

THE ALTAR SANCTIFIETH THE GIFT.

A man hearing an Evangelist say to a seeker of holiness: The altar sanctifies the gift, Christ is the altar and you are the gift, put yourself on the altar and you are sanctified.

Not being satisfied that the doctrine was scriptural, he asked the Christian Witness to give the scripture supporting it. It was referred to Dr. Daniel Steele for his solution. The following is his answer:

The verb to sanctify is used in two senses (1) to consecrate or set apart for sacred uses. "There is no other term which in the Greek Testament expresses the positive side of dedication to God" (Dr. Pope), and (2) to cleanse, to purify. When a thing was laid upon God's altar there was no essential change. The only thing in the object was relative. It changed ownership. It ceased to belong to the offerer and now belonged to God. If a diseased or blemished slain lamb was laid on the altar it was not made perfect by its consecration to God. Nor did he accept it. In this case the altar did not sanctify the gift in either sense. These two meanings of sanctify are both found in one sentence of Christ's high priestly prayer, "for their sakes I sanctify myself (consecrate myself to the redemption of men) that they (believers) may be sanctified in truth" (or be truly, really sanctified, in the second sense of that term), be wholly cleansed from all moral defilement. This corrects the error of Dr. Huntington, who says in his "Sin and Holiness," p 170, "Nor does Christ intimate that his own sanctification was different in kind from that which he sought in his disciples." Our good brother failed to notice the improved MS. reading which omits "the" before truths and puts "in" in the place of through making it an adverbial expression, "in truth" (R. V.) truly. Says Dr. W. B. Pope, "The method of our sanctification and its process in the destruction of alien affections find no pattern in him" (Our Saviour). Meyer, the German exegete, says, "Christ's sanctification was sacrificial, ours is holy purity and endowment." The adverbial rendering is sustained by Chrysostom, Luther, Calvin, Zwingle, Olshausen, and others. Therefore our conclusion is that when a thing or a holy person is said to be sanctified, it or he is consecrated to some specific use. When a thing is laid on God's altar it is not only purified, but noly consecrated. When the phrase, "I lay myself on the altar," is used by a seeker of entire justification he has used a wrong formula, for impurity has no place on the holy altar of God. Its place is in the cleansing stream issuing from the pierced side of the son of God. In the Wesleyan sense no person in the Scriptures was ever sanctified by being laid on the altar of God or by touching it. The altar theory of sanctification is not found in the writings of either Wesley or in the volume of his great defender, John Fletcher, or in any of the standard Methodist theologians, Watson, Raymond, Pope, Miley and Sheldon (not published). In fact, it originated in America about the year 1840, in the writings of Mrs. Phebe Palmer, who regarded it as a great discovery. It was her short way to entire sanctification. Christ is the altar; the

altar sanctifieth the gift; lay yourself on the altar and you are sanctified. The error is in confounding the two meaning of sanctity, or in substituting purification, the work of the Holy Spirit, for consecration, man's work. It was fortunate that the doctrine of Christian holiness awakened a great theological debate in the New York preachers' meeting, and that the method of its attainment advocated by this saintly and gifted woman, was shown to possess no scriptural basis. Rev. J. H. Perry (who became colonel in the civil war and died for his country), was the champion of this new theory, and Hiram Mattison, D. D., defended the method of the Methodist fathers. This debate was published at that time and was widely read. The more thoughtful friends of the precious doctrine of full salvation adhered to Wesley's statement that "no one ought to believe that the work is done till there is added the testimony of the Spirit witnessing his entire sanctification as clearly as his justification." That souls have experienced entire sanctification while asserting "The altar sanctifieth," we do not deny. They had real faith in Christ despite the erroneous formula. But many have made the same assertion and have found themselves in great perplexity. The altar theory has become a snare to them. Their faith was mere presumption, and unwarranted inference that God does his part because they have done their part, as they suppose. But no one knows that he has fulfilled the conditions either of justification or sanctification, except by the witness of the Spirit. It is the province of God, and not of the seeker, to decide when these conditions have been performed. Many a person has under erroneous instruction, thought that he laid himself on the altar and has been induced to say "the altar sanctifies the gift," and has kept repeating this assertion for months and years, without realizing any inward change. Some continue thus till death, but many more in despair pass into a state of indifference and unbelief respecting the purity of heart in this life. Bishop Wm. Taylor styles the altar theory the devil's switch just outside the depot of full salvation, by which he switches off seeking souls, and causes them to wander around and around, and to fail of entering in. The so-called holiness evangelist is strongly tempted to adopt this theory, because it enables him in his brief term of labor in any church to count up as sanctified as many as he could persuade to say, "I am on the altar and the altar sanctifies the gift." Some do not yield to this temptation. It would be a great advantage to the cause of evangelical perfection if all had clearness of vision and strength of will to resist this temptation. There would not be so many mistaken professors of perfect love standing as stumbling blocks on the way to the fountain of complete cleansing.—Christian Witness.

Some folks may feel ill at ease in heaven as there is no back seats—no bounds. Any Christian should be humble enough to take a front seat in the church.

"Sin destroys the power to do right, which is man's true freedom."

PARDON AND PURITY.

Pardon and purity are the two hemispheres of evangelical religion. Pardon and purity are the two wheels to the charity of New Testament salvation, while faith and love are the celestial steeds that draw this chariot along the King's highway to heaven. Pardon and purity are the two posts on which the gates of pearl swing back to admit us to the city of light. Pardon removes all guilt of violating the law of God; purity the violation of the image of God. Pardon takes away the guilt of all sinful acts, words, volitional purposes; purity takes away the uncleanness of sinful tempers and desires which are often not shaped into acts or purposes. Zechariah presents the fountain of atonement as furnishing pardon for sin (voluntary) and purity for uncleanness (involuntary). Pardon sweeps away from my soul all of my responsible sin, purity sweeps from my soul all my irresponsible sin. Pardon wipes out the moral evil that I have accumulated, purity wipes out the moral evil that I inherited. Pardon deals with the choices and decisions of the soul, purity deals with the innate disposition of the soul.

Pardon covers the mighty empire of volitions, purity covers the mighty subterranean empire of cravings. While it is true that neither pardon or purity annihilate the collateral results of sin on my mind and body, it takes glorification to do that, yet it is true that on the harp of pardon I can sweep a song of deliverance back to the rosy smiles of my infancy, and on the harp of purity I can sweep a song of deliverance that takes my affections back to the spotless morning of Eden. Pardon will publish itself in the actions of a man, purity will publish itself to the keen inner feelings of the heart. Pardon harmonizes me with the law of God, purity harmonizes me with the character of God. Pardon introduces me to the kingdom of Peace. Purity introduces me to the kingdom of power. Pardon reveals Jesus to me as my substitute, purity reveals Jesus to me as my heaven-enthroned and heart-enthroned King. Pardon places me in the kingdom of God, purity places the full kingdom of God in me.

Pardon puts into my hand a title deed to heaven, purity puts into my heart a moral fitness to go at any time and sit down on the banks of the river of life. Pardon takes away my night and gives me day, purity takes the mists out of the air and gives me cloudless sunshine. * * * Pardon must precede purity, just as the birth of a child most certainly must precede the curing of diseases. Pardon and purity are both received by separate, specific acts of receptive faith; are both instantaneously wrought by acts of the Divine Will; are both attested by the instant submission, unwavering trust and obedience up to all our spiritual light; are both requisite to a happy, useful life, and both absolutely essential to admission into heaven.—Sel.

"The prayers of God's saints are the capital stock in heaven by which Christ carries on His great work on earth." How much are you adding daily to that stock?"