

175. Of Sanctification.

But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Cor. 6, 11.

We confess in the Third Article: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith." The First Article treats of creation, the Second of redemption, the Third of sanctification.

What is sanctification? By sanctification in the wider sense is meant the entire work of the Holy Spirit, by which man is separated from sin and the service of sin and becomes God's own, unto whom he now lives and whom he now serves. In this sense sanctification includes the giving of faith and justification, sanctification proper, the inner change that has been wrought in man, preservation in faith, and the complete restoration of the divine image on the Last Day. Sanctification in a narrower sense signifies exclusively the inner spiritual change or transformation of man, in consequence of which, by the power of the Holy Spirit working in Him, he now struggles against, and overcomes, Satan, the world, and his own flesh and walks in godliness and good works. So we see that without this blessed work of the Holy Ghost through the Gospel we would be lost in spite of Christ's redemption. For what could the redemption of Christ help us as long as we did not have the strength to believe in Jesus Christ or come to Him? Let us, then, consider what the Holy Ghost has done to bring us to Christ and sanctify us! Let us ponder this blessed work, rejoice, and take comfort!

As the Holy Ghost by the Gospel endows us with the true faith, He also keeps us in the saving faith by the same means. As Scripture says: "Ye are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." Man has now new thoughts, new desires, new hopes. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Man now strives to follow Christ in a holy and blameless life. He studies the divine commandments to learn what God would have him do. He walks in godliness and good works.

Prayer.

O God the Holy Ghost, let Thy gracious working upon my heart not be in vain. Work in me not only to will, but also to do of Thy good pleasure. Counteract, I pray Thee, the evil designs of the infernal fiend, arrest the promptings of my perverted heart, so that the holy resolution I have may not be hindered or come to naught. Open my eyes that I may clearly see and bitterly lament my sins. Give unto me that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of. Uphold me with Thy power that I may serve God all the days of my life, in holiness and righteousness, pleasing to God. Make me willing to further the cause of Christ. Amen.

Spirit of wisdom, turn our eyes
From idols and all earthly ties
To heavenly truth and love;
Spirit of understanding true,
Our souls with heavenly light endue
To seek the things above.

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