

THE ALTAR THAT SANCTIFIETH THE GIFT

By Rev. E. F. Walker

Quite frequently these words are quoted to seekers of sanctification, for the exercise of their faith. The argument is this: (1) Jesus is the Altar. (2) You are the gift. (3) If you place yourself upon the Altar—that is, make a full, complete consecration of yourself to Jesus—He says that He sanctifies you. (4) What He says you are to believe, for faith is believing what He says.

There are some who object to this use of the Scripture quoted. Some slightly call it "sanctification by syllogism." Some seriously argue against it.

The great Bible scholars who refer at all to the matter, as a rule, agree with such interpretation. Examples: Wm. Milligan: "The New Testament Altar is Christ Himself." Cruden: "Christ is the only Christian Altar, to whom we bring all our sacrifices and services." Matthew Henry: "Christ is our Altar, for it is He that sanctifies all our gifts." Philip Henry: "The gift received a kind of inherent holiness from the Altar. So Christ sanctifies all our gifts."

This was the constant application made by Mrs. Phoebe Palmer; and how the Holy Ghost did honor such use! According to the observation of this writer, no holiness people have been better samples of clearness and steadfastness than those who have received the blessing on this text.

We are in the habit of saying that we are sanctified through consecration to the Lord and belief of his Word. The "gift" we bring to the Altar is simply the consecration of our being to Him. The faith we exercise is simply our confiding that He sanctifies what we consecrate.

"The gift." It must be our own voluntary offering. No one but ourselves can yield ourselves to God—can place us upon that consecrated Altar. If we do fully yield ourselves to Him, He is made of God our sanctification, for whatsoever toucheth this Altar is holy.

In Numbers viii. 16 we read: "They (the Levites) are wholly given unto me"; and in the next verse the Lord gives the assurance, "I sanctified them for myself." That was an official sanctification. But a personal, entire consecration upon this sanctifying Altar will immediately bring a personal, entire sanctification.

The tense is present—"sanctifi-eth"; that is, does now sanctify—a perfect, present sanctification.

Believe it! When the Israelite's gift was placed upon the sacred altar, he believed that Jehovah accepted the same; believed the fact, because God said it was so, and according to his faith it was unto him. Likewise the children of God who now present themselves to God, through Christ, in faith, a living sacrifice, are, in the very act of yielding and believing, made holy and acceptable unto God.

Whatever may be one's intellectual position with regard to such interpretation and application, we must all agree that God has in the great work of spreading scriptural holiness over the lands, set His seal of approval upon it. Many a precious soul has been purified in the exercise of faith in the statement "Do you want Christ to represent you and your gift to the altar sanctifieth the gift."

WAR DECLARED

God's people are committed to a program of war. It is a grave error for one to presume that salvation will immunize him against battles and tests. Peter admonished: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Peter 4:12-13).

A state of emergency has existed in the ranks of the righteous since Satan launched his aggressive invasion of the beautiful Garden of Eden about 6,000 years ago. The Bible graphically depicts an age-long contest between good and evil; but it is gratifying to note in the historical record, the glorious triumph of good. We must concede that there are times when evil may appear to triumph; but, thank God, we look with glorious anticipation to the ultimate overthrow of evil. It is not enough that we should be merely ordinary conquerors: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us," (Romans 8:37).

It is imperative that the would-be Christian be thoroughly convinced that there is no escape from this battle of the ages, if he is to make Heaven. Any vagabond from "skidrow" can serve Satan; but it takes one with principle and determination to serve God, living "soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world," in direct defiance to the diabolical forces of evil.

This writer is not seeking to discourage those who are looking toward the Christian way of life—but war has been declared; good and evil are irreconcilable; evil is aggressive in principle and in act. We must either compromise, or fight. Progress means destruction of evil, without and within. We must take the offensive in self-defense. We must be ever alert, vigilant and aggressive in this battle. One battle is no sooner won at one point, than another is launched from a different position. There is a continual race for preparedness between these two forces, a frantic rallying of resources. Every time God's people build a new church, the devil's forces build a new "liquor dive"; with every new Bible school comes a new moving picture producer or a new dance band.

Ah, who would seek to be deferred from this gallant fight for right, when God has provided us with such effective weapons of warfare, and has assured us of ultimate victory? "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)"

"Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
Or sailed through bloody seas?"

"Sure, I must fight, if I would reign—
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy Word."

—By the Editor in the Church Herald
"Remember that in life, as in a mirror, you never get more out than you put in."—Holiness Era.

INTERCEDE FOR—A 20TH CENTURY REFORMATION

Presbyterian Life asks this startling question: "Have you ever attended a Bible Class in which 2,000 people sat with Bibles on their knees? Have you ever heard 35,000 young people recite the Twenty-third Psalm together? Have you ever joined with 180,000 Christians singing "A Mighty Fortress is our God?" This is just what happened at Essen, Germany, last August. For months Protestants all over Germany were preparing for this great church convention, which was called "Evangelischer Kirchentag 1950." All who called themselves Christians were invited to come to Essen, the city of questionable fame from the millions of guns that were built there; a city which, today, resembles the crater scenery of the moon because of the bombs that were dropped on it during the war.

For five days people assembled to witness for the Prince of Peace. Every day of the great meeting began with a Communion Service, attended by thousands; and this was followed by an hour of intensive Bible study, in groups averaging one or two thousand. The theme of large study groups was "Save man; his freedom, his family, his faith." Evening services were led by Church leaders from all over the world, and closed by evening prayer. The final sermon, preached by Praeses Wilm, head of the Westphalian Church, closed with these words: "One of our pastors a few years ago was thrown into a concentration camp. Day by day he witnessed for his Lord by giving a word from the Bible to his fellow prisoners, although it cost him more torture from his guards. Finally, he gave his life for his testimony. What will you give?"

PRAYER FOR THE NATION

Almighty God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage; we humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favor and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that through obedience to thy law we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all of which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CRUSADING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Montana Council of Churches worked for a long time to get a law through banning slot machines in that state. Victory came when the State Supreme Court rendered a decision outlawing not only slot machines but all billboard beer advertising as well within the State. A district court had previously ruled that a new law banning the advertising of liquor did not apply to beer.—Sel.
Lord's work such as evangelistic extension, what we are in secret ultimately determines our public influence and witness.