

THE SANCTIFIED MUST GO ON

by F. Lincicome

Sanctification is not graduation. It is only a full matriculation. To suppose that sanctification is graduation is to confuse the foundation with the formation of character—to confuse moral purity with Christian maturity.

There are three facts distinct in Christian experience, namely, spiritual life, moral purity, and Christian maturity. Spiritual life is received in regeneration, moral purity in sanctification, Christian maturity by growth in grace. We must not fail to distinguish between purity and maturity. Purity is an obtainment, maturity an attainment; purity is an acquisition, maturity an accumulation; purity is the foundation of character, maturity, the formation of character; purity is moral character, maturity, moral stature; purity is a crisis, maturity, a process.

Sanctification does not graduate the believer in perfect love—it only conditions him to advance in that love. Adam Clarke said, "To be filled with God is great; to be filled with the fullness of God is greater; to be filled with all the fullness of God is greater still." John Fletcher said, "To be filled with all the fullness of God describes a state of grace beyond sanctification."

What God said to Joshua He could say to every sanctified person: "There remaineth much land ahead to be possessed." We get in the land when we are sanctified, but we do not possess it. Many have crossed the Jordan, shouted down the walls of Jericho, then sat down and gone no further. There is no "ne plus ultra" in Christian experience. The advent of the sanctifying power of God dropped into the heart of a born-again soul does not lift him out of his infant period and make an adult Christian out of him. It will lift him out of his pouting period, out of his envy, jealousy, getting angry. The initial stroke of holiness puts an end to all of these.

The Scriptures always speak of growth. After we are sanctified we will not have an equal growth. If a dozen people get sanctified today, no two of them will make the same progress in the next twelve months. Some make more progress in two months than others in six months, due to the difference in their age, health, environment, and capacity.

The sanctified should go on. This great stagnation that exists everywhere is due to the fact that we are resting too long in the beginning. Sanctification is only the entrance upon a fuller, deeper, broader, victorious life.

Holiness is more than a crisis, it is a process. It might be well to shift the emphasis to the process in our preaching.

RADIANT CHRISTIANS

A minister of one of the larger denominations was discussing some of the problems of the present-day church with a few of his fellow ministers in a midwest city. He said, "Present-day Christians have lost radiance." Yes, it was a striking statement, coming from one whom we would consider rather formal and unappreciative of our position and unsympathetic with the doctrine of holiness. And yet he knew of a day when there were "radiant Christians."

Radiant Christians have always been the best advertisements of the Christian religion the world has ever had. Radiant Christians are active; they are happy; they have vision and zeal and faith; they are both inspired and inspiring; they have a passion and are compassionate; they are tireless even in their weariness; they are unafraid in the very midst of danger; and they are cheerful and optimistic and kind. It is to the radiant Christian that the sick will come for comfort; and to him comes the sinner who would find a sympathetic listener and one to

pray with him that he might be forgiven. It is the radiant Christian upon whom the pastor will place responsibility, for he will be dependable and trustworthy.

Lord, give us radiant Christians. We have every other kind: those who keep the Discipline; those who know our doctrines and would fight for them; those who are glad to sit on important committees; and those who are ready with suggestions and advice; but we are impotent because we have too little radiance. Our knowledge of law and discipline and doctrine is not catching. Our testimonies are positive but without conviction-producing qualities, because we have lost the glow, the enthusiasm, the radiance. God give us more radiant Christians.—Ralph J. Milton, in *The Free Methodist*.

THE POISONOUS SNAKE

by Ruby Tarrance

Last Summer I was busy doing the laundry when, looking at the clock, I discovered it was 11:00 a.m. Expecting my husband home for lunch, I hurriedly grabbed a bucket and rushed to the cellar for potatoes.

Without looking, I reached into the potato box. Something rough and unusual raked my hand. Glancing down, I screamed in horror—a snake lay along the edge of the box. My hand was bleeding; I saw where fangs had left their marks. I feared a poisonous snake had bitten me.

Rushing to the telephone, I called my mother, then soaked my hand in kerosene until help arrived. Luckily, the bite was not that of a poisonous species.

Sin is like the serpent—always poised in some dark place, ready to strike. Unless you're well acquainted with snakes, it's hard to detect the harmless from the poisonous. Likewise, what does not appear evil on the surface may lead to deadly sin.

The serpent of sin lurks in books, pleasure, companions. Look out for it—it even hides in our own natures. Eve and Adam were the first to suffer the consequences of sin when they ate of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Yet men, women, boys and girls still let temptation overcome them.

A Memphis newspaper told of a man who had a pet rattlesnake which he had found when it was very small. It would come when he called it, and it would eat from his fingers. It would coil around his hand and let him pet its head with the tip of his fingers.

One day he took it to town to exhibit among his friends. They admired it. He took it back home. Suddenly the snake became angry with him and buried its fangs in his arm. Two nights later the man died.

So with all who make a pet of sin. It seems glamorous on the surface. Yet we can see all about us people who have over-indulged in sin.

Do you know some victim of drink? He got his start by taking his first drink, probably socially, at a party. Perhaps he had seen it advertised on TV, in the newspaper, or in a secular magazine. It appeared as innocent as the pet rattler. Yet the chemist tells us that liquor in any form contains poison.

It is the same with other sins. They seem innocent, but they are not. Like the serpent I met, they are dangerous, whether or not we realize it.

When we let Christ enter into our hearts we become new creatures. But we will never be free from temptation—we must constantly be on the alert.

Solomon said, "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" (Prov. 4:14, 15).

—The Free Methodist