

THE NEED OF NEW DEFINITENESS.

By Rev. W. E. Smith.

While the sanctification which produces holiness of heart is the all essential thing in the Christian religion, it is surprising how vague, indefinite and uncertain this whole matter is to many who are called to be teachers of spiritual things. The "masters in Israel" are generally well posted on politics, history and many phases of intellectual knowledge, but alas so many are ignorant of the blessed experience of holiness of heart. In all charity why must we conclude them to be ignorant of the matter? Simply because of their silence or indefiniteness on the subject. The preacher who really enjoys holiness of heart cannot keep still about it. He must declare the whole counsel of God and tell definitely what God has done for his soul. But I hear some one say, "My preacher is a good man; just as good so far as I can see as those who preach or profess holiness, and he doesn't say anything about it." Yes, your preacher may be a good man. He must be a good man to be truly justified; his life outwardly must be just as good as the preacher who is sanctified; but if your preacher does not tell his people of a second work of grace just as distinct and definite as conversion, it must be because he does not enjoy it himself, for this is the most glorious experience God has for his people.

There are so many preacher who can preach excellent sermons on consecration and the dedicated life, but they fail altogether to tell what consecration and complete dedication to God inevitably brings to the soul. The carnal mind fully accepts the human side of sanctification but it stops short often of preaching and receiving the divine work of purification and cleansing. A preacher can preach consecration in its most radical form to any congregation and there will be a general assent to the truth, and they will say, "Our preacher is fine; he gives the straight truth;" but let him emphasize the work of sanctification that makes clean the heart, then the devil will stir up bad men and weak Christians to oppose.

We firmly believe that if preachers have a real definite experience of holiness they will definitely preach the doctrine and will see souls seek the blessing; if church members enjoy the same grace they will be definite in testimony. Let a preacher or a member become indefinite in preaching or testimony and they will soon be uncertain of their experience. Why? Because something has entered in that hinders faith from doing its perfect work. When we cease to be willing to bear the reproach the witness to the truth brings, then we lose our grip on that truth, and that truth loses its grip on us; we may still be orthodox in the head, but cold and lifeless at heart.

It is surprising how indefinite the whole subject of sanctification and holiness may become in holiness churches and camp meetings. This is always true when workers are employed who stress consecration and perhaps the baptism of the Holy Ghost but say little or nothing about sanctification and holiness. Carnality will

come and fatten on any preaching that does not go in for the "killing of the old man." It will get happy over a deeper work of grace, a higher life; the deeper death to self and all such, but will soon look sad and miserable when you talk about entire sanctification.

Why do holiness people often become indefinite? It is because they lose the blessing. Preachers in holiness churches, and members of the same who trust to their environment to keep them and settle down to an easy going life soon lose out. Yes, they may be living good outward lives, but so are a multitude of people who never professed holiness. But the unction and joy and aggressiveness and definiteness are gone. They say, "I am saved and kept," but if a person is sanctified wholly they want all to know they were saved, and then got the second work of grace that keeps them all the time and everywhere, and they could not be kept without this experience as they ought to be kept. So many people think they are kept because they are still alive and pray a little and "are serving God in their poor weak way." But to be really kept means to be kept on the outside and on the inside. To be kept means to be saved from heart sins as well as outward transgressions. It means that pride, lust, jealousy, impatience, anger have no place in our hearts. God gives victory within.

We insist that such victory cannot be ours and be maintained without the second work of grace, that kills carnality and unifies the soul.

Some preachers think they are preaching holiness when they retain the phraseology and still repeat these terms, "Saved and sanctified" may be only a parrot-like expression that becomes cant when all the life is gone and there is no holy anointing. Preachers in some instances may become radical and abusive in proportion as love leaks out and they drift away from perfect love. The devil doesn't care which way he drives so long as he gets us out of the middle of the road or the center of God's will.

Brethren, there is nothing like the straight definite spirit-anointed preaching of holiness to drive out error. The devil of error cannot stand the unadulterated truth. Those who want tongue soon get "bored" (through); those who are running after healing of body more than a clean heart either get their eyes opened or stay away; but honest hearts stand by. The work of God prospers when true holiness is preached, lived and testified to.

But does that mean we play only on one string? By no means. Preachers preach repentance, regeneration, faith, assurance, more clearly and strongly after they are sanctified than ever before. They "rightly divide the word of truth." We heard a splendid young preacher the other Sunday preaching on consecration say that "consecration leads to that new life called regeneration," and yet he was preaching to a lot of people whom he regarded as regenerated and professed the same. The preacher's sermon was splendid as to homiletics, matter and delivery save that he said consecration leads to regeneration, when he should have said

to holiness of heart. A mixed experience makes even a master muddle the truth. The sainted Rutherford said, "We should praise God even more for sanctification than for justification, and no preacher can become an able theologian unless he gets the experience of sanctification." This grace clarifies the mind as well as the heart. It enables us to explain the word of God according to the analogy of faith; it saves a preacher from contradicting himself because he is able to distinguish between things that radically differ. He can explain the difference between our humanity and carnality; between infirmities and sins; between imputed righteousness and imparted holiness; between absolute perfection that alone belongs to God, and perfect love that a finite creature may enjoy; it in fact enables the preacher to rightly divide the word of truth proving himself to be a workman owned of God and who needeth not to be ashamed.

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learned that there is instantaneous forgiveness and restoration to be had always. That there need be no times of despair. If God shows me a sin in me, I ask and claim forgiveness.

One of the blessed results of this life is not only the consciousness of Christ's presence, but the reality of his presence as manifested in definite results when, in the daily details of life, matters are left with him and he has undertaken.

My own thought of Him is beautifully expressed in Spurgeon's words:

"What the hand is to the lute,
What the breath is to the flute,
What's the mother to the child,
What the guide in pathless wild,
What is oil to troubled wave,
What is ransom to a slave,
What is flower to the bee,
That is Jesus Christ to me."

—Sunday School Times.

We have watched carefully the course of those evangelists during the past generation, who make a specialty of blistering and pounding every one who does not agree with them, and we have observed that they are left almost alone and with little to do. No one seems to want them any more. Their influence amounts to little.—Christian Witness.

The man who comes around once in a while and delivers a few sermons as an evangelist or visiting minister does much to enliven and build up a congregation; but it is the man who lives among his people, knows them from the inside out, comes in touch with their daily needs and problems, and delivers his weekly messages with a view to giving his flock the nourishment that it needs, who does most to strengthen the work. In other words, it takes a shepherd to hold and to build up a congregation.—Gospel Herald.

"The slacker lightens his own burden by putting part of it on some one else. How many around our churches are slackers?"