

Mrs. Thomas Moran

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

"And an highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness."

VOL. XXXVIII.

MONCTON, N. B., AUGUST 31ST, 1947

No. 184

SEVEN THEORIES OF HOLINESS

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All men who believe the Bible must of necessity believe in some sort of holiness, seeing it is a self-evident and undeniable fact that the Bible teaches holiness: that is why it is called the "Holy Bible." The material used in making a Bible is not more holy than is the material of any other book; but the theme of the Bible being "Holiness," every one recognizes the propriety of this Book's being named, "The Holy Bible." Hence, when men say they do not believe in holiness they usually mean to say they do not believe some certain theory of holiness. The points of controversy are as to when, and how we are to be made holy. We shall briefly examine at least seven different theories of holiness, in the hope of finding the true and scriptural teaching on this subject.

I.

That whoever is pardoned and regenerated is made holy; that regeneration and sanctification are coetaneous. This we affirm, is contrary to both the Scriptures and universal Christian experience. Every person who has been regenerated soon discovers that there still remain some elements within that are at variance with the new life, manifesting themselves in doubts, selfishness, envy, anger, pride, a manfearing spirit, an unforgiving spirit, and such like; this accounts for the inward struggle and conflict—"The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other" (Gal. 5:17). Although these manifestations may be suppressed, they are nevertheless present, thus evidencing the fact that the heart has not yet been made holy. In the language of Mr. Wesley, the founder of Methodism, "Sin does remain in one that is justified, though it has not dominion over him: he has not a clean heart at first." To this statement virtually all evangelical denominations agree in their credal statements, articles of religion and confession of faith. As stated in the Ninth Article of Religion by the Protestant Episcopal Church, "Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam: but is the fault and corruption of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam: and this infection doth remain, yea, in those that are regenerated." Although the Corinthians were "In Christ," they were nevertheless, "yet carnal" (I. Cor. 3:3). No, men are not made holy in regeneration, hence we see if they are ever made holy, any time, anywhere, by whatever process or method, it must be a subsequent experience.

II.

Some will teach that holiness is attained by a gradual process of growth in grace. This is impracticable and illogical. Growth simply adds to that which already exists; as weeds cannot be grown out of a garden, or as a child cannot grow clean, even so spiritual uncleanness and sin cannot be grown out of the heart. While there is a growth in grace—both in the grace of justification, and in the grace of sanctification—there is no growing into grace. As no one can grow into the grace of regeneration because it is a divine act—a something that God must do for us, so in like manner, sanctification is a divine act—a something that God must do for us. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly . . . faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (2 Thess. 5:23, 24).

III.

The death-bed theory. Doubtless the majority of those who would deny the possibility of an instantaneous deliverance from all sin and the obtainment of a holy heart, and living a holy life in this world would rather adhere to the death-bed theory of holiness. While we are happy to believe that some may have received holy hearts while on their death-beds we would most emphatically deny that dying made them free from sin and made them holy. Death is no Saviour, and has no saving power; death is the result of sin, and is an enemy. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:26). If dying would free a Christian from sin and make him holy why would not dying do the same for the sinner, seeing he dies in like manner? If that were true there would have been no need of Christ shedding His blood on Calvary's Cross to save us and cleanse us from sin. There is not a single passage in all the Bible giving any such promise, or even remotely hints at such a prospect. But even if that should take place in death, it would be a second work of grace, and would need to take place in this world—seeing we are not going to die in the next world—and then it would need to be accomplished by the all-cleansing blood of Jesus; and the blood of Jesus has no more cleansing saving efficacy when a man is dying than while he lives. Hence the only way to be assured of holiness when we die is to have a holy heart now, seeing we may die now.

IV.

The Romanist theory of a post-mortem purging in a mythical purgatory. Of course every true Protestant rejects and resists this teaching as an unscriptural deception and delusion—seeing there is not one word in all the Bible

to sustain such a theory. As Protestants we protest against this as a falsehood and a delusion—believing that the blood of Jesus Christ is our all-sufficient and only remedy for sin.

V.

A sort of sacramental or official holiness; the teaching that sanctification is merely a setting apart for a holy purpose, and holy service—as the holy priesthood, the holy ministry, the holy temple, etc. We grant that in inanimate matter, which does not involve any moral defilement, this may apply. However, being engaged in a holy service does not cleanse the heart from sin, and make the man holy. Yes, a man may be set apart to a holy ministry and yet have an unholy heart. Official and sacramental holiness does not necessarily indicate heart holiness.

VI.

There is the teaching of imputed holiness, in which a person is accounted holy because he is supposedly covered with Christ's holiness, though the heart of the individual yet remains unholy. This doctrine is simply a revamping of the old Antinomianism, which was so constantly and fully refuted by the Wesleys and their coadjutors, and especially by Fletcher's "Checks." We regard this teaching as unscriptural and untrue. Even God could not consistently declare a person holy while the heart yet remains unholy. Jesus died on the cross to "save His people from (not in) their sins" (Matt. 1:21): "If we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (I. John 1:7). The holiness He provides is not an imputed holiness, but an imparted holiness. We are not simply to wear a borrowed robe of holiness, but we are to be made holy. The command is "Be ye holy" (I. Pet. 1:15-16). The company that John saw had "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14).

VII.

There is the Wesleyan teaching of a second work of grace, inwrought in the heart of the true believer, subsequent to regeneration, and prior to death. Seeing that none of the foregoing theories are scriptural, and never have produced any witnesses by the methods they have advocated, we are left to this seventh theory—which perhaps more properly should have been termed the first theory—namely, the glorious truth that there is virtue and efficacy in the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse the heart "from all unrighteousness" (I. John 1:9), subsequent to pardon, right down in this (Continued on Page 5)