

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN HOLINESS AND HOW OBTAINED

By Rev. Joseph H. Smith

Question: In what sense, and to what extent, are Christians eligible to holiness or sanctification in this life? And what are the provision and process for same?

Answer: The term "sanctified" is used in Scripture with several applications to places and instruments and ministries of worship; and when used in reference to persons it has different degrees or grades of intent. Illustrative of this latter, we might cite Paul's address to Corinthian Christians as the "sanctified in Christ Jesus," notwithstanding he proceeds to say and show that as but "babes in Christ," they are "yet carnal" in tempers and attitudes of their minds. And later he exhorts them to "perfect holiness in the fear of God" by cleansing themselves "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," and appropriating certain promises to that end. And since this is not solitary but there is frequent recognition of a perfect also as of a partial state of sanctification of believers, it is probable that the above question would apply to that "entire sanctification" for which the Apostle Paul prays in behalf of the already considerably sanctified believers at Thessalonica when he asks, as precedent to their "blameless preservation," the "very God of peace [to] sanctify them wholly."

All Christians who have as good evidence of the New Birth as the apostle accredits to these Thessalonians (in the first chapter) are **already sanctified in these three senses.**

1. Relatively, in that they are separated from the world unto Christ.
2. Outwardly, in that by the "washing of regeneration" their lives have been cleansed from sinful deeds and practices.
3. Inwardly, in that by the new birth, the "seed of God" has been implanted within them, and from this seed springs up and grows the ninefold "fruit of the Spirit," which is the life of holiness begun in their conduct and character.

There remains, however, the "carnal mind" otherwise figuratively called the "old man" and the "body of sin," and "law of sin" and the "flesh." This lusts against the Spirit within them. But the dominion of sin is broken, and even the babe in Christ, walking in the Spirit, has the victorious life and "does not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

Now, the entire sanctification noted in the apostle's prayer (and the anticipation and apprehension of which has much place in the writings and ministry of all the apostles, as well as in both the teaching and the intercession of the Saviour) has mainly to do with this sin of our nature, for which the Lord's disciples tarried until the Day of Pentecost was fully come, and which now all Christians, as those at Ephesus, are incited at once to partake of and possess. This being the sanctification" (R. V.) or "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." And thus two apostles distinguish this from all other modes or measures of holiness as the "sanctification of the Spirit." (See 2 Thes. 11:13 and 1 Peter 1:2).

Accordingly we find that the Scriptures relate the "purification of the hearts" both of the "hundred and twenty" in the upper room at Jerusalem and those at the house of Cornelius in Caesarea to the baptism with the Holy Spirit thus. (See Acts 25:8, 9).

And not only so, the full shedding abroad

of God's love in our hearts (which is the same as John's "love made perfect") is attributed to the gift of the Holy Ghost (in Romans 5:5).

So we conclude that the entire sanctification of our soul or the perfecting of holiness in the heart of the believer consists in the soul's cleansing from its inherent sin, and in complete permeation and possession by the love of God. Briefly, Christian holiness is a heart made pure and filled with the Holy Ghost. This is effected by His baptism and maintained by His indwelling and abiding presence.

Only God Himself (independently and infinitely) is holy. His holiness is neither amissible nor dependent. Holiness with creature is altogether derived and dependent. We suppose that now with angels it is fixed and immovable. But with us, who are still on probation, it is both dependent and amissible; for it is preserved by faith in the precious blood of Christ and the honoring due the Holy Ghost—who is the spirit of holiness (or fountain thereof to the creature).

But like that of the angels, holiness with us is ever progressive as to measure; for as we have seen the holiness of God is infinite and exhaustless and our nature is ever expansive, and not only by ceaseless progress in this life, but by endless enlargement in eternity, we who now bear the dear image of God (in miniature) may always be partakers of more and more of the holy nature of God.—The Free Methodist.

GOD'S HOLINESS IMPARTED TO MAN

By Rev. George W. Saunders

In the dawn of the revelation of God to man, holiness primarily attaches to Jehovah, and secondarily to times, places and to things, by His appointment. However, as revelation unfolds, it is manifest that the purpose of the revelation of holiness is the regeneration and sanctification of man.

On this subject the voice of prophecy speaks boldly of a refiner who "shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Mal. 3:4).

Then, as if in direct answer to this prophecy, James, that scholarly and Spirit-filled apostle, says, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." Then he proceeds to tell us how to draw nigh: "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded." (Jas. 4:8).

The Apostle Paul, in perfect harmony with this teaching of James, enjoins, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:12).

Again Paul charges: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14). And once more: "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. 3:19).

To all this that loving apostle, John, adds: "As he is, so are we in this world."

Lastly, revelation informs us, He "that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," hath "chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." (Eph. 1:4).

Hence holiness primarily, ever and always belongs to God, but according to New Testament revelation, holiness is directed to the regenera-

tion and sanctification of man, that through faith in the great Refiner he may be so adjusted, purified and filled with His holiness that the appointments of times, places and things become only teachings and preachings of that inner holiness which becomes more and more inner, and adjusts, regulates and purifies the life, making it harmonious with God, peaceful with men, happy and hopeful in its own person—an inner life which grows brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. "First the blade (of holiness), then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear", (Mark 4:28). How fitting the plan. How wonderful the grace! How glorious the experience!

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"TURN OR BURN"

Rev. C. H. Spurgeon

"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." "God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he hath ordained his arrows against his persecutors."

Forsooth, because this age is wicked, is it to have no hell; and because it is hypocritical, it would have but feigned judgment? This doctrine is so prevalent as to make even the ministers of the Gospel flinch from their duty in declaring the day of wrath.

How few there are who will solemnly tell us of the judgment to come; but of what avail it is to preach mercy unless they preach also the doom of the wicked? And how shall we hope to effect the purpose of preaching unless we warn men that if they "turn not, He will whet His sword"? I fear that in too many places the doctrine of future punishment is rejected, and laughed at as a fancy and a chimera; but the day will come when it shall be known as a reality.

Ahab scoffed at Micaiah, when he said he should never come back alive. The men of Noah's generation laughed at the foolish old man (as they thought him), who bade them take heed for the world should be drowned; but when they were climbing to the tree tops, and the floods were following them, did they then say that the prophecy was untrue? And when the arrow was sticking in the heart of Ahab, and he said, "Take me from the battle, for I must die," did he then think that Micaiah spoke an untruth?"

And so it is now. You tell us we speak lies, when we warn you of judgment to come; but in that day when your mischief shall fall on yourselves, and when destruction shall overwhelm you, will you say we were liars then? Will you then turn around and scoff, and say he spake not the truth? Rather, my hearers, the highest honor will then be given to him who was the most faithful in warning men concerning the wrath of God.—Wesleyan Methodist.

THE UNCHANGING GOD

It is said to be the property of a crystal to assume precisely the same form into however many fragments it may be broken up. The infinitesimal particle, for the study of which a magnifying glass must be used, is a precise facsimile of the parent crystal from which it came. If we could take God's eternity and break it up into aeons, if we could take the aeons and break them up into ages, and the ages into centuries, and the centuries into moments, we should find each separate moment of God's life to be just as resplendent with benignity, compassion, redeeming grace, and happiness as His sublime eternity itself.—T. G. Selby.