

Having seen the Necessity, Nature, Mistakes, Source, and Cause of Christian or Gospel Holiness—this brings us this morning to—Its Means—now by *means* I mean the instrument the Spirit uses to work change within our hearts—and let say very simply, the primary means through which the Spirit saves and sanctifies the people of God—is the word of God...

My dear brethren—two weeks ago I said that Christ was the Source of our holiness—last week I said the Spirit is the Cause of our holiness—and just as I said, there is no true holiness apart from Christ as the source, and the Spirit as the cause—there is NO true or Christian holiness apart from the Word of God—the Spirit uses the word to sanctify us...

- I. The Doctrine Stated
- II. The Doctrine Proved
- III. The Doctrine Applied

I. The Doctrine Stated

1. Here—I simply want to suggest a simple doctrine, or teaching, divide it into three parts, and briefly explain each part...
2. The primary means used by the Holy Spirit to sanctify God's people is the word of God—notice three phrases...
3. [1] The primary means—that is—the word of God is the PRIMARY means or instrument used by the Spirit to sanctify us...
4. Now—I purposefully use the word PRIMARY because there are other means that the Spirit uses to sanctify...
5. But—these other means, are always used in connection or relation to the word—the Scripture is supreme or primary...
6. [a] Ordinances—by ordinances I refer to those things ordained or instituted by Christ to serve as means of grace...
7. Basically—everything associated with public and private worship—preaching, prayer, singing, and sacraments...
8. All of these are means of grace, as they relate to the word of God—without the word these will never benefit us...
9. Brethren—it is for this reason that our public worship is WORD-BASED—everything entails or includes the word...
10. [b] Fellowship—that is—Christian fellowship is one means through which the Spirit strengthens our souls...
11. Eph.4:29—"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers..."
12. One major purpose behind Christian fellowship is to speak good things to each other—that grace would be imparted...
13. True Christian fellowship is in the TRUTH—it is fellowship in, with, by—the TRUTH—this is why it communicates grace...
14. [c] Trials—by this I mean—the various providences we all face—by living life in a fallen and wicked world...
15. Included here would be—trials, tribulations, hardships, afflictions, persecutions—and God's Fatherly discipline...
16. Heb.12:10—"Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness..."
17. But—all of these are means of grace—only in so far as they drive us to Scripture—to the word of His grace...
18. Robert Dabney—"The Word is the uniform means of sanctification. It guides, authorizes, and instructs our worship. it is symbolized in the sacraments. And it shines through the providences, which do but illustrate

- it. So that the Word is the means, after all, in all other means. Where the word is not, there is no holiness..."
19. [2] The Holy Spirit—this is an important point to remember—the word of God doesn't sanctify outside the Spirit's blessing...
 20. We can read the entire Bible every year—memorize large sections—and listen to best sermons—but unless the Spirit bless the word—we will never be sanctified...
 21. 1Thess.1:5—"For our gospel did not come to you in WORD ONLY, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit..."
 22. Thus—we're sanctified by the Spirit and word—or, the word in the hand of the Spirit—the word blown on by the Spirit...
 23. Now—strictly speaking—it's not that the problem lies in the word of God—but the problem is in the heart of man...
 24. Ps.119:18—"Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law"—there's wonderful things in the word if we see them or not...
 25. Thus—the Psalmist doesn't ask that God would open the Scripture, but that He would open his eyes to see Scripture...
 26. Or, another way of putting it would be—the Spirit works in our hearts faith that we might believe the word...
 27. Thus—the word of God is NOT the means of sanctification apart from the Spirit—we are sanctified by the Spirit through the word...
 28. [3] The word of God—that is—the entire word of God—the law and the gospel—the commands as well as promises...
 29. [a] Law—by law is meant, the moral law of God, summarized in the TC, reduced to two, love God and neighbor...
 30. This law—includes every command given in the NT Scriptures—and comes to us in the hand of Christ—our King...
 31. Thus—the Spirit uses the LAW—to show us the rule or standard of holiness—to show us what pleases God...
 32. Furthermore—the Spirit uses the law as a mirror to show us our sin—NOT to condemn us but to convict us...
 33. [b] Gospel—by gospel is meant, that part of Scripture that doesn't tell us what to DO, but what God has DONE...
 34. The gospel is the good news about what God has DONE for sinners in Christ—wherein God promises every good thing...
 35. Thus—strictly speaking, by gospel is meant, the portions of Scripture that tell us what Christ has provided for us...
 36. The law says do, and the gospel says done, the law says obey God, and the gospel tells us WHY and HOW...
 37. Thus—most of our Reformed and puritan forefathers understood that the entire Bible was either law or gospel...
 38. And—the Spirit of God uses the entire Bible, the law and gospel, as the primary means to sanctify God's people...
 39. The law is needed to show us our duty—the gospel is needed to show us Christ who enables us to do our duty...
 40. The law is needed to convict us of sin—the gospel is needed to bring forgiveness, comfort, and encouragement...
 41. Thus—the Spirit uses the whole Bible, the law and gospel, as the primary means to sanctify God's believing people...
 42. John Colquhoun—"If the law commands believers, the grace of the gospel teaches them to love, and to practice universal holiness. What the law as a rule of life binds them to perform, the grace of the gospel constrains and enables them to do..."

II. The Doctrine Proved

1. Here—I want to examine 5 keys texts—that underscore the primacy of the WORD in relation to our sanctification...
2. Jn.17:17—"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth...v19 for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth..."
3. This chapter contains our Lord's prayer to His Father—with regards to His people He prays for two things...
4. V15—that the Father would keep them from the evil one, and v17—that the Father would sanctify them in truth...
5. [a] Who—"Sanctify them"—that is—the disciples, v20—"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word..."
6. In other words—this prayer concerns all of God's people—every Christian is sanctified because of Jesus prayer...
7. To "sanctify" means to make holy—it specifically refers to the process of conforming into the image of Christ...
8. [b] How—"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth"—here we find the means or instrument of our sanctification...
9. Sanctify them by Your truth—the TRUTH the means whereby or through which every Christian is sanctified...
10. What is meant by TRUTH—our Savior clarifies—"Thy word is truth"—that is—His word found in holy Scripture...
11. Here we learn a great truth—there is a set standard of truth—we are not left to determine what is and is not truth...
12. The Word of God is THE TRUTH—it's the truth about God, about man, about salvation, and about eternity...
13. But—my point for turning to this text is to underscore the preposition—"Sanctify them by (through) Your truth..."
14. This preposition describes means or agency—God, the Holy Spirit, sanctifies His people through or by the word...
15. Ps.19:7-9—"The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether..."
16. Most of you know, that this Psalm describes two forms of revelation—vv1-6 general and vv7-9 special revelation...
17. These are NOT two opposing revelations—but comprise ONE revelation given in varied clarity and clearness...
18. David uses 6 terms to describe this word—the law, the testimony, the statutes, the commandment, the fear, and the judgments of the Lord...
19. These all view the word of God from a specific perspective—they each view the word from a certain perspective...
20. David also provides 6 descriptive terms to describe the word—it is perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true and righteous...
21. But for our purposes this morning—notice the effects that this word has upon a soul—converts, makes wise, rejoices, enlightens, and warns (v11)...
22. The word of God is the means whereby we are converted, made wise, given joy, encouraged, strengthened, enlightened, warned, and motivated to endure...
23. V24—"More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb..."
24. Acts 20:32—"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified..."
25. These are Paul's words to the Ephesian elders—he's exhorted them to take heed to themselves and the flock (v28)...
26. He's left them with a great responsibility—they must feed the flock of God and protect them from their enemies...

27. How are they to do this—what means, what tools, what instruments are they provided with—to fulfill their calling...
28. V32—"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified..."
29. The apostle commended them—both to God and to the word of His grace—it's as if they needed no more—God and His word...
30. Notice—he refers to the word as—"the word of His grace"—that is—the word that tells us about His grace in Christ...
31. But, also—it's the word that communicates that grace, when applied to our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit...
32. I say this because—this word of grace is—"able to build you up"—that is—strengthen, mature, and sanctify you...
33. Eph.5:25-26—"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word..."
34. [a] The source of sanctification, v25—"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her..."
35. [b] The means of sanctification, v26—"that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word..."
36. Here our Lord borrows from the OT imagery of cleansing—wherein regeneration and sanctification were shadowed...
37. For example—just before the priests entered the tabernacle—they had to first wash their hands and feet in a laver...
38. Our Savior uses the language of means—"sanctify and clean her with the washing of water BY THE WORD..."
39. The effects of the word, in the hand of the Spirit, are like water—that washes away our moral dirt and filth...
40. 1Pet.2:1-3—"Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious..."
41. Peter describes all Christians as "newborn babes"—that is—we are ALL to resemble newborns in terms of hunger...
42. Every healthy newborn baby, comes from the womb crying for milk—they long (desire) for their mother's milk...
43. The milk of the mother is the means through which the baby is nurtured and grows—without which he dies...
44. Well—this is similar to the word of God—the word is milk through which Christians are strengthened and grow...
45. [1] The word is a LAMP for our path—that is—the word of God shows us how to live and what pleases God...
46. Ps.119:105—"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path"—it teaches us what God commands...
47. Many people wrongly think—that somehow love and law are at odds—that Christians are to love not obey...
48. But these two are necessarily related—"If you love Me, keep My commandments"—do what I command you...
49. But it's only in the word that we read about His commands—it's in the law that we learn what pleases Christ...
50. Law is love's eyes—and without the law—love is blind—love fulfills the law—it does what God commands...
51. [2] The word is BREAD for our souls—that is—the Spirit nourishes and strengthens the soul with the word...
52. Matt.4:4—"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God..."

53. The Spirit feeds the soul with the word—strengthening and motivating it to comply with God's holy commands...
54. Now—here I need to remind you—the WRITTEN word of God is intimately related to the INCARNATE word...
55. Do you remember a few weeks ago—when I mentioned that Christ Himself is the SOURCE of ALL GRACE...
56. That is—all of the grace, strength, and power necessary to put to death sin and to cultivate holiness is in Him...
57. Jn.15:5—"He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit...v7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you..."
58. In other words—Christ and His word are intimately related—they are inseparable—they are necessarily related...
59. It's for this reason the same Scriptures refer to Christ Himself and the written word—both as the Bread of God...
60. Thus—Christians are in need of feasting upon Christ and His word—that their souls would be feed and nourished...
61. [3] The word is a SWORD for our enemies—that is—the Spirit uses the word to fight against sin and temptation...
62. Eph.6:17—"Take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"—the Spirit uses the word to cut off offending right hands...
63. As we shall see in subsequent studies—the word and Spirit of God are both necessary in mortifying the deeds of the body...
64. Ps.119:11—"Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You"—the word is the remedy to our sin sickness...
65. [4] The word is a PICTURE of our beloved—that is—it's within the word that we behold our heavenly Groom...
66. Jn.16:13—"When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and shall show it to you..."
67. This promise, I am totally aware of, has it's first and primary fulfilment, in the gift of Scripture to the apostles...
68. Christ here promises to send the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Truth, to enable them to author the NT Scripture...
69. But—what the Spirit did uniquely to the apostles, He does generally, though in lesser degree, to all Christians...
70. Think of man in a distant land, finding a long and fierce war—before he leaves his wife gives him a picture of herself...
71. Every day, as the man is in the midst of difficulty and danger—he looks at that picture and it encourages him to continue...
72. Well—that's similar to what our Savior had done with His Word—we are presently separated as He is in heaven...
73. Yet—He's given us His word, which is a portrait of Him—it shows us who He is—and what He's done for us...

III. The Doctrine Applied

1. Here—I want to suggest several brief exhortations that necessarily flow from what we've learned this morning...
2. If Holy Scripture is the primary means whereby the Holy Spirit sanctifies us—let us immerse ourselves in Scripture...
3. To "immerse" is to—submerge or engross—if the word was an ocean—we must go to the middle—and sink to the bottom...
4. Now—I want to suggest in closing—five ways in which we are to immerse ourselves in the sacred Scriptures...

5. [1] Let us HUMBLY immerse ourselves, Js.1:21—"let us receive with meekness, the implanted word which is able to save your souls..."
6. My friends—we must immerse ourselves in Scripture—fully aware—that it's able, by the Spirit—to save our souls...
7. Now—keep in mind that this verses was originally written to Christians—thus the saving refers to our sanctification...
8. There is a sense in which Christians need saving too—not in regards to their justification—but their sanctification...
9. My dear friends—our enemies are always advancing—they never stop—only the word of God can stop them...
10. [2] Let us REGULARLY immerse ourselves—that is—we need to, on a regular basis, immerse ourselves in Scripture...
11. If our bodies are in need of "daily bread"—how much more does our soul need—the daily bread of God's word...
12. [3] Let us BELIEVINGLY immerse ourselves—that is—we need to receive the word of God by or with faith...
13. Heb.4:2—"the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it..."
14. We need to read it and hear it preached—with FAITH—applying it to ourselves and believing it for ourselves..."
15. [4] Let us DEPENDENTLY immerse ourselves—by this I mean—we need to trust the Spirit to apply the word...
16. My friends—how often do we pray before we enter into public worship—O God use your word to sanctify us...
17. [5] Let us PURPOSEFULLY immerse ourselves—by this I mean—we must intentionally look to Christ in Scripture...
18. Simply put—we must strive to have personal and intimate fellowship with the Word in and through the Word...