

"SANCTIFY THEM"

Jn. 17:17

By A. D. Cann

The words of the text refer to the followers of Jesus. It is clearly seen that they for whom Jesus prays to be sanctified were Christians and already partly sanctified. They were separate from the world even as Jesus Himself was separate from the world. v. 14.

While Jesus' followers were model Christians, and such as make up what would today be considered excellent church members, yet our Lord was not completely satisfied with them. His prayer for them would imply that they did not enjoy perfect unity so He prays, "Sanctify them . . . that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in them that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." As the Father and the Son were one, even so were the members of His church to be one.

His prayer for them also implies that while they had joy, yet they had not the fullness of joy. The joy of the Lord is our strength. If we do not have joy in our religion, then religion becomes dry, legalistic and powerless.

There is much confusion in evangelical churches about the term sanctify. Many interpret it to mean consecration only. Consecration alone does not deal fully with the sin problem. A character study of the disciples will reveal bigotry, unbelief, spiritual pride, selfish ambition, etc. These traits of character in Christians cannot be consecrated. They must be crucified and cleansed from the heart. Further, Christians know comparatively little about consecration until they are sanctified. We read of no martyrs among the followers of Jesus until after Pentecost.

Others claim that holiness or sanctification is imparted to us through Christ. That is, that Christ's righteousness is accepted for mine. According to Paul, Christ's righteousness is imparted to us, and His faith, love, purity, power, etc., is reproduced in us." I am crucified with Christ . . . I live by the faith of the Son of God."

What is sanctification? Let the Bible define its own terms. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification that ye should abstain from fornication." "God hath not called us unto uncleanness but unto holiness." According to the Scriptures, sanctification or holiness is the reverse of fornication or uncleanness. Both Bible and dictionary agree that sanctification is (a) To set apart as holy for some sacred purpose; consecrate (b) To purify, free from sin.

Let us add here, there is nothing on earth or in heaven that will make the heart and life pure as it ought to be save sanctification.

When and how people are sanctified are very vital questions. Entire sanctification according to the Word of God is brought in the heart of believers instantaneously by faith. The Scripture argument for sanctification has been enforced by the testimony of millions. There is a popular error among Christian people, namely—too much stress upon consecration as a condition for receiving the experience of sanctification. The sin which remains in believers must be destroyed or cleansed. We cannot consecrate pride, selfish ambition, lust, etc. These elements hinder consecration and must be eradicated before consecration becomes significant.

We consecrate ourselves again and again, and still find these elements in us. Note that carnal temper in this man, fashion and vain glory in that one, lust in another and family prejudice in still another, etc. Why so? Because consecration does not reach the seat of the trouble. The Apostle says, "Mortify or put to death, fornication, uncleanness, etc. There is a consecration of the human powers, but only a putting to death of the sin in our members will effectually sanctify the heart.

The mistake that many of us make today is that we merely have to give over our hands, feet, voice, in short "our body" to the Lord and immediately we are sanctified. Jesus said, "I sanctify myself," that is, He who was always holy gave Himself to the Holy. We in like manner dedicate ourselves to the Lord and assume to be sanctified. I am afraid that we omit the intermediate steps and overlook the fact that we are carnal, selfish, deceitful, and that such must be mortified or put to death before we can be wholly sanctified.

The text declares that we are sanctified through the truth. The truth finds us as we are and only as this inward hidden corruption is confessed and destroyed can we have the experience for which our Lord prayed.

Some have said that horses or even a wash tub could be sanctified. That is true in one sense of the word, but it is not true in the sense which our Lord prayed for His disciples. "Both He that sanctified and they (disciples, horses, wash tubs) are all of one for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

The term sanctify as used above refers to persons and means more than consecration. Horses and wash tubs may be dedicated or consecrated to God, but personalities must be purified.

Note that Peter on one occasion professed the deepest kind of consecration. "Though all men forsake Thee, yet not I." Peter was sincere but he was overlooking his moral cowardice. Later he denied his Lord.

Now, friends, let us not overlook the plague of our hearts. Remember that God not only wants our bodies consecrated to Him, but our souls purified from all sin.

WHAT IS PREACHING POWER

Rev. T. W. Burgess in the Religious Telescope

The subject of preaching power must be an interesting study to all ministers to whom the Church has entrusted a pastoral charge, and to all who are engaged in Christian service. Any preacher who has not seriously considered the best methods of reaching the hearts and consciences of men, has the smallest right in a pulpit. Qualifications of eloquence and culture, the natural and acquired gifts which are supposed to make an effective public speaker are not to be overlooked, or underrated, but however valuable they may be, they are at a loss to answer the above question.

The call of God to preach the gospel is undoubtedly a call to the intellect as thoroughly as to the heart. It is a call which both commands and quickens the intellect to make the best possible use of its opportunities; but if philosophic culture had been alone bidden to set forth the way of salvation, much of the history of the Church would never have been written.

What, then, is preaching power? Perhaps the shortest and best answer is, The Gospel of Christ proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit. Let

it be preached by Paul, or Peter, by Barnabas, or Apollos; let it be applied in keen, incisive arguments; let its truths be driven home with all the strength that mental energy can use; or let its pleadings be heard in the pathos of tender sympathy; let conscience be cut to the quick; let deep conviction be planted in the soul; let tears be drawn from their fountain, the answer remains unaltered.

Preaching power is when the gospel comes "not in word only," but in "the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." The two-edged sword may pierce "even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow"; or by the wooing of the Spirit the sinner's heart may be healed; yet withal, in every mode and measure of its application, gospel power is the same.

How may this power be realized? This will at all times be in the front of a true aim, inasmuch as a true aim implies continuous adjustment of the heart and mind to the claims of the divine Will—that aim must be the glory of God. To turn men "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; to win souls; to convert sinners from the error of their way; to save souls from death; to "hide a multitude of sins," will at all times be in the front of a true preacher's aim.

Can this be done without a thorough and a complete surrender of the preacher's life to the will of God? We think not. It is possible to carry into the pulpit the best of theories, but unless a man carry into it a devoted spirit, he will do very little good. People are not deeply impressed with dull, cold, tame sermons. They want life, and light, and fire, and love in the pulpit.

Preachers differ, and always will differ, both in preparing what they want to say, and in saying it. Let the preacher be thoroughly consecrated to Christ's work, and he will be endued with Christ's spirit. His heart-power will be the love of Christ constraining him. His speaking power will be a tongue of fire. A preacher who rightly understands his work will never subject himself to cramps which hinder the free action of the divine influence upon his soul.

There is only one object to the preacher. There is only one theme to the preacher. The cry of the Philippian jailer: "What must I do to be saved?" is still the concern of the anxious. The plan of salvation is absolute. The conditions of a sinner's reconciliation with God is never changed. The provisions of salvation, and the materials on which they act, are unchanged. It is indispensable to preaching power that the preacher himself be assured of this. The man who expounds divine verities with a faltering faith should never be considered a safe guide. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

Today in the American city sin is gloriously housed, air-conditioned, indirectly lighted, and well protected from interference.—W. Erdman Smith in Missions.

The Presbyterian of March 30 says editorially: "While in Washington last week, we were informed by a member of the Ways and Means Committee of the House that the Amendment proposed whereby Churches and other institutions should be brought into the orbit of the Social Security Act was given a hearing and the Committee is against its passage. If this opinion becomes the final judgment of Congress, then the Churches may hope to continue their own constructive program.—Sel.