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GUEST EDITORIAL

THE SECOND BLESSING

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Various terms have been used to designate the experience of believers who have followed on to know the Lord in a deeper relation after being born again or being born of the Spirit. Such terms as Perfect Love, Full Salvation, Entire Sanctification, Christian Perfection, Christian Holiness, and many other expressions are used in the writings of holiness teachers. In this article we are emphasizing another term known as the Second Blessing. Some have criticized the term but we believe it is very expressive and scriptural.

Earnest Christians, who have received a clear assurance of sins forgiven, invariably have sensed in the course of time, an inward yearning for a deeper experience in the grace of God. Some have realized it as a result of a consciousness of certain forms of inward sinful tendencies. Some have sensed a need of more power with God. Some have felt the need of more love for God and others have felt as if they were slipping away from grace. As they waited upon God, His Spirit revealed to them their inward defilement, and gave to them a hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

In some form or other we believe this inward "thirsting" is universal in all true believers. In his Plain Account of Christian Perfection, Mr. Wesley says, "We do not know of a single instance in any place of a person receiving in one and the same moment the remission of sins, the abiding witness of the Spirit, and a new and a clean heart." He did not teach that it was not possible for God to save and sanctify a soul at the same time, but experience did teach him that it did not often happen. When we come to Christ as sinners we ask for pardon; and when we come to Him again as saints we ask for cleansing or Full Salvation. The first is something that God does for us through the death of His Son; the second is something He does in us by His Holy Spirit, and both are by faith and faith alone.

The Scriptures are clear on this double cure. But why a double cure? Because sin is twofold in its operations. There is actual sin—the sins which we commit. These bring us under condemnation. For these we are responsible. Naturally when we seek the Lord, the first thing we ask for is pardon. The second form of sin is inward in our nature. It is inherited depravity—our old man. We did not put it there. It is not the result of our action, but it is there. We ask God to cleanse it out of our nature—to make us clean. Thank God, the blood cleanseth.

What do the scriptures say about the second blessing? David asked the question in the 24th Psalm, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in His Holy Place." The answer is, "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart." Clean hands refer to the acts which we have done and the pure heart refers to the cleansing of our inward nature. Again in the 32nd Psalm he says, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." The prophet Zechariah tells us in the 13th chapter that in that day (the gospel day) there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." In the New Testament James cries, "Cleanse your hands ye sinners and purify your hearts ye double minded." John says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Many more passages might be given but these will prove the scriptural warrant for the second blessing.

Gipsy Smith writing a Foreword for a book on Full Salvation recently said, "When Methodism ceased to preach 'Full Salvation' or as the Wesleys spoke of it, the experience of 'Perfect Love,' she lost something for which she has never found a substitute."

The contemporaries of the Wesleys found an experience which gave them victory over and from the man within, until they could and did sing:

Oh for a heart to praise my God, a heart from sin set free,

A heart that always feels Thy blood so freely spilt for me.

A heart resigned, submissive, meek, my great Redeemer's throne,

Where only Christ is heard to speak, where Jesus reigns alone.

It was this burning all-consuming fire and passion within which gave power and point to their witness, which brought conviction and surrender to Jesus Christ and created a body of men and women all over England who became the leaven in the lump, the salt of the earth, the light of this bit of God's world—until as Lecky says, 'Wesley's Revival saved England from another French Revolution.'

Beloved, we must keep this blessed standard ever before the church. If we become indifferent or apathetic in expounding or exemplifying in our daily lives this precious truth, we are headed for the spiritual cemetery. We will join the great body of backslidden churcharity and the glory will have departed. God will have a sanctified church in the world, to uphold His Name. Let us continue to follow after Holiness.

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The sin we spare is sure to become our master.

No earthly duty can take the place of duty to God.

ZEAL NO SUBSTITUTE FOR PIETY

Dr. J. B. Chapman

The exploits of Barnabas are accounted for without the necessity of lifting the voice to a higher key. He accomplished what he did because "He was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." His works were not miracles; he was a miracle himself. And what he gives full explanation of what he accomplished. His work was just the normal product of his character in action. Those who associated with him, I think, were aware of no strain on his part. He did what he did and had the results he had because of what he was. Zeal was of course normal to his character, but it was zeal as a consequence, rather than zeal as a purposeful cause.

Paul condemned a zeal which he said was not according to knowledge. But his severest castigation was reserved for that zeal which would give and suffer as a substitute for love (in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians). Love in this chapter is a big word by which is implied the full content of inner grace. The things compared with it and contrasted with it are all good things. But the summary is that one may have all the symptoms of goodness, but if he does not have goodness itself, he is nothing bettered. All the parts of a good life, unless they are products of a right heart, are as worthless as the parts of a body, a human body, with no spirit to unite and vitalize them.

But zeal is an example, not an epitome of proposed substitutes. There is no substitute for genuine piety. One might make a summary of all good words and works and of all good sentiments and still the conclusion would be the same—only genuine goodness counts. Still what we are saying is not unreasoning radicalism. For if zeal or any other or all other substitutes could avail, then would being truly right with God and men at once become a matter of degrees, and even the most accomplished could not be sure that his attainments were sufficient. As it is, even the humble and the ungifted can be good and right and holy and know that he is so by the Spirit which dwelleth in him. It is now impossible for us to say just exactly how zealous one must be, but it is possible for one—any one—to be saved and sanctified wholly and to walk before God in full acceptance every day and all one's days.

Let us therefore rejoice that "by grace ye are saved." Let us look well to our own state and standing before God. And let us major on essential virtues—veracity, honesty, purity, generosity and godliness.—Herald of Holiness.

"Jesus who passed the angels by,
And still He makes it His abode;
Assumed our flesh to bleed and die;
As man, He fills the throne of God."