

a proper subject for baptism, and in the covenant of promise, though entirely unacquainted with truth, what serious mind could sanction the plea? Yet, what claim could an infant have, even though its parents should be believers, which might not be urged in behalf of the superannuated character just supposed?

*To admit what is termed Open Communion, would be holding one faith in judgment, and practising another in our conduct.* This is what no honest man can submit to, if he be aware of the inconsistency. If a church ought to be formed according to the Scriptures, and it be acknowledged, that, they require all believers to be baptized, then, the church ought to consist of baptized believers only; and it would be contrary to Paul's injunction to the Corinthian church, to allow of opposite sentiment and practice in the same society. "Now I beseech you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. 1 Cor. i. 10. Can it be thought, the writer of these words viewed the subject of strict communion, as Mr. Hall does now? How can a church speak *the same thing*, when one part of it is contending for Pædobaptism, and the other for adult baptism? One pleads that, carnal persons are

to be baptized ; the other, that none but spiritual persons are proper subjects. One says, whosoever is rightly baptized shall be saved ; the other, that very many of those, who are rightly baptized, are eternally lost. One says, *If thou believest thou mayest* ; the other, if thy father believes thou mayest. One affirms baptism is a figure of the sufferings and death of Christ, also of his burial and resurrection ; the other, that it is a sign of our enjoyment of those things, in a life of holiness, and *not* a figure of Christ's death and resurrection. One considers *much water* to be requisite, to the due administration of the ordinance, — and seeks a convenient place accordingly ; the other believes a few drops only to be needful : the *former* uniformly maintains immersion to be the only right way of performing the ordinance ; the *latter* speaks sometimes of *sprinkling*, and at other times of *pouring*, as equally right ; but that *plunging* is not scriptural ! One supposes his natural seed to be entitled to gospel-blessings, as being the children of godly parents ; the other believes, that, they have no claim on any such foundation : the *former* speak of coming to Christ by Abraham ; the *latter* of coming to Abraham by Christ. Gal. iii. 29. One believes that whoever has a right to baptism, has also a right to the supper of the Lord, and that such

person is required to walk in newness of life, and to adhere to all the ordinances of the Lord's house ; but the other believes, that infants have a right to baptism, which can neither properly receive the Lord's Supper, nor walk in newness of life, nor attend to other branches of holy worship. Now, as the Pædobaptist is thus obliged to separate the two connected ordinances, through the circumstances and state of his young creatures, does it not amply shew, that, he has misunderstood his Lord, relative to the subject or person proper to be baptized ? To me it is obvious, that this must be the case.

Another reason occurs to me, which has some claim to notice, *If the Baptist were to comply with the popular scheme proposed, it would become impossible for the pastor of such a mixed community, to be both FAITHFUL and ACCEPTABLE to his flock, either in his prayers or his preaching.* If we consider him as standing at the head of the assembly, interceding with God for his blessing upon his people through the word ; so long as no particulars are specified, there is no division of mind occasioned by his petitions : but, presently, he feels his heart grow warm in the engagement, and, thoughtless as to consequences, he prays that God would lead his people into all truth, not only as to doctrine, but also as to practice ; and that he would cause them to confess his holy

name, in the appointed ordinance of baptism, and not leave them to follow the customs of men: he prays that the saints may speak and practice the same thing. The Pædobaptist knows his meaning, but unites not with him; whilst the advocate for adult baptism feels interested, and perhaps, in the simplicity of his mind, mentions that part of his pastor's prayer afterwards, with some mark of approbation, which the Pædobaptist no sooner hears, than he drops some hint of his dissatisfaction, or his disregard for what his brother remarked, and this creates a coolness, at least, between them. To say this is not likely to be the case, is only to betray an ignorance of the imperfections too common to the best of men; and if we suppose the pastor to enter faithfully into the subject, in his preaching, what may reasonably be expected to follow? If he hide the Scripture testimony for baptism, as being an ordinance for believers only, one part of his church will be discontented; and if he faithfully plead for it, the other part of his charge will be dissatisfied, if not highly displeased. Besides, we are to bear it in mind, that perhaps this pastor is a plain man, and has never been taught to act with craft, and to deal in ambiguous terms and phrases; it may be, he knows not how to flourish over the premises without affirming any sentiment, or making

any error. Perhaps he has a tender conscience for the honour of God, and is constrained to speak God's word faithfully; and if so, how will his labours be acceptable to his Pædobaptist friends? and when the ordinance of baptism is administered, will they be glad to see it, and rejoice with their brethren, that others are come to follow Jesus in the watery way? If the preaching, praying, and singing, be close to the point, will they not feel very restless, or at best, entirely careless? I am certain, from observation and experience, the effects of such a mixture must be often painful, and at times, truly injurious to both parties; it always tends to gender a negligence of mind, as to sentiment, or unhappy disputation rises. Such characters, so different in sentiment, are better apart, and their love for each other is more likely to be maintained in separate societies, than by their being blended into one; for, if they unite, it must be at the expense of truth and faithfulness.

Once more. *General communion would encourage the unscriptural custom of sprinkling babes, and of infant communion, with other erroneous sentiments that follow in connexion.* The apostle could not say to such a mixed assembly, "I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you;" but to such a society the

words of God by the prophet, would be more appropriate:—"Ye have changed mine ordinances." It seems highly unreasonable to imagine, that, children should be admitted to baptism by the apostles, and no account of the matter be anywhere recorded, no command be given to baptize them, nor any directions afforded on the subject: whether the children of godly *parents* were to be baptized; or whether those which had but one godly *parent* should be esteemed proper subjects; and if it signified whether that parent was the father or the mother, or whether infants in general were to be baptized; for, it is very certain, the Scriptures nowhere give any direction on this head, but all through declare, *If thou believest thou mayest*; which leaves us sufficient ground to infer, that, *if thou believest not, thou mayest not*. "He that *believeth* shall be saved." What may we infer from these words? No less than this, "He that *believeth not* shall be damned." Surely the apostles did not require faith of some, in order to baptism, and not of others.

It seems a most absurd idea for any good man to take up, that he was baptized when an infant, since which time he has, in all probability, shewn himself the enemy of God and truth, and therefore, what can that ceremony have to do with him, as a true Christian now? How could he have to do with a spiritual ordi-

nance before he was a spiritual man? Or rather, does it not evidence the custom of sprinkling carnal babes, to be a carnal ordinance, and of human authority, seeing the subject is not required to be spiritual? And how is it that any one, while carnal, can perform what would have become his duty after regeneration, had he not done it while in an unregenerate state? These things, to me, appear so ridiculous, that I wonder how any serious, reflecting mind, can become their advocate. Does it make no difference, in the ordinance, whether the person be baptized when a child, or when he is become not only a man, but a good man? To answer in the affirmative, would render it difficult to vindicate the plea of having been baptized in infancy, as containing proof sufficient, that there remains no need for further baptism after conversion: and to answer in the *negative*, would be making a work of grace a very unimportant thing, with regard to the worship of God, as well as to the character who performs it; but, blessed be God, there are many gracious souls to be found, who have not so learned Christ. Hence it appears, that, the pretence of having been baptized in infancy, is no reason why a church of baptized believers should consider such persons as baptized, according to the Lord's command. Therefore, they are not fit persons to admit into the church

of Christ, not having put on Christ, or confessed his name, in that way of obedience which is prescribed in the scriptures, and was adhered to by the churches, formed under the ministry of the Apostles of our Lord.

---

SECTION VII.

---

*Some Observations on the Necessity and Means of Sanctification.*

As sanctification is revealed in the Scriptures, we are sure it is needful, because the Lord of salvation has made choice of no unnecessary thing. He has determined that his own name shall be graven upon all his vessels of mercy,—as he is holy, so he will have his people holy also. No one doctrine is designed to supersede another. The doctrine of election does not exclude adoption, but is amplified to our view thereby; for there can be no adoption but election must be manifested therein. Neither do these doctrines set aside those of redemption, remission, and justification; but are extended through them, and implied in them. But all these do not render needless the doctrine and grace of sanctification; the elect of God must all be sanctified efficiently, internally, and externally: for he will have them beautified within and without with salvation. *He will beautify the meek with salvation. The*



*King's daughter is all glorious within, and her clothing is of wrought gold.* The souls of the people, shall be the habitation of their God.

This internal work of the holy Sanctifier, is not requisite to make us sons, but, to impart to us the disposition and likeness of sons, and to raise us to the enjoyment of sonship by faith. We were constituted sons before the world began, by an act of the divine will ; but, by sanctification of the Spirit, we receive a temper becoming the relationship of sons. Thus, while it is not necessary to make us children, it is nevertheless needful to manifest that we are children. As justification discharges us from guilt, and redemption puts off our fetters and chains, so sanctification bestows the right image of the Lord, and fills the heart with sanctity, joy, and peace. It is not requisite to give us *right* to salvation and eternal glory, but is essential to make us *meet* for, and *evidence* our *right to* those benefits. Though sanctification be not the good man's title to endless life and blessedness, yet, it is that which gives him possession of a title ; it puts the title into his hand of faith and feeling, and into his heart of experience, and he receives and enjoys it, under the Spirit of communion with his God. Hence, the enjoyment of his given title through the power of the Spirit, affords him a spiritual meetness for his heavenly inheritance. There-

fore, that which is the foundation of my claim, or the sure ground of my lively hope, is opened to me in the mystery of sanctification, by the Holy Ghost; for he comes to prepare a sinner's heart for God, and to reveal the perfections and purposes, promises and precepts, of God therein. Thus are the objects of divine choice *set apart*, for the honour and pleasure of him who chose them. The Spirit works sanctification, under the merit of Immanuel's obedience and blood, and by shedding abroad the electing love of the eternal Father. Hence, it bears witness to our justification in Christ, and sets our spirits free from a state of bondage under the law of works, and from the dominion of sin, Satan, and the world. We are also hereby fitted *to serve God* acceptably; *to do those things that are pleasing in his sight*; and to counteract and crucify *the works of the flesh*. Gal. v. 19—21. The works we before fulfilled, we are led to abhor and oppose, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the production of his fruits in our hearts. But to all these things, this sanctification is indispensably requisite; as it also is, to our fellowship with God, to our love for his word and worship, as well as to the purity, peace, and comfort of our own souls. This work of holiness, enables, a lost, sinful creature, to conceive of the great truths of the gospel, usefully and thankfully;

and, indeed, there must be some grace from Christ in the soul, before that soul will receive Christ spiritually, or can discern his excellence, and love his character in truth. It is this internal work of grace that enlightens the understanding, softens the heart, converts the will, and cleanses the conscience. The necessity of this sanctifying work of the Spirit is very evident ; for without it, who believes? without hope, who expects? without patience, who waits? and without inward desire of heart, who looks out for the fulfilment of God's promise? But he who is made holy in principle, is fitted to all the subsequent acts of sanctification : the root secures the fruit, and the actuating power of the Spirit is engaged to fall in with the living principle, and carry on the good work begun.

It is abundantly manifest, that we should neither come out from the world, be saved from its spirit, nor be ashamed of our crimes, nor relish the doctrines of the gospel, were it not for the influence of the Holy Spirit, in our inward sanctification. We have no reason to express surprise, that men in general are not in love with divine truth, and its adorable Author ; or that all men, who have opportunity of hearing the gospel, do not walk worthy of God. We see it is easily accounted for, from the things of the gospel being only to be dis-

cerned-by spiritual men, and in a spiritual way. He that is sanctified, has received the Spirit of God, that he may know those things that are freely given to us of God. He is said to be taught of God—to be led into all truth,—to have the witness of Christ’s mediation in himself, and to be made the temple of God. But the right knowledge of gospel mysteries, and a conversation becoming them, require the internal work of sanctification ; and it is impossible that the fruits of righteousness should ever grow from any other root.

I will now consider the *means* of sanctification. This idea can never be applied to the formation of the principle of sanctification, which is the immediate and instantaneous work of God ; but, it wholly belongs to the exercises of the quickened soul, and to its growth and progress in spiritual knowledge, affection, strength, and conformity to the will of God our Saviour and King. Now, though God works by means, where the creature wrought upon is an active agent in the things effected, he does not use means in the forming of a new principle in the mind ; for in that work, the creature, in whom it is wrought, is entirely passive. Where means are employed, I believe we usually find improvement is expected and designed ; but in regeneration there can be none : it is as complete as ever it will be ; and we find com-

mandment connected with appointed means ; but the work of spiritual creation comes not under commandment, for it is the work of God, who can never be commanded, because he has not only no superior, but he has no equal. When I consider sanctification, as including effectual calling and real conversion, the use of means becomes admissible and needful. The means and the end are inseparably joined : God's means are elected in wisdom, and the ends designed will be certainly answered. It is common to say, *We should use the means*, which is very right, so long as we keep within the bounds, where means have their appointed station and utility. But what can be done with the child before it is born ? Regeneration must precede all use of means in the matter of spiritual sanctification. Means are to be used by faith, but nothing can be done by Faith, before Faith is born. All means are from Christ, or under his controul ; so that we are wholly, and in every respect sanctified through him. The three active graces, Faith, Hope, and Love, are inward fruits and active means of sanctification ; as they spring from an inward principle of holiness, they are fruits of sanctification : but as they receive Christ, and administer to the life, liberty, comfort, purity, and peace of the mind, they are means of sanctity ; and the Christian walks in Christ by faith, is saved

by hope, and follows the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, in love. Hereby he is sanctified; nor is any one actively sanctified, in the practical branches of holiness, without faith, hope, and love.

The gospel is also a means of sanctification; and by it the Lord's people are *called to be saints*. Rom. i. 7. Peter said to his brethren, *Ye have purified your souls in obeying THE TRUTH through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren.* Thus prayed our Lord, *Sanctify them through thy truth: THY WORD IS TRUTH; for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through THE TRUTH.* This shews, that the gospel doctrines have no unholy tendency, but that they are ordained to promote the sanctification of God's chosen. The Holy Spirit is connected with these holy doctrines, and has engaged to bless them for the great ends whereunto they are sent. *Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by THE WORD.* This should greatly encourage ministers to study the word, and preach the word; and it also is an inducement to the saints to hear the word, and to read it, and pray over it, to esteem it highly, and treat it with reverence. The throne of grace is another means appointed for the sanctification of the Lord's elect. The

spirit and exercise of true prayer are ever opposed to iniquity, and greatly promote a separation of the heart unto God. For holiness the believer prays, nor does he pray in vain. His mind is sometimes caught up to God, and all his powers are sweetly filled with the humbling presence of his condescending Lord. This adds feeling to his thoughts, and fervour to his petitions; he forgets his sorrows in the embraces of his merciful Saviour, and his fears are scattered from his breast, in the delightful vision of faith. The Holy Ghost is pleased to sanctify the soul in the exercise of prayer, by opening the glory of Christ's person and righteousness to the eye of Faith, and shedding his matchless love abroad in the heart, in the quickening and renewing influences of divine power; and even the buffetings of Satan,—the afflictions of the body and mind,—also the trials of life in circumstantial, are all made to work together for good, to the promotion of sanctification in all the members of Christ. For God worketh with, and through those dispensations, so that the mind is led to himself under them, and taught to cease from undue confidence in creatures, for happiness or satisfaction. The bitterness of sin is tasted, and the pleasures of fellowship with God are sought, and in measure obtained. The ordinances of God, and the discipline of a

spiritual church state, are also means of aiding the cause of evangelical sanctity. They are ordained to that holy end, and the Spirit of holiness is engaged to attend them with power to the souls of his people; and thousands of saints can attest their utility; and let it not be forgotten, that to worship God as he has commanded, is the way to enjoy God as he has promised, and to glorify him as we ought.

---

SECTION VIII.

---

*In what Sense Sanctification is Progressive.*

A FEW remarks on this disputed point, shall conclude my present small labour, on the highly important subject of spiritual Sanctification. Some speak of progressive sanctification, as though they supposed iniquity to be in a perpetual consumption; or, as if sin were gradually diminishing and dying; but experience knows nothing of this sentiment; for, if we inquire of the most aged and most upright saint alive, we shall certainly find him still exclaiming, *O wretched man that I am!* and stiling himself the Chief of Sinners. Some good men speak of the *remains* of corruption; but I see not why this language should be used, when the sin of nature is just the same as it was before they received the grace of God.



The power of sin is broken and counteracted, and its dominion lost, but its nature and fullness are still the same. The evil propensities of the heart are remaining and are unchanged, although they are restrained and abhorred. The flesh cannot do the things it would, by reason of the spirit, or inward law of holy dispositions warring against it; but, were the regenerate soul left to itself, it would immediately make it manifest, that, the root of all wickedness remains unimpaired, unimproved, and in full strength. It is lamentably evident, that spiritual men have been guilty of awful crimes; nor does sin ever appear to have greater power, in any acts of the unregenerate part of mankind, than it seems to have possessed in certain acts, in which, some of the servants of the Lord have been overtaken. On this point, no serious mind can reflect, without some degree of pain and inward concern. Nor should we overlook the vast riches of God's wisdom and grace, discovered to erring mortals, in the complete forgiveness and salvation of such daring and provoking practices. Such dishonouring blots, however, in the garments of some of the Lord's redeemed, are strong attestations to the real and undiminished vileness of the heart, even after grace has been infused, and the seed of perfect sanctity, sown in the heart, has begun to spring up. Thrice

happy the men, whose garments are always white, whose loins are girt with righteousness and truth, and whose conversation is such as becometh the gospel of Christ. *And let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.*

He that knows his own heart, will neither knowingly trust it, nor once pretend to commend it, either to God or man. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, neither can any one fully know its evil depths and hidden workings, but God himself! And though a good man should be preserved from every external and bodily act of transgression, he will still see every reason to disclaim the idea of progressive holiness, or of becoming less sinful. Sin is a sturdy enemy, and is not to be slain in this present life. Death came in by sin; and to the righteous it is a known truth, sin goes out by death. When sin separates the good man's body from his soul in death, its power ever after is confined to the body only; and as it came into the world by the flesh, so it finally dies with it: and though the body shall rise again, sin will rise no more. Hallelujah, Amen!

Some there are who seem ready to deny the idea of progressive sanctification altogether. These men must be wrong, because the Bible is right; and that there are several testimonies

to the truth of the doctrine of progressive sanctification will now be shewn. All those passages of God's word, which speak of the saints' growing in grace, increasing in faith and love, and of their being sanctified *wholly*, seem to imply the idea of progressive sanctification : and many other forms of expression we have, beside these, which indicate the same thing. A few out of the many shall now be briefly reviewed. To the Philippians Paul said, "He who hath *begun* a good work in you, will *perform it until* the day of Jesus Christ." Now that which is said to be *begun*, and to be *carrying on*, with the prospect and certainty of its being ultimately *finished*, may justly be denominated a *progressive* work. This passage assures us, that, regeneration and glorification are inseparably united ; and that sanctification is begun in the former, and completed in the latter. To the same effect are these words,— "The very God of peace sanctify you *wholly* : and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Herein the apostle considered the Thessalonians as already sanctified in measure ; but *not wholly*. In a relative, meritorious, and radical sense, they were already fully sanctified ; but, in a practical sense of conformity to the precept and conduct of Christ, they were only sanc-

tified *in part*. Therefore, he prayed for them, that they might be sanctified *wholly*; and his prayer testifies, that, he believed it possible for them to be more sanctified than they were, which sufficiently evinces sanctification to be in one sense progressive. A man may be complete *in Christ*, who is still far from being complete *for Christ*. I consider sanctification as not only belonging to the priestly office of Jesus, but as appertaining also to his kingly character; and, with regard to the saints, the words just cited bear witness, that, sanctification concerns the body as well as the mind; and as the body is required to serve and glorify God, it must be by its members and exercises being brought under the authority of Christ, and swayed by his Spirit; but in these things it is not difficult to conceive, that, the apostle might find abundant reason to pray as he did, and that, under the notion of his friends becoming further advanced in the work of sanctification. Some good men seem to wish to distinguish between sanctification and its fruits: the *latter*, they allow, may increase, but not the *former*; but this to me appears a useless distinction, and tends to an exclusion of holiness from the actions of regenerate men, as far as words can do it, and consequently confines the idea of sanctification to the principle of life produced in the soul, in regeneration, and

makes sanctification to be merely a passive work : to this I am persuaded the Scriptures will not agree, neither can the understanding Christian retain this sentiment, if he honestly view the subject in all its bearings. Most mistakes arise from looking at the Scriptures in a partial way, and not considering truth on all sides, and in all its ramifications. That sanctification is not to be reckoned a passive work merely, is evident, from such Scriptures as the following :—‘ For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication ; that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour. If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work. Seeing ye have purified yourselves in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently, being born again, &c. 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 ; and every man that hath this hope in him, (*of finally seeing God our Saviour, and of being like him*) purifieth himself, even as he is pure.’ 1 John iii. 3 ; 2 Cor. vii. 1 ; 1 Pet. i. 22 ; 1 Thes. iv. 3, 4 ; 2 Tim. ii. 21.

Now, as such testimonies as these fully prove, that sanctification is to be taken in an active sense, as well as passively, so, when Paul says, "Let us cleanse ourselves from *all* filthiness of the flesh and spirit, *perfecting* holiness in the fear of God:" he seems to suppose a progress in holiness, and that it is a work not *perfected*, but *perfecting* in the fear or service and worship of God; and it may with safety be affirmed, that God's believing family will be *perfecting* until they are *perfected*. "We are praying," said the apostle, "night and day exceedingly, that we might see your face, and might *perfect* that which is *lacking* in your faith," There could be no defection in their faith as to its principle, it must therefore be meant of the acts of faith, and it is only in the active part of sanctification that progression can be supposed. It is in this the ministry of the gospel is a means of advancement and edification. To the same people it is said, "Your faith groweth exceedingly." This surely suggests the idea of progress in an exercise of holy kind, unless we imagine Paul commended a growth, in which sanctification was not included; but spiritual faith is a holy act, arising from a holy principle, and by it are God's people declared to be sanctified. The vision of faith is sanctified of God, to the sanctification of his regenerate

household. Growth in special faith is a growth in sanctity, and it has a killing effect upon the lusts of the flesh and of the mind. For this the disciples intreated their holy Lord, saying, "Increase our faith." When this prayer was answered, they were more abundantly sanctified, in judgment, affection, and converse; their sanctity shone out before men as a lamp that burneth. Again, "The righteous shall *grow* like a cedar in Lebanon; and they who have received Christ Jesus the Lord, are commanded to walk in him; rooted and *built up* in him, and established in the faith as they have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." But these words imply a progress in the divine life of faith and holiness. To grow stronger, and to become more established in Christ and his doctrine, and to be built up in him, who is made unto us sanctification, is certainly to advance in holiness and devotedness to the glory of God. Increase of knowledge, through the doctrine and Spirit of Christ, is increase of conformity to him who is our Head of wisdom and knowledge; and the knowledge of Christ is holy knowledge, and sets the heart apart for the glory of God. To become rooted in Christ, is to be more fixed for his honour, against all the oppositions of his enemies; it is a holy establishment, contrary to the workings of unbelief, and the natural

fickleness of man's unsettled and erring mind ; and as it produces abundant thanksgiving to God, which is a holy sacrifice, it may safely be considered as promoting *a growth in active sanctity*, and the acceptable fruits of righteousness. The notion of being *built up* in Christ, is congenial with the sentiment of progressive sanctification, and may be reckoned an additional proof that the apostle was an advocate for the doctrine ; also when he says, ' We know *in part*,—but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is *in part* shall be done away ; he intimates that the holy knowledge of the present state is part of a perfect work designed, and that it is carrying on to perfection. Accordingly, he prayed that the *Colossians might be filled with the knowledge of God's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*. Here, the idea of being *filled* with knowledge, and that *in all* wisdom, seems to suppose that they were *filling*, and so upon the increase, and would, at some future period, be *filled*, or completed in knowledge, holiness, and joy. To the same purpose are his words to the Ephesians : " But speaking the truth in love, may *grow up into him in all things*, who is the Head even Christ." This growth must be a holy one, because it is a growing up into Christ as the Head of all true holiness. Again, he prays, saying, " Now the God of peace



make you perfect in *every* good work to do his will, working in you, that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." In these Hebrews, a good work was supposed to be already *begun*, and which was carrying on, the Lord *working* in them to do, not *some* only, but *every* good work, according to his will. Here, therefore, we again see active sanctification going on, and that it is working *out* by the saints, while the Lord is supposed to work it *in* their hearts: and they are said to work out their own salvation, the Lord working in them to will and to do.

Thus, active sanctification springs from an inward principle, and the effectual working of the Holy Ghost. James said to his brethren, "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, *wanting nothing*." He wished to see his brethren advancing in all good conduct, that they might be thoroughly perfected in every good word and work. But these things involve the doctrine of Progressive Sanctification, and shew that the holy apostles were led to inculcate the sentiment, and demand an exemplification of it, in the lives of their Christian brethren. The words of Peter also are to our purpose, where, he says, "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may *grow* thereby: *grow* in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." But this cannot be,

without an advancement in the life of sanctification, and devotedness to God ; for all growth into Christ by his Spirit is holy growth ; it brings us nearer to God in judgment, and affection, and sets us apart for him, more and more. His glory shining into the mind, changes us from glory to glory, and while in his light we see his excellence, at his footstool we humbly bow, and joyfully adore his holy name. It is impossible to grow in spiritual knowledge of Christ, and not to grow in spiritual love at the same time ; and while his character fills the mind, the vileness of nature is crucified, and abhorred. Corruption and death lose their power over our feeble mind, when his countenance is turned towards us, and his mediatorial virtues are appropriated by lively faith ; and by his kind visits he promotes our sanctity, and confirms our expectations, which are built upon his word, under the directions of the holy Comforter.

In these growing fruits of a holy state of vital union with Christ, we find some of the brethren more enriched than others. It is plain, all are not alike filled with spiritual understanding, neither are they alike strong in the faith, crucified to the world, patient under the cross, stedfast in the ways of righteousness, affectionate towards the brethren, honest in their converse, conformed to the image of Christ, and zealous for his

glory. When Paul prayed that the Thesalonians might be sanctified *wholly*, his meaning, in part, at least, was this, That they might be sanctified not in body only, nor only in spirit, but in both, or in the whole man; and it may further denote, that, he desired to see them *set apart* for God, in the whole tenor of their conduct; not departing from some evil ways, but from all: not yielding obedience to some of the Saviour's commands, and rejecting others; but standing perfect and complete in all the will of God. Col. iv. 12; Rom. xii. 1, 2; Luke i. 6.

Furthermore, we read also of babes, young men, and fathers. Now, as all fathers were once babes, it conveys the thought of growth and progress, in the knowledge and enjoyment of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Babes are saints, as truly as those who are called Fathers; but they are of smaller growth in the mysteries of the gospel of Christ; and God promises to show even unto the best informed, great and mighty things which they yet know not. He has given "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, and edifying the body of Christ: *till we all come* in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be *no more children*, tossed to and fro, and carried

about with every wind of doctrine," &c. Here also is the same sentiment of going on in knowledge and stability, in hope and prospect of ultimate perfection. The growth of some is very manifest; and even others, who may not seem to make any progress in the things of God, may nevertheless, be so far training up under the Spirit's influences, that they may be said to grow into Christ, and become more rooted in their most holy faith, and more conformable to Christ in his death.

All the saints are equally related to Christ, and, therefore, in a relative sense, they are equally sanctified; but they are not all alike conformed to Christ, in their spirit and behaviour. Regeneration, which is sanctification in its root and principle, is the same in all, and admits of no improvement. Progression cannot be applied to radical sanctity, but belongs to the acts which spring from the root, formed within by the sanctifier. The notion of believers becoming gradually less sinful, as to the condition of their fallen nature, it appears, was unknown to the apostles. Of course, if we suppose a man to have grown into a further consistency, in judgement and practice, he must, in those same particulars, be less defective and sinful, than before such growth took place; but still the sin of nature remains just the same, though its reigning dominion over the mind is mercifully destroyed.

It has lost its power of reigning, but not its will to reign: it has lost its ruling authority over the mind and body of the spiritual man; not by any weakness in itself, but through the reigning power of invincible grace. Some say the old man is in a decline, and that he is continually dying; but I must say he never appeared so to me. If he be dying, he is stronger on his death-bed than Sampson was before he lost his hair, or when his locks were grown again. I believe he is under restriction, as is the Devil his father, and this I esteem an unspeakable mercy; but were his chains taken off, I am apprehensive, the best of the men saved by grace, would find their old master's constitution unimpaired.

This active sanctity, of which I speak, is represented as "a putting off the old man, and a putting on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him;—where Christ is all and in all." Now, as the putting off the old man, is putting off those tempers and practices which spring from a state of corruption, and the principle of indwelling sin; so, putting on the new man, is putting on those dispositions and practices, which spring from a state of grace, or the possession of a holy principle. Thus the outward garments of practical godliness are put on, by virtue of an inward principle; and

these are the robes which are said to be washed, and made white in the blood of the Lamb. These are the garments which the saints are sometimes said to defile, and without which they would be found naked. With respect to these holy garbs, many exhortations are given, and increase of conformity is possible, and therefore the idea of progression is implied. Rev. xvi. 15.

Finally. The apostle Paul frequently enjoined the brethren, to whom he wrote, to press forward, and *increase more and more*, in all expressions of the Christian temper and behaviour ; so that, we may say, it is enforced, if it be not duly exemplified. “ This is the will of God in Christ Jesus, even our sanctification.” And as sanctification is begun in regeneration, and carried on in effectual calling, conversion, and perseverance in grace, and is ultimately completed in glory, it is evidently a progressive work ; notwithstanding, in other respects, it is as complete as it ever will be ; and with regard to the actings of sanctification, the Holy Spirit of truth will continue to draw forth the inward principle, in holy exercises, and impart new light and life to the souls of the justified, until that final change come ; when faith and hope shall terminate in vision, and holiness and happiness will be perfected forever. AMEN.

THE END.