

Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers

If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live (Rom. 8:13b; KJV)

Lecture 6—Two Rules of Mortification

Chapters 7–8 (33–43)

I. You Must be a Believer (ch. 7)

“Unless a man be a believer,—that is, one that is truly ingrafted into Christ,—he can never mortify one sin.” (33)

A. Proven by Paul’s Doctrine

Rom. 8:13 cf. 8:1

Col. 3:5 cf. 3:1, 3, 4

“There is no death of sin without the death of Christ.” (33)

B. In Contrast to Rome’s Doctrine

“It is his duty to do it, but to do it in God’s way.” (34)

C. Mortification the Work of the Spirit (cf. ch. 3)

“How shall he, then, mortify sin that hath not the Spirit? A man may easier see without eyes, speak without a tongue, than truly mortify one sin without the Spirit.” (34)

Rom. 8:8–11

D. Conversion the Business of the Unregenerate

Acts 2:37

E. Evils at Work in “Convinced” (i.e., Convicted by the Law) Persons

1. The mind and soul taken up with what is not man’s business
2. Since mortification is a good thing man concludes his state is good
3. After a long course of trying men despair and give up

“To kill sin is the work of living men; where men are dead (as all unbelievers, the best of them, are dead), sin is alive, and will live.” (37)

F. Mortification is the Work of Faith

Acts 15:9

1 Peter 1:22

G. Objection: “Should the unregenerate do nothing to reform their lives, then?”

1. No, since God restrains men
2. The word has convicting power
3. Mortification goal is available to the unregenerate
4. It is their duty, but in its proper place

II. **You Must be Mortifying All Sin (ch. 8)**

“Without sincerity and diligence in a universality of obedience, there is no mortification of any one perplexing lust to be obtained.” (40)

Isa. 58:2, 5–7

A. Seeking to Mortify Only a Particular Sin Proceeds from a Corrupt Principle

“If thou hatest sin as sin, every evil way, thou wouldst be no less watchful against every thing that grieves and disquiets the Spirit of God, than against that which grieves and disquiets thine own soul.” (41)

2 Cor. 7:1

B. Perhaps God is Permitting One Lust in Punishment for Negligence Elsewhere

Cf. Canons of Dort 5.4:

Although the weakness of the flesh cannot prevail against the power of God, who confirms and preserves true believers in a state of grace, yet converts are not always so influenced and actuated by the Spirit of God as not in some particular instances sinfully to deviate from the guidance of divine grace, so as to be seduced by and to comply with the lusts of the flesh; they must, therefore, be constant in watching and prayer, that they may not be led into temptation. When these are neglected, they are not only liable to be drawn into great and heinous sins by the flesh, the world, and Satan, but sometimes by the righteous permission of God actually are drawn into these evils. This, the lamentable fall of David, Peter, and other saints described in Holy Scripture, demonstrates.

“He, then, that would really, thoroughly, and acceptably mortify any disquieting lust, let him take care to be equally diligent in all parts of obedience, and know that every lust, every omission of duty, is burdensome to God, though but one is so to him.” (43)