

Holiness: Its Nature, Part 2

by Albert N. Martin

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I'm sure there are many of you who are very conscious of the fact that this is about the most unenviable time in which to speak to any group of men and women gathered for serious thought. You've had lunch; the sun is at its zenith, and it seems to say with every forth-coming ray, "Take a nap. Sit back; relax." And it tests the metal of both the listener and the preacher. But I trust in mutual dependence upon God the Holy Spirit and by the engagement of all of our faculties, we will give ourselves with alertness to the Word of God. If you begin to go off into the land of nod, let me encourage you to push your lower back against the pew, throw your shoulders back, draw in a few deep breaths, and hang in there until the conclusion of the hour. At least the sound of my own voice will keep me awake, and I hope I will find you awake with me.

Now, in the development of this vast and comprehensive Biblical theme of holiness or sanctification, thus far I have thought to underscore from the Scriptures the importance or the necessity of Gospel holiness, and then earlier this morning something of the nature of Gospel holiness or Biblical sanctification. And in the previous exposition, I suggested that the Biblical materials force upon us a view of sanctification that breaks it down into three fundamental categories or three dimensions: sanctification begun in the radical cleavage with sin (the breaking of sin's dominion, the putting off of the old man, and the putting on of the new), then sanctification continued in the gradual process, and then sanctification completed in the final crisis.

Now what I propose to do is to go back to that second dimension of sanctification, namely, sanctification continued by the gradual process and to open up some fundamental lines of Biblical teaching with respect to this subject. And so if I were to give a title to today's message, it would be "Cardinal Issues Relative to Progressive Sanctification." It's use without which I sincerely doubt that any material progress can be made in the nurture of sanctification unless we do have some clear understanding of some fundamental Biblical issues. And if times permits, there are three categories of thought that I will open up under this general heading of "Cardinal Issues Relative to Progressive Sanctification." First of all, the necessity of the process, and then the agent in the process, and then the pattern for the process.

First of all, then, just a word about the necessity of the process. We saw in our study this morning that the New Testament gives us abundant materials with respect to the fact that there is a process. And when we ask the question, "Why must there be a process?" The answer is twofold. Number one: because the new man in Christ is not a perfect new man. Though sin no longer reigns, sin does remain. Though it no longer exercises dominion, it does exercise constant guerilla warfare. And so because the new man in Christ is not a perfect new man, there is this necessity of process. And it is in the very context in which the radical cleavage with sin is set

before us that the necessity of the subsequent process is also underscored. For instance, it's in Romans 6:13 that we are told: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin." The indication clearly being that it's possible for someone in whom the dominion of sin has been broken still to yield his members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin in given areas. Again, in Romans 8, where that radical transformation from the realm of the flesh to the realm of the Spirit is clearly taught in verses 5 through 9. Just a few verses later in verse 13, we are commanded or instructed: "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Paul is thereby indicating by the direction of the Spirit that, though we have been brought out of the realm of the flesh; we have been brought into the realm of the Spirit, we are not perfect men in that new dimension of the Spirit. And that emphasis could be drawn from many texts. Suffice it to say, the necessity for this process is rooted in that fundamental reality that as new men and women in Christ, we are not perfect new men and women.

And then the second reason which necessitates the process is that God has decreed and revealed that a gradual process is His will in dealing with the problem of remaining sin. God could have decreed that His salvation would be as radical in the complete dealing of the internal dimensions of sin as it is radical in dealing with the objective problems of sin. But God has decreed and revealed that it is His will to deal with remaining sin by a gradual process so that the concepts of growing in grace, increasing in knowledge, walking in the Spirit, putting to death the deeds of the flesh, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, adding to our faith, virtue--and I've just been quoting texts from the New Testament--those concepts are forced upon us by God Himself. And therefore, every attempt to concoct a theory of the Christian life which will bring us to some position in which the realities of process no longer obtain is really an affront upon the wisdom and sovereignty of God. Every theory of complete eradication of sin, all theories of the higher life which talk about being lifted above conscious desire for sin or conscious sin, and all of that terminology is in reality an affront upon the wisdom and sovereignty of God. For He has decreed that from the moment of radical cleavage with sin and the breaking of its dominion, the process of sanctification will advance by a process until the final crisis. Now granted, in that process, there are low points and high points; there are plateaus. There are times when we seem to take three steps at a time; other times when we seem to be taking about one millimeter of a step at a time; other times we may take two steps backwards. But the overall pattern, like climbing a mountain, which may involve some walking in level places, walking down on your way up--the overall direction is always upward and onward in conformity to Jesus Christ.

Well, so much for that word concerning the necessity of the process. And I have said it for this simple reason: there is in the heart of every truly regenerate person a longing that it would be otherwise. You see, God has given us in the language of the New Testament the earnest of the Spirit, the down payment of the Spirit. And because the Spirit has been given to us as the down payment of what we shall be, there is a panting, and a longing, and a commitment to perfection in the heart of every single Christian. When John says, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not," the heart of every true Christian says, "O God, would that it was so." And it's because we're stamped for perfection that we're sitting ducks for any teaching that says we can have perfection here and now. And it's only the earnest Christian that gets ensnared in perfectionist teaching with regard to the subject of sanctification. And so I give that material not as filler, but because I would preserve

some of you from the agony and the disillusionment of the being attracted by any form of perfectionist or semi-perfectionist teaching.

So much then for the necessity of the process. Now that which is the real heart of my burden this afternoon: the agents in the process. In that initial definitive sanctification, that radical cleavage with sin, God acts monergistically. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are operative to break the bondage of sin. But now in the process of sanctification, the agents are two. There is the agency of the triune God and the agency of the renewed believer. And so consider with me, then, this matter of the agency in the process of sanctification. Now, why is it important for you to have a clear grasp upon this aspect of Biblical teaching? Well, for the simple reason that the church in its history has been plagued with unscriptural views of sanctification which basically fall into two categories at the opposite end of the extremes. There is a polarity. On the one hand, there is sanctification by unaided human effort. People see that dimension of Biblical teaching in which human agency is involved in the sanctifying process, and completely overlooking the necessity of the divine agency, they so give themselves to the process of sanctification by naked human effort, that they always drift either into legalism, Phariseeism, or aestheticism. And the history of the church is strewn with the wreckage of men and women and whole movements that have in reality attempted to get on in the process of sanctification without a full appreciation of and commitment to the necessity of the constant divine agency in the process. But then on the other end of the spectrum, you have in the history of the church the wreckage that has come from the theories of sanctification that I call sanctification by complete passivity. These people take up the words "yield," "abide," and other such vocabulary from the New Testament, and they say,

"Ah ha, there's the secret of the process of sanctification. Get old self out of the way. And if you can just get yourself so utterly yielded, so utterly surrendered as to be nothing but a funnel, then Jesus Christ will live His life through you. And the process will go on with wonderful success as you seek to live to the glory of God."

Now, that teaching has brought such things as quietism, mysticism, and not strange, the worst form of antinomianism. For, you see, if it's Christ who lives through me (and that's the essence of the process), then whatever I do or not do, ultimately Christ is to take the credit or the blame. I am neutered in the process. So, you see, it is essential for us to understand and constantly to hold in proper Biblical tension that the agents in the process are not only the triune God but the entire redeemed humanity of the new man or new woman in Jesus Christ.

First of all, then, consider the agency of the triune Godhead in the process of sanctification. Now, here again, we are tempted to say, "Well, surely, God is the one who regenerates. God is the one who justifies. God is the one who adopts. But because we have a legitimate part in the process of sanctification, we can lose sight of the fact that ultimately sanctification is as much the work of God as any other redemptive privilege. It is the work first of all of God the Father. Some of the pivotal texts which clearly teach this. In John 17:17, our Lord prays, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." In John 15, Jesus says that His Father is the caretaker who is active in the proving process of all those who are in Him as the vine. "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman...and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (vv. 1-2). So in the process of sanctification, the Father is very active as the divine husbandman pruning away that which would not be conducive to our increased fruitfulness. Furthermore, in 1

Thessalonians 5:23, the apostle prays, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly...." And obviously, this is a reference to God the Father. And you have a similar emphasis in the context of Hebrews 13:20-21: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight...." And then, of course, the classic passage in Hebrews 12--the whole section on the Fatherly discipline of God which has as its ultimate goal our advancement in holiness. He says, "Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children...for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (vv. 5-6). And why does He do it? That we might be partakers of His holiness. Now, I don't want to belabor the point by just piling text upon text. But I want to give you enough texts so that you feel something of the pressure of the New Testament witness to this fact that the agent in the sanctifying process is God the Father. He is active in that process. Now, why is it important to understand this. Well, it is important to understand it so that we may be kept from any do-it-yourself moralism. The idea that God broke sin's dominion, but now He's patting me on the back like a coach pats the flanker as he's going in with the next play and says, "Go get 'em," and now I'm on my own. No, no, the Father who broke sin's dominion is constantly active in that process of sanctification both in its negative dimensions of mortification and in the active and positive dimensions of the cultivation of the graces of Christ-likeness. So we need to understand that if we are making any progress in this process, we are to render praise and thanksgiving to the Father that He has enabled us to make that progress. And then it will also keep us from a "Jesus only" kind of cultism. I always feel uneasy when people talk about Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. There's something fishy somewhere, because He's always addressed in the worship language of the New Testament either as our Lord Jesus Christ or as our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And He is always presented as the one through whom we bring our worship which terminates essentially and pervasively upon the Father. In the language of Ephesians 2, "we have access to Christ in the Spirit unto the Father." And though I take second place to none in asserting that as true God, Jesus Christ is the rightful recipient of praise and adoration and worship and prayer and confession, the climate of the New Testament is a climate in which we are worshippers of the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. And then, of course, it will also keep us understanding the place of the Father from a "Spirit only" mysticism. Whenever our religious life begins to terminate upon the Spirit, and there is a preoccupation with the Spirit, we're moving into the fringes of mysticism that can lead us into the most tragic forms of deviation from the norms of the New Testament. On the very threshold of the Christian life, Trinitarianism is dominant in the religion of the New Testament. When men undergo the initiatory ordinance, it oozes with Trinitarian implications. "Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name [singular] of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." And that concept that confronts us on the threshold develops and expands in the Christian life. If you've never read Warfield's article on the Trinity, I urge you to read it, to ponder it, to chew it over as he demonstrates that the doctrine of the Trinity is not so much a doctrine of dogmatics in the New Testament as it is the pervasive religious climate of New Testament life and of worship. And so we must understand the agency of the Father in the process of sanctification.

Furthermore, we must understand the agency of the Holy Spirit. In a very special and peculiar sense, He is the sanctifying agent. The phrase "sanctified by the Holy Spirit"

as such, to my knowledge, is only found once in the New Testament. We do have the phrase we looked at yesterday, "in sanctification of the Spirit" from Thessalonians and its parallel in 1 Peter. But the glory of the blessings of the new covenant are described by the Apostle in terms of the work of the Holy Spirit, particularly in 2 Corinthians 3 and 4. And the Spirit is central in the administration of the blessings of the new covenant. So when the Apostle describes that transforming process in 2 Corinthians 3, the Holy Spirit is central in his description: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD." And here the relationship of the exalted Lord as the dispenser of the Spirit and the activity of the Spirit are brought into a closeness of proximity that would result in heresy if we had no other testimony from the Apostle Paul concerning the distinction between the exalted Messianic Lord and that which is His crowning gift, even the gift of the Holy Spirit. But He is central, you see, in that transforming process. Now, with regard to the mortification of sin, His activity is essential. In Romans 8:13, Paul does not say, "If ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." He says, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." And so the Spirit's activity is absolutely essential in the process of putting to death remaining sin. Are there Christ-like virtues to be formed in us and expressed through us, those virtues of love, joy, peace, and longsuffering? Paul is careful to tell us in Galatians 5:22-23 that these are the fruit of the Spirit, not the fruit of our great efforts to conjure up something that appears like love, joy, and peace. No, wherever they are truly manifested, they are the fruit of the Spirit. His direct, His immediate, His powerful agency operative in our hearts. Now again, I ask the question, I hope, for you, why does this need to be emphasized? Well, again, for the simple reason that unless we cultivate a deep sense of utter dependence upon the Holy Spirit, we shall not know what it is to be a people who instinctively look out of ourselves to another for the cultivation for the graces of Christ-likeness and for the putting to death of remaining corruption. One of the greatest sins that characterizes us when sin still has dominion is our cursed creature confidence. And one of the most humbling remains of sin in the human heart is to be found in that precise area. And the measure of our true felt dependence is in reality in direct proportion to the earnestness, the fervency, and the frequency of our prayers. Prayer is the language of dependence. Prayerlessness is the eloquent testimony of creature confidence. Now, it's easy to learn the language of dependence: "O, without You, Lord, we can do nothing." But the man or woman who believes that cultivates both the attitude and the disciplines of specific prayer. For prayer in reality is but the spreading of our helplessness in the presence of the one who alone can help us. And so it essential to know that in this process, not only is the Father active, but the Spirit is active.

But then thirdly, the Lord Jesus is active. And here it is that perhaps our understanding is most deficient. And I confess mine was for years. Yes, the Father prunes and is active. Yes, the Spirit as the indwelling life of God is active. But I must think of the Lord Jesus primarily in terms of His work of satisfying all the demands of the law both with respect to its precepts and its penalty, to rejoice in Him as my righteousness and somehow to know communion and fellowship with Him in my day by day Christian experience, but not to look to Him consciously as the powerful agent in the ongoing work of my sanctification. And yet the Scripture surely is clear. Ephesians 1:3 tells us that it is in Christ that we are blessed with every spiritual blessing, including sanctification. He is the reservoir of all blessings which the people of God will enjoy from the beginning to the consummation of their redemption. And therefore, since sanctification in its progressive dimensions holds no little place in

that glorious salvation, we should expect to find our Lord Jesus Christ and His activity at the center of the process of sanctification. And that's precisely what we do find. It is in a passage on sanctification that Jesus says in John 15, "Without Me [severed from vital communion with Me] ye can do nothing." And then He gives us the positive commandment to abide in Him and to have His Word abiding in us that we might be fruitful in this process. Paul uses the language in Philippians 1 in his prayer, that the Philippians might be filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory of God. Those fruits of righteousness, he says, are fruits derived from the virtue that is in Christ Jesus. Or in the well-known text, Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." He is active in the process, not in just some general way as the great reservoir out of whom all our blessings come, and the great mediator through whom they are conveyed to us. But He is active in terms of His indwelling by the Spirit, in terms of His advocacy, and in terms of His intercession.

Now examine those things with me briefly. In Romans 8, the Apostle tells us that the Spirit who indwells us is the Spirit of Christ. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Verse 10: "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." In the great mystery of the indivisibility of the one God in three persons, where the Father is the Son and the Spirit. It's the only way you can sort out the language of John 14-16. Jesus says, "I'll pray to the Father; He'll send the Comforter. He comes. I come. My Father comes." Whose coming? The Godhead is coming. And though in the economy of redemption, the activity of the Spirit is central, we must never regard it as divisible from the presence and communion with the Father and with the Son. And so the New Testament sets before us a doctrine of the indwelling of Christ--"If Christ is in you...." Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Now, that text has been greatly abused, as we shall see in a few moments. But we must not allow the abuse of it to rob us of the preciousness of what it does teach: Christ lives in me--and then that text in Colossians 1:27 and possibly Ephesians 3:17. But these suffice to demonstrate that in the process of sanctification, I'm not left to naked unaided human effort. There is not only the direct agency of the Father in His pruning and disciplinary work. There is not only the direct agency of the Spirit stirring me up to long after holiness, giving me the grace to put to death the deeds of the flesh, forming the graces of Christ-likeness in me. But there is Christ Himself, the one who objectively in space and time as my surety and substitute went to the cross and died and cried, "It has been accomplished!" In the mystery of the indwelling of the Spirit, Christ Himself indwells me. And though the focal point of my faith and my religious life is not Christ in me but Christ for me at the right hand of the Father, we must never be robbed of this dimension of Biblical revelation.

But He is not only committed to my progressive sanctification as the one who indwells me, but in a special sense, as my advocate and my intercessor. Is it not in a section dealing with progressive sanctification that the advocacy of Christ is brought forward by John? 1 John 2:1: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." You see, it is in the context of having a heart that pants after perfect sinlessness and pursues that goal that the ugly reality of imperfection is introduced. "If any man sin" is no indication he has forfeited his advocate. It is at that precise point that the confidence he has an advocate is to fill his soul with hope. We have an advocate--and notice, not with the Judge but with the Father. In all the liberty and filial delight of a conscious sense of adoption, I can come even when my conscious

smarts with the sin that has been committed. And where would we be in this process without the confidence of the advocacy of Christ? Crippled, paralyzed with consciences laden down with the felt reality of our failures. O how wonderful to come and say, "O my Father, You have said Christ is my advocate." And to know that He pleads my cause in the presence of the Father.

And then that added dimension of His intercession as it relates to the whole subject of progressive sanctification. In Romans 8:34, the Apostle ask the question, "Who is he that condemneth?" In the face of the reality of sin, having come through the description of the actings of sin, even in best of believers in Romans 6 and 7, he says, "Who is he that condemneth?" And then his answer comes: "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." And then he goes on to ask the classic question in the light of that: "Who shall separate us from the love of God?" If we have one who intercedes on the basis of His once for all oblation and atonement, and by that intercession in the language of Hebrews 7:25, He is committed to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. Little do we appreciate the function of the intercession of Christ in our progressive sanctification.

We have a couple of hints of how it works out in the realities of that process. For instance, you remember in the 22nd chapter of Luke, our Lord said, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when [not if] thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." And then when we read on in the Gospels that Peter having denied Christ, and the last couple of times, cursing and swearing with oaths, it says, "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly." What made the look of Christ efficacious to break the heart of Peter? It was the intercession of Christ. There was nothing in that look that held inherent power to break his heart. Those were the same eyes that looked into the face of Judas and said, "betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" Those eyes didn't break his heart; they hardened his heart. And he went out and hanged himself and sent himself to hell. Those were the very eyes that looked into the face of the Pharisees, and they said, "Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" There was no magical, mystical power in the look of Jesus to break anyone's heart. It was His intercession. O, my friends, what a story will be told us when we get to the other side. Can you think of those times when you've been negligent in your devotional life, and your hunger for the Word of God has been shriveled until it was almost nonexistent, and when there rose up in its place conscious hankering after the leeks and the garlic and the cucumbers of your past Egyptian life; when you felt, as it were, a raging fire of carnal passion within your breast? And then it seemed, as if out of nowhere, the Word of God became precious. A text of Scripture flashed into your mind; God brought a fellow believer unexpectedly across your path, and in conversation with Him, the deepest springs of what you are as a new man or woman in Christ were suddenly opened again. What's the answer to that? The intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ, praying that you would be kept in the way of holiness. Read John 17. Conscious that you're in a world in which the devil is seeking as a roaring lion to devour you, He prays, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." You see, this is one of those greater fallacies of the Deeper Life teaching that says the measure of our progress is in direct proportion to our faith. I wouldn't be standing here today if that were so. There are times when through the subtlety of Satan and the corruption

of my own flesh, I've had very little conscious desire for God, very little conscious longings after holiness. But, I tell you, I've had conscious passions and temptations to every form of sin imaginable. Yet I stand today kept and preserved and in the way. Why? Not because of some super duper no reckon, yield, abide ability I have, but because I have an intercessor who committed Himself in the gory baptism of Golgotha to take this sinner all the way from a state of nature to a state of glory. Blessed be God for the intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we need as the people of God to understand that He is active in this process. "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins." And His part in the salvation is not just in the initial, but it is there in the entire process. And it will be there in the consummation. We are said to be glorified with Him. "The dead in Christ shall rise." Even death cannot dissolve our union with Him. And the consummate glory will be the manifestation of all the dimensions of that union to the wonder of an on looking universe.

Well, God is the active agent in the process. But! And in the few minutes that remain, let me seek to expound the other side of that "but." The second agent in the process is the believer himself. The second agent in the process is the believer in the entirety of all that he is as a man and as a new man in Christ. Now, I say by way of repetition that much harm and confusion has come by a failure to come to grips with this fact. There have been those (and they exist to this day) who so emphasize the activity of God as to lead to quietism and passivity. And some people take that teaching seriously. I did. And well can I remember standing in front of the refrigerator at night--and I don't want you to laugh, because it isn't a laughing matter, and I'm not saying it to be funny--paralyzed as to whether or not I should take a glass of milk before I went to bed. Was it the indwelling Christ urging me to take that glass of milk, or was it carnal gluttony--paralyzed in front of the refrigerator. I spent hours on my face paralyzed to make a decision about what to preach because I wanted the indwelling Christ to choose my text. And I didn't want my carnal mind to get in the way. And so I kept pushing it into neutrality waiting for some kind of celestial fluttering to occur in the deep recesses of my thought processes so that I could stand confident that the indwelling Christ was preaching through me. Some of us took that teaching seriously, my friends. And it's a wonder we didn't end up in a nut house.

Christ living His life through you? There is not one verse in the New Testament that using that terminology. And that's what liberated me. I took my New Testament and my Greek Testament, and I started in Matthew and went clean through Revelation. Paul says one time concerning his miraculous gifts as an apostle, "I will not speak of that which Christ wrought through me." That has nothing to do with the Christian life. There is not one text in the New Testament that says Christ lives through anyone. And that opened the door. He lives in us by the Spirit. And I discovered in Galatians 2:20 there's more I than Christ. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me [but in what way? Notice the next phrase]: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live...." I live that life, and all that makes me me in the full integrity of my humanity quickened by the grace of God, it is that "I" which lives this Christian life, but lives it in the context of faith, faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. And if we do not understand and come to grips with this fundamental issue, we are doomed to become vulnerable on many fronts with regard to the Christian life.

Very quickly now, let me trace out a few lines of thought which show that this is the predominant emphasis of the New Testament. Is there remaining sin to be mortified

in this process? And I hope you answer intelligently, "Yes, there is." Now the question is, who is to mortify it? Christ or me? If I read my Bible rightly and understand a little bit of my Greek correctly, I'm told in Romans 8:13, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify [or put to death] the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Ye put to death by the Spirit? Yes! But the Spirit's activity does not negate my agency and my activity. In the process of sanctification, are there defilements of the flesh and the spirit to be put away? Then whose to put them away? Am I to say, "O Lord, put them away from me. Take them from me." No, no, 2 Corinthians 7:1 says, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." John gives the same emphasis in 1 John 3:3: "Every man that hath this hope in him [allows the Lord to purify him]." That isn't what the text says. It says, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." So, if there is defilement; if there is to be the putting away, what did Jesus say? "If thy right hand offend thee, [pray that the Lord will put you to sleep and give you a painless amputation in some mystical experience of the indwelling Christ]." No! "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee." "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee." Figurative language, yes, but the point is clear. We do the amputating, and we do the casting, not the Lord. You do it. And He says if you don't you'll go to hell. Read the passage. That's strong language, but that's the language of the Son of God; that's the language of the Apostle. Is there a tendency for bodily appetites to get out of hand and lead us to sin? Notice, I did not say that the appetites are sin. But is there a tendency through the inherence of remaining sin with respect to bodily appetites? Is there a tendency for these things to get out of hand and jeopardize us spiritually? What are we to do? Paul gives us the example in 1 Corinthians 9:27. He says, "I keep under my body [I literally bruise myself under the eye], and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be [adokimos]." And that doesn't mean put on a shelf. "Adokimos" in its standard usage in the eight times it occurs in the New Testament means reprobate (tried and found wanting, and therefore rejected). Paul says, "I keep my body under, lest in preaching to others, I should end up reprobate." Who keeps it under? He says, "I do it." "So fight I." He didn't say the Lord did it for him. He didn't say, "Lord, I've got a problem with getting up in the morning. Won't you please just come and gently stroke me on the cheek when I ought to get up and pray? Nothing too violent, Lord. I'm a sensitive character, you know." No, he says, "I buffet my body." Whatever that meant for him, he did it. And he used pretty graphic language in the original. Are there positive graces to be cultivated and developed? Yes, Peter says in 2 Peter 1:5 and 6, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance...." You say, "But I thought they were the fruit of the Spirit." Well, if you want one that blows your mind, what's the last of the nine fold fruit of the Spirit? Self-control--and that brings it all together. Never is the fruit of the Spirit more active than when I am more active. For His activity is not given to negate mine but to secure it and make it efficacious.

And perhaps what is the classic text: Philippians 2:12-13. And as Mr. Aken has reminded you, so much of what we bring upon occasions such as these is biographical, whether we acknowledge it or not. This again is one of the texts that God used to liberate me from the bondage of quietism and passivity in the process of sanctification: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation...." He doesn't say work for your own justification. That would be a complete negation of

everything in the immediate context in which he describes Christ going in the obedience of death to the cross that we might be justified. It would contradict everything in chapter 3 in which he says, "I have no desire but to have a righteousness that is found in Christ and Christ alone." No, he's says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Notice what the text says. I'll give you just a few of the principles quickly. God's working and our working in the outworking of salvation are coextensive. God's working is not suspended because we work, nor is our working suspended because He works. You work out with all seriousness because God is working in you. His working and your working are coextensive. His working does not negate ours, and ours does not negate His.

Second great principle: God's working is the incentive and motivation for our working. Why are we to work out with fear and trembling? Because--here's the rationale--it is God who is working in you, not to bypass your willing or working but to secure it. He works in you not to negate your willing and working. That's what quietism and pietism and higher life teaching propagate. "Get so yielded that your will is out of the way." Paul says, "No, get working because your will is in the way of His working." And it's God who energizes the renewed will to make the choices that please Him and then gives us the power to perform them. God's working, then, is the incentive for our working. I need never fear that my working will outstrip His.

And the third great principle is, our working is the only certain evidence of His working. If He works in me to will and to do of His good pleasure and I'm not willing and doing His good pleasure, what proof do I have that He's working in me? You see, the evidence of His working in me is that I'm willing and working that which is pleasing to Him.

And then the fourth great principle is, God's working is to be the focus of our trust. "Work out with fear and trembling." And it's as though the Philippians say, "But Paul, the issues are so great, and sin and the devil and the world are such massive and mighty enemies, how can we hope for success?" He says, "Let your comfort be that it is God in the glorious Trinity of His being who is at work in you. Let that be the focal point of your trust."

But, the final principal is, let your working be the focal point of your effort. Work it out with fear and trembling. It's serious business being a Christian. It's serious business putting sin to death. It's serious business being conformed to the image of Christ. And I say, in those five principles which inhere in this text, there is a theology of the progress and process of sanctification that is so balanced and guarded from errors on the left hand and on the right. I close with a choice quote from Kyper that speaks to this very issue and then one brief quote from John Owen:

"When we are called upon to speak or act or fight, we do so as though we were doing it ourselves, not perceiving that it is another who works in us both to will and to do. But as soon as we finish the task successfully and agreeably to the will of God in Scripture, as men of faith we prostrate ourselves before Him and cry, 'Lord, the work was Thine as were the prayers in which we sought Thy help and the praises which we now render for what you have enabled us to do.'"

That's it. Kyper understood it. And John Owen in his classic work Volume 6--and I urge upon you to make this book your lifetime companion. If you want to make

progress in the matter of putting sin to death and dealing with temptation, next to your Bible and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* nothing will be more helpful than Volume 6 of Owen. He says,

"He does not so work in our mortification as not to keep it still an act of our obedience. The Holy Ghost works in us and upon us as we are fit to be wrought in and upon; that is, so as to preserve our own liberty and free obedience. He works upon our understandings, our wills, our consciences and affections agreeably to their own natures. He works in us and with us, not against us or without us so that His assistance is an encouragement as to the facilitating of the work and no occasion of neglect as to the work itself."

And, you see, that in turn spins out so many implications it will make your head swim. There's never any kind of wooden uniformity. You see, whenever people take the deeper higher life seriously, they're all cut out of the same mold, because their humanity is being negated by the passivity. Can you imagine me trying to preach when I believed that stuff? Anytime I felt an emotion coming, well, that was Al Martin; that was flesh. I've got to keep it down. Imagine me trying to talk in a monotone voice with my hands at my side. I took it seriously, folks. And when God was pleased in grace to show me a better way, O how liberating it was, not only with my glass of milk before I went to bed at night, but to proclaim the blessed Word of the living God, and to proclaim it the way God ordained it should be proclaimed in my redeemed humanity so that I'm fully me with a longing and a passion that He should be praised in the proclamation of His truth. These are some of the fundamental aspects of this process, my friends. Don't treat them lightly. We didn't get to the pattern. But you read Professor Murray; you can get all that material better said than I could say it anyway. But may God be pleased to write these things upon our hearts for our profit now and for the benefit our people who desperately need clear Biblical instruction in these aspects of practical Christian experience.

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