



"You will know them by their fruits." Mt. 7:16

FEATURES OF SANCTIFICATION

By Ismael E. Amaya

(original title) THIS IS ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION)

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FOREWORD

In no area is the principle, "Precept upon precept; line upon line," more important in Christian life and faith than in connection with the doctrine and practice of holiness. Author Ismael E. Amaya has served as a pastor and evangelist, and is now giving his major time to the arduous task of translating English materials into Spanish for the fast-growing field of evangelical Spanish literature.

Ready facility in two modern languages, together with his own theological training and insight, has given Rev. Ismael Amaya resources which he has amply used in this survey of entire sanctification in doctrine and experience.

I am happy to commend this book to those who desire information and inspiration concerning the highest in Christian life.

W. T. Purkiser

Editor, Herald of Holiness



1. OUR HERITAGE

The history of the Church is the history of holiness itself. If we eliminate that element, religion ceases to be religion. As Asbury Lowrey says: "Since all moral natures are essentially alike, holiness is an indispensable fundamental principle in all levels of intelligence. Without it Christians could not be Christians, angels could not be angels, and God could not be God."

Looking at the New Testament, we note that the holy writers clearly stated that the full salvation that God has provided for man is given in two different experiences. That is, first, there is the experience of regeneration, and subsequent to this, entire sanctification. The New Testament is full of references which tell us clearly that God has provided a

“more excellent” experience for the believers. Some of the best-known references are Matt. 5:8, 48; Luke 1:73-75; Eph. 1:4; I Thess. 4:3, 7; 5:23-24; Heb. 12:14; and I Pet 1:15-16.

But the New Testament is nothing more than a depiction of the fulfillment of the symbols and figures of the Old Testament. For instance, Paul, referring to Israel’s life in the desert, says that all these things are figures that are written for our admonition (I Cor. 10:1-11). Egypt represents the captivity of sin; the crossing of the Red Sea, the experience of regeneration; and the crossing of the Jordan River, the experience of entire sanctification.

Four hundred years before the law was given, God had told Abraham, “Walk before me, and be thou perfect” (Gen. 17:1). So this is not a new doctrine. It is as old as the Bible itself.

But if we continue searching we will discover that the doctrine of holiness did not start with the Bible. This doctrine brings with it the fragrance of another world – of God himself, for holiness is the basic attribute in which all the other divine perfections are grounded. Holiness has been and is the atmosphere in which God breathes.

What heritage we have received-holiness! What a glorious task-the preaching of holiness! What a high ideal-a life of holiness! What a holy vocation-testifying to holiness! What a great privileges – to be sanctified wholly! What a tremendous responsibility-to “Christianize Christianity” with the message of holiness!

“Holiness unto the Lord” is our watchword and song.
“Holiness unto the Lord” as we’re marching along.
Sing it, shout it, loud and long.
“Holiness unto the Lord” now and forever!



2. OUR RESPONSIBILITY

In order to have a holiness revival we must preach and teach holiness. Pastors and leaders must examine themselves to be sure they are being faithful to this task of spreading the message of holiness.

Ministers must preach the doctrine of holiness. Holiness must be the central theme. The Apostle Paul tells us that the purpose of the Christian ministry is the “perfection of the saints” (Eph. 4:11).

Leaders from other denominations have expressed their concern about the lack of emphasis upon the doctrine of holiness within their groups. Dr. John A. Brooks said: “There are many ministers, authorized exponents of the doctrine of holiness . . . who deliberately and completely leave aside the matter of holiness in their preaching in the pulpit. There are many pulpits from which holiness has been barred; in others it has been rejected; while in others it has been misrepresented.”

Bishop George Peck said: “The truth cannot be denied. The great privilege and responsibility of presenting salvation from all sin has been omitted in many sermons to the point of creating doubt on the value of this doctrine, discouraging and confusing those who wanted a complete salvation.”

John Wesley said that his desire was “that all preachers make an effort to preach Christian perfection constantly, powerfully and clearly to the believers . . . No doubt we are not clear enough,” he said, “in talking publicly or privately about entire sanctification.” He wrote in one of his letters: “I am afraid that Christian perfection will be forgotten.”

Many of John Wesley’s sermons have to do with the doctrine of perfect salvation or Christian perfection. And he preached more than seven hundred times a year during all of his ministry and over forty-two thousand sermons during his lifetime. One of his masterpieces is his sermon entitled: “Christian Perfection.” More than half of the hymns composed by Charles Wesley were on the theme of holiness.

Dr. Adam Clarke urged “that all who possess the apostolic doctrine that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin in this life, encourage the believers to go forward into perfection and receive salvation while they are here in this earth.”

Bishop Francis Asbury said: “The night cometh and I will close by saying: Preach sanctification, directly or indirectly in every sermon.” To one of his friends he wrote: “Oh purity! Oh Christian perfection! Oh sanctification! It is heaven here on earth to know that all sin has been removed. Preach it wherever they will listen. Preach it!”

The doctrine of holiness is the backbone of Wesleyan theology. If it is not kept in a position of prominence and emphasis, the whole system falls. Furthermore, the doctrine of holiness is closely related to all the other doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ, and so the scriptural and logical preaching of any doctrine will lead to the proclamation of the doctrine of holiness. It is equally true that in order for the message of holiness to be scriptural and logical it has to include and be related to all other essential doctrines of Christianity.

The doctrine of holiness runs throughout the Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. This does not mean that holiness is the only subject treated by the Scriptures, but it is the subject that unites all the other subjects. Bishop Randolph S. Foster said that holiness “breathes in the prophecy, thunders in the law, murmurs in the narrative, whispers in the promises, supplicates in the prayers, sparkles in the poetry, resounds in the songs, speaks in the types, glows in the imagery, voices in the language, and burns in the spirit of the whole scheme, from alpha to omega, from its beginning to its end. . . . It is the truth glowing all over, webbing all through revelation; the glorious truth which sparkles and whispers, and sings and shouts in all its history, and biography, and poetry, and prophecy, and precepts and promise, and prayer, the great central truth of the system.”

What a glorious task we have received-the preaching and teaching of holiness! What a tremendous responsibility-to carry the banner of holiness around the world!



3. A SECOND WORK OF GRACE

One of the most important aspects of the experience of entire sanctification is that it is presented in the Bible as a second work of grace. This is very simple to comprehend for many sincere believers; however it is difficult for others. Many people accept holiness as a divine work, but not as a second experience reserved only for the believers regenerated by the blood of Jesus Christ. Some accept it as imparted to the sinner in the experience of regeneration. This is not possible for several reasons:

In the first place, the need for a second work of grace stems from the nature of sin itself. Sin is twofold, consisting of (1) volitional acts (sins) of the individual (for which he is personally responsible) and (2) the inward pollution (sinfulness) or the sin principle (which he has inherited and for which he is not personally responsible). For the first, man must seek forgiveness (the first work); but for the second, he needs cleansing (the second work). Furthermore, an unforgiven heart is not a candidate for cleansing.

It should be noted, too, that when the sinner comes to Christ he comes burdened by his own sins; comes in repentance and under deep conviction for the sins which he has committed. He may, and should, shed bitter tears of repentance. His heart and mind are concerned with only one thing – to have the sins of the past forgiven, to have his load of guilt lifted. The experience of holiness is not his immediate concern. If he has not been taught about the “second blessing,” the glorious experience he now enjoys, the relief from the burden of his sins, together with the emotion produced by that event so sublime, is completely satisfying. He cannot imagine that there is something better than the experience of conversion. The first work of grace is, indeed, a complete work.

The sense of need for a second work of grace may come to a person very soon, or more slowly, depending on his background, teaching, and experience. He may be already instructed in the way. He may be led to seek the experience through the study of the Scriptures, or through the testimonies of the persons who already have been sanctified. At the same time a sense of personal need will begin to develop – a desire for an experience that will help him to live a victorious Christian life. When this need increases to the extent that it gets to be a petition to God, then the individual starts seeking the experience of entire sanctification.

Then, too, the Bible presents clearly both experiences. The more we study about them, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and through prayer, the more clearly we see them. The two experiences are so different that in certain aspects they seem to be the opposite of each other,

Regeneration is a birth. “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Cor. 5:17). According to these passages the person who is saved is born again spiritually and starts a new life in Christ. He is a new son of God by adoption and becomes a part of the great family of the redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, the experience of entire sanctification is, in a sense, a death. “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:6). “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

Therefore, in regeneration man is born, while in sanctification he dies; in regeneration he is made spiritually alive, while in sanctification he is crucified; in regeneration he is freed, while in sanctification he is buried.

The record of the New Testament Church confirms that entire sanctification is a second work of grace. All Christians from all generations have agreed that something tremendous and miraculous happened to the disciples between the time Jesus was crucified and the time when Peter spoke with high courage to the multitude on the Day of Pentecost. This remarkable change can be credited only to the heart-transforming filling with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost – a definite, spiritual experience.

Another classic example of this second work of grace is found in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. He was writing to a group of people who had been converted for some time, a group of persons whose faith was abounding and their joy contagious. However Paul, sensing a certain lack remaining in their spiritual lives, prayed for them in these words: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly" (I Thess. 5:23).

Throughout the history of the Christian Church, Christians have witnessed again and again to this second work of grace, Many of our own day could be called to the witness stand to testify of this experience.

Dr. Samuel Young testified that after a struggle with an unwillingness to trust God's judgment and plan for His life he came to the place where the old life died and in answer to a simple faith God's will became "a delight instead of a foreboding fear." The resultant life of holiness "is now a life of radiance," he testifies.

Dr. J. B. Chapman testified that he was sanctified in the same holiness camp meeting in which he was converted as a lad fifteen years old. Dr. Chapman confessed that it was not simply the clear, Bible preaching on holiness that won him, but the happy band of people whose lives backed their testimony.

These are reasons, logical, scriptural, and experiential, which support our position that there is a second definite work of grace which all Christians may enjoy.



4. A NEED

Entire sanctification is not a fancy, luxury experience that man seeks just to possess a highly sophisticated religion. Entire sanctification comes in response to a spiritual need. Dr. Samuel Young says that "before one is willing, and ready, to go the great length required to obtain the blessing of a holy heart it is usually necessary for him to sense his need of God in desperate terms. This conviction for holiness is most frequently a conviction of want or lack rather than of wrongdoing. Often it is accompanied by deep conflict. But in any case the response must be the response of obedient faith."

Entire sanctification is a need of the regenerated person. The believer's heart needs the experience of holiness if he would live a victorious Christian life. We see many persons who go to the altar seeking pardon for their sins. They testify with great joy that they have been saved. We see them walk for a period of time in the light of the gospel. They come to church every Sunday, read the Bible, pray. But too often we find them losing out spiritually.

Even after the person is saved from his sins, the root of sin still remains in his heart. Soon he finds out that the inbred sin is at work in his heart. Then he starts experiencing what Paul talks about in his Epistle to the Romans: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:22-23). Of course this does not mean that all persons who do not seek sanctification will backslide and go back to sin. But we can say for sure that their lives will not be all that God wants them to be. They will live a mediocre, limited Christian life. (They will live under a "glass ceiling.")

Many believers live at a level of constant spiritual struggle when they could be living an

abundant and happy Christian life that would, in turn, be a blessing to others. They never have a clear testimony of a victorious experience. Instead they magnify their problems and difficulties – and this does not bless those around them. It is true that none of us will be completely free from burdens and obstacles, but if the Holy Spirit abides within the heart, there can be inner peace and victory. Within there is a fountain of joy, not a center of spiritual warfare. No wonder the unsanctified heart yearns for the experience of holiness, that satisfies and gives a life of real joy and blessing.

Entire sanctification is a need for the Christian home. The Christian home also needs the influence of persons who are living in the beauty of the experience of entire sanctification. The home is not always the easiest place to live the Christian life. This is where everybody knows us as we really are. How difficult it is to keep calm in spite of the wrong attitudes of unsaved members of the family! And for that matter, how difficult it is sometimes to keep a good spirit when problems and misunderstanding tend to break the peace of the home, even though all the members are Christians! The point of failure for many Christians is not in the church, nor at work, nor in public life, but at home! The presence of the Holy Spirit in a home can make it like heaven on earth; the lack of it can make it a hell. Holiness is the only thing that can guarantee us happy Christian homes.

Entire sanctification is a need for the church, The church, if it is going to be what God wants it to be, needs the influence of sanctified persons in its membership. The church is like a family. Unless the persons who are a part of it are living the sanctified life under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the common problems of a congregation can ruin the whole church, How many churches have been split because of carnality among the members! Paul, writing to the Christians in Corinth, points out some of the problems among them because of unsanctified attitudes: “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and division, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (I Cor, 3:1-3)

Most of the problems of a local church originate in the carnal hearts of its members. Dr. A. F. Harper says that “where there is perfect love, Christians may have many and great differences within a united church. But where the sanctifying Holy Spirit has not yet filled their hearts with love, congregations may quarrel and split over the color of paint to go on the church steeple or the kind of hymnbook racks to be put on the pews.”

Holiness of heart is the only thing that can guarantee us a victorious Christian life, a happy Christian home, and a highly spiritual church. Entire sanctification is indeed a need.



5. AN INSTANTANEOUS WORK

Most Christians believe in the need for holiness of heart. There is a wide difference of opinion, however, as to when and how it is received. Some believe that the individual is sanctified wholly at the time of conversion. Others say it is impossible to obtain such an experience in this world and that it is something that God will do in the individual's heart at the moment of death. Others believe that it is attainable, but only after death, in a place called “purgatory,” where souls will be purified and made fit for heaven. A great group believe that holiness is attainable in this life, but in a progressive way. That is, a diligent

Christian can grow better every day, attaining a certain degree of holiness, *even though never perfect*. All of these doctrines are inadequate and none of them can be proved by the Scriptures.

The Bible teaches us that sanctification is an immediate or instantaneous work and that it is an experience to be enjoyed in this present life. And furthermore, it teaches us that not only is it possible to be sanctified in this life, but it is indispensable to present and final salvation. Sanctification is an instantaneous work wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit in the justified person whereby the heart is purified from the corruption of his sinful nature, and the Holy Spirit takes up His abode within. "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor, 1:21-22). "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13).

"Insist everywhere on full redemption received now by faith alone. Press the instantaneous blessing," wrote John Wesley to his brother Charles.

In Gal. 5:24, sanctification is associated with the idea of death: "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." No matter how long a person is in the state of coma, physically, when he dies it is an instantaneous event. Some who seek holiness receive it in a short time; others need months and even years. Such delays are not caused by God's reluctance, but rather are the result of some deficiency on the part of the individual. It may be that his consecration is not complete, or it may be that his faith is not strong enough. We have to distinguish between what we may call the "state of coma," that is, the time between when the individual starts seeking holiness and God's work in answer to his request, and the act itself of sanctification. No matter how long the believer may seek, when God sanctifies him He does it instantaneously,

Of course, when the person has been sanctified wholly, that is not the end. On the contrary, it is the beginning of a life of holiness where he will have room to grow and mature in the Christian life. "Holiness is a life to be lived as well as an experience to be attained." We cannot expect from a person who has recently been sanctified the same progress and maturity as would be expected from a person who has walked for thirty or forty years in the experience of holiness. However, if both have been sanctified by the Holy Spirit, the heart of the one is as pure as that of the other.

When the people of Israel went across the Jordan, it was not the end of their experience in Canaan. They still had challenging years ahead and most important events were to take place during their conquest of the land. They still had to fight against the "giants," But they had the assurance that God was with them! As long as they followed Him, Israel prevailed. This is also the secret of victory and growth in the sanctified experience.

Dr. Samuel Young once wrote: "It is a mistaken notion, and has no formulation in the Word of God, to suggest that entire sanctification marks the end of spiritual progress and excludes further improvement." Peter exhorts Christians to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). "Sanctification is more than a negation of sin; it has an unlimited positive side in which moral health promotes growth, strength and enlargement," wrote J. A. Wood.

C. W. Ruth declared: "No experience, however glorious, should be considered as a finality. While it is impossible to grow into sanctification, there is a limitless, endless, boundless growth in grace after sanctification. Indeed sanctification is the necessary precondition for growth in grace."

Dr. W. T. Purkiser says: "Entire sanctification is not the end-it is really the beginning. It

is not a terminal; it is a starting point . . . The surest indication one has missed the true meaning of Christian holiness is the attitude of ‘arrival,’ of complacency and self-satisfaction . . . Sanctification is the beginning of a lifetime of growth . . . It is true, God’s sanctifying work is complete in a moment of time, but ours isn’t. For the human side of holiness means not only consecration before cleansing, but commission afterward.”

Do you not think that our influence as Christians would be limited if sanctification would be the end of our Christian experience? Some have thought of Canaan as a figure of heaven, but this is wrong, because heaven is a place of rest, where there are no battles or trials; a place where we will be forever in the presence of our Lord. Let us go across our spiritual Jordan and let us live lives of holiness. It is true that we will have many “giants” to fight, and many “enemies” to destroy, but we are encouraged by the knowledge that God is on our side! The victory will be for us, the glory for God, and the blessing for those around us.



6. A COMMANDMENT

Some would argue that, since man is a free moral agent who can choose his own destiny, entire sanctification is likewise an optional experience for the Christians. This is not the case. It is true that man is free to choose between right and wrong, for God does not force anybody to be saved. God established His law, and then gave man freedom to decide whether he wanted to obey it and go to heaven or disobey it and go to hell. Joshua told the people of Israel: “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom we will serve” (Josh. 24:15). But it is also true that, according to man’s decision, so will be the end of his life.

The fact that man must choose to be sanctified does not contradict the fact that sanctification is God’s command to man. Therefore any person who does not surrender himself to God’s will and let Him sanctify him wholly is disobeying God’s law. Throughout the Old Testament, as well as throughout the New Testament, we find this commandment.

It is interesting to note that in the Old Testament we find doctrines so clearly expressed that even though the New Testament had never been written we would not be excused for not knowing them. One of them is holiness. “The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect” (Gen. 17:1). “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy” (Lev. 19:1-2).

By these scriptures alone we clearly see that God not only asks, but that He commands, that His people be holy and perfect before Him.

Some people say that these passages do not mean very much because they are taken from the Old Testament. Since we now live under the dispensation of grace, we should accept only what we find in the New Testament. But this is no escape, for the New Testament is filled with references to God’s command to be holy.

Let us go directly to the New Testament. Here we find Christ’s words: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). Paul says it is God’s will that we be sanctified: “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification” (1 Thess. 4:3). And Peter adds: “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all

manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:15-16). Finally, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that without holiness “no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).

God’s call unto holiness implies the necessity of obedience to Him. Peter admonishes, “As obedient children . . . be ye holy” (I Pet. 1:14-15). God encourages us to seek sanctification and at the same time it is a command. It is somewhat of a paradox that God’s invitation should, at the same time, be God’s command. Holiness appears to be an option while at the same time it is an imperative. Just as the sinner must be born again, so the believer must be sanctified wholly; otherwise he will be disobeying God’s command. Paul says that “God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit” (1 Thess. 4:7-8). According to this, it is impossible for a man to reject *willfully* God’s directive and still be saved. We cannot possibly pray with all sincerity that God’s will be done in our lives and then refuse to obey Him in seeking our sanctification, for the scripture clearly states: “This is the will of God, even your sanctification” (I Thess. 4:3). If we want to remain in God’s grace we must obey Him fully and continually. John wrote: “He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (I John 2:17).

Now God would not require from us something for which He would not give the provision for accomplishment. A. M. Hills, referring to these commandments, says: “Is God a heartless tyrant issuing commands to a race of moral beings that none are able to keep? These commands are as authoritative as any in the Bible; and if holiness is not attainable, then God commands what is impossible. To affirm it is a wicked reflection on his holiness. Some one has observed that all God’s commands are enablings. Whatever he commands he furnishes a gracious ability to perform.”

Paul says: “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves; . . . but our sufficiency is of God” (II Cor. 3:5). And John adds: “His commandments are not grievous” (I John 5:3).

God’s design in redemption was that we “might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life” (Luke 1:74-75). Paul, after telling the Thessalonians that it was God’s will that they be sanctified, then prays: “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly,” adding, “Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it” (I Thess. 5:23-24).



7. SEPARATION

What is entire sanctification? Some say it is nothing more than consecration. But this is only one of the aspects of holiness. The original meaning of the word sanctification in the Old Testament was “separation” or “setting apart” to a sacred use or some special service for God. That is the reason why, especially in the Old Testament, this term is always related to ceremonial or ritual consecration of some person or thing.

In the Bible we find that the term “holy” is applied to the ministers, priests, prophets, and apostles of God; that is, to persons who have been set apart from the secular tasks and have been consecrated for an exclusive service for God. “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation” (Exod. 19:6). “For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God” (Deut. 7:6).

In these verses God is talking to the people of Israel through Moses just before giving

them the law at Sinai. He tells them that they are those whom God has set apart as “priests” who were to serve Him. They were to be a nation, a people, united under the law that He would give them. They had been separated from all other nations on earth to be God’s chosen people. They were to be a “holy” nation separated from all kinds of sin and idolatry characteristic of their heathen neighbors.

In the seventh chapter of John, Christ prays for His disciples: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). Adam Clarke, referring to these words, says: “This word [sanctify] has two meanings: 1. It signifies to consecrate, to separate from earth and common use, and to devote or dedicate to God and His service. 2. It signifies to make holy, or pure. The prayer of Christ may be understood in both these senses. He prayed—(1) That they may be fully consecrated to the work of the ministry, and separated from all worldly concerns; (2) That they might be holy, and patterns of all holiness to those to whom they announced the salvation of God.”

In some instances the people of Israel are called a “holy nation,” meaning that they were God’s chosen people and separated for Him. In the same sense, in the New Testament the Christians are called “saints” (holy), referring to them collectively. “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (I Pet. 2:9). All these titles had been given before in the Old Testament but only with reference to the Jewish people. Now, under the dispensation of the gospel, God’s people, chosen and set apart, consisted of all those who believe in Christ, Jews or Gentiles, who have been washed and regenerated, and sanctified by the blood of the Lamb. These are the “saints” who often are mentioned in the Epistles of the New Testament.

We also find in the Old Testament that the term holy is applied to things as well as to people – all that belongs to God in a special way, such as the Temple, its various parts, its furnishings and utensils, and so forth. This is indicated in the following scriptures: “Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple” (Matt. 4:5). “And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy” (Exod. 29:33). “Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?” (Matt. 23:17) “If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (2 Tim. 2:21).

The first verse refers to the “holy city,” Jerusalem; the second verse, to the meat of the rams which was offered in sacrifice to God and which was “holy.” The third refers to the gold which was presented as an offering in the Temple, which “sanctifieth” it; while the last verse speaks of a person who consecrates or “sanctifies” himself to the Lord’s service. In these scriptures the idea of “separation” is clearly given.

We also find that in the Old Testament the term “holy” is applied to the Sabbath as a day separated for God. “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exod. 20:8). When Moses said that God had made the Sabbath day holy, it meant that He had set it apart in order that the people of Israel would use it only for worship and religious exercises.

In the same way we, as God’s children, are a separated peoples – separated from the sinful things of this world and separated unto God and His service.



8. ALSO PURIFICATION

As we saw in the previous chapter, sanctification, especially in the sense in which it is used in the Old Testament, means “separation.” This involves not only a separation from the world but a separation to God.

But this is only one of the meanings of the term. It also means “purification” or “cleansing” and it is in this sense in which it is applied to the work of entire sanctification by which God makes man’s heart, corrupted and stained by original sin, completely holy and clean. It is an instantaneous work of divine grace wrought in the heart of the already justified person.

The Manual of the Church of the Nazarene clearly states in its Articles of Faith the twofold aspects of the doctrine of holiness: “Entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotement to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect. It is wrought by the Holy Spirit, and includes in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service.

Dr. H. Orton Wiley says: “While the primary meaning of the word holy is setting apart, or separation, this in the New Testament takes on the other deeper significance of cleansing from all sin.” He also says that the “first marked result is the purification of the heart from inbred sin.” Peter, referring to what happened at Cornelius’ home, said that God “put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:9). Commenting on this text Dr. Wiley says: “Since this statement was made about eighteen years after Pentecost, it is evident that Peter regarded the purification of the heart as one of the important and abiding factors in entire sanctification. No scriptural doctrine and experience can overlook it. This is foundational.”

Adam Clarke defines holiness as “the cleansing of the blood that has not been cleansed; it is the washing of the soul of a true believer from the remains of sin.” Dr. Edward F. Walker defined sanctification as a “personal cleansing from sin, in order to (obtain) a holy life.” Dr. John W. Goodwin defined it as “a divine work of grace, purifying the believer’s heart from indwelling sin.”

In the New Testament we are called to a life of holiness, or purification. Let us consider the following scriptures: “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness” (I Thess. 4:3, 7). “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).

Paul’s repeated exhortation to the Thessalonians was to holiness. In this passage, the contrast is drawn between the uncleanness which is in the world and the purity to which all Christians are called. In the Hebrew passage, the emphasis is that a holy heart is God’s requirement for entrance into heaven. It is quite logical that a holy God, who abides in a holy place, should require that all who want to go where He is be also holy (pure). Nothing unclean and filthy can inherit the kingdom of God. Adam Clarke says that the author refers “to that life of continual sanctification, that life of purity and detachment from the world and all its lust, without which detachment and sanctity no man shall see the Lord--shall never enjoy His presence in the world of blessedness.”

The Apostle John says: “But 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). In other words, this is a continuing experience of cleansing provided we keep close fellowship with God. This means that we are in a state of constant readiness to

meet Him.



9. A GIFT

One of the most significant characteristics of the redemption of Jesus Christ is that it is a free gift to all who believe and accept it. No one is barred. The conditions are the same for everyone. We are saved and sanctified by accepting what God offers to us freely.

About justification Paul says, “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ . . . for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Gal. 2:16). And about salvation in general (that is, justification and sanctification), he says: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9).

The grace of God cannot be bought with money. It might seem strange to suggest that a person might even attempt to buy spiritual power. But Simon tried. His story is told in the Book of Acts. “And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power” (Acts 8:18-19). And this is the strong reproof he received from Peter: “Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness” (Acts 8:20-22).

Entire sanctification is a gift and we can receive it only by giving ourselves completely to God. This consecration of all we have and are to God is what has been called the human side of sanctification. The Bible tells us that we must consecrate ourselves to God. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Rom. 12:1). “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:13).

Consecration is a surrender of everything to God. This includes our loved ones, our personal plans and ambitions, our money, our possessions, our time – our all. God will not, indeed cannot, sanctify a soul that is not completely given over to Him.

There is a big difference between consecration and sanctification. Consecration has to do with what we give to God; sanctification, with what we receive from God. Human efforts can make a Pharisee, but only God can make a saint. Consecration is the human side of entire sanctification. In a sense, a full consecration is to entire sanctification what repentance is to justification. The sinner, in order to be saved, must first repent and then believe. Likewise the believer, in order to obtain the blessing of entire sanctification, must consecrate and then believe.

Dr. A. M. Hills explains it this way: “Consecration is the antecedent (qualifying) condition of sanctification, but not the thing itself. Consecration is man’s work; sanctification is God’s work. God never consecrates for us, and we never sanctify for God. It is true that the acts of consecration and sanctification are both combined in the work that produces the experience of holiness, yet they are forever separate and distinct. We consecrate; God sanctifies.”

Sanctification is a gift of God. Dr. Samuel Young says that evangelical holiness is that “holiness that comes to us through the atoning death of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is not a life of self-attainment or personal achievement. It comes through the grace of God and is therefore a divine gift.” Hannah Whitehall Smith states: “This blessed life must not be looked upon in any sense as an attainment, but as an obtainment.” We do not obtain holiness by struggling, but by surrendering. Nor is it something that we receive because we deserve it, for it is the free gift of God.

Acts 2:38 reads, “Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Again in Acts 10:45 are the words, “On the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.” These and other scriptures point out that the Holy Spirit is offered to all freely. All that the needy person has to do is to come to God in simple faith, completely willing to obey Him, and consecrating his life and his all to Him. Then will God honor the sincere request for this gift which is above all other gifts. The Holy Spirit will come in -in all His fullness to purify the heart and take up His abode there.

10. OUR POSSESSION

The doctrine of Christian assurance belongs to our evangelical faith. It is God’s intention that we know beyond all doubt that we are saved and sanctified wholly. Therefore the Bible says that when a person has truly repented of his sins, and has been adopted into the family of God, the “Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Rom. 8:16). And just as clearly as the Spirit bears witness to our acceptance in sonship to God, just so He bears witness to our sanctification. When asked, “How do you know that you are sanctified, saved from your inbred corruption?” Wesley replied, “I can know it no otherwise (the same way that) than I know that I am justified.” That means that the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit belongs to entire sanctification as well as to initial salvation.

Just as clearly as the “Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God,” in like manner He bears witness to the subsequent work of sanctification. “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us” (Heb. 10:14-15). John Wesley taught that “none, therefore, ought to believe that the work is done till there is added the testimony of the Spirit witnessing his entire sanctification as clearly as his justification.” “And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth” (I John 5:6).

Dr. H. Orton Wiley defines the witness of the Spirit as “that inward evidence of acceptance with God which the Holy Spirit reveals directly to the consciousness of the believer.” Wesley confessed, “The manner how the divine testimony is manifested to the heart, I do not take upon me to explain. Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me! I cannot attain unto it” (In those days vicious persecutors were just waiting make a mountain out of a molehill.)

C. W. Ruth says that “the witness of the Spirit is the divine assurance, the voice of God in the soul, that gives the conviction of knowledge to our inner consciousness, that the blessing sought is now mine.” He explains this whole process in these interesting words: “The instant faith really lays hold on the promise, God sends a telegram from the skies by the Holy Ghost that the bank of heaven has honored the draft and ‘counted’ out to us the sum that faith has appropriated. The man or woman who has this certificate, bearing the witness and signature of the Holy Ghost, has no occasion to ‘hope’ he has the blessing, nor will it matter much to him what any person may think or say about it, even though he be the preacher, presiding elder or bishop, seeing he has heard from heaven. He does not require visions nor the witness of men and angels, having heard from higher

authority.”

We find the best proof of the experience of entire sanctification in the personal possession of it. Then it is not something that we have heard about, or read about in books, but something that we are enjoying in our own lives now. People may seek to make us doubt that we have it and suggest that we only think we do. But that would be like trying to tell a boy who is eating a delicious apple that it isn't really an apple he is eating. He just thinks it is. But the boy knows better because he is tasting it. As someone has stated it, “We who have tasted the high and holy experience of a sanctified heart know its wonderful reality.”

Yes, entire sanctification is a knowable experience. The Bible tells us of it; our faith appropriates it; God performs it; and the Holy Spirit confirms it. Glory be to God!



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