

STRAIGHTWAY

"And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him" [Mark 1:18].

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"THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION"

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(PART ONE)

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Concerning Galatians Legalists

They had forgotten that we are sanctified in exactly the same way that we are justified. In neither case is it by human works, but by the grace of God administered by the Holy Spirit of God. Justification sees us accepted in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:6) with a change in masters, and then the Holy Spirit delivers from the bondage of sin. In neither case is it produced by the efforts of men.

Failing to realize this, we produce first-class Pharisees who thank God that they are not like others! (Dr. James E. Singleton; Fundamentalism: Past, Present, Future; page 31)

Scriptural Sanctification

The biblical doctrine of sanctification is both the most neglected and the most misunderstood doctrine of the Christian life. However, it must be honorably taught if we are to consider ourselves upholding the fundamental teachings of the Holy Scriptures. If it is neglected then the Christian convert is left marooned on the island of **evangelism**; if it is misunderstood then it will hinder the hope of **revival** among the saints. No doctrine has suffered more at the hands of the believers identified with Christianity in spite of the fact that this necessary and precious teaching must become the experimental doctrine of the church, having presupposed the

appropriation by faith, of the fundamentals of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish:¹

God “so loved the world” (John 3:16); but “Christ also loved the church” (Ephesians 5:25). Everyone of the great **fundamental** truths of the Gospel is a direct part of the fulfillment of God’s love for the sinner; and the **distinctive** truth of the Gospel is a direct part of the fulfillment of Christ’s love for the saints of the church. There must be this holy bridge between the sinner’s faith in Christ and the saint’s walk in the Spirit which must follow saving grace.

Sanctification and Holiness

The King James Version uses both the word “sanctification” and

“holiness” from the singular Greek word **hagios**. In the former word, the passages speak more of the entrance, crisis, and appropriation of sanctification; in the latter word, the passages speak more of the process, quest, and fruition of holiness in the life of the Christian believer. Of course, both of these are the results of a Divine Depositum placed in access for the believer at the time of the new birth or regeneration. Everything follows only as the biblical teaching of redemption is received by the Christian believer. In our time, the charismatics have substantially isolated and/or a separated neo-pentecostal teaching of “the baptism of the Holy Spirit” away from the new birth. This is confirmed by their fellowship with the Roman Catholic charismatics who relate their neo-pentecostal teaching of “the baptism of the Holy Spirit” and the glossolalia with the sacrament of “infant baptism” by the church.² In reality, The new birth is sanctification or cleansing begun, and the subsequent process of sanctification perfects (bringing to maturity) the work of holiness in the Christian life. The Romanist then proceeds to refer to this “baptism of the Holy Spirit” and glossolalia as merely a **renewing** of that which was begun in the former sacrament of baptism.

A Neglected Doctrine

The neglect of the doctrine of sanctification will lead to the **libertinism** of the flesh; the misinterpretation of this doctrine will lead to the **legalism** of the flesh. In either direction, the flesh survives and has dominion over the Christian life; whereas in the understanding and appropriation of biblical holiness,

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through the grace of the Lord Jesus, the war of the flesh ceases in its **dominion** (lordship of the flesh) over our lives, and the believer begins his “walk” in the Spirit with the Savior. To do nothing with the doctrine of sanctification will lead to the undoing of the Christian life itself and carnality and backsliding will result.

In the last half of the twentieth century, evangelism has been overdone to the neglect of the Christian life itself, of which holiness is most needed. This deficit in this doctrine has opened up the doors of scandal, fornication, abortion, euthanasia, immodesty, and a host of other detriments to the testimony and victory of the church. At the very outset of this paper it must be understood that we must no longer divorce ecclesiastical separation from personal separation or else we will truncate orthodoxy away from orthopraxy. Also, we must be sure that in our presentation of this doctrine of holiness that we do not overemphasize the **subjective** aspect of sanctification away from the **objective** holiness of Almighty God Himself. We have for too long pushed American **evangelism** as the priority, and now we have come to a time of a great need of **revival**. Evangelism is for the saving of the sinner; revivalism is for the sanctifying of the church. We must also remember that genuine evangelism is a result of the spirituality of the church, not the mere product of the pragmatic salesmanship of the public relations officer of an overzealous administrative church board.

Thus, the past agenda of a failing pulpit and church has demanded a biblical agenda in the urgency of the holy presence of God manifested in a

revival of holiness among God’s people.

The Source of Holiness

No minister is worthy of his calling in every sense of the word. Every preacher is vulnerable to the charge of hypocrisy. In fact, the more faithful a preacher is to the Word of God in his preaching and his life, the more liable he is to the charge of hypocrisy. Why? Because the more faithful a man is to the Word of God the higher the message is that he will preach. The higher the message the further he will be called to see the need of a holier life. The more he becomes accountable to God, through His word, the more he will see the need of the holiness of God, and the unholiness of himself. Of course, in turn, these principles become embedded in the congregation of saints who worship near such a preaching pulpit, and therefore all of God’s people are urged to the likeness of their Holy God. He, and He alone, is the source of holiness; this is revealed through His Word.

Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the Lord your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: for I am the Lord which sanctify you.³

But he which hath called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written be ye holy; for I am holy.⁴

It is a mere self-righteousness to assume that because a person is drawn to holiness, as his quest in life, in study, in meditation, and prayer, that

he is thereby a holy man. The source of that deep hunger and quest is only because the source of the holiness lies in God and He alone maketh His people holy through the atoning sacrifice of His dear Son, the Lord Jesus.

The Holy Temple

Going concurrent with this source of holiness in God, lies the companion truth of God's Holy Temple. As pilgrims and strangers in the earth, God's people long for His Courts, His Holy House, His Holy Temple. There is a sense in which we live desperately at a distance from God's House in heaven. We are presently living outside His Temple, in a far country, if you please; but there is another sense in which we are always longing for His Holy Temple in heaven. This fosters a regular longing to be in His Holy House on earth, a house in which His word and worship are central to the Lord's Day, the New Testament Sunday. Worship is one of the greatest regular miracles we may have in our lives. The old Greeks only believed in the immanence of their gods; there was no understanding of the transcendence of God.⁵ We, as Bible believers believe in both the immanence and transcendence of God. Therefore, we may behold our God through the immanence of His providence in our daily lives, and we may also behold Him in reverence and humility in His transcendence through worship. The separation of our individual self, along with our families, from all of our earthly care and business and duty, to go into His House on earth, His church, affords us the privilege of standing in awe of His holiness in His Holy House.

Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Nor forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.⁶

So, we who live more outside the Holy Temple are always longing to worship our Holy God; yea, longing to be in His House forever. The longing should increase more and more as we see the end of history.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.⁷

There is a counterpart to this precious privilege. God has ordained that the sanctified, consecrated body be the "temple" (**naos**) of the Holy Spirit. This Greek word is the word at the holy place, the sanctuary, rather than the court of the temple (**hieron**).⁸ The Holy Spirit will not fill an unclean life (Note I Corinthians 6:15-20); He will not anoint a rascal (Note Romans 12:1,2).

The Fundamentals in All the Compartments of Life

Fundamentals, from the very beginning of their testimony, were so quickly pressed into service by the defenders of the Faith, the Fundamentalists, that it took most of their time and energy to survive against the onslaught of their enemies. This was especially truth among the leaders of the early movement. This urgency demanded one main aspect of

warfare so that, unfortunately, they were only thought of, by a great majority, as being **fighters**. The observers of the warfare did not realize these soldiers were also citizens in the Kingdom of God maintaining their biblical identity. This has too often caused the **reputation** of a fundamentalist as being only that of a militant Christian if not a cultist, and unfortunately, the **character** of the Fundamentalist was often unnoticed. Unfortunately, too, the sanctification of the soldier was held in reputation only as a separatist, a dissenter, and the larger truth, which the grace of God provided, abounded to other aspects of sanctification besides separation which enemies did not acknowledge. The doctrine of separation, as one aspect of sanctification, was misunderstood in the many skirmishes of the Fundamentalist as a kind of one-sided definition of the larger doctrine of sanctification and holiness. Let us establish a very practical definition of the relationship between separation and sanctification before we proceed on to a more theological definition. Any definition of separation, and/or sanctification, that does not seek as its first motive and final goal the exalting of the Lord Jesus Christ in all His beauty and glory is not worthy to be called biblical separation. Also, this doctrine must be further defined as not only a separation **from** ecclesiastical apostasy and/or disorderly brother, but also a separation **unto** the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. This brings us the holiness of God and the provision of holiness for the believer into a source of grace that should enter in and touch every compartment of the Christian life.

“Holding the Fort;” “Heeding the Faith”

Since the first generation of the fundamentalists, besides “holding the fort,” they have also set forth the banner of “heeding the faith.” It is the privilege and benefit, by the grace of God, that we do not enjoy the “fort” more than the “faith.” Of course, we must never compromise with the enemy, but it is equally true that we must never grieve the Lord. Both of these are parts of the biblical teaching of sanctification. Many of our enemies, after watching us deep into other generations since the beginning of the twentieth century, have assumed that all we do is fight from the fort. Well, we want them to know that we fight. But as fundamentalists, we must always remember that we can never build upon what is wrong; we must build upon what is right. We must always condemn what is false and wrong; but we can only build the Kingdom of God on what is true and right. As a fundamentalist, I have always experienced sorrow of heart when and if an enemy did not understand our spirit in the warfare, but I am still assured by the Word of God that Christian love is in our hearts whenever the warfare against the Lord and His Word rages. I have often been asked if I love the pope, or Billy Graham, or Oral Roberts. I have always been careful to respond with gentleness: “Yes, just as the sweet singer of Israel, David, when he slew Goliath, for I believe there are spiritually uncircumcised Philistines among the people of the Lord.” I believe this is both the spirit of “holding the fort,” and “heeding the faith,” and the

doctrine of sanctification is involved in the heart of this kind of warfare in spite of those who might watch our good fight and believe us to be otherwise. It must be remembered that the enemy is called upon to love us as well, and although there are neo-evangelicals and charismatics who have exalted love above truth, yet in reality, they do not seem to love the fundamentalist any more than they say the fundamentalist loves them.

The Complete Definition of Sanctification

We have now entered into this paper at the point of the battle, setting forth immediately a most practical definition of sanctification. This **practical** area must be acknowledged first to know where we are in need of definite teachings on holiness for our time of the battle.

Before we further the definition of sanctification, we must further the practical observations and preliminary scene. There can be no biblical sanctification merely applicable to either the negative or the positive side of the biblical principle of holiness. The motive of militancy must not be the end and goal of our Christian testimony. Militancy is only one ingredient of our Christian life. The Christian life, itself, is much larger, and sanctification is a provision in the atonement which includes much more than a fight. "Holiness is also the honoring of Christ; the battle is only a means to that end. It is that end of

exalting and honoring Christ that dictates the means to that end."⁹ Militancy is only one means or channel to the glory of Christ. Sanctification must circumscribe the entire life of the fundamentalist; we must honor Christ in all things. Robert Murray M'Cheyne identified the hallmark of sanctification when he said: "All for Christ's Sake," because of the burden of "How much I owe."¹⁰ He would add: "All else is unworthy."

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