

## CONFESSION OF FAITH.

### CHAPTER 13.-Of Sanctification.

III. In which warre, although the remaining corruption, for a time, may much prevail<sup>1</sup>; yet, through the continuall supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome<sup>2</sup>: and so, the Saints grow in grace<sup>3</sup>, perfecting holinesse in the fear of God<sup>4</sup>.

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Question 1.—*In this war between the flesh and the spirit, may the remaining corruption, for a time, prevail?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Rom. 7:23. Since the flesh is opposed to the law of God (neither is subject to it, nor indeed can it be, Rom. 8:7), it is evident that as long as the flesh remains in us (it remains, however, as long as we are here), neither is our sanctification perfect, nor can the law be fulfilled by us, Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:14,19. Thus, the saints of God in times past were far from imagining they had attained to sinless perfection, Job 9:20; Ps. 19:12; Phil. 3:12. So Paul exhorts us to be careful not to fail of the grace of God, Heb. 12:15, which, although the saints may for a time retrogress in grace, yet, they shall never fall from grace totally and finally, John 10:28.

Question 2.—*In this war, do the saints, through a continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, experience the regenerate part overcome the remaining corruption?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Rom. 6:14; 1 John 5:4; Eph. 4:15,16. Both the sanctification of the soul, and the mortification of sin are expressly declared to be progressive processes. If we consult the following references: 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Acts 20:32; 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:13-15; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 6:1; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18; Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5. So, the Bible compares the saint to living and growing things; as the vine, the fruit tree, the plant of corn, the infant; all of which exhibit their lives in growth, Col. 1:10. Grace is also compared to the “morning light, waxing brighter and brighter to the perfect day;” and to the leaven, spreading through the whole vessel of meal: and to the mustard-seed, the smallest sown by the Jewish husbandman, but gradually growing to the largest of herbs. Prov. 4:18; Matt. 13:31, 32. Is not the rhetoric of the Word just? Then we must suppose the analogy exists; and that spiritual life, like vegetable and animal, regularly displays its power by growth. Thus, as the infant is a work of God’s power and skill; he is designed to grow to an adult, Eph. 4:11-16.

Question 3.—*Do the saints of God grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God?*

*Answer.*—Yes. 2 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 3:18; 7:1. This work of sanctification involves the destruction of the old body of sin, as well as the development of the grace implanted in regeneration; it is also first inward and spiritual, and then outward and practical, Rom. 6:6; Col. 3:9, 10.

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<sup>1</sup>Rom. 7:23.

<sup>2</sup>Rom. 6:14; 1 John 5:4; Eph. 4:15,16.

<sup>3</sup>2 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 3:18.

<sup>4</sup>2 Cor. 7:1.

That the whole body of death is not immediately destroyed in the instant of regeneration is plainly taught in the sixth and seventh chapters of Romans (6:9-14; 7:14-23), in the recorded experience of many Biblical characters, and in the universal experience of Christians in modern times. It hence necessarily follows that the tendencies graciously implanted and sustained must come in conflict with the tendencies to evil which remain, Rom. 8:13. They can co-exist only in a state of active antagonism, and as the one gains in prevalence the other must lose, Gal. 5:24; Col. 3:5.

That this work begins in the state of the heart, and governs the life by previously governing the heart, is evident—1.) From the known fact of human nature that the moral character of all actions is derived from the inward moral dispositions and affections which prompt to them, Acts 8:21-23. 2.) The same is asserted elsewhere in the Scriptures, Luke 6:45. As the character of the fruit is determined by the character of the tree which produces it, so the moral character of actions depends upon the heart from which they proceed, Matt. 12:33. 3.) Truly good works can be produced only by a heart in living union with Christ, John 15:4. Sanctification is a work of God's free grace in execution of his eternal purposes of salvation, John 17:19. Wherefore we are "confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," Phil. 1:6.