

## Erroneous Religious Beliefs

(Cont'd)

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"Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." (Matt. 22:29).

There is another teaching abroad which is not in harmony with the teachings of God's Word, hence, is erroneous. It is commonly called "eternal security," and teaches that if a soul is once born again, and becomes a child of God, he never can be lost; inasmuch as he can never be unborn. In trying to prove this statement to be true, they appeal to a natural law, and say that when a child is born into a family it never can become a child of any other than its own parents.

Here, they confuse a spiritual law with a natural law. It is true, naturally, that a child can never become a child of any other than its own natural parents, but there is a very great difference between a natural birth and a spiritual one. We became children of our parents by their choice. We had absolutely nothing to do with becoming their children, but when we are born again, and become God's spiritual children, we become such by virtue of our own choice and our faith in God, and obedience to Him. "Choose you this day whom you will serve," saith the scripture.

When God converts us he does not rob us of our power of choice and make mere animals of us. Hence, we can, by our own choice, disobedience and unbelief, turn away from God and forfeit our sonship, for we do not become immune to the temptations of Satan. And he who has caused men to turn away, and forsake God ever since he defeated Adam and Eve in the beginning, and brought sin and ruin on the race of man, will defeat God's children and drag them down to hell, unless "we hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." (Heb. 3:14). "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." (Heb. 3:12).

The Word of God abounds with warnings of the danger of backsliding and falling away. Why so many warnings if one cannot be lost if he backslides after being converted?

One scripture which people use, to try to prove eternal security is in John 10:28: "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish." If they will read the preceding verse they should understand whom Jesus is speaking of. Here it is: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (Verse 27). Here is a condition: "They follow me." Surely if we continue to follow Him we are eternally secure.

Note some of the warnings of danger of falling away. "If, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they had known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." (2 Peter 2:20-21). Now the question: why had it been better for them not to have the way of righteousness, if they cannot be lost when they turn away? "For if we sin wilfully after that

## HISTORY AND FACT

Then there is the possibility of a person substituting history for present fact. This is a prevalent sin amongst us. The older we get the more liable we are to commit it. It is possible for one to lose the grace of holiness and still go on glorying in the fact that he is sure that he did get it once. One may be able to tell "a good experience" and still not have a good testimony. Incidentally, that is why testimony meetings are not nearly so helpful as they might be. To be frank, they have ceased to attract the people and it isn't because the people are not interested. I have given you one reason for this condition. People able to tell "a good experience" without having a good testimony cause the testimony meeting to degenerate into a talking meeting. It is not what you were once, it is what you are today that counts. Nothing—absolutely nothing—must be allowed to substitute for a present, conscious knowledge of the abiding Sanctifier within.—J. B. MacLagan.

## CREED AND GRACE

Some people class themselves as "holiness people" simply because they have accepted the second blessing theory of entire sanctification. Important as it is to have a Scriptural creed, it is much more important to possess the grace and experience. The most convincing argument for the truth of holiness is the holy life of the person who professes it; but one cannot live the life without possessing the grace, therefore, the greatest factor in the propagation of the doctrine and work of holiness is the experience of holiness in the hearts of those who profess it.—J. B. MacLagan.

we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." (Heb. 10:26).

"Now, the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." (Heb. 10:38-39). "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." (Matt. 10:22).

"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:17-18).

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abideth not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." (John 15:5-6). These are the words of Jesus, which is a dark picture for a backslider. One who does not abide in Jesus is cast into the fire and burned.

We are saved by faith: "The just shall live by faith." "Without faith it is impossible to please God." A backslider has no faith. Eternal security, eternal life depends upon our faith and obedience to God. "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways." (Prov. 14:14). "Wherefore, the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." (2 Peter 1:10).

## Tragic Trends in Our Time

Norman E. Trafton

The people who profess and propagate the doctrine of entire sanctification, are more in danger of decline than any other evangelical group. Unless we pursue tenaciously the ethical practice of holiness, we shall find ourselves in possession of a theory, with very little reality to back up our arguments.

First of all, there is the danger of being satisfied with the "Shibboleth" of holiness. As long as we have made a second trip to the altar, intone time honored holiness phraseology, then we have surely reached our spiritual Canaan. Nothing will defeat our cause so much as professors of holiness who lack the deep abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, and who fail to grasp the meaning of a pure heart and a sanctified life. We may pour people into a mold, producing religious puppets who respond when we pull the strings, but who lack the power to perform on their own.

I have been somewhat alarmed and concerned to notice trends of worldliness in our own ranks. There is a danger in presenting a positive gospel, to feel that all decisions regarding Christian conduct can be settled between the Holy Spirit and the individual. Conscience is not a safe guide. We must provide a spiritual environment in order that conscience may function consistent with scriptural principles. We have many in our ranks today, who have little or no conscience about what appears to be the spirit of worldliness. Either they do not possess the experience of holiness, or as a church we have failed to guide them in the practical aspects of the experience. Permanents, worldly dress, frivolous conversation and unbecoming conduct between the opposite sex, seems to be increasing at a rapid pace. The experience of holiness is not characterized by any particular act, but it should be the foundation principle of our entire existence. The spirit of worldliness invades the pillars of the sanctuary. Sometimes it appears in the leading laymen of the congregation, who are not in possession of a vital experience, and in some cases who actually oppose the spiritual progress of the church. The greatest triumph is achieved when the power of the pulpit is neutralized as a result of prayerlessness, lack of soul passion, scanty sermon preparation and when money is made the measure of the ministry.

There is another danger in the trend of evangelism. This is the age of mass movement, and we are tempted to covet quantity at the expense of quality. We should not depend on the public altar as the only source of spiritual contact, but carry the message to the individual need. Then again, a church should not be satisfied with their program of evangelism, because two series of special meetings have been held during the year, but strive to cultivate a spirit of revival continually.

Finally, we need to beware of a superficial presentation of the gospel, resulting in adherents who are not prepared to embrace the full implications of a surrendered life. While we extend our length and breadth, let us not jeopardize our depth. As we near the close of this age with tension and turmoil on every side, let us not tolerate the spirit of worldliness, but remain firm in our stand for consecrated, consistent living which is the only real purpose for our existence.

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