonic deliverance. Indeed, we are told to fight the good fight of faith, to flee immorality and to strive against sin. Demonic deliverance is a modern heresy to enable gullible believers get an easy fix to their problems.

## **Conclusion**

**He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Eph 1:4**

God's Son on earth was named 'Jesus' for a reason, because he will save his people from their sins (Matt 1:21). God's people do not just require forgiveness, but complete deliverance from their sins. Justification deals with forgiveness and freeing us from the condemnation of our sins, but sanctification deals with the power of sin in us and delivers us from that sin and purifies us to make us holy. In performing this work, the whole man is purified and made clean in three distinct but inter-related works of Christ applied in us by the Spirit. These are known as the tenses of sanctification where the grace of God is applied separately to our spiritual man, our soul (or inner man) and our body. Doctrinally they are termed 'definitive sanctification', 'progressive sanctification' and glorification.

To understand sanctification properly we must be doctrinal. If we adopt a devotional attitude to this we will make mistakes. Thus Pietists, Quietists, Hyper-Calvinists, mystics, and Perfectionists all err, mostly because these adopt a devotional attitude to the subject. Only by being doctrinally careful can we distinguish sanctification both from regeneration and justification. Confusing these separate Biblical doctrines results in very mistaken views about Christian development.

To understand sanctification we must also be entirely Biblical. This means, that even when we separate regeneration, justification and sanctification from each other, we must still take care to expound the Scriptural statements about sanctification in the past, present and future, properly develop the law of Christ, and carefully exegete Romans 6. Many Reformed fail in this.

The demonstration of the truth of our teaching on sanctification is shown in whether those we teach actually manifest a growth in holiness or not. The pastors of many Charismatic churches have congregations which clearly show that their understanding of sanctification is false in their unholy living and aberrant church practices. For instance a certain Charismatic leader, famous for his teaching on sanctifying grace, is proved to be teaching error by the widespread behaviour of his church members who practise slander, cheating, dishonesty, unkindness, lewdness and various obvious forms of unrighteousness.

Thus to summarise:

### *Regeneration*

Provides a new and holy nature for the believer. He is given a new spirit and a new heart where God dwells within him, but not a new soul. [**'You must be born again.'** Jn 3:7 **'If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.'** 2 Cor 5:17. **'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you.'** Ezek 11:19]. The principle factor of regeneration is newness of life; definitive sanctification (which occurs at the same time) is centred upon making our spirit and heart holy as a dwelling place for God. The new man is in the heart and in the spirit. The new nature is like a baby which grows into maturity but definitive sanctification is a completed act.

### *Justification*

Makes a sinner stand 'not guilty' before God. It is the 'great exchange' whereby the sinner's sin is imputed to Christ (who took it to the cross and paid the price for it) and Christ's righteousness (his perfect obedience to the law as a man) is imputed to the believer. It gives the believer a heavenly, legal, righteous standing before God but does not change the believer's earthly state. Though justification is not to be confused with sanctification, it always leads directly to it; those who are justified are sanctified. [**'Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.'** Rm 3:24]

### *Definitive sanctification*

This makes the spiritual nature of the believer holy before God so that he can sit with Christ in heaven. This is closely connected to regeneration and justification and they all occur at the same time but follow on from one another. [**'Those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus.'** 1 Cor 1:2. **'You were washed, but you were sanctified.'** 1 Cor 6:11]

### *Progressive sanctification*

This is the process of a continual, gradual purification of the soul of the believer in time. It is achieved as the believer learns to put off the old nature and put on the new. This is done by believing God's word and applying it in obedience; of necessity this involves a struggle against sinful tendencies within. The presence of the old nature, which grows in sinful corruption, ensures that this process is never completed in this life; it is finalised at the end. [**'Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.'** 2 Cor 7:1. **'Therefore if anyone cleanses himself ... he will be a vessel for honour, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.'** 2 Tim 2:21. **'Those who are being sanctified.'** Heb 2:11. **'You have purified your souls in obeying the truth.'** 1 Pt 2:22. **'Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself.'** 1 Jn 3:3]

### *Glorification*

The final stage of sanctification is the provision of a new, spiritual body like Christ's and the finalisation of the purifying process of sanctification. [**The Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body.** Phil 3:20-21]

### *Perfectionism*

Is the claim that believers can be 'entirely sanctified' or experience 'sinless perfection' in this life. This is supposedly achieved through various means, such as the eradication of the old nature, a death to the self life achieved through a mystical crisis, or an overwhelming experience of the Spirit producing a change in inner dispositions to be fully loving. There are many forms of Perfectionism; it is a serious error. Chief proponents of Perfectionism include Wesleyans and the Holiness Movement.

### *Higher Life, Victorious Life, Deeper Life errors*

This variegated movement is a form of Arminian Perfectionism, which separates justification from sanctification making them two separate acts of the soul. Christians, they claim, may receive justification but fail to experience sanctification; they know forgiveness of sins but not holiness ('the higher life'). They also confuse sanctification with justification making them both an experience received by faith; the deeper life is gained after much soul searching and usually after a crisis experience of consecration, sometimes called a 'second blessing'. Thus the self-life is cast off and the higher life received by faith. They usually affirm a victory over the power and presence of sin but do not claim entire sanctification. This error is a failure to understand the Biblical doctrine of sanctification in its three forms.

### *Antinomianism*

This is the opposite extreme to Perfectionism which produces lawlessness. It teaches that there is a holiness of the believer in Christ which produces no experiential change in him; that all sins are forgiven and no further action is necessary. It leads people to despise any form of God's law and diminishes the problem of sin. Such people claim to be holy in Christ and then sin with impunity and without care. This confuses the Christian's heavenly standing with his earthly state, or definitive sanctification with progressive sanctification.

A final word from Arthur Pink, whose book contains so many gems and yet, as a whole, is often confusing and poorly structured, with fractured argumentation, so as not to be recommended for novices.<sup>6</sup>

First, the Father sanctified His people by an eternal decree, choosing them in Christ before the foundation of the world and predestinating them unto the adoption of children. Second, the Son sanctified His people by procuring for them a perfect and

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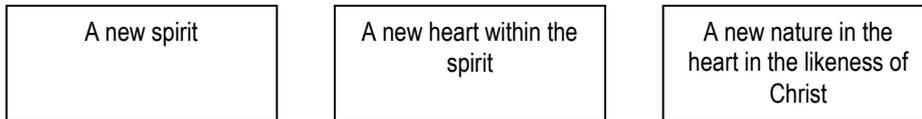
<sup>6</sup> Like others of his books, Pink's work on sanctification was the compilation of many individual chapters written for his magazine '*Search The Scriptures*' over a long period of time. These were later collated by editors into books, mostly after his death in 1952. The result was that there is repetition, parallel statements in differing contexts and, sometimes, poor argumentation over the course of the book since it was not planned as a single work. Despite this Pink is often far more perceptive and original than many theologians, despite being a pastor and not a seminary professor. This is often down to his wide reading and refusal to follow a certain party. This is especially true in this book where he cites Puritans, Reformers, Reformed Presbyterians, Reformed Baptists, Brethren authors and other evangelicals and is not afraid to even criticise aspects of the Westminster Larger Catechism. It has great value in its individual comments but, overall, is not an easy work to follow and often makes the same point under different headings so that what is described under one title, is later designated by a different title. Sometimes the heart is said to be totally purified and at others only partly so. This leads to a confusion of practical, experimental, subjective, and progressive sanctification; which are sometimes the same in his work but sometimes different. It should also be noted that the version of this book in the CD Rom of all Pink's works excludes the last two chapters of this book on the role of faith as the instrument of sanctification; probably because it condemns Arminianism and emphasises the life of suffering and misery a believer has on the earth.

inalienable standing before the Judge of all, the infinite merits of His finished work being reckoned to their account. Third, God the Spirit makes good the Father's decree and imparts to them what the work of Christ procured for them: the Spirit is the actual Securer of sanctification, *applying* it to their persons. Thus the believer has abundant cause to adore and glorify the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. [AW Pink, *The Doctrine of Sanctification*, p113.]

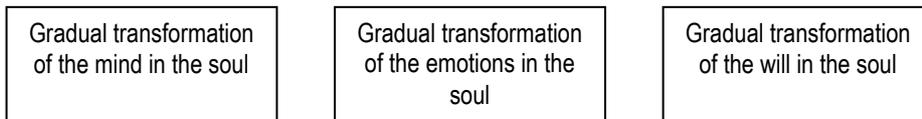
## Diagrammatic summary

### The tenses of sanctification

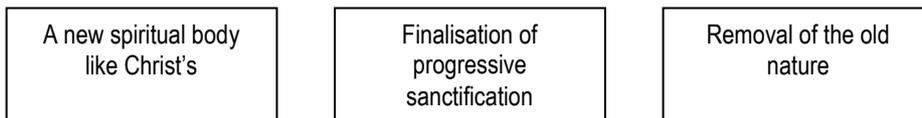
#### Past tense: Definitive sanctification – dealing with the human spirit



#### Present tense: Progressive sanctification – dealing with the human soul

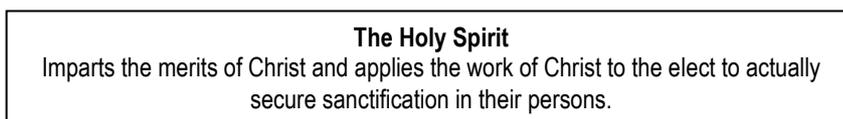
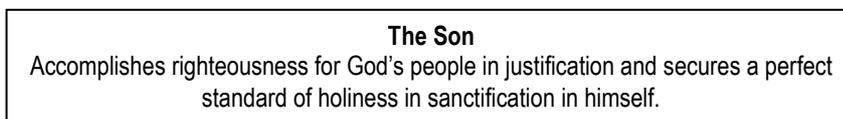
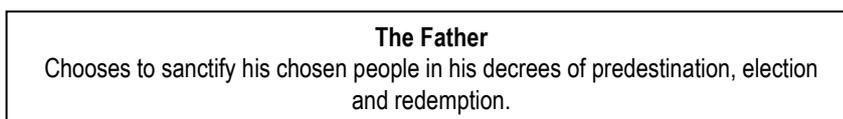


#### Future tense: Glorification – dealing with the human body



Here we can observe the acts of God demonstrated in triplets, or in three sorts of action. This is also observed in many other aspects of salvation and is a reflection of the Trinity in operation. [See my paper, *'Reflections of the Trinity'*.]

### The triple work of God in sanctification



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