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## SANCTIFICATION

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“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”—JOHN xvii. 17-19.

I PROPOSE to treat with a little freedom the great truth of sanctification, Christian sanctification, not confining myself to the verses which introduce the term in the passage just read, but connecting with them some other portions of the word of God which set forth the same great truth, either as the Lord here introduces it, or as carrying it out in practical detail. That there is a very special sense in the way in which our Lord employs the term must be evident to any one who weighs His words. What I hope to shew may convince some (who may not perhaps have perceived it before) of the danger of taking only one side of any truth, let it be ever so precious. We shall also see, I trust, that the subject is larger and deeper in God's word than anywhere else. This is no disparagement of that which may have been seen by many of the children of God. We ought to delight that it is so; and not least such of us as find out how much more there is to gather than they had even conceived. Why should we wonder if we find the mind of God infinitely rich as compared with our own? We ought to expect it rather, and should constantly bring our little measure

of insight into the truth of God with the confident assurance that we shall find that there is far more that had escaped our notice even where we have laid real hold of a truth. I am not now about to dwell upon that which is erroneous. There are views prevalent at this time in Christendom which diverge far from truth on this very subject. My present purpose is not at any length at least to deal with what I believe to be unfounded, but to attempt the happier task of searching out with simplicity what the plain truth is, and thus of demonstrating with the clearest evidence how much there is in God's word of prime importance which is never found in the measures of man.

Now our Lord, when He says, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," seems to me to give a most plain and positive proof that what is commonly the view of sanctification prevailing among the children of God is at any rate defective,—that even those who see what is from Him see but a small part of the truth. In general sanctification is limited to the practical work that the Spirit of God carries on in the souls of those who, though born of God, have much to contend with, but find power in His grace through the knowledge of Christ against their own evil. It is evident that this cannot apply to verse 19; and this on the surface of it. It must be owned therefore that sanctification must have a bearing different from ordinary thought, and incomparably larger than that to which it is usually confined. "For their sakes I sanctify myself," says our Lord Jesus.

Thus at the outset it is happy for a simple child of God to find plain proof that it cannot mean the amelioration of fallen humanity. He has the certainty in his soul that the Lord Jesus does not here refer sanctification to the



Spirit's dealing with an evil nature. There was no evil in Him to be subdued or improved : what child of God does not reject such a thought with horror ?

Hence it is that many have through ignorance and haste fastened a meaning on our Lord's sanctifying Himself very remote from the truth. Thus some of old supposed that our Lord used it in some figurative way of His sacrifice, if not of other truths. But it can readily be shewn that this is altogether a mistake. There is no reason for departing from the radical thought that is always contained in "sanctification." It invariably means the setting apart unto God of those that are concerned. This is its true and simple meaning, from which there is not the least reason to depart here. It does not matter where the word is found in scripture : sanctification when used of a man always means his setting apart to God. How the person is set apart is another matter. In the Jewish system we know the nation itself was so. This was after an outward sort, and was effected by various ordinances, more particularly by that of circumcision; but in fact it was a sanctification that was carried out in all the details of a Jew's life. The whole ritual system of ordinances and judgments which ran through the practical habits of a Jew forms the evidence, measure, and material of his being so set apart unto God.

But the striking thing that we find in our Lord's unbosoming of Himself to His Father on this occasion is, that there is now a new kind of setting apart. Within those of old set apart as Israelites we have the disciples themselves, to be set apart after a fresh sort, nay even the Lord deigning to set Himself apart for their sakes. For His own sake He needed nothing. We must find room therefore for thoughts differing widely from those

prevalent among men. Indeed there cannot be a more striking proof of the depth of the setting apart of the Christian to God than the patent fact, that our Lord here prays the Father that the disciples, already morally apart from the Jewish people, who were themselves apart from all other peoples on the face of the earth, should be sanctified by the truth. He was not content with their being drawn to His person here below; He was about to make them more than followers of Himself, in whom they already had faith. All the rest was true; yet He prays, "Sanctify them through thy truth." It was no longer therefore on the face of it a question of the law. This should be beyond controversy. From the people who had the law the disciples were to be sanctified. The Jews might be a holy people, but the disciples were to be sanctified not only from men but from Israel—from all they themselves had been. They were to be set apart after a new sort altogether. The law which severed the practice of Israel from the Gentiles is not the rule of Christian life.

But even this is not all. The Lord Jesus in carrying out this setting apart or sanctification of the disciples shews that He must contribute to it personally, and in order to this that He must set Himself apart. "For their sakes," as He says, "I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

Now the first thing to which I would here call attention is the instrument employed. The disciples were to be sanctified, as He says, "through *thy* truth." Then the Lord explains what He means by the Father's truth. "Thy word [the Father's word] is truth."

Undoubtedly the Father's word is most directly to be

found from the time when, and in the holy writings where, His name as Father was clearly revealed. It is in the New Testament, as we all familiarly know, that the Father's name was thus declared. We find our Lord Jesus from the beginning, as in the Gospel of Matthew for instance, most carefully declaring that name. But we know too that the disciples did not yet enter into its real power. This could not be in the transitional state through which the disciples were passing with the Lord. All the time of His ministry, and with increasing plainness towards the close of it, He was intimating that an immense change was at hand. In the chapter read (John xvii.) He says that which a little connects itself with what has been now remarked—"I have declared unto them [unto the disciples] thy name, and will declare it." He had been already doing so through His life, but it does not terminate there—quite the contrary. It was to be declared with still greater fulness afterwards. There were many things He had to communicate which their state forbade. They could not bear them now. When the Spirit of truth was come, He would guide them into all the truth.

It is therefore more particularly in the scriptures of the New Testament that we have the Father's name set out and made known, the Lord Jesus declaring it either in person or by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. It is the Father's word then that is most manifestly and immediately given us there. And what a mighty change, my brethren, this was!—that He who remains still, as He always is, God, the only true God—that He who had been revealed to the sons of Israel as Jehovah, and even before their immediate parents, to

those that are called "the fathers" (to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) as the Almighty,—that He was now making Himself known in the intimate name and relationship of Father. But we must remember that there is something more than this. It is not merely a nearness of love, but it was as the *Son* knew God the Father. That is, it was as He is in truth—in the deepest and fullest way in which the only One capable of knowing the Father from all eternity knows Him. And He who had known the Father from all eternity—the only begotten Son—had come down, was a man upon earth, and though born of woman He was still the Son. In this condition He walked in unbroken communion with the Father. All this was really new, and the disciples were permitted to see and know the fruit of this holy fellowship. But now they are told more. The wondrous truth is more clearly made known that the Lord Jesus by the work which He would effect for them, and which He in spirit sees already finished, would bring them, as no others could be, into a most real and profound enjoyment of the same relationship—would bring them, even while passing through this world, to know the Father as none had ever known Him in this world but Himself the Son.

I grant you there was in the knowledge of the Father by the Son that which was ineffable and entirely beyond the creature; but then we must remember, brethren, that our knowledge of the Father is in a certain sense above mere creature knowledge. Not that of course we ever cease to be creatures, even in the glorified state, but that we now enter a wholly new place as partakers of the divine nature, and with the Holy Ghost given that we may enjoy it in power as

well as testify it to others. We are now brought out distinctly and consciously as the children of God, being born of God; and, further, the Lord Jesus, having closed the whole estate of the race as such in the cross, and having entered into the new and final condition of man according to the counsels of God in His presence on high, the time was come for the Father's name and truth to be known in the Holy Ghost, as it was impossible before or otherwise.

It is in view of all this then that our Lord prays that the disciples might be sanctified through the Father's word—through His truth. And indeed the knowledge of Christ has consequences immensely greater than even that to which I have already referred. It is not only that we are now rendered capable by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us of appreciating His mind, but we are said to "have the mind of Christ." It is not only that that which was not revealed of old is now, and that we enter into it, as the same chapter that I have referred to proves (1 Cor. ii.); but, more than this, all scripture is sensibly transfigured for us, if one may say so, by the knowledge of the Son of God thus revealed.

Thus, if we but take up the legal ordinances, there is not one of them but what is now filled with a new and heavenly light. It is not therefore that the Father's word is to be necessarily restrained to the full unfoldings we have in the New Testament, but the light of the Son of God is reflected from every part of scripture. The very same portion which is understood by a Jew in one way conveys wholly distinct and infinitely deeper lessons to the Christian in another. This is nothing fanciful in us, nor shadowy as to scripture, but an effect of its own real fulness in the light of Christ. Take



a pious Jew reading the law, or the Psalms, or the prophets, before the Lord Jesus came. What he saw was true enough, and had its own importance for the object for which it was literally given; but how immensely enhanced and enlarged and deepened when the connexion with Christ as we know Him is seen! Thus the revelation of the Lord Jesus, and this too as the One who declared the Father to the disciples, affects every part of the word of God, making that which in its primary application is merely an institution of the law to be a witness of gospel truth, of divine grace, of heavenly things.

Take for instance the great day of atonement. A Jew reads Leviticus xvi., and has before his mind certain important institutions of the law: the high priest, the bullock, the goats, the application of the blood within and without, and the confession of the sins on Azazel sent off into the wilderness. All this is before him; but to us how different! It is not that we deny or slight any one part, nor that the fuller truth, the Father's word (to apply it to this subject), is such that one loses an atom of what a Jew saw; but that the Jew has not the smallest conception of that which we are permitted to know in fellowship with Christ, as we look on the things that are unseen and heavenly. We see the High Priest going into the holiest, but have its application in an altogether distinct way. We see our Lord Jesus Christ going there, not alone; we see others *in* Him.

Not a word of this identification is said in the chapter. It is a mystery; and the mystery was not then revealed. Now it is. It is not merely a question of the sons of Aaron, and that we have the force of it

made good in ourselves in a new way. Christ is known not merely as a single person, so to speak, but complex. The New Testament gives us to see Him constituting us a part of Himself; we are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Thus in the One who goes into the holiest we behold our own portion as brought into the presence of God. We are not like the people that stood without, waiting for the reappearance of the high priest, when their consciousness of acceptance is imparted. We are entitled to an incomparably deeper knowledge of this sacrifice, because it enters into that within the vail, instead of waiting for what is published outside. Ours is what is before the eyes of God in heaven; and not merely the measure of acceptance that the people would form from seeing the high priest come out; it is founded on the infinitely more glorious fact of what God sees in the blood and in the great High Priest who presents it before Him. In short, what we are brought into is not the measure of the comfort or of the judgment formed by a pious mind, even though the Spirit of God be working therein. What we rest on is what God the Father sees in the Son and His work, and what the Holy Spirit testifies accordingly.

Thus therefore for us all is changed. Hence, we know, the great force of that word which I do not suppose a Jew will ever know as the Christian does—"the righteousness of God." The way in which Israel will have it made known, more particularly, will be rather as to the form "the righteousness of Jehovah;" but we see "the righteousness of God" as such, entering in our measure into that which the depths of His moral nature have found, all that is suitable to Himself completely glorified in the Lord Jesus by His work; and then God

according to His counsels dealing with us suitably, for we are made His righteousness in Christ.

This may illustrate the way in which the Father's truth, the Father's word, is the instrument of setting us apart to God the Father as given directly in the New Testament, but not confined to it, as just seen. What I am more anxious still to shew is that which might easily enough be overlooked—the complete change that the knowledge of Christ has thus revealed on the basis of redemption already accomplished in the Holy Ghost sent down to bring us into all its fruit now in faith,—the change that is wrought by this in our appreciation and enjoyment and application of all the word of God. In short, the result of Christ revealed as we know Him is that we see scripture generally as we never did before. Many of us have said, and many more have felt if they have not said, that such a knowledge of the Lord Jesus makes the Bible to be a new book even if we had been Christians before. I am perfectly persuaded that many present in this place know what this is. I am appealing to what has passed through their own souls in feeling. Instead of the questions, the anxieties, the unsolved thoughts that they have had, the vagueness with which the truth of God was approached, and their own relationship too with God, now they have seen it fully through the grace of God as far as any of us can speak of anything being full: but, in truth, *we may*, for God our Father speaks of us as knowing Himself without a doubt or question. He speaks even of the youngest among us, the babes that have an unction from the Holy One and know all things. How could the Father so speak of the least of His family? He has given them Christ and the Holy Ghost.

Yes, we are sanctified by the truth, and the Father's word is truth. This it is then that has made such an immense change. The Christian is brought out of the old contracted way of looking at the word of God. We know what it is now no longer to be half Jew and half Christian. We have been brought by His infinite grace in the gospel to appreciate Christ, to embrace all the revelation of Christ, to see that, whatever might have been the literal application, it is now absorbed and lost in the brightness of One who fills the mind of the Spirit from Genesis i. to the end of Revelation xxii.

All scripture is thus our heritage, and nothing less. Only we need to know the Father in the Son in order to read it all thus. I shall not be charged at any rate with abridging; nor does such a view admit even in appearance of shutting up the Christian to that which the Jew had as a rule of death which some would persuade us to regard as our rule of life. I rather think that those who plead for the law are more liable to that accusation. No, beloved friends, let us not abandon what our Saviour spreads before us in its infinite extent for that by which God was shutting up the proud Jew to condemnation. If we had been Jews, we have left that kind of sanctification behind. The disciples were not only Jews, but believing Jews; yet they needed to be (and were not yet) sanctified by the truth.

Sanctification then was not conversion (for they were converted), but the separating power of the Father's word which they were about to prove. And the mighty change was wrought in them. How was it wrought? What has the Lord said? "Sanctify them through thy truth." Undoubtedly that which wrought this, as far as the written word was concerned, was the new de-

velopment of divine truth where the Father's name as revealed in and by the Son was the distinguishing characteristic force of it.

In short, the instrumental means was the New Testament. But then so far from this taking away one fraction from the Old, it is the best way to make the Old truly our own; thus is it really understood. Knowing the Father we enter in and enjoy every part of the word of God. There is nothing therefore lost. It is not imagining ourselves to be Jews that will give us the truth or sanctify us. On the contrary, it was precisely out of all that was Jewish those were taken who had been really Jews. It is a question now of one new man in Christ.

Thus then we may see clearly the general ground on which the Lord speaks, and somewhat of that weighty change that was to be brought about by the power of the Spirit of God. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." You must remember that the disciples were not yet on Christian footing. This sanctifying that is spoken of here is really setting them apart as Christians. It was not the communication of life, which is not sanctifying. On the other hand it does not refer simply to the practical work that goes on day by day in the heart of the child of God. This is true, and important too; and there are scriptures that speak of it in this light exclusively, as 1 Thess. iv. 3, 4; v. 23; Heb. xii. 14. There is a sanctification or setting apart unto God the Father of a more general kind, and more fundamental too. This, without excluding the practical work going on all through, is what (I believe) the Lord Jesus refers to; the setting apart, in that new proper Christian character and power, of the disciples who then

surrounded the Lord Jesus. They were still connected with the old condition of things, having been Jews up to this moment. The time was just at hand when they were to be brought out of their Judaism. The Lord Jesus appears to have this in His mind.

But this is not all. He does not merely say, "Sanctify them through thy truth"—the Father's truth, more particularly and directly in the Christian scriptures commonly called the New Testament; but further He says, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." It was no question of the land of Judea now. The world was before them. Thus, if there was the intimacy of setting apart to the Father, there is also an universality of mission. Though the Lord Jesus had a mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, this is not the way in which He is regarded in the Gospel of John. There is a deeper thing here in question. The fact is that all through this Gospel the people are viewed as utterly gone from God, and as only part of a vast system in opposition to the Father: so completely are all regarded as hopelessly evil and enemies. As the Father had sent Him into the world, "even so I also sent them into the world."

But in order yet more to effect this work of setting apart unto the Father, the Lord adds another and a most weighty truth: "For their sakes I sanctify [or set apart] myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." That is, the Father's word (blessed as it is, and changing all as it does for us) is not enough. We want a personal object in order to bind our affections to it. Who could that object be but one—the Lord Jesus himself? But it is the Lord Jesus not on earth. Jews will have the blessed revelation of the

Lord here below: I do not say how far or how long; but they will have it. They will have the promised One making Himself known to them here below. His feet, as we know, shall stand on the Mount of Olives. But it is not there or thus that we know Him. How then? As He is now in the presence of the Father in heaven. This is the meaning of His setting Himself apart. It is not the victim upon the cross. There God made Him sin, instead of His sanctifying Himself. There it was the substitute forsaken of God that we who believe might never be. Not that Jesus, even when made sin, was one whit less but infinitely more the object of God the Father's delight, and in that most solemn judgment even morally a deeper, yes the deepest, delight to the Father. But still it was most true and real that He was made sin upon the cross in this sense, that He identified Himself thoroughly and without reserve with all the consequences of our evil, and suffered accordingly at God's hand against whom the evil was wrought and whom He came to glorify. The cross certainly was no mere appearance but a reality, whatever might be the vain show of the world wherein it stood. Weaken the reality of His suffering, and the reality of your redemption is gone. Weaken the reality of His suffering, and the reality of the glorifying of God is gone—which is a much more important thing than your salvation or mine. Brethren, all was met there and settled for ever. All evil was there taken on Himself, who was judged for it. There was nothing so foul but Jesus suffered for it; there was no sin so dark but He washed it away with His precious blood. The consequence is that there, and there alone, can either God Himself rest with satisfaction when He

looks at a sinner, or a sinful soul find the rest that his awakened conscience needs. But this is a wholly different thing from our Lord setting Himself apart or sanctifying Himself for our sins, "that they might be sanctified through the truth." It is the Lord Jesus who enters into an entirely new place for man—a place essential in order that there should be Christians in deed and in truth. For the essence of a Christian is that, although he is upon earth, he is heavenly; and how could he become heavenly unless by the revelation of a heavenly man who is his life? And who is or could be that heavenly man but the man Christ Jesus, who, after having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, takes this new place there, Head of a new family, and is so revealed to us by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven?

This then is the force of our Lord's added words. Instead of only giving us that fulness of truth in the Father's word, more particularly the New Testament, but at the same time so affecting all the Old as to give us distinctly and positively a means of knowing the Father in every part of scripture, He gives us Himself as a personal object before us in order that we may have the truth thus. Besides having thus the detailed word of the Father, we want an object to attach our hearts to; we need it that we be not lost in the abundance of the revelations of God. Here then is One who can claim every affection, who can detach us by the revelation of Himself, the worthiest of all objects, an object worthy of God the Father, and surely of us the children who delight in what He delights in. This is none other than Christ, but it is Christ after all the evil was judged, after all the good was won, after love had



nothing to do, nay, even righteousness no other task but to bless us. This is what God now can afford to do as the Father: this is what He is now doing through the infinite sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. But this is what He now reveals, through the Lord Jesus in His presence, and by the Holy Ghost sent down gives us to know. Hence therefore our Lord's taking His place at the right hand of God is not a bare fact in Christianity, an incident be it ever so great and glorious, but barren of fruit. Far from it: His setting Himself apart at God's right hand is a root of divine truth, yea, the root of our distinctive blessedness. He is there the model man according to whom the Spirit forms us by the truth. It is thus essential in order that He fitly and fully should be the means of that wondrous display of truth and love that God looks to be reproduced in those that are Christ's below.

This then is the further intimation in the words, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." We require the Father's word; but we require the person thus set apart in heaven, and in this order too. For the Father's truth that is made known in the New Testament invariably precedes our full appreciation of the Lord Jesus at His right hand, thus sanctifying Himself that we might be sanctified through the truth. But then, (need we say it?) when we have seen the Lord Jesus there, when we appreciate the all-importance of having Him as an object before our souls entirely outside the world, according to which the Holy Ghost is carrying us on and fashioning us while we are here below, the truth is everywhere made more personal and in power. Not that the truth abides not in the word, but that it is thus

applied with increase of blessing.\* As He says here, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," but not stopping at this, "that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Thus we see, if we begin with the truth and rise to see the personal place of the Lord, the truth only receives more and more power and point through it.

Turning now to some of the chief scriptures of the New Testament that touch on sanctification, we shall find fresh developments no doubt, but all of them making good the same great truth, whatever the special application to need.

Almost every epistle furnishes evidence. "To all that be in Rome, called to be *saints*," or rather saints called; "to them that are *sanctified* in Christ Jesus," saints called, that is, in Corinth; "all the *saints* in all Achaia;" "to the *saints* which are in Ephesus;" "to all the *saints* in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi;" "to the *saints* and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse;" "unto all the *holy* brethren," speaking of Thessalonica. Here there can be no doubt to any simple, not to say intelligent, mind. It is the description of persons set apart to God; and this too from the beginning of His work in their souls as Christians. The word in no way speaks of their measure or practical attainment of knowledge: it supposes that they were set apart to God as His own children in this world from the outset of their career after their calling, but it says no more.

But this truth, elementary as it is, was far too much for Christendom to carry uncorrupted. Nor do I speak only of the grossness of Babylon, which canonizes *her* saints years after death, and actually not till alleged proofs are given of miracles from relics of the deceased candidate. But even where the pope is rejected, what

can be more timid, what more unscriptural, than the unwillingness of most believers now to recognise each other as saints, and to confess themselves sanctified in Christ Jesus from the starting-point of their confession of the Lord's name? What is this but an unworthy shrinking both from accrediting the rich grace of God and the solemn responsibility of the believer? Saints they are however; and as such they are bound to walk. Not to own it is not exuberance of humility, but only ignorant unbelief to the dishonour of the Lord and their own souls' great loss. It is clear as light from the scriptures adduced that all who confessed Christ were called and treated as saints, and that sanctification is viewed as attached to every one who bore His name. They were set apart to God; and this from the first. (Compare Acts ix. 13, xx. 32, xxvi. 18.)

Again, in 1 Cor. i. 30 we find another reference, without taking up every one, for this would be beyond the limits of the present discourse. But here the apostle says, "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." There I think that the Spirit of God uses "sanctification" in a very large sense, not only for the separating us from the first unto our God and Father through the Lord Jesus the Son, but also looking at the separative power as going on practically in our souls to the last. It is very general, and this is my reason for citing it, as I believe that this two-fold application is contained in it and meant. "Wisdom" is in contrast with the philosophy of men that particularly prevailed among the Greeks to whom he was writing; "righteousness" as setting aside all that was imperfect, and communicated in grace where

moral consistency with God was absolutely wanting to man as such; "sanctification" not only from the first call but going on all through; and "redemption" completing the work of grace; for it is not here redemption through Christ's blood but that of the body, as I gather from its place as winding all up. This again illustrates the largeness of the term "sanctification." As it is clear that redemption is meant in the fullest sense, so I suppose is "sanctification" too.

But when we come to chapter vi. we have something a little more precise in verse 11: "Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified." No theologian writing in the nineteenth century would ever think of putting these words in any such order. They have missed the truth therefore. And let me say further that no man writing in any century whatever would have ever chosen the same form of words except one inspired of God. But have we learnt the wisdom of it? Have we discovered why these words are not only true, but more true in this order than in any other? Certainly the verse does not regard sanctification as only the practical application of the truth to the conscience by the Spirit of God after one is justified, which is the general sense among Protestants; still less does it confound sanctification with justification as Romanists do.

It is manifest therefore that, assuming the apostle's words to be the vehicle of divine truth perfectly expressed, the notion which limits sanctification to the practical process which goes on in the soul after justification is altogether defective. It is not the view that the apostle gives here for our instruction. Is it meant then to weaken the value and need of that prac-

tical work, of growth in holiness, after we believe and are justified? Far from it. I admit its importance and that it is rightly styled sanctification, being our continual setting apart to God every day and in each detail. But I maintain that there is more truth which man does not so easily let into his own thoughts and judgment, and that an element is wanting to give Christians a fuller and clearer understanding of their relation to God.

First of all is it not plain that the apostle Paul here tells these Corinthians that (whatever they might have been in vileness before they knew the Lord Jesus) when they received Him, they were washed? It is very possible there may be some allusion to their baptism as an outward sign of it. I am not discussing this; but I affirm that washing is not the same thing as sanctifying, and that sanctifying is, as all admit, a different thing from justifying. But further, as all these express necessary parts of Christian salvation, are they not all right as God has written them here? The Corinthian believers are said to have been "washed," because the first action of the word of God on a guilty soul is to deal with his impurity—to detect, judge, and remove the evil that defiles. "Washing" by the word (Ephes. v.) is not sanctifying, though in the closest way associated with it; God's grace thereby takes notice of and deals with that which is altogether contrary to Himself. "Sanctifying" is more positively and exclusively occupied with the good to which the soul is set apart. There is a separating object *to* which the affections are attached, not merely a cleansing from our natural evil.

Although we may distinguish between the washing

and the sanctifying, in point of fact they cannot be separated in the soul of him that comes under the quickening power of God.\* But still God is wise in the order in which He puts the thoughts and words. The washing, I repeat, is the application of the word of God by the Holy Ghost to the conscience. Christ, thus received in truth, gives the sinner to detect and judge his evil before God. He is born of God; but the effect of the new birth is that he feels what he himself is. There is repentance in short. But, besides, sanctifying goes farther by the revelation of an object that wins and draws out the heart towards that object. It is plain therefore that the washing supposes more the removal of defilement; and that the sanctifying is rather the effect of the object revealed, which commands the heart, and attracts it from all else, set apart to itself.

This then is the way in which the Spirit of God presents the matter. But there is a third expression—justifying; and it is clear that to be justified is here put after and not before sanctification. In the order in which the Spirit of God puts them, it follows washing and sanctification. How is it possible to reconcile this with the view which limits the doctrine of sancti-

\* So in Ephes. v. 27 we read that Christ gave Himself for the church that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present the church to Himself glorious, having no spot or wrinkle or any of such things, but that it might be holy and blameless. The English Version might, and no doubt does confuse, by putting it as "sanctify and cleanse." The cleansing or purifying by the washing of water by the word is the way by which Christ sanctifies the church. The object here is to state the work in itself, not to distinguish the initiatory setting apart from the progressive work.

fication to the practical holiness of a Christian after he is already justified? Impossible! Is the apostle's statement then to be given up as unintelligible? Are we not to have the truth of God as to this received and enjoyed by our souls? The truth is, that not only "sanctified" in John xvii. is proved by our Lord's use of it to have other and larger meaning than men usually assign to it, but the way in which the Spirit of God, through the apostle, uses it has a force quite different from its bare application to the practical condition or growth of the soul after the Lord is known.

I will refer to one other scripture, in order to shew that this is no arbitrary thought, but that the Spirit of God has designed it in the most distinct manner. The very same side of the truth is revealed by another apostle. In 1 Peter i. 2 we are told that the Christian Jews who were scattered about Asia Minor were elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. It is clear that what is called "justified" in 1 Cor. vi. answers to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus here. If the common view were meant, the way in which the apostle Peter would have expressed himself would have been somewhat of this sort—that these Christian Jews were elect unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, after which the Spirit carried on the work of sanctification in their souls. But He makes, at the very least, a totally different statement. He says here, "Elect through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." In short, the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus is supposed necessarily to be in virtue of sanctification; for they were

sanctified by the Spirit in order to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus.\*

In what sense then is sanctification meant here? This is the real question. What does the Spirit of God mean either by Paul saying, "sanctified, justified;" or by Peter saying, "through (ἐν) sanctification of [the] Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of [the] blood of Jesus Christ"? Put before "justified" in 1 Cor. vi., and before the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus in 1 Peter i. 2, "sanctification" in these passages must needs take in the work of the Holy Spirit from the time that the soul is quickened to desire after God, to look up because of Jesus, distrusting itself, yet daring only to hope for good. Perhaps the soul does not yet know what provision grace has made; but it knows enough mercy in God to make it willing to bow to His judgment of all that it has been and all that it has done. Hence it cleaves to Him, and is perfectly sure that all goodness is in Him, trusting that His grace through the Lord Jesus will yet shine upon it; but it does not yet know how richly that grace has sought it out, and wrought for it even before its awakening. The Spirit of God produces a desire to do the will of God at all cost, and testifies before such a soul the work of the Lord Jesus in its infinite efficacy before God. Then and thus it is brought to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus; but as it was elect before the Holy Spirit began to work effectually, so the Spirit was effectually at work before the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.

There is, it seems plain, an allusion to Old Testament figures or facts in the language of Peter, which was calculated to impress the believing Jews with a lively sense

\* See Appendix.



of their new position as compared with the nation of old. For an Israelite could scarce avoid recalling Exod. xxiv. 7, 8, when Moses "took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that Jehovah hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which Jehovah hath made with you concerning all these words." Now here we have the same elements in their case: obedience of the law and sprinkling of the blood of the victims offered at that solemn moment. But how great the contrast! Israel stood pledged to obey the law and sprinkled with the blood which declared death the penalty of its infraction. The Christian is partaker of the life of Christ which lives in obedience, the obedience of a son, even as Christ was its perfect expression; and he is sprinkled with His blood, which declares that he himself is perfectly cleansed from his sins before God.

That effectual work of the Holy Spirit from first to last is called in the scriptures "sanctification of the Spirit." It embraces the entire setting apart of the soul to God from the beginning onwards. Quickening looks on the soul as being dead in trespasses and sins. There is a new life given it from God; but the effect of divine life is that the heart goes out towards the God that gives it. Sanctifying always supposes the affections drawn out towards Him who thus confers His blessing. The depth and fulness of the blessing may be imperfectly known yet, but nevertheless He is believed in who alone can bless. It may be but the conviction that in the Father's house there is bread enough and to spare, with the assurance of happiness if one could

only get there. The soul is quite sure that mercy is there, though not yet looking when there to be more than a hired servant. Still the confidence of the heart is in the love that is there if one can only get there; and so he sets out. Such is the effect: behold a quickened soul. Without the Spirit there had been no such turning of the prodigal's heart to the Father; no real sense and confession of having sinned against heaven and in His sight. This action of the Spirit was immediate and vital. From the moment that self-judgment was produced, and the affections of the heart turned towards the Father and His house, there is sanctification of the Spirit. It is only when he meets the Father and learns the killing of the fatted calf with the ring and the shoes and the best robe—it is only then that he is doctrinally what may be called “justified.” Justified is the application by faith of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ to the person who is already in the true sense of scripture sanctified by the Spirit.

Of course practical holiness mainly follows justification; and with such a view I have not the smallest quarrel. I do not in the least mean to raise any question or attack any person or party on that subject. It is an important truth in its own place that the progressive work of holiness proceeds after we are justified. But what is sanctification of the Spirit before we are justified? And why is it that theologians or preachers never say a word about this? Why is it thus left out? Not certainly to do honour to scripture; nor through intelligence in the truth of God. How comes it to be thus ignored in Christendom at the present moment, and for seventeen centuries before it? If it be not so treated, where among the divines ancient or modern can we find its

expression? Who can say? I do not know, and I do not believe that anybody else does. The fact is that this truth has, in a way absolutely unaccountable save to such as have learnt the defection of Christendom from the faith, fairly dropped out of the schools of theology.

What should we gather from this, my brethren? The blessedness of having the scriptures. For this is no recondite truth; it is not something that might be lost without any particular detriment to the soul. There are immense practical consequences which result from losing sight of sanctification of the Spirit from the point of view in which both Paul and Peter treat it. I am speaking now not of what may be called relative or progressive sanctification, or whatever growth in practical holiness may be styled in theology; I leave all that as it is. Those terms may be more or less correct, but I pass them by without the smallest debate or arresting ourselves upon that question. For my own part I believe that they express substantially the truth, and I have no controversy with Arminian, Calvinist, or anybody else about the matter.

But I must demand of these Christians and you, whether it is not a most extraordinary and suggestive fact, that one of the primary truths for every soul that fears God, one of the most capital truths of the New Testament, should have thus practically become a cipher to most of God's own children up to this present time? If I be mistaken in such a thought, let me be shown the evidence; for indeed I should take it as a very great kindness if any one do me the favour of pointing out where I have in some way overlooked it; but I can honestly say that, after searching in vain yet examining carefully, I believe that what has been said

is the simple truth, (and a solemn truth it is,) that sanctification of the Spirit, in the most important sense in which the New Testament presents it, is a truth wholly wanting—an “unknown quantity”—to most Christians at the present moment.

And what is the result practically for souls? Much every way. But this is obvious that there are those in whom the Spirit of God has wrought, who are often tried and miserable. Then not the Father's word but the law is brought in as a rule for them, and they are thus made still more wretched; for it never was the intention of God by the law to make any sinful man happy. “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” How could it do aught for any child of Adam but enslave, condemn, and kill? (See 2 Cor. iii.) Further, the law, as it does not give power, so it never reveals an object. The law has a most important use: but its use is to convict the guilty soul. As the apostle expressly teaches, its lawful use is not for the righteous but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane. It is the strength of sin, not of holiness, the precise reverse of a sanctifying power. The Father's grace reveals to us the most blessed object that even He has; and His word makes His object to be our object. This sanctifies. “Sanctify them by thy word. Thy word is truth. . . . For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified by the truth.”

Besides this, which gives us the full character of Christian sanctification right through the believer's course, “sanctification of the Spirit” takes in the first effectual working of the Holy Ghost in every soul that is born of God, from the earliest real effect of the Spirit of God by a life that is given in opening the heart

more or less (for it may be often hindered, and is often in bondage), nevertheless with affections turned to God. In such a case how frequently the soul is pining after the assurance of being sanctified! If a person could know himself sanctified already, what a relief it would be! It is exactly in that condition that many a person, conscious of his unworthiness, is cast down immensely, because he is deeply conscious that, whatever the grace of the Lord Jesus, at any rate he is not sanctified himself. What a comfort it would be for such a soul to know that it is precisely what he is, in a sense still more absolute than the practical measure which occupies his mind—to be thrown off self on Christ!

But there is a further thing. While God does meet a soul tried, cast down, and without ability to take full comfort and peace through faith in the Lord Jesus, even though already sanctified, He does not allow one to settle down in that condition. Here is where the importance of Peter's word comes in: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." And why obedience first? This often is no small difficulty, and sometimes leads persons to a sad perversion of the word. They acknowledge that as believers they are called to obey; but are apt to think that, if we fail to obey, the blood of Christ becomes the resource, and makes up all deficiencies. There is hardly any one, it is to be hoped, in this room so uninstructed in the mind of God as to treat the scriptures thus lightly, not to say offensively. No, my brethren, the apostle meant no such thing; but this,—that when the Spirit of God thus separates a soul from the world, the first movement of the soul when turned really and

truly to God from sin and Satan, the great and prime desire of the heart thenceforward is to obey, while the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus assures of cleansing from guilt in the sight of God. "Lord," said Saul of Tarsus, when he was smitten down, "what wilt thou have me to do?" I know there are those who say that this was rather legal. From such thoughts I wholly differ. I grant you there was not yet known the full liberty of the gospel; but, as far as it went, the desire was excellent and blessed. It is the instinctive yearning of the new nature to do the will of God.

But we have far more here. We are told that the measure of the obedience of the elect soul now sanctified by the Spirit is the obedience of Jesus; for His name, I believe, qualifies both the obedience and the blood sprinkled. It is not the obedience of a Jew, but in contrast with it. Such is the point of the words "Jesus Christ" introduced at the end. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by sanctification of the Spirit unto [the] obedience and sprinkling of [the] blood of Jesus-Christ." The English words are a little changed to give the full force. The obedience was Christ's obedience, as the blood was His blood. And is not the first desire of the awakened soul to obey? But God has no obedience now that He values, except that kind of obedience which Jesus rendered. It is not obeying the law, as a Jew might do, in the hope of certain blessings, or from fear of certain curses. The Lord never obeyed on this principle; He always obeyed out of the consciousness of a Son—the Son—of God; and the simplest Christian ought to obey from a similar consciousness too; for we too by grace are children of God; and our God and Father has implanted this in us as the first

feeling of the new life—to do His will. This it is you may see in many that are born of God, and that, even though not in liberty, and alas! too often imbued with doctrine that injures the soul, they nevertheless delight in His will. Their hearts desire to be faithful and obedient. They only want the bright fulness and freeness of the grace of God to clear them out of these imperfect and sometimes erroneous thoughts.

This then is what I believe the Spirit of God here meant. The sanctification of the Spirit is “unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.” It is in contrast with the Jew saying presumptuously, “All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient,” and in consequence of this, having himself as well as the book sprinkled with the blood of the offerings, which threatened death in case of disobeying the law; for this was the sense of the blood with which the book of the covenant and the people were sprinkled. It was not at all the blood of atonement to secure them, but blood sanctioning the law and their own obligations, so as to keep before them the death that they must die if they failed. The apostle Peter appears to me to have all this in view: only the change is complete for the Christian, who begins, not with the book of law, but with the Saviour; and what he finds in the Saviour is both a spring of life, by which he desires to obey God, and also accomplished redemption, by which he starts with his sins effaced and forgiven before God. Thus, instead of having the blood of victims to tell him he must die if he fails, he has the blood of the Saviour to assure him that all is clear because he is thereby washed from his sins. And the redemption is eternal no less than the life in Christ.

I trust, therefore, that in these few scriptures compared with what has come before us somewhat more at length in John xvii. the nature of Christian sanctification has been shown clearly. Its full character and means the Lord Jesus first gave us to see. This the epistles follow up, developing the order and place of sanctification, or the setting apart of the soul to God, as compared with His other dealings in grace. Christ looked at its full import right through, while the passages in the epistles we have examined take up its beginning, so to speak, in the heart. At the same time both of course are divinely true, and each of all possible importance; but both differ not a little, unless I am greatly mistaken, from popular thought even among the children of God. I have been anxious therefore to set forth, as far as God has enabled me, the testimony of scripture to this most momentous truth.

There are other scriptures that refer to practical sanctification, on which I must say a word next. One clear text of this description is in Hebrews xii., where the apostle says, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness" (or sanctification, if you please) "without which no man shall see the Lord." It is evident that this is practical holiness. He is addressing those whom he assumes to be Christians. There might be persons among them in danger of going back, as we know there had been. Some had already been apostates; but the apostle was "persuaded better things of them, and things that accompanied salvation, though he thus spoke." But here he says, "Follow peace with all men." They had already peace with God, but they were told to "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." There is



nothing really harsh in that, nor a word to cause the smallest difficulty to the most sensitive spirit; for surely, my brethren, there is no Christian who would affirm or allow that a man can live as he lists and yet go to heaven. Can a person sin habitually and be born of God? Surely the language of St. John is even stronger where it is laid down that "he that is born of God doth not commit sin." No doubt, as you justly plead, he means the person so characterised, not that a believer may not fail in this particular or in that, but that no man who is really born of God lives without exercised conscience and holy ways before God: no man so born goes on in sin, but walks according to the new nature. There are differences of measure, and various degrees of spiritual power as we know; but all saints have an uniform desire, and the Lord hearkens to that desire and answers it too,—meeting and helping the soul, sometimes by the comfort of the truth, sometimes by sharp discipline, but in one way and another strengthening it to please Himself. It is manifest from this that there is not the slightest ground for explaining away such an exhortation, no excuse for trying to make out that "holiness" here means what we are made in Christ. This is not the thought in the smallest degree. It is only deceiving ourselves if any think so.

Again, in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians it is clearly a question of practice. "This is the will of God, our sanctification." "For God hath not called us to uncleanness but in holiness" or sanctification. Here it is plain that he is speaking of walking in holiness every day. And then again he prays that the God of peace Himself sanctify them wholly, and that their spirit, soul, and body should be preserved blameless at the

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In all he is looking at the practical work that goes on in the believer.

I particularly mention these passages; for we ought never, in asserting one side of the truth, to forget another. Only what has been already said proves that, besides the practical holiness of which we have been last treating, the New Testament speaks pointedly and plainly of the separating power of the Spirit of God in every man's soul who is born of God, and from its rudiments calls it "sanctification of the Spirit." From the first motion of divine life in the soul right through, all that time a man is sanctified; and this one may call absolute or personal sanctification, in order to distinguish it from what came next, that is, relative sanctification, which depends upon spiritual growth, submission to God, use of means, as the word of God, prayer, fasting, self-judgment, discipline. All these things help on the soul's practical growth in holiness.

Again, we must notice briefly such passages as Acts xx. 32, xxvi. 18. It is impossible to apply these to progress in holiness but to the character and estate of all Christians. The structure of the word *ἡγιασμένοι* admits of no other meaning. Is it argued that this is only the condition of believers when they have arrived at the end of their course, if not of the world altogether? Rom. xv. 16 and 1 Cor. i. 2 refute such a restriction; still more forcibly does Heb. x. 10. This is not at all weakened by the form of the word (*ἁγιαζόμενοι*) in verse 14, as in chap. ii. 11. For the present participle may be used abstractedly apart from the question of the action or the passion. But the perfect tense could not be used as it is in verse 10 about the same persons at the same time, if the object were to define by

ἀγιαζόμενοι that we are only under a process of sanctifying now going on, but as yet imperfect. For while the present may express either the actual time or the abstract character and object of the operation, the perfect necessarily gives the permanent result of a terminated action, and therefore affirms that we have been and are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. It is no question of God's counsel respecting us, but of a present abiding effect of Christ's finished work. Hence to lay stress on ἀγιαζόμενοι as if it must needs indicate a process going on is not only arbitrary, because the present participle does not always convey this force, but even negatived by ἡγιασμένοι which decides the time and excludes what is imperfect. It is not potentiality, but a present fact and a continuous character acquired by Christians through the accomplished and accepted sacrifice of Christ. To translate therefore in verse 14 τοὺς ἀγιαζομένους as "them who are being sanctified" is, under the appearance of literal precision, to prove that we have never seen the true spirit of the passage, and that we do not understand the apostle's doctrine on this great head; and the rather too as τετελείωκεν ("he hath perfected") in the same clause is irreconcilable with this effort to get rid of sanctification here as a standing condition, by denying the abstract force of the present participle as used in this case. It is interesting to observe that in the same chapter (ver. 29) the Spirit employs the aorist ἡγάσθη to describe him who had once been a baptized confessor of Christ crucified but afterwards turned out an apostate. That tense simply states the fact historically; whereas the perfect, adding to it the idea of an existing result, could not properly be used of one who spurned Christ

and counted the blood of the covenant a common thing. It is not true that he had advanced so far in the spiritual life that this blood had been applied by faith, or that its hallowing or purifying effects were visible in his life. Such talk is merely imaginative, not only without scripture, but neglecting the obvious intimation of that which is said; for the passage says nothing of spiritual life, or of applying the blood by faith, or of purifying effects visible or invisible, but only of sinning wilfully after having received the knowledge of the truth. Be it ever so exact and full, this in no way implies in itself a divine work in the conscience so that the person was born again and converted to God, but such a clear full and certain knowledge as many unconverted men possess who nevertheless hold fast the truth in unrighteousness. Very different is the statement in Heb. ix. 14 where the blood of Christ is said to purify the conscience from dead works in order to serve (*i.e.* religiously) the true God. Had there been any such language in chap. x. used of the renegade's previous state, there would have been a scriptural basis for the idea of some; as it is, in what is really said here and in what is said not here but in chap. ix. 14 is a twofold testimony of the most distinct kind against it. Heb. xiii. 12 seems too general to decide the question before us in either way; but there is ample light where the language is strict to gather the sense with certainty.

These then are the two main senses in which "sanctification" is used of believers; for I do not here go into the setting apart of the Son by the Father (John x. 36), nor of praying that the Father's name be hallowed (Matt. xi. 9; Luke xi. 2), nor of the relation of marriage with a believer (1 Cor. vii. 14), nor of food

no longer taken in mere nature but set apart for godly use of the faithful. The first is what the apostles Paul and Peter have laid down, where, as we have observed, sanctification is expressly shown to be before justification. To apply this to the practical work would destroy all truth: there can be no proper Christian holiness of heart and ways before the soul is justified. Tridentine doctrine is ignorance of scripture: "to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Since therefore both emphatically introduce it before justification, it is plain that the "sanctification" of the Spirit intended has another sense than the practical one; and that it means the setting apart in principle to God which is true of the believer from first to last. So it is used in 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Sanctification of the Spirit" evidently here accompanies "belief of the truth," and this "from the beginning." It is not growth in holiness afterwards. Yet assuredly growth comes when the soul, finding rest in the work of Christ, identifies itself by the working of the Spirit practically with Christ as an object before the heart. "As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" or sanctification. Hence "being now made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting

life." There it is and thus that the Christian enters into what the Lord Jesus set out so fully, which, as we have seen, contemplates Christian sanctification and its specific means without drawing attention to time one way or the other. Its object is a deeper one, shewing that we are set apart unto the Father according to what was revealed by His word and in the Son on high. "We all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are changed unto the same image from glory to glory even as by the Lord the Spirit."

May the Lord then grant that this rich and grave subject may be estimated better,—a subject so easily obscured to the loss of the children of God, and so easily forgotten to the injury not only of those that are beginning their career (depriving them of the comfort of the knowledge that they are sanctified), but also of those that may be longest in the way. May they be continually stimulated, knowing that if they are thus sanctified, they are called on to walk according to no less a measure than Christ revealed by the Father's word. May they profit not by fragments of the truth only, but by the whole revelation of God, acting by the power of the Spirit of God in renewed affections, ever judged, ever deepened, by these divine communications, but also concentrated on the person of the Lord Jesus. May He give us thus to prove more and more how precious it is that we are sanctified by the Father's word, and that the Son has set Himself apart for our sakes that we might be according to such a model. Amen.

# APPENDIX

## ON 1 PETER i. 2.

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It may help souls if I give a few proofs, not from persons of extreme views, but from the most intelligent among the Reformers, of their looseness on this subject and their divergence from scriptural truth. It is needless to speak of Romanists; for they are too stupefied by tradition to afford the least hope of finding real and intelligent subjection to the teaching of the apostles.

The plainest conceivable instance of the way in which popular error works may be seen in the following extract from Beza's Version and Annotations. I quote from the latest edition (1598) during his life, where his thoughts are given most fully and correctly. "*Electis ex præcognitione Dei Patris ad sanctificationem Spiritus, per obedientiam et asperisionem sanguinis Jesu Christi.*" Such is his version: of the note this will suffice. "*Ita complexus fuerit Petrus omnes proprias salutis nostræ causas quæ a Deo manant, nempe efficientem summam causam, Dei Patris præscitiam, id est decretum æternum: Formalem, vocationem efficacem, quam electionis nomine intelligit: (nam ut alibi diximus, tum demum re ipsa eligimur quum Deus æternum suum decretum in nobis per vocationem exequitur) Finem, sanctificationem electorum: Materiam ipsam, Christi justitiam, cujus imputatione justii coronamur.*"

First his version is as unfaithful as one can imagine. He not only departs from the necessary force of the apostle's words in two most weighty particulars, but inverts the prepositions employed so as to alter completely the revealed mind of the Spirit. It is true that in one of these errors the Vulgate had led the way; for it is impossible fairly to render *ἐν ἀγιασμῷ* by "in sanctificationem." Beza should

have been rather warned by such a flaw, especially as Erasmus from the first had correctly given "per sanctificationem," as none could justify the taking  $\epsilon\nu$  and  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  as both = "in" with the accusative. But Beza allowed his system of doctrine so completely to warp his mind that he proceeded to the still greater error of representing  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  by "per," a rendering which not only falsifies the meaning but has not the smallest shadow of justification from the Greek idiom in any work of any author from Homer down to the fall of Constantinople. And, secondly, this bold and excessive perversion is the foundation of his comment; which, being wholly unfounded, calls for no remark further than that it is just the common notion on the subject. For, spite of the English Bible, which is in the main right, people continue to fancy that the Lord means here that the Christian is elect according to God the Father's foreknowledge unto sanctification of the Spirit by the obedience of Christ and the sprinkling of His blood.

Much more right was his leader, J. Calvin, though he speaks hypothetically. "If there be parts or effects of sanctification, then sanctification is to be taken here somewhat differently from what it means when used by Paul; that is, more generally. God then sanctifies us by an effectual calling; and this is done when we are renewed to an obedience to his righteousness, and when we are sprinkled by the blood of Christ, and thus are cleansed from our sins." Even he is mistaken in thinking that Paul does not use sanctification in this more general way, as I have shewn on 1 Cor. vi. 11. But plainly the Genevese chief owns a sense of sanctification different from that which is ordinarily seen and admitted. 2 Thess. ii. 13 appears to me another clear witness of Calvin's limiting this more general usage to Peter. For there the apostle speaks of God's having chosen the Thessalonian saints from the beginning unto salvation by sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. It was in virtue of the Spirit's setting them apart and their faith in the truth of the



gospel that God thus chose them to salvation: doctrine strikingly in analogy with the statement of Peter, if we allow for the difference in presenting the thought to Jewish and Gentile Christians.

Again, the excellent Archbishop Leighton, in his well-known Commentary upon the first Epistle of Peter, is perplexed by this obedience. He rejects Beza's application to Christ's obedience actively (though he took it as His obedience unto the death of the cross); and he himself thinks that it is contained in (yea, chiefly understood to signify) that obedience which the Apostle in Romans i. calls the *obedience of faith*, by which the doctrine of Christ is received, and so Christ Himself. When he adds that "by *obedience* sanctification is here intimated," it appears to me that he gets confused by not holding fast the more general sense of sanctification. The apostle certainly treats of obedience in this place as flowing from the setting apart to God or sanctification which precedes it. Besides, I think he mistakes the nature of the obedience by understanding it as the obedience of faith when a soul receives the gospel. In my judgment the phrase means that we are thus set apart to obey as Christ did, in the consciousness of our sonship, and with the assurance of being purged by blood. Much more correctly does he say later (Works, vol. i. pp. 15, 16, Jerment's edition) that "*sanctification* in a narrow sense, as distinguished from *justification*, signifieth the inherent holiness of a Christian, or his being inclined and enabled to obedience mentioned in this verse; but it is here more large, and is co-extended with the whole work of renovation, and is the separating of men to God by His Holy Spirit, drawing them unto Him; and so it comprehends justification (as here) and the first working of faith, by which the soul is justified through its apprehending and applying the righteousness of Jesus Christ."

