



The
School
of Christ

Nelson S. Perdue

The School of Christ

Jesus, Both Teacher and Lesson
"Learn of Me" Matt. 11:29

Dr. Nelson S. Perdue



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TO MY WIFE

MRS. BARBARA J. PERDUE

...Whose faithful devotion has been an encouragement and an inspiration to my life and ministry for many years, and whose prayers have sustained me while in His service, this volume is AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

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PREFACE

Volumes have been written on the importance, need and relevance of the doctrine of entire sanctification, experienced and lived out in the heart and life of every believer. Much has been written to clarify, explain, and to define this great truth, but opposition to it still ensues. Men and women of far greater scholarship than this author, have written on this subject. So the question naturally arises, "Why another book dealing with the subject of Christian Holiness?" Perhaps, because after 32 continuous years of holiness evangelism, I see, not only a drift, but a resistance to this message within the church, and it is having tremendous consequences in our world.

I recall listening to Dr. William Greathouse as he spoke in a General Church Assembly several years ago in which he stated the following; "As any movement grows numerically and matures ecclesiastically there are two dangers that it faces. One is the tendency to dilute its original message and the other is to divert from its original mission." I'm afraid his words were more prophetic than I realized at that time.

The loss of interest in personal holiness in the churches is closely related to the loss of interest in high morality in the world. In every age the conditions of the world reflect either the high tide or low ebb tide of her spirituality. Billy Graham said recently, "The church has fallen to such a low spiritual standard that it no longer has the moral authority to speak to our world." It is true that when the doctrine of Christian holiness is held in disrepute it impairs the Divine Character of God; it undermines His Justice, perverts the work of the atonement, and holy ethics and morality go by the wayside. If there has ever been a time when a revival of the holiness message has been needed, it is in this present hour.

The need of the church is that this Biblical tenet be believed, experienced and practiced in order that the church may adequately minister to the needs of the world around her. Bishop Merrill called it, "the aim of all Christian endeavor, the crown of Christian experience and the essence of Christian character and enjoyment." It is the one and only experience that deals completely and adequately with the sin problem.

Richard S. Taylor writes,

Sin is virtually everybody's only problem. Sanctification solves the sin problem in society and in the world only to the extent that it solves the problem in individual units of society. As there are no mass sanctifications, so sanctification provides no mass solution in any community. It is not a social reform, but a personal cure, which enables the healed soul in turn to modify the corruption of society by the infusion of his own health.

I answer the question, "Why another book emphasizing scriptural holiness?" in this way. If the following pages will be of benefit in leading even one to a freedom from sin and a heart made pure by the blood of the Lamb, then our society will be that much more improved, and I will have fulfilled my purpose in its writing.

Nelson S. Perdue

THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST

(Ephesians 4:17-32)

In Chapter 19 of the Book of Acts, we are told that Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus and found twelve disciples who had been converted under the ministry of Apollos. While Apollos was a very eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures, he knew only the baptism of John. He had not yet experienced the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Later, under the ministry of Aquilla and Priscilla, he was led into this deeper work of grace.

As a result, these who were won to Christ by Apollos also knew only the baptism of John. There is a truism, "as priest, so go the people," because one cannot lead someone else higher in Christian experience than they themselves have gone. When Paul came to them, he laid his hands on these young disciples, and they received the Holy Ghost. The result was that a mighty revival occurred in Ephesus.

Paul writes this very instructive letter to these new Christians. It is a circular letter that was passed around to the saints which are at Ephesus. "Saints" simply means "holy ones." and it is to these holy ones he gives the instructions of my text. The first three chapters of this letter deal primarily with the creeds of the church, the next two chapters, from which I have taken my scripture lesson, deal primarily with the conduct of the Christian, and the last chapter emphasizes the conflict of the Christian.

In the first verse of Chapter 4, Paul implores them to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." Paul saw the Christian life as a vocation, a way of life. Whatever else one may do to keep body and soul together in this world, his primary mission on earth is to live a life to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. He said in Philippians 1:21-24, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I want not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." G. Campbell Morgan said one cannot read these verses without coming to the conclusion that Paul had an obsession with Jesus Christ. What a magnificent obsession it was!

In reading the fourth chapter of this Epistle, Paul was like a nurturing mother, caring for and instructing these babes in Christ. He restates the standard of truth to these unstable Christians. In verses 14 and 15 we read, "That ye henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." He reminds them not to walk as other Gentiles walk, ("walk" refers to their living). In verses 17-19, He names about seven characteristics of their sinful way of life. Paul, in a very gentle way, was reminding them of their former way of life, for they remembered his statement in Chapter 2:2, "Wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world." Then Paul says, "Ye have not so learned Christ!"

It is for this privilege that we have to "learn Christ" and the "things of Christ" that we enter into the "School of Christ." In verse 21 we read, "If so be that ye have heard Him,

and have been taught by Him, as the Truth is in Jesus." Jesus is not only the Example for our learning; He is the Tutor for our teaching. While He was here on earth, He showed us by precept and example how we were to live. He has ascended back to the Father, but He did not leave us orphans. He sent back to His children the gift of the Holy Spirit to be our Tutor to guide us "into all truth." "He shall not speak of Himself...He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Just prior to going to the cross, Jesus invested most of His time teaching, explaining and enlarging on the coming Comforter.

On the eve of Christ's Ascension, Jesus put away any question concerning the return of the scepter to Israel and His Earthly Kingdom, over which the disciples had argued and placed the emphasis on the coming of the Holy Spirit. This would be their evidence and confirmation of the Savior's glorification. From that moment on, no other interest eclipsed or clouded the emphasis that Jesus placed upon the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. The fact is that God is known to us only in His Son through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is in the world today seeking a bride for Christ. His purpose is to glorify Christ by making believers like Himself.

I. The Learning of Christ

The first step initially in learning Christ is revelation that comes through the Spirit's reproof. "When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and righteousness, and of judgment." He is the prosecutor that arraigns the sinner before the bar of conscience. He is the one that convicts man of his sin and demands a confession. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). To confess means to take sides against ourselves with Jesus. In other words, we agree with what Jesus says and knows about us.

By the Holy Spirit's ministry of reproof, we have a stark revelation about ourselves, as well as about who Christ is. He is the revealing God of "Light." He is also the redeeming God of "Love." The same God that convicts is also the God that converts. In the revelation we realize the fact of our sins, but in redemption we experience the freedom from our sins. He will also refine us from all sin, both our disobedience and depravity. The sanctification of the believer is His chief task, "being sanctified by the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15:16b). He is denoted as the "Spirit of holiness" because of this special office work which He comes to perform.

If we are to honor His name, we must learn Christ and live the example that He has provided for us through the power of His Spirit. This involves "putting off" the old man as well as "putting on" the new man, "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

II. The Likeness in Creation

Holiness is the standard by which God created and redeemed and by which all moral values are measured. It is also the standard by which all men will one day be judged.

This standard of holiness and righteousness is a creative act of God. When God redeems man from sin, he becomes a new creation. We have an example of God's creation in the beginning of time. God's inspired Word tells us that "God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning

were the sixth day" (Genesis 1:31). That tells us that God used six days in the creation of the world and man. He created the world by fiat; He spoke and it was done. God's words are His deeds. "He created man in His image, being formed out of the dust of the ground, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 1:27 & 2:7) Thus we read that the world and all therein, along with man, was the first creative act of God.

I bring this to our attention because God chose, by His sovereign will, to involve six days in the act of His first creation. Each day that was created was a completed part in and of itself, yet it took all six days to complete the whole of the first creation. We now read in Ephesians 4:24 about a new man "created in righteousness and true holiness." God only had to breathe to bring about the first creation, but He had to bleed to provide for a new creation. In His sacrificial death on the Cross of Calvary, Christ made provisions for both man's forgiveness and cleansing. There are some who object to the fact that God's Word teaches that full salvation involves two works of grace. One is the forgiveness of the sinner's transgressions, and subsequently the cleansing of a believer's heart. The first requires the birth of the Spirit, which is then followed by the baptism with the Spirit. It takes both of these works of grace to free one from all sins, the deliberate acts, as well as the diseased state.

There are those who take issue with this Biblical position, and sometimes they are inclined to cast a bit of aspersions on those who hold to this position. With regard to the first creation, they don't seem concerned that God involved six days in its completion, rather than doing it all in one day because He is Sovereign and can do as He wills. However, they don't seem to understand that it was likewise His Sovereign will to involve more than one work of grace to accomplish the new creation. It certainly wasn't because He lacked the power, but He is setting forth in His Sovereign will a Divine plan and pattern of the whole scheme of creation and redemption.

Perhaps we might be able to allay the concerns of some as to why God has provided two works of grace in the plan of salvation. Both works of grace, regeneration and entire sanctification, are completed works in themselves. We do not, and must not, demean or diminish the first work of grace to make room for a second work. God did everything perfectly in both works, and the second work of grace is not to make up for a lack found in the first work of grace. It takes both to complete the whole of redemption, like two sides to one coin. Just as each day was a completed part in the first creation, and it took all six days to accomplish the whole, so it is with the plan of salvation.

Each work of grace does not admit to comparative degrees or a superlative emphasis. For example, when one is regenerated there is no such thing as being regenerated-ER or regenerated-EST, so it is when one is justified there is no such thing as being justified-ER or justified-EST. I give these extreme examples to prod one's thinking; the same is true with the word "sanctified." When one is born again, he enjoys being justified, regenerated, adopted, and converted: all this is experienced in the first work of grace. There now remains the necessity for that believer to "leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and go on to perfection" or entire sanctification (Hebrews 6:1).

I would be remiss if I did not tell you that this Christian Perfection does not preclude growth because it has to do with the matter of grace. In fact, one is ready to grow more rapidly than before because all hindrances to growth have been cleansed from the heart; namely, carnality.

While we are speaking about two works of grace, there is yet another work of grace (glorification), that God has provided for in the atonement that none of us can yet admit to having experienced, but we are pressing for and following after like the Apostle Paul, "that we may apprehend that for which also we are apprehended of Christ Jesus ... that is attaining unto the resurrection of the dead." Though Paul had experienced the Perfection of Righteousness (Philippians 3:15), he had not yet, as of the writing of this letter, attained unto the Perfection of the Resurrection (Philippians 3:12). He is now enjoying the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. We, who are alive, are yet pressing toward it.

III. The Liberty in Cleansing

When we enthrone Christ as Supreme Ruler in our heart, He will emancipate and cleanse us from all sin. This is what the Apostle Paul calls "true holiness." He felt it necessary to preface this common noun "holiness" with a qualifying adjective "true" in order to distinguish it from the false and spurious holiness of that day. Just as in Paul's day, we too have the spurious and the counterfeit holiness. We have our own brand of Gnosticism today that would advocate that we cannot be free from sin. The Gnostics taught that all matter was evil. The body was matter; therefore, the body was evil. Since the body was evil, its appetites and passions would be in the position of mastery as long as we live. This, however, would not affect the spirit that was like a jewel in the mire and the physical could not penetrate it. Whatever we did in the body, the spirit had no sin, and as long as we are in the flesh we must sin in word, thought and deed every day.

They speak of all holiness as being merely "imputed" but never "imparted." The scriptural expression "in Christ" has been so distorted as to be a dangerous error. Harry E. Jessop explained, There are those who will say, "Yes! you are to be holy, but only in Christ not in yourself." On the surface, it sounds good; it seems to magnify the Lord and humbles the flesh. However the difficulty is not in the expression, but in the interpretation. All we have and are is "in Christ." "He is the center and source of all good, but His nature is to be IMPARTED to us and POSSESSED by us. True holiness is not an imputation which is reckoned ours by proxy, but an impartation which becomes ours by faith. A Christian is commanded to be holy as he is commanded to be honest. It is not sufficient to talk about being 'honest in Christ' while we are dishonest in ourselves." This kind of spurious holiness makes God a minister of sin, rather than a deliverer from sin. Imputed holiness is not "true holiness." Imputed holiness is an emergency provision where light and obligation are unknown, such as an infant before he reaches the age of moral discrimination, or those who are yet ignorant of the full privileges of the Cross of Christ and the grace of God. True holiness is never imputed where light, obligation, and responsibility are deliberately being ignored or evaded. Disobedience nullifies the possibility of His holiness being imparted.

True holiness has a negative aspect to it in that we are to "put off concerning the former conversation of the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." This speaks of the crucifixion of "the old man," the principle of inherent sin in the heart, elsewhere called the carnal mind, the law of sin and death, and the root of bitterness. The heart is free from the law of sin, but we are not yet free from the liability to sin. Our purity does not end our probation. It is spiritual fitness, not finality.

But true holiness is more than the absence of sin, just as light is more than the

absence of darkness. The positive aspect is when we "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Just as the old man was after the world, the flesh, and the devil, the new man is a life following after the things that are holy and right. In verse 25, it pursues truth; in verses 26-27 it is conciliatory; in verse 28 it is honest, industrious and charitable and a life lived in reverence to God and man.

The phrase "true holiness" not only designates that there is a distinction that needs to be made between it and a spurious holiness, but it also refers to the "holiness of truth." This sounds a bit redundant because, in reality, there could never be any other kind of holiness but that which is true, and if it isn't true, it could never be holy.

Righteousness, holiness, and morality are the products of truth, without which they cannot exist. Truth is spiritual knowledge which is eternal life. "This is life eternal, that we might KNOW thee the only TRUE God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). This truth not only illuminates the understanding, but sanctifies the heart. This truth comes through Jesus Christ who prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" {John 17:17). The Spirit is denoted as the Spirit of truth that effects the work of sanctification in the believer's heart through His Baptism. My prayer is that we will be good students as we sit and learn at the feet of the Master.

THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD

(Philippians 3:8-14)

One of the most sublime and impressive themes in this Epistle is the condescension and the exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Philippians 2:6-8 we see the great condescension that Christ made when He emptied Himself and "took the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." This was the stoop of deity. This He did that we might have the mind (disposition) which was also in Christ Jesus.

Following through with the great plan of redemption, and finishing the work that His Father had given Him to do, God exalted Him and "gave Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." It is to this image that Paul admonishes the believer to be conformed.

In the Cross of Calvary, adequate provisions have been made for all to receive the mind of Christ. However, if we ever experience those provisions, we must follow the pattern which He has set before us. He who humbled Himself, God has highly honored. So it is with us, if we ever participate in His exaltation, we must first be willing and with gladness of heart experience His humiliation. If we reign with Him over there, we must be willing to suffer for Him here.

The Apostle Paul brings forward this truth to illustrate and enforce the necessity of making Him preeminent in our lives. This is the attitude that every believer must have in his upward press for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The prize that Paul was pressing so hard for was the perfection of glory. It was the resurrection and immortal triumph of Christ's final victory.

In previous verses of this chapter, particularly verses 4-6, the Apostle had related to those believers of Philippi his past life before he was a Christian and gave them a bit of his pedigree. He could point to twenty-two-hundred years of Jewish heritage. However, Paul had only known the righteousness that was of the law, and this was in his days before conversion, but now he knew the "righteousness which is of God by faith." He said that before He knew Christ as his Lord, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung (refuse), that I may win Christ." It is for this knowledge of Christ that the Apostle says that he is forgetting those things which are behind and is reaching forth to those things which are before. His analogy is as an athlete on a race track running (pressing) toward the mark for the prize. In this depiction, we have revealed the spiritual aspiration of the Apostle Paul, and Christ who was his spiritual inspiration.

He wanted to "know" Christ, and that is far more than just "knowing about" Him. I know the President of the United States, but I have never met him face to face, nor

have I ever gotten acquainted with him to the degree that I can say I know him personally. However, anyone can come to an intimate knowledge of the Christ if they avail themselves to Him. When we come to know Him as Savior, there is imparted to every believer a desire to know Him better. I recall when I was converted, I wanted only to be pleasing and to know better the one to whom I owed by new found life. That pursuit of God has never left me after forty-eight years in His service.

Progress is the eternal law of existence. Life which does not continue to grow will soon decay and die. After conversion and we find new life in Christ, it won't be long until we will desire higher things in God's grace that we have not as yet reached. There will be a voice that will call us to the heights of holiness and a sublime vision of God that we have not yet realized. We are making progress when we have a holy discontent with our present achievement. The Shepherd of our souls gently leads us from one level of living to another. Each level is of increasing value, and none are complete in themselves, but each leads to the next higher in Divine communion. "We are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Just as there are different stages of education such as elementary, junior high, high school, and then college and post graduate work and each leads to the next higher, so it is in the School of Christ. There are the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and there is also wisdom for them that are perfect (Hebrews 6:1). In both of these Jesus Himself is not only the teacher, but He is also the lesson. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me..." (Matthew 11:29).

The great quest and all-consuming passion of the Apostle Paul was "THAT I MAY KNOW HIM!" Here Paul is not speaking about knowing Christ merely historically, or philosophically, nor altogether intellectually, but it is intimate knowledge by experience. The Methodist Expositor, Joseph H. Smith, explained that this heart cry of knowing Christ was more like a child's knowledge of its mother than a scholar's science of maternity; more like a fiancée's knowledge of love, than a psychologist's theory of the affectionate nature. It was knowledge beyond that which he had found on the Damascus road and even more than the experience of receiving his sight and being filled with Holy Spirit when Ananias, led of the Lord, laid hands upon him in the house of Judas.

Paul Rees said,

You can date your conversion, you can date your entire consecration and sanctification, but you can never date this phrase, "that I may know Him." One can know Him in the forgiveness of sins, or know Him in the cleansing of the heart, but when it comes to the knowledge of the person, His personality is inexhaustible. It is in this deeper and more profound acquaintance that Paul passionately craves to know. The Apostle Paul conveys to us that this knowledge of Christ and conformity to His likeness is the mark that he was pressing toward in order to ultimately attain the prize, that prize being the attainment unto the resurrection of the dead which was the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

I. FIRST, "The power of His resurrection"

Here Paul is not speaking of that event which one day will take place in the life of the faithful when our vile bodies will be changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body.

This resurrection is that which He received by the power of the Holy Spirit. It was by the power of the Spirit of holiness that Jesus was raised from the dead (Romans 1:4). It was by this same Pentecostal power of the Holy Spirit that He was raised to live above the world even while in the world. The power of Pentecost reverses the law of gravitation to the law of ascension, and we see this in Paul's statement, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2).

"If we be planted together in the likeness of His death we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." (Romans 6:5). In Galatians 2:20, Paul gave his personal testimonial when he said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live." Mortality had no part to play in these two passages because one does not have to go to the graveyard to experience this resurrection and find freedom from sin. He makes that quite clear in Galatians 2:20 when he goes on to say, "and the life which I now live in the flesh." These passages and others reveal that we do not have to wait until the dawn of the resurrection morning to know the risen life.

II. SECOND, "the fellowship of His sufferings"

This is not a reference to the Savior's earthly persecutions including the agony of Gethsemane and that which He suffered on the cross. Those we can never know; He tread the winepress alone. This suffering speaks of that which He is enduring while on the right hand of the Father, interceding for us as our Mediator between God and man. Paul had already experienced the crucifixion of the self-life and this was a finished fact for him. It was this actual and accomplished fact of "being made conformable unto His death" that sustained him in the hours of his persecution. It was this experience that enabled him to say when he faced his persecutors, "We had the sentence [answer] of death within ourselves" (II Corinthians 1:9). The inner death to self, as well as to the world, was the silent answer from within to all the threats and dangers from without of physical death for Christ's sake. He even stated that he was constantly under the threat of physical martyrdom when he said, "I die daily."

Paul was speaking of the sacrifice of worship that was governed by the law of love. From the fall of man until Jesus came into the world, the blood of animal sacrifices was offered. "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when He cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offerings thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (Hebrews 10:3-5). Jesus was the Lamb of God that was slain to take away the sin of the world. He made the ultimate and final sacrifice on Calvary. We are admonished to present ourselves as living sacrifices to be used of God to reach a ruined and dying world.

We read in His word that "He saved others; himself He could not save" and this applies equally to us and our service. Service without self-denial is useless because God can be pleased with nothing less than devotion unto death. He must invest us in order to invite them into His Kingdom. It was for the joy of bringing many sons unto glory that "He endured the cross, despising the shame and this must be our joy as well. Thus we take part with Him in His high priestly ministry. John tells us that Jesus has "made us kings and priests unto God and His Father" (Revelation 1:6). As priests we represent, not in grandeur but in grace, not in majesty but in ministry. We take part with Him in His

High Priestly ministry. As on Him, so on us should rest the burden of a world's salvation. His travail and suffering should become our lot down here. He is still the Good Shepherd, and we are to seek the lost and lead them to His open side, to the fountain open for sin and uncleanness (Zechariah 13:1). "He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (I John 3:16).

The Apostle Paul did glory in his knowledge of the Christ. In his dying hours he said, "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I KNOW WHOM I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (II Timothy 1:12). It was this intimate knowledge of Christ that proved to be his confidence when in his dying hour and at the time of his departure from this world he could triumphantly say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." He attained unto the resurrection of the dead. He apprehended that for which he also was apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Every believer will attain this at the Lord's return, when we will be caught up to meet Him in the air. We shall be changed, and our bodies shall be made like unto His glorious body, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Paul S. Rees said, We shall have a body that will be flexible, adaptable, endowed with amazing powers of locomotion and penetration and tireless ministrations. The whole man redeemed from sin now; the whole man redeemed from the consequences of sin when Jesus comes again.

Therefore, let us press toward the mark (Christ-likeness) for the prize (Resurrection of the body) of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!

ISAIAH'S VISION

(Isaiah 6:1-8)

As a matter of history and biography, and as one who has faithfully studied this prophecy, none can intelligently regard this as either Isaiah's first religious experience, or his original call to the prophet's office. According to the very first verse of this book he speaks of a vision that he saw, in the days of Uzziah. In this chapter he speaks of having this vision in the year that King Uzziah died. The record introduced it with a word which indicates that something had gone before, for it says, "I saw ALSO..." (in addition to). This, apparently, was not Isaiah's Conversion nor was it his initial Call.

Uzziah had reigned over the southern kingdom for forty-five years, the longest reign of any king of Judah. His kingdom prospered under his reign morally, spiritually, socially, economically, and politically. The decline of the nation began when Uzziah became impatient with the priest who delayed the offering of sacrifices in the temple. He then usurped the authority of the priest of God and committed an act of sacrilege and offered sacrifices on the altar of God in the priest's stead. Because of this act, the anger of God was revealed when He struck Uzziah down with leprosy.

Henceforth the kingdom went into a downward spiral as the king lost his influence and power over the kingdom. The pure worship of God was replaced by the heathen deities. The kingdom became spiritually corrupt, and apostasy set in, and they declined economically, socially, morally, and politically. There was evidence of spiritual stupidity as was noted in Isaiah 1:3 which says, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." The decline of the kingdom was capped off with the demise of the king. King Uzziah died!

It was during this dark hour in the kingdom of Judah that the prophet Isaiah went into the temple to pray. He was driven to his knees to seek the King of the Universe to prevail in prayer for himself and Judah. Isaiah saw the future was very black and foreboding for Judah, and in that regard he was a realist. It was in facing the reality of the moment that moved Isaiah to seek God in faith and claim victory over the situation. He saw the desperate situation of Judah, but when he went into the temple, he said, "I saw ALSO the Lord." We need to seek Him today, until our hungering souls cry out, as did the inquiring Greeks of John chapter 12, "Sir, we would see Jesus" and with that vision experience a spiritual awakening across our land.

The name Isaiah means: "the eternal one is salvation." He prophesied more of the coming Messiah than any other prophet, so much so that he was called "the evangelical prophet of the Old Testament." In fact, Paul draws heavily on the prophecy of Isaiah to reinforce the doctrine of righteousness by faith.

There are four things that I want to lift out of this vision of Isaiah:

- I. The Revelation of God's Character
- II. The Recognition of his Carnality
- III. The Realization of his Cleansing

IV. The Response to God's Call

I. The Revelation of God's Character

Isaiah said that he "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. The earthly throne of Judah was now vacant because of the death of Uzziah, but God was seated upon the throne of the universe. Hebrews 1:8 tells us that, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom."

- a. He saw Him in His Transcendence. In Isaiah 57:15 He is "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity..." He is not only the Holy One, the Supreme One, but also He was Omnipresent because it says His "train [robe] filled the temple." It has been said that His center was everywhere and His circumference was nowhere.
- b. He saw His Lordship as "sitting upon a throne." While all other thrones crumble, crowns fade, and dynasties cease, Jesus is eternal. There have been a lot of men from Napoleon to Hussein who have tried to rule the world, but all have failed. Many have tried to destroy the Christian faith and chase God out of His universe, but they have long since passed off the scene, and He still reigns. He declared Himself to be the "First and the Last" (Revelation 1:17). He who spoke the first word that brought this world into existence will one day speak the last word when it has served its purpose. In Hebrews 1:11-12, it tells us that all this shall "wax old as doth a garment." When that time comes, God will grab the pendulum of the clock of time that measures off the minutes and the millenniums and say time shall be no more, and He will fold this old world up like an outmoded garment and preach its funeral oration, but He will be the same yesterday, today, and forever.
- c. He saw most of all His Holiness. One said that there must have been a shortage of holiness preachers, so God called the seraphims into service. Their proclamation was "holiness unto the Lord." They resounded the words, "Holy, Holy, Holy" three times in acknowledgment of the triune God. In this prophetic book of Isaiah, the holiness of God is declared at least thirty-five times. Holiness is the essence of God. It is manifested in Christ; it is executed by the Holy Spirit. It is the heritage of the saints forever.

Bishop Lowery many years ago wrote, Mount Sinai is holiness demanded, Calvary is holiness provided; Pentecost is holiness executed; the sanctified saint is holiness demonstrated, and heaven will be holiness consummated.

Whether it was the seraphims in this prophetic book or the creatures around the throne in the book of the Revelation, none of them resounded God is love, love, love, even though we know that God is love. They did not cry mercy, mercy, mercy, even though we know that He is a merciful God and all of us are needed recipients of His mercy. They did not accent the fact that God is truth even though we know that the personality of truth is the great revelation of Christianity, but they heralded HOLY, HOLY, HOLY! P. T. Forsythe said, "Everything in Biblical theology begins and ends with the holiness of God."

Holiness is the substratum of all other of His attributes. If God were not Holy, then it

may be possible that He would be unmerciful in His justice and unjust in His mercy. He may even be partial in His love and dangerous in His power. But He is holy, hallelujah, and He always acts in a way that is consistent with His nature. Holiness always expresses itself in love, and love always seeks to lead its objects of affection around to holiness.

II. The Recognition of His Own Carnality

This was a painful experience for Isaiah. Isaiah had been a prophet for many years and had not seen the depths of depravity remaining in his heart. He felt secure in himself as he probably measured himself by the standard of the people among whom he lived. However, when he went into the temple and had this life-transforming vision of God, all of that changed. The brighter the sunshine, the darker the shadow, and the more clearly we see into the holiness of the divine nature, the darker becomes the depravity of our hearts. It is only when we see ourselves in the light of His holiness that all pretenses melt away. It is only in the light of His holiness that anyone can identify and define sin.

God is light, and when we come into contact with Him, then He exposes who we really are. He is the revealing God. One said that if there be no God it would be like looking into a mirror and seeing nothing. We would never be able to know who we really are. There would be nothing pleasurable about that kind of exposure if it were not for the fact that the revealing God is also the redeeming God. He reveals in order to redeem.

When holiness is proclaimed, it always moves something. Not only did the posts of the door move, but Isaiah was moved. In Isaiah 3:9, 11 and 5:8, 11, 20, 21, and 22, we are confronted with a number of "woes." The personal pronoun is "woe to their soul," "woe to the wicked," and "woe to them." However, in 6:5 it is "woe is ME!" He was first aware of his own undone condition and uncleanness, and he further acknowledged the same dilemma was prevalent with the people to whom he ministered. Leprosy was a dreadful disease in that day, and anyone who was afflicted with the fatal and contagious disease was required, by law, to warn the people when they would come near them by shouting, "Woe, I'm unclean!" Isaiah saw his friend, King Uzziah, afflicted with that disease. Now he painfully realizes what was true of Uzziah physically is now true of him spiritually. When he saw the holiness of God, he then saw that he was a moral leper.

The depraved heart is the most horrifying discovery that a man can make. So terrible is its awareness that God reveals it only to the Christian. God knows that it could never be revealed to one without first having experienced His mercies in pardoning grace for sins forgiven. It is a revelation that only comes to the Christian subsequent to his being regenerated; otherwise, the shock would be too great for him. The depraved heart has the potential for every evil act of which man is capable, yet resident in its embryonic stage in the heart. That is why this cleansing is so essential. God, through Christ, has provided not only for the sinner's regeneration, but for the saint's refinement.

Refining fire, go through my heart, Illuminate my soul;
Scatter thy life through every part, And sanctify the whole.

—Charles Wesley

The story is told that at the trial of Adolph Eichman, one of Adolph Hitler's murderous henchmen who was guilty of the destruction of millions of Jews, that one of the victims of the holocaust was present. When Eichman was brought into the room, this man passed out and fell on the floor. When he was revived, they asked him what caused him to pass out. They asked if it was the horrid memories that came flooding back into his mind when he saw the murderous Eichman. No, he answered. Was it the fear of the man that at one time held in his hand his life or death? No, he answered. Was it his hatred for the man that was responsible for the death of his friends and family? He said, no it wasn't any of those things, but that his last recollection of Adolph Eichmen was one of a god-like army officer who held their destiny in his hand. At his command literally thousands died. Yet, he said, when I saw this old man come into the room, he was nothing like I had remembered him to be, now stripped of his power and health. I was gripped with the fact that he was just an old man like I am, and as such, I became aware of the fact that I have in me the same evil potential that he has. I could have been guilty of committing the same atrocities that he committed if I would have acquiesced to that lower nature.

O that in me the sacred fire Might now begin to glow,
Burn up the dross of base desire,
And make the mountains flow!
—Charles Wesley

There is a conviction of depravity, definite and clear, which every Christian feels, as did this prophet of the Lord. Jacob had it when he said, in answer to the question as to his name, "he said Jacob (Deceiver)" Genesis 32:27. David had a keen sense of his inward depravity and corruption and cried, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" Psalms 51:5. Peter realized it when he said to Jesus, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" Luke 5:8. When Isaiah cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips," he knew that his unclean lips would disqualify him for ministry in this world, and his unclean heart would bar him from the presence of God in the next world.

This is not the cry of a sinner over his sins committed, but of a man who had a vision of his unclean heart in the presence of the holiness of God. He could not say Holy, Holy, Holy, as the seraphims did as he had unclean lips. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" Matthew 12:34. The seraphims were holy, they see God and live; I have seen Him and must die, for I am not holy. Only the pure in heart can see God; and they only can live in His presence forever.

III. The Realization of His Cleansing

Isaiah had a vision of God's holiness, and he knew that His holiness was discriminating. God is not only holy but He is holy to the exclusion of all unholiness. He is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. His love is not an indulging love, therefore, He will not endure hate. He is sovereign and will not tolerate a rebellious spirit. His sovereignty and sanctity go hand in hand. The Holy One is Sovereign and the Sovereign One is Holy! When Isaiah saw his condition, his crying confession was met by an immediate remedy. The purging was quick, indicated by the fact that the seraphim "flew." How interested all heaven is in the purification of a human soul.

It is significant that the purifying coal of fire was taken off the altar of sacrifice. This was then the altar of burnt offerings which was before the door of the temple. The altar stood for fire and blood, God's remedy for sin. Blood is the meritorious element in the plan of human redemption, and fire is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, the executive of the Godhead and the One who came to administer the provisions of the atonement, made possible by the blood.

This foreshadowed Calvary's Cross, the altar on which the Lamb of God was slain, to make atonement for all man's sin. Not only did Christ make provisions for the pardon of man's sinful acts but also for the purging of the sin principle. In Hebrews 13:12, "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." Verse 7 says, "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy SIN PURGED." Though by a simple touch, it was nevertheless thorough. Moreover, all this was witnessed to from heaven; not only did the seraphim do it, but he told Isaiah when it was done.

IV. The Response to God's Call

God asks, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" The invitation was for someone who would be willing to preach an unpopular message, to have no outward success, and to continue on the mission until judgment came. He does not directly speak to anyone, but Isaiah responded to the call of God immediately, "Here am I; send me." Our willingness should precede His call.

It must be noted that the call to service followed the purging of the heart from all sin. How important it is for us to experience the baptism with the Holy Spirit in order to be effective servants in the kingdom work. Jesus knew that the disciples were not ready to go into all the world until they had tarried for this baptism. The only effective vessels that are profitable for God's use are sanctified ones. As important as gifts, talents, education, and such like are, nothing can take the place of a pure heart. A pure heart seems to be God's supreme requisite as qualification for service in His Kingdom. It is out of a pure heart and perfect love that one finds the incentive to be faithful in all kind of situations. One may face hardships, disappointments, rejection, criticism and persecutions, but in this love service he will find God's grace sufficient.

Isaiah was sent to tell a nation the truth of God. He knew beforehand that they would not receive the truth. He didn't receive any accolades from any ecclesiastical organization. He was faithful though he had been told that they would reject him and his message. He was not in it for mere approval from the populace but for the approval of God. Oh, how we need more Isaiahs today proclaiming God's unadulterated truth, regardless of their response to the truth or their acceptance of us as the messenger of God.

That was the reason Isaiah asked, "Lord, how long?" and God answered, "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land" Isaiah 6:11, 12.

LOVE OUT OF A PURE HEART

(I Timothy 1:1-7)

When one considers the subject of scriptural holiness, he is confronted and gripped with the vastness of its scope. No one term can capture its true meaning. Its reach is not only felt in time, but also in eternity. Because holiness has such far-flung horizons to it, many terms and titles are used to express the meaning and extent of its work. We use phrases such as the Fullness of the Spirit, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, Entire Sanctification, Christian Perfection, the Second Rest and many others to try to define this precious truth. I would like to present it in the context of PURE (Perfect) LOVE!

I. The Fact of Love

The whole plan of redemption is but a demonstration and outworking of love. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). "Jesus gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people" (Titus 2:14). The greatest test of religion is love, and without love there is no Christian religion. Perhaps no higher expression of the moral nature of God, aside from the term "holiness," can ever be ascribed than the words of the Apostle John, "God is love." True holiness always expresses itself in love, and love always seeks to bring its object unto holiness.

The Gospel, of which Christ is the Head and the Heart, is the world's greatest love story. It has been said, "If there ever comes into the world a religion with more love in it than is found in the Gospel, we might tremble for our Holy Faith." I am not concerned with that happening because the Gospel tells us that "God is love!" In fact, that is how the Christian religion got started, not because we loved Him, but "because He first loved us" I John 4:19.

In the study of comparative religions, men tend to become like the gods they serve. If a person's god is one of power, then those who worship such a god are prone to be warlike in their conduct. If they serve a god of lust, a low standard of morality will mark their lifestyle. There are several things that make the Christian religion unique to all other religions of the world.

- a. One distinction is that we serve a living, loving God. Jesus said, "I'm He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore" (Revelation 1:18). The gods of every other religion have long since died and are no longer with us. We serve a Risen Lord!
- b. Another distinction is because God is love, and because He is Love, He always takes the initiative and comes seeking and saving those who are lost. In every other religion man is seeking, groping, struggling and trying to find and appease their god.
- c. The Christian religion is the only religion where the Spirit of the founder can be received by its followers, "Christ in you, the hope of Glory" (Colossians 1:27). Paul further tells us that "Christ liveth in us, and the life which we now live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God" (Galatians 2:20). When we receive Him, "The

love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5). We are then able to fulfill the Lord's admonition, "That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34).

There are many creeds, religions and gods, but there is only one true religion and that is Christianity, the religion of holy love. To the Greek, god was beauty; to the Romans, god was justice; to the Jews, god was law, but to the Christian, God is love!

One of the greatest weaknesses of the English language is its poverty of expression when it comes to the matter of "love." We have only one word for "love," but the Greek language has three or four words. The word agape, meaning divine love, was always used to express God's love. Philos was used to express friendship love, love of neighbors and friends, while eros was used to signify the love of a man and his wife toward each other as marital partners. But in order to interpret the English word "love," we must depend entirely upon the context of its usage.

All the writers of the New Testament agree with each other, as it were, in portraying agape as the "queen of all virtues." James speaks of it as: "The royal law" (James 2:8). Paul calls it: "The fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:10). Peter says it is the evidence of Christian experience: "See that you love one another with a pure heart fervently" (I Peter 1:22b). John tells us that it is the proof of salvation: "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren" (I John 3:14). It is the test of discipleship: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another" (John 13:35). It is the test of our obedience: "If ye love me keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Jesus makes it the test of true faithfulness: "If a man love me, he will keep my words" (John 14:23). In my text, Timothy presents it as the essence of true Christianity: "The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart" (I Timothy 1:5).

Divine love is a delicate flower in the soil of the soul. It has to have the daily sunshine of God's presence and the daily water of His word to nourish it and keep it ever blooming. One must find time to get alone with God, whatever else he does. Just as lovers find ways and means of getting together and expressing their affection, so the Christ-enthroned soul must find ways to get alone with his God.

II. The Function of Love

Paul says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law." It is important to notice that the word "fruit" is singular. Therefore, love is the fruit of the Spirit, and the rest of the cluster is love in action. Let us see how love expresses itself:

1. Joy is love Blessing
2. Peace is love Blending
3. Long-suffering is love Bending
4. Gentleness is love Bestowing
5. Goodness is love Behaving
6. Meekness is love Bowing
7. Faith is love Believing
8. Temperance is love Balancing

This "LOVE" was made visible by the incarnation, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). This "LOVE" is made communicable by the Holy Spirit. This "LOVE" must be clothed in human personality to give it meaning. Jesus was the very personification of this love, and love to be pure cannot give less than the gift of itself. This Jesus did in the voluntary offering of Himself on the Cross. In an act of His will, He freely and vicariously became "the propitiation for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2).

If we are to have this love communicated to and through us by the Holy Spirit, we, too, must make a voluntary offering of ourselves as a living sacrifice to Him. Because of this love, we cannot give less than the gift of our all. When a man and woman are courting and preparing to unite in holy wedlock, there will come a time that giving cards, candies, and courtesies will not be enough; they must give THEMSELVES in holy wedlock. So it is with God our Savior.

Divine love is the only panacea for the problems, difficulties, and contentions with which the human race is beset. Beginning with the discontent of the heart and running through all the discord and strife of this sin-cursed world, love is the only thing that will keep marriage sacred. It will transform a house into a home and stop the rapid rise of divorce in our society. It would stop the abandonment of our boys and girls by their parents, and instead of living on the streets they would find the home a cozy place of solace.

It is the only solvent of this crime-ridden, drug-addicted, murder-crazed age in which we live. It would purify the cesspool of politics and make righteous leaders and statesmen out of self-seeking politicians. It would enable us to be patient and understanding toward those with whom we disagree and find peaceful resolutions to our problems, whether it be one family member with another family member, neighbor with neighbor, labor and management, one race with another race. Love would result in peace, and wars would cease if men were filled with Divine love.

Henry Drummond, in his little commentary on the thirteen chapter of I Corinthians entitled, "The Greatest Thing in the World," said, "As a prism breaks down white light into the seven colors of the spectrum, when agape is passed through God's prism, He extracts it down into nine beautiful graces:

LOVE

1. Suffers Long – Grace of Patience
2. Is Kind – Grace of Kindness
3. Envieth Not – Grace of Generosity
4. Vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up – Grace of Humility
5. Does not behave itself unseemly – Grace of Courtesy
6. Seeketh not her own – Grace of Unselfishness
7. Is not provoked – Grace of Good Temper
8. Thinketh no evil – Grace of Guilelessness
9. Rejoiceth not in iniquity but in truth – Grace of Sincerity

III. The Fountain of Love

My text says that this love comes out of a pure heart. In I Peter 1:22, we are

admonished to "Love one another with a pure heart fervently." A pure heart is the only soil in which perfect love will thrive. It is the only fountain from which it will flow. Entire sanctification is the act of Divine grace, purifying the heart of the believer, and thus preparing the human heart for the indwelling of perfect love. Perfect love is a state of living, made possible, only to those whose hearts have been cleansed from inherited sin. No one can love as God commanded until his heart has been made pure by faith in the cleansing blood of the Lamb.

It is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit that effects this cleansing, and this experience is not optional; it is essential. This experience fills the heart with delight in doing the will of God and is the blood-bought privilege of everyone who has been "born again."

Living this life of perfect love is never apart from a pure heart, but is always a product of a pure heart. With the fountain of love being the heart and the source being pure, then the service rendered will be "love without dissimulation" (Romans 12:9).

Love, however, must have boundaries or it will degenerate to sin. There are those who think that when Jesus died on Calvary's Cross that He wiped out law. He came rather to fulfill the law. One day a lawyer asked Jesus, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments HANG ALL THE LAW and the prophets." Jesus did not wipe out the law, rather He took the law and hung it on love! Love is the disposition to do what the law requires. Love is the great motivator, as well as the principle of obedience. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments. "

The law of love also supersedes the law of my own personal liberty. Paul said, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (I Corinthians 8:13). It is this pure love for God and man that takes the dryness out of devotion, the drudgery out of duty, and the dread out of destiny, because we read in God's Word, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment" (I John 4:17).

To illustrate this truth, picture in your mind a flowing river. Allow LAW to be the banks of the river and LOVE will be the water flowing through the banks. To have LAW without LOVE would be like the banks of a river without any flowing water. That presents a very dry, desolate and unfruitful picture of life. On the other hand, to have LOVE without the constraints of LAW would be like a river overflowing and flooding, which depicts a very devastating picture.

In Conclusion

- a. I would like to give a few words of encouragement on the one hand and also a few words of caution on the other hand. There may be many things that one is not gifted to do. For example, not all are gifted to sing, to teach, or preach, but none is so limited as to be excused from loving God and his fellowman. God's grace is sufficient to enable any normal person to love as is commanded in God's Word.
- b. Whatever else one is capable and gifted to do, there is no substitute for love. As has previously been mentioned, no worthy wife would accept a gift from her husband as a substitute for the pure affections of his heart. In the first three verses of the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians, Paul lifts the human element with all of its gifts,

talents, skills and possessions to the zenith of its glory, then he says that without love, it amounts to a sum total of nothing. Love is presented as the mountain peak of New Testament salvation. He uses a trilogy of words; faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love. Faith is the foundation; Hope is the anticipation, but Love is the realization of the completed Christian character. Christ is more jealous for our love than our labor.

- c. The most serious thing that can happen to any man in this life is to be void of this love. The loss of property, health, position, prestige or anything else is a minor matter in comparison to the leakage and loss of love. Once love is leaked out of a heart, one begins to justify every questionable thing that he does as being appropriate. One becomes self-shielding, self-sparing, and self-defensive.
- d. Lacking this love is never an accident, because moral and spiritual failures are never a result of chance over which one has no control. Ephesus was not rebuked for losing their first love, but rather they left it!

I would caution us to take short accounts of our relationship with God and love for His Kingdom. If that love has waned and cooled off, hasten to a place of repentance and ask Christ to restore it. He admonished Ephesus to repent or be removed; we do not want to be removed; we want full restoration. If the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, let us love one another fervently "

THE MESSAGE OF LIGHT

(I John 1:5-10)

The author of this First Epistle of John was the son of Zebedee and Salome, the sister of the Virgin Mary. This made him a first cousin to Jesus, the Messiah. He was called the Apostle of Love. When you read this Epistle you notice that "love" is a dominant theme throughout the letter, the word being used at least forty-one times. His life exuded the message of love that he wrote so much about. In writing this short letter, he addresses those to whom he wrote with the endearing phrase, "my little children," three different times. In his old age he became their beloved spiritual father.

It has been said that the Gospel of John was a running commentary on the First Epistle of John and that the First Epistle was like a "Reader's Digest" condensed version of the Gospel of John. The letter excels in contrasts, one word being distinguished by its antithesis; light and darkness, life and death, love and hate, truth and falsehood, children of God and children of the devil, truth and error, Christ and anti-Christ.

One summarized true Christians as possessing three things:

1. They will have all the Features of Eternal Life.
2. They will have all the Fidelity of Effectual Love.
3. They will have all the Fullness of Essential Light.

Eternal Life

In John's Gospel, Jesus gives to us a definition of eternal life in His High Priestly prayer when He says, "This is life eternal, that we might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Eternal life consists of communion that shall never cease in an environment which shall never pass away. This life does not come through mere generation but RE-generation. It is the possession of the Divine Nature, the union of the soul with God in Christ, and the consciousness of fellowship resulting from it. John gives several features that characterize the Christian life, as one "walks even as He walked."

- a. One will perform the law; "We do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments"(2:3).
- b. One will practice righteousness, "Ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him" (2:29).
- c. One has power over sin, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin..." (3:9).
- d. One has passion for the brethren, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (3:14).
- e. One prevails over the world. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world" (5:4).
- f. One has the presence of His Spirit, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (5:10).

Effectual Love

Chalmers speaks of one who has received Christ as having experienced "The expulsive power of a new affection." What used to possess him and where his allegiance and affections used to lie has now changed, and his love and affections are for God, Man, Truth, Purity, Holiness and Righteousness. These become the all-consuming pursuits of his life.

The Ten Commandments are a transcript of God's holy character. It is by this holy standard in which He requires me to live, that I am able to know what kind of a God He is. His exhortation, admonitions, commandments, promises, prayers and precepts all reveal to me that He is a Holy God, and also, He is Love.

John uses the term "perfect love" five times. Perfect love is the result of the cleansing blood of Christ removing everything contrary to love from the heart. Carnality is completely cleansed from the heart; otherwise it would negate the perfection of love. "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us" (1 John 4:12). God will not cohabit with sin, so He cleanses the heart for His indwelling. Perfect love is a qualitative term, and because God is love and He indwells us, it is His quality of love that permeates our being. It is a qualitative love that reaches out in a quantitative realm. There is an unceasing reach to it, and the Apostle Paul prays, "that the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another. that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more" (1 Thessalonians 3:12 & 4:1).

Having mentioned Eternal Life and Effectual Love, the main emphasis of this message is "Essential Light!" I lift the seventh verse out of this passage for my text.
Essential Light

My text reads as follows: "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."

Holiness is hidden glory, and glory is holiness shining forth through Jesus Christ who is the Light of the world.

John tells us, " Jesus was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John 1:9). We further note that "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, he shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

The Condition

The word "if" in this verse is a sort of moral hinge on which God's promises and our destiny swing. O. A. Curtis said, "God hangs the stars, spins the planets, and creates worlds without man's acceptance or rejection, without man's approval or disapproval, but He hangs the destiny of a human soul on the invisible hinge of the human will. Man's obedient walk is essential to God's plan of salvation."

Christians that walk in the light need never worry that the darkness can ever put that light out. The light came and the darkness could not comprehend (put it out, conquer) it. This darkness refers not only to mental confusion but also moral corruption.

Walking in the light implies receiving knowledge and progressing in the truth, and

John knew the importance of light in both knowledge and truth, but it was in the context of knowledge that he found himself battling with the Gnostics. They placed great emphasis on knowledge. To the Gnostics, knowledge was more important than virtue, but it did not involve them in a holy walk. One of their teachings was that all matter is sinful, and therefore, because the body is matter, one must sin every day in word, thought and deed. They would further say that it did not affect the spirit of man, so when man died and his body was laid in the grave, his spirit would be released to go to heaven. This, of course, made death our deliverer, rather than Christ.

John refutes this teaching by saying that there is a temptation to profess a likeness to God when there is no similarity to His moral character. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth...If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us...If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (I John 6, 8, 10).

John was saying that you cannot walk in the light and give place to darkness, and one cannot walk in darkness and have fellowship with light. Some in their teachings insinuate that their moral state has nothing to do with their fellowship. They would say that their relationship is secure even though they may lose their fellowship. However, John says that conditions for both fellowship and relationship are the same. In fact, our fellowship describes the content of the relationship, and to lose one is to lose the other.

The Cleansing

Findlay: "The day cries its light at the windows. It has no voice, it utters no speech, but when it comes; sleepers stir and go forth to work, birds sing their songs, beasts come forth from their lairs, and creeping things of the night crawl away to hide." His coming to our hearts has a similar effect.

Those, in darkness, who have responded to His light become children of the day. They have begun their walk with Jesus (dead men don't walk), and this walking in the light implies walking in the truth, and truth is progressive. Its progression is determined by our permission. We must be always receptive and obedient to truth as it comes to us. God will soon begin to awaken us to our need of heart cleansing (entire sanctification). Those whose sins have been forgiven begin to aspire for a pure heart. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness" and to such is held out the promise, "for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

"If we walk in the light as He is in the light," we know that we must walk in "all" the light because He is the light, and in Him is "no darkness at all" Just as our confession and faith resulted in forgiveness of all past sins, consecration and faith will result in the cleansing of all sin, even its stain. Our confidence lies in the promise of His faithfulness, the provision of His blood, the sufficiency of His grace and the adequacy of His Spirit to accomplish the work in our hearts.

The conjunction "and" in the seventh verse is something over, above, and in addition to what we have already experienced and are enjoying; namely, sins forgiven. Our former sins were high treason against the government of God. We brought them and confessed them to God in His criminal court and by forsaking them, He gave us a pardon!

However, we are dealing with something deeper down and further back in Verse 7; it is "inherent sin," a malady (disease of the soul). We bring it to God's civil court, and

there we shall find healing by the Great Physician. Wesley said, "It is not the dead that needs healing but those who are alive from the dead. The dead He quickens; He heals the morally sick."

The distinction between the two works of grace, forgiveness and cleansing, are as follows:

- a. Forgiveness is a judicial act; Cleansing is a priestly ministry.
- b. Forgiveness takes place in the heart of God; Cleansing takes place in the heart of the believer.
- c. Forgiveness deals with the wrong I have done; Cleansing deals with the wrong I am. What I have done is volitional; What I am is dispositional.
- d. Forgiveness gives me standing before God; Cleansing gives me union with God.
- e. Forgiveness makes me an heir; Cleansing gives me an inheritance among them which are sanctified.

Forgiveness inspires me to sing: "My soul is reconciled, His pardoning voice I hear; He owns me for His child, I shall no longer fear. With confidence I now draw nigh, And Father, Abba, Father, cry."

Cleansing enables me to sing:

I've entered the valley of blessing so sweet, And Jesus abides with me here; His Spirit and blood make my cleansing complete, His perfect love casteth out fear."

The Communion

Walking together in fellowship one with another implies Holy Communion. The word fellowship in the Greek is "Koinonia." There is common interest, harmony, and agreement involved in this sweet fellowship. The question, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3), is appropriate here. There are several conditions implied in walking together.

1. You must be going in the same direction and the same way. All of the person goes along; man cannot be compartmentalized until a part of him will go one way and another part another way.
2. You are in agreement with the one you are with as "Enoch walked with God." Their conversation must have been interesting. I'm sure they both engaged in topics that interested each other. When one walks with God, God does not make any condescension to talk to us about our most menial concerns; He is highly concerned about the minutia of life.

As we walk with God, He being the center, the closer we get to Him, the closer we find ourselves to our fellowman and less divisiveness with one another.

The Christian growth in grace enhances and develops more rapidly. He will not be in the same place today, spiritually, that he was yesterday. It also results in victory in the life, for one can never be defeated walking with the Victor.

While walking with Jesus we will be safe because we have a tremendous protector. The God who keeps Israel shall not slumber. He promises to protect us on our journey to heaven. He promised to give His angels charge over us, to bear us up in their hands, lest we dash our foot against a stone.

Psalm 91:14-16: "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I

will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.

ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

(I Thessalonians 5:23-24)

These verses present to us the closing benediction of this important letter. This is a valuable epistle because it is considered to be the first letter written following the ascension of our Lord. In less than three week's time this church was established, and it was about six months old at the time of its writing. The letter breathes with the hope of His return because it is mentioned in each of the five chapters. In this letter, Paul presents the second coming of Christ as well as the second work of grace as two essential doctrines in the Lord's economy. It is the second work of grace that I want to emphasize, namely to "sanctify you wholly" as stated in my text. I want to present three thoughts concerning this great truth:

I. By Implication there must be a state of Initial Sanctification.

II. By Specific Petition there must be a state of Entire

Sanctification III. By Faith there is a possibility of Continuous Preservation.

Let us study the text by following the stated outline.

I. INITIAL SANCTIFICATION

One cannot read the first chapter of this letter without concluding that these young Believers had been truly converted. In the third verse of this chapter, Paul gives us a trilogy of traits that distinguishes these young Christians from the unbeliever. He acknowledged their "work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in Jesus Christ."

Their salvation did not come through good works but rather by grace they were saved, however, their works flowed from their faith. They were not saved by good works, but they were saved unto works. The writer heard a minister preach a sermon on Christian stewardship, and he placed emphasis on the importance of works and service. Following his message one approached him inquiring if, perhaps, he wasn't in danger of preaching a salvation by works rather than by faith. In response the preacher said, "No, for Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:8 "by grace we are saved through faith" and then with a bit of a pause he said, BUT IT WORKS!" Faith without works is dead. These exemplified Christ by their "work of faith."

They also had a "labor of love," and this was another mark of their salvation. They had a new dynamic and a new Master ordering their lives. Where once they were slaves to sin, now they were servants unto righteousness, and Jesus was their new Master. They had become His love-slaves, and their desire was to serve Him and others.

The third mark of their salvation was their patience of hope, the hope of eternal life and the promise of being like Him when He appears. This hope is evidence of their sonship. In the first epistle of John 3:1-3 we are told that God has lavished His love on those who are His sons, and because we are the sons of God, we have a hope that the world knows nothing about. It is this hope in Christ that these new converts were enjoying in Thessalonica.

" They became followers of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit. Their lives were a testimony to all that believe in Macedonia

and Achaia."

These Christians had already known His peace by their initial experience which was evidenced by the outward transformation of their lives as proof of their election of God. No one, having read the first chapter of I Thessalonians could question their justification, adoption, and regeneration.

However, when you read I Thessalonians 3:10, Paul voices his concern about the lack in their faith. While they had experienced Initial Sanctification, Paul was praying that they would experience the higher phase of sanctification that is identified with this enlarging, qualifying, or amplifying word, "WHOLLY."

It is important to notice that it is the will of God for the new Christian to be sanctified (I Thessalonians 4:3).

Oswald Chambers stated,

Do not say that you are longing to be sanctified. Stop longing and make it a matter of transaction. If God has not sanctified you and made you blameless, there is only one reason, and that is because you don't want to be. For it is the will of God, and one does not have to urge God to do His will.

Continued relationship and fellowship are contingent on a believer's faithfulness to do His will.

Thessalonians 3:7, makes it clear that God's call to holiness is a call to cleansing. Sanctification is the noun that names the process of that cleansing, and holiness is the state produced by cleansing. In verse 8 we are cautioned not to reject (despise) this call to cleansing because to reject (despise) the call is to reject (despise) the one who calls, namely, God. Whatever estimate we place on this holy calling is likewise the estimate we place upon God.

Every believer has already received the "peace of God" in the knowledge of sins forgiven. They have power and grace to walk in the Spirit, yet within there remains a longing to be perfectly whole and a desire to be made whiter than snow. This whiteness and wholeness is the result of the sanctification of our text. Let us look more closely at this call by considering the second point of our outline.

II. ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

This wholeness is a completed and finished work of grace in the soul. Man is a whole rather than a conglomeration of parts. When we discuss and intellectualize about man, we can speak of his various component parts such as his mind, soul, conscience, emotions, his volitional capacity and such like, but these various facets of man's make-up do not function apart from the whole man. As sin (depravity) affected the whole of man so does sanctification. Total depravity does not mean that man is so bad that he could not be worse but simply that there is no part of man's being that has not been affected by sin. So it is with God's grace of sanctification. It is a thorough work for it is all of grace and it provides grace for all of man. God sanctifies WHOLLY, ("through and through") ("in total") or ("to the uttermost").

When God created man, He made him in His own image, so man was made a holy being. He was not only holy, he was also human, and it is stated in Genesis 1:31, "And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." So man was a holy and human being before the fall. I emphasize this fact in order to make the point

that to be human does not necessitate one to be sinful. Humanity is not synonymous with carnality.

When man disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, he lost the moral image and likeness of His creator. Sin entered into the picture and was passed on through the generations to come. Genesis 5:3 says, "Adam lived a hundred and thirty years and begat a son in HIS OWN LIKENESS, AFTER HIS IMAGE..." Sin is an alien element in human nature and God's intent in salvation is to remove that which is foreign in man (sin) and restore him to the spiritual and moral image of God. The Bible teaches that entire sanctification removes nothing from humanity but sin, ALL of it!

Sin is dual in its nature. It is not only an act, transgression of the law of God; it is an evil principle of the heart. The deliberate act requires forgiveness, but the diseased state or principle requires cleansing. The question has often been posed, "Is an apple tree an apple tree because it bears apples, or does it bear apples because it is an apple tree?" The root determines the fruit. So a man sins because he is a sinner. When he repents of his sins (the fruit), it is further necessary to subsequently be cleansed of sin (the root).

Jesus was not only "manifested to take away our sins"(I John 3:5), but also "He was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil" through this sanctifying work of grace (I John 3:8). He thus enables man to live according to the command given in Luke 1:74-75, "That He would grant to us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life."

In I Thessalonians 4:7, uncleanness and holiness are set as opposites; they are as exclusive to one another as light is to darkness. The extent of cleansing is measured by the moral need of spirit and soul. The body is not inherently sinful; it is only an "instrument of unrighteousness unto sin or an instrument of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:13). If carnality has the ascendancy in the heart, it will affect the desires and appetites of the body, so likewise, entire sanctification with its cleansing work will affect the desires and appetites of the body.

It is to be noticed that the entire triune Godhead is involved in this sanctifying experience. It is the "God of Peace" that performs the work in man's heart. It is not through effort of our own. Secondly, it was the sacrifice that Christ made on the cross and the efficacy of the blood that was shed that makes sanctification possible. In Hebrews 13:12 we read, " Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." Thirdly, the fundamental operation of the gift of the Holy Spirit is the baptism as with fire, to burn up the dross of base desire. Entire sanctification is central in the whole scheme of redemption and is a supreme requisite for life here and now as well as a supreme requirement for the life yet to come.

III. CONTINUOUS PRESERVATION

It must be remembered that man is still human with all the human appetites, desires and drives, and these must be brought under His mastery for they can become a point of stumbling and result in sin. Entire sanctification does not dehumanize man, but rather it decarnalizes man, (to coin a term).

It is important that we understand the difference between these two terms. Some have made them synonymous and excuse sin because one is human. Again, I want to

state, to be human does not necessitate that one be sinful. Jesus, Himself was human but He was sinless. The difference between the two is that humanity can be disciplined and brought under control, but carnality cannot be controlled. As stated in Romans 8:7, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." This verse reveals the anti-authoritarian or lawless spirit that characterizes the carnal mind. Because this spirit within man will not subordinate to God's law, He must cleanse it from man's heart.

Though one be saved and sanctified entirely, we still live "in earthen vessels" (II Corinthians 4:7), but we also have "this treasure," the Holy Spirit, within to "preserve us blameless" as we continue to walk in the light and live a life of obedience to His will. While sin within is destroyed when one experiences entire sanctification, the sin without is still very real. We still live in a world that is no friend of God or His grace, and the devil didn't go out of business when we were sanctified wholly.

This cleansing work does not change, rearrange, diminish, or dishonor any essential elements of the true self. There is no such thing as the death OF self-consciousness but rather the death TO self-centeredness. However, there must be a denial, dedication, and discipline of the true self. We still maintain every instinct, desire, capacity, and appetite that was possessed by Adam before the fall in the Garden and by the incarnate Christ when "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

While we can be cleansed from sin at a crisis moment, the scars and consequences of sin will continue throughout this present life. In this life we shall never be free from the infirmities of the human nature. John Wesley said, The holiest of men still need Christ as their Prophet, as the "light of the world." For He does not give them light but from moment to moment. The instant He withdraws, all is darkness. They still need Christ as their King; for God does not give them a stock of holiness. But unless they receive a supply every moment, nothing but unholiness would remain. They still need Christ as their Priest, to make atonement for their unholy things. Even perfect holiness is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ.

There are those that would make entire sanctification a finality rather than fitness. They expect it to accomplish here in this life what is reserved for the life to come. Sanctification is not glorification. Entire sanctification brings the end to nothing but sin in man's heart. While sin within has been cleansed it opens the way for the beginning of a full and fruitful life of obedience and service. Man is no longer self-centered but Christ-centered and Christ-controlled; Christ not only resides, but He reigns without a rival in the man-soul.

Dr. Paul Rees says,

While one is preserved blameless in this life, he will one day be presented faultless in the life to come. While in this world it is incumbent upon us to seek through discipline and obedience to close the gap between blameless and faultless living as near as possible, knowing, however, that in this life we will not close it completely.

We are ambassadors of Christ, and if we represent Him as we ought, we must spare no energy to be more and more conformed to His image so that the world might believe and come to know Him as their Lord and Savior.

While it is true that "God looks upon the heart but man on the outward appearance" (I Samuel 16:7), that very fact makes it necessary for us to display, outwardly, the Spirit

of Christ in all of our actions, affections, and attitudes. The world cannot see Christ crowned within, but they can see the Christian conduct without, so let us so live as to represent our Lord well.

READINESS FOR THE FINAL REWARD

(I Peter 1:1-16)

As a minister of the Gospel of Christ, I take my calling very seriously. Every preacher is responsible for the souls that are placed in his trust. We must be true in proclaiming His Word. All preaching should have a measure of scholarship for we are admonished to "study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). But preaching must also be searching. When the Word is scripturally expounded, the Spirit will expose sin and draw the sinner to Himself so that he can experience salvation. Paul tells us, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21b).

In this modern climate of tolerance, political correctness, and compromise, I fear many have failed God, who called them to this holy calling, as well as the souls of men given their charge by compromising God's truth. While "tolerance" means to be free from bigotry, and none of us want to be guilty of that, the danger is that we are pursuing tolerance where we are sacrificing God's principles for Christian living. When this happens it is then that tolerance becomes treason. Treason is the offense of betraying God and His church, and this is an act of rebellion.

For example, God's word makes it very clear that we will either experience redemption or retribution. We will either be pure or we will perish. It is in fact, holiness or hell. I'm well aware that when that statement is brought out of the dusty archives of the past, we have a tendency to close our ears like those who stoned Stephen. All efforts to evade this alternative are futile, and we need to face it humbly and honestly. The only reason for any soul to be lost in hell is the lack of holiness. The only reason a soul is saved to heaven is holiness.

Let me immediately say that I do not proclaim the truth of scriptural holiness drivingly. I realize the other side of the coin of "holiness or hell," is "holiness and heaven." I believe that men are drawn to holiness primarily by the beauty and attractiveness of the life, and I preach with that in mind. However, a false doctrine is not only dangerous for the errors they espouse, but also for the truth they OMIT. It is not always what we say as much as what is left unsaid. It is with this in mind that I write about holiness of heart and life being the prerequisite for our final reward and hope of heaven.

I. The Experience of Cleansing

In this first chapter, Peter addresses himself to "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, and Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." Peter packs a great deal of truth in this brief salutation. We notice the "Experience of Cleansing," by the underlined words. By deleting some words without doing harm to the verse, we read, "ELECT, THROUGH SANCTIFICATION."

Perhaps we need to explain our terms in order to understand the first point.

"Sanctify" is the verb that speaks of cleansing; sanctification is the noun that names the process by which we are cleansed, and holiness is the state produced by sanctification. Verses 15 and 16 say, "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (living); Because it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy." Here we have what C. W. Butler called, "The Rome of the Bible." Centuries ago Rome was the hub of civilization, and all the roads that led into the city were like spokes in a wheel with Rome being the hub. Likewise, everything in the Bible converges on this passage of scripture. "Be ye holy!" Everything in the Bible converges and centers on these two verses.

The command, "Be ye Holy" arises out of the character of God, "for I am holy." God is both the motive and model for holiness. He is not only the standard, but also the source of holiness. This command also is the charter of God. "Because it is written." It is written in the law of God, the types and shadows, prophecies, Psalms, parables, admonitions, exhortations, promises, and prayers. It is also the call of God, the command of God, and the choice of God. "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Ephesians 1:4).

Here we read that long before we were ever born, long before Wesley, Clark, Morrison, Bresee, and hundreds more ever came on the scene, long before Christ was ever born in the lowly manger of Bethlehem, long before Abram ever left Ur of the Chaldees, long before God ever spoke the first word that started this created order, long ago when there was no one and nothing but God, He made the choice that we should be holy.

This experience: "Elect...through sanctification of the Spirit" is the necessary preparation in order to be ready to receive the reward that will be given at the revelation of Christ. To be ready for that great day should be a matter of grave concern for all God's people. While we are not informed as to the date and time of His revelation, we have been informed as to our duty for readiness for that day. This entire chapter, while it encourages the suffering saints in their faith, is primarily an emphasis on holiness as a necessary fitness for the reward that will be bestowed by our Lord on the day of revelation of Jesus Christ.

The word "elect," simply means "called ones" or "chosen ones," but this calling is conditioned on cleansing, "elect through... sanctification of the Spirit." The entire Godhead is interested and contributors to our sanctification:

1. God is Originating cause... "The very God of peace sanctify you holy" (I Thessalonians 5:23).
2. Jesus is the Provisional Cause... "Christ loved the church and He gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it..." (Ephesians 5:26-27).
3. Holy Spirit is the Efficient Cause... "through sanctification of the Spirit" (Peter 1:2).
4. The Blood is the Merit Cause... "Jesus, also that He might sanctify the people with His own blood suffered without the gate" (Hebrews 13:12).
5. The Word is the Instrumental Cause... "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth" (John 17:17).
6. Faith is the Conditional Cause... "Put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8-9).

It would seem to me that if the whole triune Godhead is invested in our

sanctification, then we must be highly interested and engaged in seeking and obtaining it. When one experiences this cleansing, he is able to fulfill the command, "Be ye holy" and the command enjoins the state of readiness to receive the reward.

II. The Evidence in Conduct

We must not only be ready in Character but also in Conduct. Our conduct should reflect evidence of His holy character within us. We are told to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). Paul is simply saying that the Christian is to let that which God has worked in them come out and work for them. This is the every day outliving of an indwelling Christ. Any crisis experience that one receives must validate itself in righteous conduct. We must never profess to be inwardly pure while living a life of sin and corruption. Inward goodness always finds its expression in outward righteousness.

The Christian should, by their lives, "adorn the doctrine of God in all things" (Titus 2:10b). Our lives should be lived in such a way that it beautifies the Gospel of Christ. It has been stated that God gets His reputation, in this world, through the lives of professing Christians. If that is true, then let us be faithful to "walk in the Spirit, and not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

"I may not understand the high advice you give, But there is no misunderstanding how you act and how you live."

"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance" (I Peter 1:14). I recall many years ago, early in my Christian walk, listening to a message delivered by G. B. Williamson. He was expounding on Romans 12:9 which reads as follows, "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." He then proceeded to say, "Our tenacity in cleaving to the good is no greater than the intensity of our abhorrence of evil." That statement gripped me then, and has been a guiding principle in my life ever since. The more one maintains an intense and passionate love for God, the more repulsive will be the lust of the flesh. The converse is true as well, the more one finds himself excusing and making allowance for sin, whether he recognizes it or not, he is losing his tenacious grip on God. One cannot love God supremely without hating sin absolutely.

Remember, Our Holy God is the standard of our living; it is His approval we seek for our lives. This standard arises out of the "ISNESS" of God. "As He which hath called you IS holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" Perhaps the following will be helpful at this point. It is an article published by the Francis Asbury Society, written by an anonymous author:

If God has called you to be truly like Jesus, He will draw you into a life of crucifixion and humility, and put on you demands of obedience that sometimes will not allow you to follow other Christians. In many ways He will seem to let other good people do things that He will not let you do.

Other Christians, and even ministers, who seem very religious and useful may push themselves, pull strings, and work schemes to carry out their plans, but you cannot do these things, and if you attempt them, you will meet such failure and rebuke from the Lord as to make you sorely penitent. Others can brag about themselves, about their

work, about their success, about their writings, but the Holy Spirit will not allow you to do such things; and if you begin bragging, He will lead you into some deep mortification that will make you despise yourself and all your good works. Others will be allowed to succeed in making great sums of money, or having a legacy left to them, or in having luxuries, but God may only supply you daily, because He wants you to have something far better than gold—a helpless dependence on Him—that He may have the privilege of providing your needs daily out of the unseen treasury. The Lord may let others be honored and keep you hidden away in obscurity, because He wants to produce some choice, fragrant fruit for His coming glory, which can only be produced in the shade. God will let others be great, but keep you small. He will let others do a work for Him, and get the credit for it, but He will make you work and toil without knowing how much you are doing. And then to make your work still more precious, He will let others get the credit for the work which you have done, and this will make your reward ten times greater when Jesus comes. The Holy Spirit will put a strict watch on you, with jealous love, and rebuke you for little words and feelings or for wasted time, which other Christians never seem distressed over. So make up your mind that God is an infinite Sovereign who has a right to do as He pleases with His own, and needs not explain to you a thousand things which may puzzle your reason in His dealings with you.

God will take you at your word; and if you absolutely sell yourself to be His slave, He will wrap you up in jealous love, and let other people say and do many things you cannot do or say. Settle it forever, that you are to deal directly with the Holy Spirit, and that He is to have the privilege of tying your tongue, or chaining your hand, or closing your eyes in ways that others are not disciplined. Now, when you are so possessed with the living God that you are, in your secret heart, pleased and delighted over this peculiar, personal, private, jealous guardianship and management of the Holy Spirit over your life, you will find the vestibule of heaven.

III. The Expectancy of His Coming

Peter said, "Gird up the loins of your mind [Gird: bring into captivity every wandering thought] be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ

With the discipline of mind and life intact, and overshadowed with a holy sobriety {Be sober is an admonishment to be sensitive and serious in duty as well as danger), we live with an expectant heart for the glorious return of our Lord. This command to be holy is not only an immutable decree, and an invariable standard, it is the inescapable requirement in the hope of His return.

This is the emphasis that Peter places on holiness as the necessary fitness to be ready to receive the reward at the revelation of Jesus Christ. This lively hope is the reward that was ASSURED us in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (I Peter 1:3). This hope will be fully AWARDED us at the revelation of Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:13).

We are told what that reward will be in the 4th verse of this chapter when Peter writes that it will be "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" What a hope we have in Christ!

- a. Inheritance incorruptible means that we will be going to a place where there will be no more death or disease and it will be a place where moth and rust cannot corrupt our treasures, and thieves cannot break in and steal our possessions.
- b. undefiled means that sin will never again endanger, entice, or enter into that glorious city. The heartaches, pain, and sorrows that sin has brought upon the lives of God's creation will be gone forever. Even the world that groans for deliverance will have its day of redemption.
- c. Fading not away means that it will not be fleeting or temporary, but it will be forever. While time can be measured by days, weeks, months and years, eternity is measureless. As the hymn writer, Rev. John Newton puts it, "When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun; we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun"

Let us heed the command and meet the requirement of God so that one day we will be fit to receive the reward at the revelation of Jesus Christ. In that day the glory of the grace of God will merge into the glory of an eternal day. Then this mortal body shall put on immortality. The scars of the curse will be lifted, and the last battle with the enemy will have been fought. Faith will turn into sight, and death will be swallowed up in victory. All who chose to set their affections on things above, rather than things on earth, and sought His will instead of the fleeting pleasures of sin, will be forever with Him who is the resurrection and the life.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST

(Hebrews 13:10-14)

Here we have in holy writ the supreme purpose for the suffering of our Savior, which was to sanctify His people. In the eighth verse of this chapter we are presented with the unchangeable Christ in the clear light of divine revelation, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." He is not only immutable in His person, but also in His purpose. From the beginning there has been no variation in His character nor has there been any deviation in His purpose for man. His purpose was fixed and final from the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:4 says, "He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love..."

In Ezekiel 33:11, we are told that "God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked." In the New Testament, Peter tells us, "God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). Therefore, God's selection for the destiny of man is heaven, and His selection for the character of man is that he should be holy. It further follows that for the holy there can be only one end, and that is heaven, and for entrance into heaven there can be only one qualification, and that is holiness of heart and life. This passage reveals the supreme price that the Savior had to pay for our sanctification.

Let us consider the purpose of His passion under four headings:

- I. THE PROVISION
- II. THE PEOPLE
- III. THE PURPOSE
- IV. THE PLACE

I. THE PROVISION

The provision is, "His own blood" Jesus came into the world to do the will of His Father. This plan was agreed upon by the triune Godhead long before the fall of man occurred in the garden. Jesus Christ willingly offered Himself as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8b). He had an immutable purpose for coming and that was to redeem a fallen race. It is important that we realize that God is doing nothing in redemption that He had not previously planned in creation. In creation man enjoyed sweet fellowship and communion with his Creator having been made in His image and likeness. However, through Adam's disobedience in the Garden, man lost the moral image and forfeited his holy estate and became estranged from His Creator.

Sin brought about a separation between a holy God and sinful man, and as Romans 5:12 says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." God immediately set His plan of redemption into motion. Throughout the entire Old Testament we see the animal sacrifices offered being but a type of the ultimate Lamb of God who would shed His blood for man so that every lost son of Adam's race could "be justified freely by His

grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). Paul Rees says, "The sacrifice of Calvary brought about a bridge of grace to span the chasm between man's guilt and God's glory."

In Hebrews 13:11 our attention is focused on the ministry of the high priest under the Old Testament provision. This speaks of the solemn ritual of the great Day of Atonement, and the writer calls attention to the fact that in the sin offerings the blood was carried into the sanctuary, but the bodies were burned outside the camp (Leviticus 16:27).

Jesus has now completed the pattern; that was the shadow, but He is the real. The one was a figure, but He has given to us the factual fulfillment. "For He hath made Him to be sin [sin-offering] for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Corinthians 5:21). Now the Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all; and since He was Priest as well as Victim, He conquered death, and through His bodily resurrection we partake of the heavenly life imparted by the Spirit. Thus we have an altar of which they dare not partake, because we eat of the Sin Offering itself, which was denied them. Jesus said, " Verily, verily, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you " (John 6:53).

When Jesus died outside the gate on the cross, it signified the end of the old covenant of works and the beginning of the new covenant of grace. The earthly Aaronic priesthood had been superseded by the heavenly Priesthood of the Immortal Son of God. The sacrifices offered under the law, "which could never take away sins: ...He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, and is sat down on the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:11-12).

The Reality of His bodily sacrifice is far greater than the Ritual of their animal sacrifices. There are several things distinctively different between the figurative and the factual:

1. Jesus was the greater High Priest after God's own order.
2. It was not with the blood of animals, but with His own blood.
3. He did not enter the Holy of Holies in an earthly temple, but into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God to offer His blood for us as a redemptive force to save us from all sin and to sanctify a people unto Himself.

The provision of His blood is the only way open to mankind for a deliverance from sin. He is the Fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness.

II. THE PURPOSE

The purpose of His suffering was to sanctify the people. Dr. Bresee said, "This is the crowning glory of the work of the soul's salvation. All that went before it was preparatory to it." This supreme work of Christ meets the deepest need of His people. His sacrifice provides for their sanctification through the cleansing blood of the atonement and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. This sanctification means much more than to dedicate or consecrate or a setting apart for a holy use or holy service. If the word "sanctify" means nothing more than setting apart for a certain task, then the price that

was paid for it was way out of proportion for what was gained. Consecration is an act, performed by man of his own volition, and one does not need a bleeding sacrifice to accomplish it. Therefore, there must be a deeper meaning of the term "sanctify" which represents a need in man's heart that cannot be met merely by the human will, but requires the sacrificial blood of the Son of God.

Jesus, with His own blood, as the High Priest has entered into heaven and lifted up His five bleeding wounds before a merciful God and offered up His intercessory prayer for His children to the Father, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). It was for sin not for service that He suffered. His suffering without the camp was not to dedicate us to a service but to deliver us from sin. To deny the work of Christ in sanctification, and to plead for remaining sin, either in act or state, is an insult to the supreme purpose of Christ's redemptive work.

Looking at it from another perspective, one must take into consideration that there is a difference in sanctifying mere things such as a temple, vessel, day, place, and setting them apart from the secular for sacred use and observance. One can see that these have no moral capacity. Such things and places have no sense of right or wrong nor sense of good or evil. For these to be sanctified it simply means to set apart.

However, in the sanctification of a person, it is unreasonable, inconsistent, and unthinkable in the light of truth, that God would take a human being and dedicate that person for any kind of sacred service and not take into consideration the moral condition of that person. If God did not take that into consideration that person could exploit the very calling of God in order to enrich himself and violate every known law of God. Sanctification must include not only the act of man's consecration, but subsequently the act of God's cleansing by His efficacious blood. The cleansing blood would expiate the sin, and instead of one being self-centered, he would be Christ-centered, and self-aggrandize-ment would be replaced with the desire to glorify God.

III. THE PEOPLE

The fact that God desired to have a people is a blessed truth in and of itself. When the triune Godhead sat in council and declared in Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." the words, let there be. were changed to, let us make. Thus, H. Orton Wiley sees humanity as the culmination and climax of God's creative acts, and in man the spiritual and physical meet. He is at once a creature and a son. It was Dennis F. Kinlaw who reminds us that God was a Father even before He was a Creator. As a Father, He apparently wanted a family, and so man was the crown of His creative work.

In Psalms 8:3-6, the psalmist considers man's unique place in the economy of God's creation, and the refrain is taken up again by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in 2:6-8b, "What is man that thou are mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownest him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him."

God was interested in a family because He then looked upon Adam and said that it was not good that man should be alone, and "the Lord caused a deep sleep to come upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs [near his heart], and closed up the

flesh instead thereof. And the rib which God had taken from man, made he woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." God would come down in the cool of the day and enjoy fellowship with the man and woman until through disobedience that relationship was severed.

The fact that God wants a family is further revealed in that He immediately instituted His plan of redemption to bring about a reconciliation between Himself and man. That plan required that ultimately the second Adam, (Jesus Christ), would be put to sleep on a cruel cross and it was out from His side, (near His heart like the first Adam), that an efficacious stream of blood would flow, a fountain for all sin and uncleanness. Every lost son and daughter of Adam's race could be washed clean and come back to the Father. Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:25-27, 31-32 "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,..." "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning CHRIST AND THE CHURCH." Here the intimate relationship between the husband and wife is compared to another intimate relationship, the Christ and the church. Common to both relationships is the binding, hallowing force called love.

God is love, and it is the nature of love to desire to be loved. So it was out of this desire came the decision for man's design in creation and deliverance in salvation. In Creation, God had only to breathe, but in salvation He had to bleed. John tells us in His First Epistle 3:1, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." From a Creature/Creator relationship we now can have a Father/Son relationship. John also tells us, "To as many as received Him to them gave He the power to become sons of God."

We, as His children, should reflect the characteristics of our Father. In the study of comparative religions, men tend to become like the gods they serve. Those who become children of God can enjoy fellowship only as they are holy as He is holy. They enjoy communion only as they walk in the light as He is in the light and the blood that sanctified continues its cleansing work in them.

It is the work of sanctification in its crisis and process that enables man to live and honor the Savior. As His workmanship His children always reflect the skill and care of the artisan, and because we are the product of His sacrifice we must be holy. This work brings about such a union between God and man that we are told "For both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:11). The sanctified are able to live in such a way that they do not bring shame and reproach upon Him, but rather by His grace their lives can be lived to His glory now and forever- more. One day when we get to heaven the angels will have to silence their voices, step back and fold their wings, and God will bring all the redeemed saints of all the ages together around the throne and say, "Here is a product of my workmanship, and I am not ashamed to call them my brethren, and they are fit to live with me throughout the endless ages of eternity."

IV. THE PLACE

This scripture tells us that the sanctified must fulfill two duties:

1. "Go forth unto Christ outside the camp, bearing His reproach."
2. "By Him offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually. "

1. When Jesus suffered outside the camp, He established a new covenant. No more were they to engage in their ceremonial rituals in the offering up of animal sacrifices that could not take away their sin, but He was "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." It is without the camp that we find a well spread table where Jesus is the bread of life. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The way of the cross leads home. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6).

There will be a certain reproach if you go with Him without the gate because it is not the popular thing to do. Even to this day there are many bound by their doctrines and dogmas that offer no hope of deliverance from original sin. While they readily believe that God can forgive their transgressions, they reject the possibility that one can be free from innate sin and that this freedom was provided for all men in the one offering of Christ. However, there are many who refuse to limit the work of the atonement. By faith in the efficacy of Christ's expiatory sacrifice, they have experienced the cleansing work of sanctification in their heart and are happy, in spite of devils and carnal men, to witness to it.

A sanctified people will champion Him in reproach. They are persecuted for His sake, rejected as He was rejected. They will rejoice in tribulation because they have the hope of a better resurrection. They, like Moses, endure the reproach in order that they might enjoy the reward. The sanctified are citizens of another country. "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Hebrews 13:14). They are willing to relinquish all the trinkets and trivia and the fun and folly of the pleasures of the present for the more enduring substance of spiritual values. He who sanctified and cleansed their hearts have constructed them an eternal habitation. They are crowned with eternal life, citizens of eternal light, and conformed to His eternal likeness.

2. "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name" What a note of triumph is this! Having lost the world with its alluring but deceptive charms, we have obtained a far greater treasure. We have been brought into the very presence of God, and through Christ, our Savior, the Blood cleanses, and the Holy Spirit as Comforter and Guide comes to dwell within us as an abiding presence. Let us therefore offer the sacrifice of praise continually, "the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name"

HOLINESS: GOD'S SUPREME OBJECTIVE

(I Peter 1:15-16)

Previous to man's creation, God (Elohim) went into consultation and a great decision was made. The character of God Himself became the prototype for the character of creature man. A theologian of another day by the name of Theodore L. Cuvler said, When the triune Godhead decided to create man, they retired into the recesses of their own tranquility and sought for a model by which to create him and behold they found it in themselves.

I. CREATION (Holiness Instituted)

Man came from the hand of God, an expression of His own infinite perfections. In Ralston's Elements of Divinity, we read that "Holiness is the substratum of all God's attributes." As light is exclusive of darkness, so holiness is exclusive of sin. It is morally impossible for God to create or approve an unholy being. Therefore man, made in His image and after His likeness, was created holy.

He was earth-born, having formed his body out of the dust of the ground. God built into him the power of self-propagation and also the power of self-preservation. He then united with it a spirit personality in His own likeness. Thus man was endowed with the capacity for God and holiness on the one hand and necessarily the capacity for rebellion and un-holiness, on the other hand. Man was made holy with every power to stay so, but necessarily with the power not to stay so. Any moral, free being must be possessed of the power to do either good or evil. We must remember, however, that the power to do a thing, neither necessitates our doing it, nor does it make it right for us to do it.

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God did not want cosmic robots, but rather He wanted a creature whom He could love and one who could freely reciprocate that love. There could be no meaning in our love unless we are capacitated for its opposite. Capacity in itself is unmoral. It is the use that a free being makes of capacity which gives it quality, either moral or immoral. It is when one freely chooses to love God and his fellowman that it brings meaning and virtue to his actions.

With this capacity, God knew that man could misuse this freedom and fall from his holy estate into sin and become estranged from his creator. He, therefore, planned and provided a perfect redemption in Christ Jesus so that no man would ever be lost on the account of the sin of another. Finally, God placed this highly created man under probation with the command to keep the law of obedience and the duty to take care of the Garden. The purpose of probation was because God wanted to have a race of morally free people who would possess a holiness which was not only a Holy God's requirement but also the result of their own moral choice. So man must confirm by his own choice

his created condition. If he would have obeyed, he would have come to sainthood and been translated to heaven with no death.

II. FALL OF MAN (Holiness Forfeited)

We know, all too painfully, that Adam did misuse that freedom. He broke the law of obedience and fell into sin. The holy union and fellowship which he had previously enjoyed with his creator was severed. The glory (dignity) and honor (authority) that he was endowed with in his created state has now been lost. His crown is rolled in the dust, and his honor is tarnished and stained. Sin has caused fear to enter into the picture, and the creation that once willingly submitted to his dominion must now be subdued by force. The sinful effects of the fall have touched all of the posterity of this first man, Adam. As a result, death and sin have passed upon the whole human race (Romans 5:12). The results can be clearly seen in the universal depravity of man. While man had forfeited original holiness that he enjoyed in the Garden, God, through Christ, had planned and provided for his redemption and restoration. It is this great plan of redemption and restoration that I want to review, keeping in mind that God is not doing anything in redemption that He had not planned in the creation. "God hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Ephesians 1:4).

God has provided in the atoning work of Christ, by His grace, to lift us out of our guilt and condemnation of sin so that we can live a life of godliness. This process and plan began immediately following man's fall in the Garden. "He was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

The Methodist Expositor, Joseph H. Smith said,
The slaying of the lamb in God's eternal thought and provision, from the foundation of the world, has unconditionally secured man a parole and deferred execution of sentence and our short tenure of life here on earth is time to give us opportunity to seek the shelter of Calvary's Cross.

The idea of the substitutionary atonement is seen in the slaying of an innocent animal so that the first couple could hide their nakedness. In one way or another, the redemptive pattern of Christ is seen upon every page of God's Word. The Decalogue was given to Moses on the mountain along with the pattern of the tabernacle that the Children of Israel were instructed to build. The purpose of the tabernacle was to furnish a place where God could dwell among His people. It was also a place where His people could worship Him in accordance with His directions. Everything, from the materials used in its construction to the offering of the animal sacrifices, was to represent Christ. Every detail in the tabernacle was a prophetic statement that one day the Lord Jesus Christ would become flesh and "tabernacle among us." Four thousand years later "the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). He walked upon the earth teaching, preaching, and ministering for thirty-three years and then, as the Lamb of God, He was crucified on Calvary's Cross to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

III. REDEMPTION (Holiness Restored)

The words of my text are a quotation from Leviticus 11:44; the passage in full states;

"Ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy." This was impressed upon the Hebrew people very early after their deliverance from Egyptian bondage that they were to be a holy people unto the Lord. God is eternal and He is immutable. From the beginning, there has been no variation in His character, nor any deviation in His purpose. He requires His people to be holy in character and conduct in the present, just as He did in the past.

God, from the beginning, and so it is now, wants to share His glory with man. If that is to be, then He must have the same quality of character in order to share His glory. Therefore, man must be holy even as He is holy. God has prepared heaven to be the destiny of man, and He has chosen holiness for the character of man. For the holy there can be only one end, and that is heaven. For entrance into heaven there can be only one qualification, and that is holiness. What God requires He correspondently provides because it is morally impossible for God to require holiness and not make adequate provisions for such a requirement. Christ Jesus provided for this on the Cross of Calvary.

A lesser motive than a complete moral recovery of man, so that he would fulfill forever the great purpose of God in His origin, could never have commanded the sacrifice which God has made for man's redemption. C. W. Butler.

Therefore God, through the offering of His only begotten Son, has provided a cure for sin, all of it, its practice, its power and one day, even its presence. The plan of salvation is deliverance from all of sin, for the whole man, for all time.

We speak of things that are important, more important and most important. Paul says "all things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient" (I Corinthians 6:12). In other words, there are some things that are important, but there are other things that are more essential. This is so true of man as well as his salvation. Man is a complex being. He is material (body), mental (intellect), and a moral being. The least important part of man is the body. He must have food for nourishment of his body, rest and exercise to keep fit, but without the development of the intellect, his appetites and passions would soon destroy him. Therefore, the mental surpasses the material in importance. However, the moral must rise in mastery over the mental, or he will become a master mind of crime and vice. Character is all important in the makeup of a man. The highest character is the Christian character, and the most important part of Christianity is holiness of heart and life.

Each step in the plan of salvation has an increasing value, and while they are complete in themselves in the designed plan, each one leads to the next higher step in the redemptive scheme. Let's notice the process of graduation. First, God in His Divine initiative convicts the sinner of his lost estate, and he senses the condemnation of sin. This necessarily is designed to move him toward repentance. Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" Luke 13:3. Repentance is the next step in the process. It is the recognition and renunciation of all personal sins. Through the appropriation of faith in the merits of the blood of Christ the soul is pardoned from all past transgressions, and he receives grace to keep from sinning in the future. Such a one is regenerated and justified before God. This completes the first work of grace. He now lives in a new dominion, under new directives, moving in a new direction, and

motivated by a new dynamic, the Holy Spirit.

Initial sanctification at regeneration solves the problem of willful sinning. This is what Dr. Chalmers called the "expulsive power of a new affection." Being delivered from the power of sin and with this new affection, the desire is to pursue the path of Christian righteousness rather than earthly indulgences. The whole sin problem is "potentially" dealt with in sound conversion. However, it won't be long until the sin problem will become very real and personal, but now the problem has shifted. The conflict will not be in a life of willful sinning, but rather with the presence of the sinful self-life. George Fox, founder of the Society of the Friends, testified, I knew Christ, and He was very precious to my soul, but I found something within that would not be patient, tender, and kind. I did what I could to keep it down, but it was there. Finally, I besought the Lord that He would come and do something for me. And when I gave Him my all, He came in and cast out that which would not be patient, tender and kind.

" And then," Fox adds in his quaint way, "He shut the door!"

It is at this point in man's spiritual pilgrimage that he will be confronted with his second challenge, that of a complete consecration, with the necessity of dying out to the world around and selfishness within. Having now experienced the depths of depravity that still lurks in the soul, it is now time to seek entire sanctification. While initial sanctification in regeneration solves the problem of willful sinning, entire sanctification in the Baptism with the Holy Ghost solves the problem of a sinful, divided self-life. Through confession, and a total abandonment (consecration) to Christ, one can believe to the cleansing of the heart from depravity.

Entire sanctification as a second work of grace removes the lurking unwillingness to fully obey God, the unit of rebellion, the inner cause of spiritual tension. Revealed truth shows us that depravity and death came through the disobedience of Adam. But the Word also shows that deliverance and life came through the obedience of One, and through that obedience many were made righteous. Christ has provided a remedy as great as the disease and a salvation as great as the sin. With all hindering causes gone, pure love can now be exchanged between the creature and the creator.

Thirdly, while one is cleansed from all sin instantaneously in entire sanctification, there is need of progressive sanctification. One is admonished to "walk in the light as He is in the light. The blood cleanses (continues to cleanse as we continue to walk in light) from all sin." One must continue the disciplining and maturing of his whole being into the habits and thought patterns of full Christian character.

Scriptures teach us that heaven is a holy place, where there is a holy God, and all its inhabitants are holy, with the angels and the redeemed saints from all ages resounding, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts!" The very atmosphere breathes with holiness. If Christianity is to fit us for heaven, it must do so by imparting a holy character within us while we are still on probation. If holiness is the qualification for entrance into heaven, then the prospect of holiness goes beyond the grave. It is with this in mind I want to impress on the reader that the most important part of Christianity and the redemptive scheme is "HOLINESS!" It is not only most important; it is imperative.

In creation, before the fall of man, holiness existed in the Garden as a principle. It was this principle that enabled the walk of fellowship and communion between God and man in the cool of the day. In the PAST, holiness was a part of man in his created state before any other facet of the Christian system was needed. In the PRESENT, it out-

shines all other experiences of the soul. All other requirements of the plan of redemption are in order for one to be made holy. In the FUTURE, it is the only part of the Christian system that will be carried beyond the grave. When we finally get in the Celestial City and experience the state of glorification, holiness will be our song of victory. When we arrive in that city, there will be no more need of conviction, repentance, pardon, consecration, confession, crucifixion, etc., but "WITHOUT HOLINESS no man shall see the Lord." Holiness is essential!

Holiness is begun when one is regenerated and it is made perfect in entire sanctification and one day will be consummated in glorification, when we get to heaven. It must be remembered that as we walk in the light, every step with Christ is a step in holiness.

J. B Chapman taught that no saved person goes to hell and no unsanctified person goes to heaven. He meant that when one becomes a Christian, sanctification is imputed to him (I Corinthians 1:30) until he receives the light on entire sanctification, and then through a complete consecration and faith he actually becomes a partaker of holiness or is sanctified wholly. Holiness is not merely imputed it is imparted to him. The saintly John Fletcher said that when one is born again he is bound for heaven, and if death occurs before he experiences entire sanctification, God will take the WILL for the DEED and he will enter heaven with a clean heart, fully sanctified.

Since God is infinite in holiness and since His holiness in its quality and content clothes Him with unspeakable and unapproachable glory, it will take the same quality of character in every moral being to satisfy God. It will take the same quality of character to fully and permanently satisfy man.... Man will never be satisfied outside of the orbit of God's perfect will, in which he possesses the moral quality of character that holiness represents.... The most terrifying picture of eternal damnation is the eternal unrest of a lost soul. It will be despair without hope, darkness without light, sorrow without any alleviation. It will be sin let loose on itself, without any of the mollifying influences of the presence of righteousness.

Heaven represents the eternal rest of the soul, basking in His glory; not rest of inactivity, but the rest of harmony, absence of all friction and care, the presence of the fullness of joy and light without darkness.... Final redemption will include the glorification of our humanity, to share the felicity and glory of our infinite redeemer.

Dr. C. W. Butler

Preparation as to this moral quality of character for this great consummation of God's plan must be made here and now. We are commanded to be "Holy even as He is Holy." He is the standard and the source because it is based upon God's own character, but the objective is to be realized by a supreme moral choice on the part of the receiving subject. Let us not put off the most important decision of our lives, for our decision now will determine our destiny then. When our probation ends, we will enter an eternally fixed state of character.

"It is written, be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16). God has put it in writing, and all the abrasive antagonisms of atheism cannot erase it. Men may refuse to obey this command, but they can't remove it. Some will try to defame it, but they can't destroy it. They

may disbelieve it, but they can't disprove it. The indelible inscription of the immutable God cannot be obliterated. "IT IS WRITTEN, Be ye Holy; for I am Holy."

OUR HOPE IN CHRIST

(I Peter 3:8-15)

The moral obligations of the Christian life are here instructed as the necessary evidence of His indwelling. The world has no means of judging the work of grace in the heart but by our actions. They cannot see Christ crowned within, but they do see the Christian conduct without. One may ask why we should seek to please the world, and the answer is in order that the world might see Jesus in us and be drawn to Him. The best way for this to happen is through the Christian living a blameless life.

In His High Priestly prayer, recorded in John 17, Jesus prayed, "pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil [one]. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." God has chosen by the method of Spirit-filled men and women to reach a lost world, "because as He is, so are we in this world" (John 4:17b). Frederick Coufts said, "It is the one serious attempt that the Christian can make to translate the Spirit of Christ into a recognizable pattern of Christian behavior."

William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, spoke appropriately when he was speaking of the various translations of the Bible by saying,

To see a new translation of the Bible into the hearts and conduct of living men and women... This seems to me to be the only translation which will in the long run prove to be of any value. It is the reproduction of the Scriptures in men and women that makes their worth.

He continues to say, speaking of the untiring work of the scholars and their various translations,

There seems to me only one thing left to be done and that is to give us a literal, and faithful and understandable translation of it in practice.

Herein lies the difference between a mere "holiness" people and a "holy" people. The former subscribes to the holiness teaching as a doctrine. He believes it and will try to defend it the best he can from an intellectual approach and even promote it with his means, but while he has accepted it in his head he has never experienced it in his heart. The latter is one who has made the complete surrender to Christ his Lord and not only believes it in his head, but has appropriated it in his heart. He now is able to exemplify the holy lifestyle in everyday practice. The former becomes a liability to the promotion of holiness, but the latter is a tremendous asset as its witness.

I believe that this is what Peter is setting forth in the text, and I would like to speak to the whole context by two propositions:

I. THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

II. THE LIVING OF THE CHRISTIAN

I. The Lordship of Christ

Peter admonishes us to sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. In order for one to do that it will require an abdication of one's rights to himself. This is not only a very sacred act, but it is an on going attitude of life. It could be read,

"Sanctify the Christ as Lord." To call Jesus Lord was to ascribe to Him supreme authority. This requires an abdication on our part so He may rule and reign without any rivals. When we enthrone Him as Lord in our heart, He emancipates us from the tyranny of self-rule. Sanctification seen from two positions is this; we resign in order that He may reside and reign.

What repentance is to justification, consecration is to entire sanctification. Repentance towards God must precede faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in the case of those seeking forgiveness. It follows that unconditional surrender is the indispensable condition of trusting Christ our Lord as Savior from indwelling sin. Perfect trust cannot exist without complete surrender. Nor can we surrender our will to one whom we cannot trust. We must come to the place where we can pray, "I am willing to receive what you give, accept what you withhold, relinquish what you take, suffer what you inflict, be what you require, and do what you command; have your own way with me and mine in all particulars." It is then that we are not far from knowing Him as Lord who has supreme authority over our being.

This abdication, this abandonment was not motivated by fear but rather by affection. Love for our merciful Savior is what inspired us. When once we are regenerated, His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and this is what moves us to make a complete surrender to His Lordship. Even in this act, He took the initiative. I John 4:19 tells us that "we love Him, because He FIRST loved us." God is love, and He always acts in a way that is consistent with His nature. C. S. Lewis said that He does not save us because we are lovable but rather because He is Love\ He who is Love is also Holy, so this love is "agape" (Holy Love). Holiness always expresses itself in Love, and Love always seeks to bring its object unto holiness. Love without Holiness would be indulgence, and Holiness without Love would be harshness, I fear.

When we sanctify the Lord God in our hearts, love is no longer centered in ourselves but in Him. Through love, our will has surrendered at every point to His will as the rule of our lives. This is not the extinction of the human will, as man without a will ceases to be man, but it is in union with God's will. God has made the will the hinge on which our destiny turns, and on its freedom rests our responsibility. Our will must ever be subordinate to the will of God. While living in harmony with the supreme will of God, we pray as He prayed in the garden, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" As He came to do the will of His Father, He set the pattern for our living while in this world. This is where the distinction between self-love and selfishness lies. Selfishness is self love without regard for the will of God or the well-being of others. It is this "self" that must be crucified before there can be a resurrection unto life. Christ, not "self," must occupy the center of our being.

Oftentimes when one enters upon the work of total abandonment of self, God will make demand after demand, until the self-life is exhausted. There are times when there may be a final area of one's life that is so entrenched that victory will not be complete until it is totally yielded. Abraham may have been willing to give everything else over to God, but if he had refused to give up Isaac, all else would have been useless. It is our

'Isaac' that God wants. F. B. Myer was willing to yield up all but one key to a small compartment of his heart, and God refused any key until he had yielded that one.

It was Frances Ridley Havergal who wrote:

"It was on Advent Sunday, 1873, that I first saw the blessedness of true consecration. I saw it as a flash of electric light, and what you see you can never unsee. There must be full surrender before there can be full blessedness. God admits you by the one into the other. One of the intensest moments of my life was when I saw the force of the word 'cleanseth'.

It was at this time, too, that she wrote her great consecration hymn, "Take My Life and Let It Be."

There are those who will argue that they made that consecration when they first embraced religion. God's Word teaches us that through the New Birth one is regenerated and becomes a new creation. Having previously been dead in their sins, God gives them new life in Christ. It is not until we have a life to consecrate that we are able to make such a presentation to our Savior. Christ now resides in one's heart, but He does not reign. There are forces of the carnal self that want to assert their authority over His Lordship. The carnal mind will not subordinate itself to the law of God and is a rebel in the soul. The carnal mind manifests an anti-authoritarian spirit over Christ's rulership and always challenges and even clashes with the Mind of Christ at the point of self-love, self-seeking and self-will. Jesus comes to inhabit our hearts and will stay as long as He gets our permission to cleanse the temple. He will not cohabit with carnality. He will be Lord of all, or He will not be Lord at all. It is at this point that we are admonished to "Sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts."

Paul further says, "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1, 2). In this passage we notice a bit of a paradox, for one must be "holy" in order to make such a presentation of himself (no sinner could ever do that), and yet

he makes the presentation in order to be made "holy." When the transaction is complete, one finds that the consecrated gift of himself is "acceptable" to God, and God's perfect will, in turn, is acceptable to him. Having abdicated the throne for Him, we can now adore Him who is on the throne. Let us endear Him who is enthroned and give our sacred love to our supreme Lord.

II. The Living of the Christian

The affection that inspired us to sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts, through which He has come to indwell us, now impels us to His sacred service. This affection giving due regard to the enthroned Christ is to be evidenced in our conduct. In Luke 6:46, Jesus had just stated that every tree is known by his own fruit, and then He poses this very searching question to His disciples, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" He is saying that there are many who will say that they know Him as their Lord and yet their practice stands as a contradiction to their profession. There was a discrepancy between what they said and how they lived. If man is not living by His sayings, it is because he has not sanctified Christ as Lord in his heart. The more

openly we call Him Lord, the greater is the obligation to obey Him, and the more severe will be the condemnation if we do not the things He says.

It is only His Lordship that enables us to exemplify the Christ-like life. For Jesus further reminds us that, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" Luke 6:45. His indwelling becomes the reason of the hope that is in us. The character of His indwelling will be reflected in our conduct for the whole world to see and inquire us of the reason, "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

The reason of the hope within is disclosed through our love, life, and loyalty. In I Peter verses 8 and 9 we read, "Having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing; knowing that you are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." Having become recipients of God's love and mercy, we are now able to demonstrate this same courtesy and compassion to those in need as we were. How can anyone, who has His presence within them, perform anything but the ministry of mercy and pity? When we were unloving and unlovable, Jesus died to redeem us from all sin because as the song writer penned it, "He looked beyond our faults and saw our need." With this same Spirit we are able to evaluate others in the light of love. The sanctified Christian does "not render evil for evil but love acts contrariwise; it blesses, and by so doing inherits the blessing."

When, through Christ, we have pure love in our heart, it always results in increased sympathy with His dominant passion, the salvation of the lost. Zeal in soul-winning is simply love on fire. In this we prove our love to Christ by what we do for our fellowman. When He is Lord of our heart and life, our love is in kind, like His love. The love of Christ, the most sublime of all motives, and the glory of Christ, the most sublime of all ends, becomes the ruling principle of our actions. Thus we are admonished to do, "all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31b).

The reason of the hope within is also disclosed by life. It is Christ within that enables us to love life, and see good days. Everywhere Jesus went, and everyone He touched, He made life worth living. He gives purpose to life. Sin makes life miserable and brings about destruction and disintegration, but the Savior always brings meaning and integration to life. When one is redeemed and restored, it results in a harmony and beauty that the world knows nothing about. The life is through the living Spirit of Christ. This life is mediated through Him.

God is revealed in Christ, and Christ is revealed in the Spirit, and the Spirit quickens and reveals life in His people. He reveals the face of Christ and transforms us into the same image, from glory to glory, even as from the Spirit of the Lord. Jesus was the visible expression of the Father, and we are to become the visible expression of the Christ. All Christ-likeness of life is by the transforming power of life through the Spirit of the living God, the giver of life. The fruit of the Spirit comes not by man's effort and striving, but by the indwelling of the life-giving Spirit. The reason of the hope within is also disclosed by our loyalty. "If ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled" (vs. 14). The model of all suffering virtues is found in the Savior. From the moment of His birth, His life was in peril until they finally nailed Him to the Cross. They pursued Him throughout His life for evil, and He pursued

them for good. It has been stated that when He lived them out of their comfort they laughed Him out of their court. When they avenged all of His labors of love with their hate, cruel mocking, scourging, and finally the suffering of the cross, He meekly bowed His head and gave His life for our redemption.

He was faithful to His mission despite the suffering and pain that He endured. He was fearless and untroubled because He loved us with an everlasting love. The writer to the Hebrews drew the picture of His suffering and admonished us to follow our file-leader "lest we be wearied and faint in our minds." He encouraged us to be patient and steadfast and loyal to the end by "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2-3).

We are further encouraged with the consoling words, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are opened unto their prayers" I Peter (vs. 12). In essence the writer is simply reinforcing the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 8:31b, "If God be for us, who can be against us V If we sanctify the Christ Lord in our hearts, greater is He that abides than they who attack. Christ is within us and the conflict is without. He not only resides, but He reigns, and we are now ready to give the reason for our hope in the reproduction of His holiness.

"Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
all thy wonderful passion and purity;
O, thou Spirit Divine, all my nature refine,
til the beauty of Jesus be seen in me."

—Albert Orsborn

THE THRONE OF GRACE

(Hebrews 4:14-16)

This is one of the most precious promises extended to the children of God. Here we are given a place to flee when in need of His mercy and grace. We are invited to come to the Great High Priest any time we need to for comfort, strength and instruction, and we will always find the help that we need.

Charles Spurgeon said, "When God enacts law He is on the throne of Government, when He tries his creatures by His law He is on the throne of Judgment, but when He receives our petitions and prayers, and He dispenses favors, He is on the Throne of Grace." Let us examine this promised privilege under four points.

- I. The Person on the Throne
- II. The Purpose of the Throne
- III. The Proximity of the Throne
- IV. The Privilege of the Throne

I. THE PERSON ON THE THRONE

"He is our great High Priest."

He is the eternal Son of God who is identified as "First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.. .He is the Faithful Witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth" (Revelation 1:4-11). In verse 18 of that same chapter He says, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death."

He is greater than the angels for even the angels worship Him according to Hebrews 1:4. He is greater than Moses, the great law giver, but while the law came by Moses, grace and truth came by the Lord Jesus Christ. He was greater than the Aaronic priesthood for their ministry was an earthly ministry. They ministered daily, offering sacrifices that could never take away sins. The sacrifices which they offered year by year continually could never make the people perfect. This order of the priesthood ultimately died.

However, when Jesus came into the world, He did not come to offer up the animal sacrifices, but He Himself would become the final sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (Hebrews 10:5b). He was the Lamb of God that was slain on the cross. Following His resurrection, He ascended into heaven itself in the role of our High Priest.

The Eternal One has made an everlasting covenant through His blood. He was here before the first bird ever sang a song, or the first flower ever bloomed, or the first tree ever bore its fruit, or the first ocean ever began its surge. ¹¹ He laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of His hands." He hung the stars in their silvery sockets and polished the shiny disc called the moon and placed the sun in the zenith of the heavens. He scooped out the seven seas and now holds the water in their banks

with a rope of sand. He piled up the dirt and made the mountains and crowns them with perpetual snow. He also carpeted the world with greenery and tacked it all down with the daffodils and daisies. However, the writer tells us that, "They shall all perish, but thou remainest: and they shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail" Hebrews 1:11-12.

In the course of time, (2000 years ago), "The Word was made flesh and tabernacled [pitched His tent and dwelt among us for awhile] among us." He was born of the Virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We are told, "He increased in wisdom and in stature, in favor with God and man," in Luke 2:52. When He reached a certain age, He was baptized by John the Baptist, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove, and God pronounced His pleasure upon Him. He was now entering into His priestly ministry in the fulfillment of all righteousness.

The Holy Spirit led Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. The first Adam failed in the Garden through disobedience, and "death by sin passed upon all men" Romans 5:12. Jesus, (second Adam), met the devil in the wilderness and defeated him. Dr. Eldon Fhurman said that the first Adam believed the devil's lies, accepted his lordship, and received his likeness. When Jesus met the devil in the wilderness, He exposed the devil's lies, expelled his lordship, and expunged his likeness.

Jesus came out of the wilderness in the power of the Spirit to continue His earthly ministry. Following three years of ministry, His mission finally took Him to the cross where He would voluntarily and vicariously die for the sins of the whole world. It was on Calvary's cross that He became our atonement and our redemptive possession. He then was laid in a borrowed tomb where three days later He arose from the dead and ascended upon high, and "who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God..." Hebrews 9:14b. Now He is our High Priest having entered "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" Hebrews 9:24b. He now is our advocate and representative Priest before God in heaven.

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE THRONE

"Obtain mercy and find grace..."

We have a High Priest who faced the devil head-on and was, "in all points tempted, as one without sin..." In other words, Jesus was not tempted in all points as a sinner was tempted; He was tempted in all points as a man without sin in His soul is tempted. His sympathy in temptation is extended to His holy people, and not to the sinners. To the sinner He extends His pity and calls them to repentance and faith so that He can lavish His love upon them and call them His sons and daughters. Therein they obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. While He was incarnate He laid aside the prerogatives of Deity and was tempted in all points like as we are, but He did it apart from a corrupt or depraved heart. He, unlike fallen man, was the sinless one. While temptation could not have been real unless He had the power to acquiesce to the enemy, when the enemy attacked Him it is stated, "the prince of the world cometh, and hath nothing in me" John 14:30. He is our redeeming kinsman, and He is able to succor (aid, help) all of His children who are tempted.

The purpose of our approaching the throne is that we may "obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Grace is God doing for me what I do not deserve and

mercy is Him not doing to me what I do deserve. Let us look more closely at the grace of God.

Grace is essentially God's love in action on behalf of sinful man. It is the favor of God bestowed freely and selflessly to work redemptively for all sinners. Christ's death is an act motivated solely by God's love for a sinful humanity that did not deserve it. It is unmerited love that is unrestricted in its universality and can be responded to appropriately only in faith and obedient service. (A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology).

- a. There are various phases to this grace that we will explore. It is first of all God's approach to man. It is called prevenient grace, which simply means that God's calling man is always previous to man's response to His call. He takes the initiative by drawing fallen man to Himself. Long before we ever sought Him, He was seeking us. He follows after and reproves, convicts, and convinces us when we are oftentimes not receptive to His voice. Many of us can recall, following conversion, the many times and ways that God was trying to get our attention, but we did not heed His reproof immediately. Personally, I well remember a number of times that I felt His nudge in my heart before I ever appropriated faith to accept Him as my Savior. He faithfully stands at our heart's door, gently knocking and patiently waiting for us to open the door and invite Him in. What a loving, patient, and merciful Savior. He uses various means to reach us. Providences of life, prayers of the saints, faithful preaching of the minister and a multitude of other ways He employs to draw us to Himself. Jesus reminds us that, "No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him" (John 6:44). Whatever means He uses to get our attention, we must ever remember that He is doing the drawing.
- b. It is also a gift of God to man. It is experienced through His pardoning and purifying grace. These are His gifts to be assured. While salvation is all of grace, there must be a cooperation (or synergism) on the part of man to receive both His pardoning and purifying work of grace in their hearts. The Spirit of God does not work irresistibly between divine grace and the human will. It has been stated that next to the omnipotence of God is the will of man. God can create and rule over the universe, but He must gain man's consent to rule over his life.

He places the stars in the heavens and spins the planets in their orbit, but He hangs the destiny of the human soul on the invisible hinge of the human will. If man's will proves to be obstinate and refuses His appeal, it is not what God chose or desires but it is what He will permit. Olin Alfred Curtis.

There are still two Adams, and the responsibility of choice still lies with man. We may reject grace and continue in sin, or we may renounce sin and live in grace. Every man elects to be identified with Adam or Christ, to choose sin or grace.

The story is told of one who was serving a long prison sentence for a political crime that he was found guilty of committing. After many long months of praying, petitioning the proper authorities for a pardon by his father, a pardon was finally granted. The father went to the prison to visit his son, along with those who would offer him a pardon. His father was so elated about sharing with him the good news of his soon release from prison. However, the son was very resistant, thinking that he was being used by an administration that he was adamantly opposed to and refused the pardon. When he refused, the pardon was withdrawn, and the sentence remained. Man is not condemned because he refuses Christ, but he is condemned already because of his sin. However,

when man refuses Christ, the offer of pardon is spurned and the sentence of death remains. "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. There are two conditions required of one to receive His pardoning grace', they are repentance and faith. If one will turn from his selfish ways and believe Christ, he will receive a pardon from all his past sins and grace enough to keep from sinning in the future.

Jesus did not die only to give a guilty man a pardon for his sins but also to purify his polluted heart. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" I John 1:9. General Frederick L. Cou tts has said:

The doctrine of holiness should always be considered in its proper setting—as an ... integral part of the redemptive purpose of God for men. Rightly understood it is the one serious attempt which believers may make (as God should help them) to translate the Spirit of Christ into a recognizable pattern of Christian behavior. The forgiven soul cannot be content to remain forgiven only.... When theologians declare that "a justification that does not issue in sanctification is not justification at all," they are but saying in their own idiom what believers instinctively realize. (THE CALL TO HOLINESS)

While God has forgiven us of our Acquired depravity (transgressions), we soon come to realize that there was something deeper down in our make-up that caused us to break God's law called Inherited depravity that came about as a result of the fall in the garden. In Romans 5:12, Paul reminds us that Adam's disobedience polluted the entire human race but Jesus has made provisions on the cross for man's restoration to the divine image. We read in Romans 5:19, "For as by one man's [Adam] disobedience many [all] were made sinners, so by the obedience of one [Christ] shall many [all] be made righteous."

As pardon abounds over guilt, so sanctification abounds over the presence and principle of sin in the soul. Forgiveness without cleansing would not cover man's need. The work of grace must be at least coextensive with the work of sin. The sacrifice of Calvary has provided not only for imputed righteousness but also for imparted righteousness. Christ in the heavens justifies; Christ in the heart saves. Where sin had its seat, His throne is established.

c. There is a preserving grace in its continuing enablement. We, as Christians are not promised exemption from the problems, trials, and cares of this world, but we are assured of the sufficiency of His grace. It is the fortifying agency that makes the soul superior to all the powers that would assail it. We have access through His blood to approach the throne of Grace and there obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. We are able to live a triumphant life over sin because of God's promised assurance. Paul tells us, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (II Corinthians 9:8).

III. THE PROXIMITY OF THE THRONE

"He can be touched..."

It was through Adam's disobedience in the Garden of Eden that man became

alienated from his creator. Sin severed man's relationship with God and an estrangement between God and man was initiated. God had plans to restore man to his lost estate and He set the redemptive scheme into motion. God's presence followed the children of Israel in a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day. That was not close enough, so He gave to Moses on Mount Sinai the Decalogue along with plans to build a tabernacle. When the tabernacle was built, God communicated to man from the tabernacle by the earthly priests. He later dwelt in the temple that was built, and He communicated through the High Priest to the people from behind the veil that separated the holy place from the holy of holies. Only the High Priest could go into the holy of holies and represent the people.

Some two thousand years ago, "The Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." God became visible, and audible, and tangible as they saw Him, heard Him, and even touched Him. That was closer than the pillar of fire, cloud, tabernacle, or temple, but it was still not close enough. When He was crucified, the veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom, giving us access to the High Priest of heaven, (Jesus). We no longer have to be represented by an earthly High Priest, but with the indwelling Spirit we can now participate in the fellowship that was forfeited in the fall of Adam.

We are not serving a God far away in the heavens somewhere, but He is as near as the breath we breathe. H. Orton Wiley said that this verse is introduced by a double negative in order to emphasize and strengthen the contrary position. "For we have NOT an high priest which CANNOT be touched with the feelings of our infirmities." There might have been high priests in the past that would consider our petitions an infringement on their dignity or intelligence. But in Christ, we have not such a one. He will never be unfeeling or unsympathetic to our cry because He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

IV. THE PRIVILEGE OF THE THRONE

"Let us therefore come boldly.,⁹⁹

We, as His child, can boldly draw nigh and touch Him with unfaltering courage and unfeigned faith. The veil having been rent, we now can enter into the presence of God ourselves. We need no earthly high priest for He is our Great High Priest. H. Orton Wiley also said, "We can draw as near as we want, say what we wish, and ask with confidence what we need, and He will respond as quickly as a mother to a crying child."

The confidence translated here "boldness." was purchased for us by the blood of Jesus and inspired in us by the Holy Spirit. Through prayer we approach the throne of grace, which is an essential part of God's economy. The expressed purpose of the throne of grace is to give aid and comfort to His embattled saints. It is by the means of this grace that we are able to be triumphant over all temptation and "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

THE PROMISED GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

(Acts 18:24- 19:7)

Paul, passing through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus and found twelve disciples who had been won to the Lord by Apollos. Apollos was a very eloquent man and well versed in the scriptures. However, Apollos was limited in his ability to declare the whole counsel of God for he knew only the baptism of John. He was, as yet, totally unacquainted with the Baptism with the Holy Ghost. It is not possible to lead one into a state of grace that you have not yet experienced, and so it was with Apollos and the twelve disciples that he had won to the Lord.

In Acts 18:26 Aquilla and Priscilla perceived that there was something lacking in Apollos' faith. They took him unto themselves and "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." Early in the ministry of D. L. Moody he had great zeal but very little effect. There were two ladies who encouraged him but recognizing his lack told him that there was something better for him and that they were praying for him to experience it. One afternoon in New York while walking along Fifth Avenue, Moody felt the need to get alone with God. In that sacred hour of abandonment to His Lord, he received a dynamic (Holy Spirit) which lifted his life and ministry from mediocrity into magnificent purpose and power. These ladies acted toward D. L. Moody in the same way that Aquilla and Priscilla interceded on behalf of Apollos.

There was no question about the conversion of these twelve disciples to the Christian faith, having received John's baptism. John refused to baptize anyone who had not truly repented. In Matthew chapter three, it is recorded that there were some Pharisees and Sadducees who came to be baptized of John, and he refused to accommodate them until they had proven to him that they had truly repented. John was simply saying to those that he baptized into the Christian faith that while "the Lord speaketh upon the heart, man can only look upon the outward appearance" I Samuel 16:7. Therefore, before he would baptize them, they must give outward evidence of their repentance.

John the Baptist further prophesied that while "he indeed baptized with water unto repentance: He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" Mathew 3:11-12. It was this baptism that Apollos had not yet experienced and that Paul recognized that these twelve disciples needed. In Acts 19:6 it is recorded that when "Paul laid hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them."

All true Christians have the Holy Spirit according to Galatians 4:6 and as is stated in Romans 8:9, "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." The question is in what capacity or relationship does one have the Holy Spirit. One day a man introduced his fiancée to me, and some time later he introduced the same lady to me as his wife. She was the same person but in a different relationship.

One may know Christ historically, but not experientially. One may know Him as their

Savior, but not as their Sanctifier. So it is with the Holy Spirit. One may know the Holy Spirit as the Reprover of their Sins or even as their Regenerator, but not know Him in the glorious gift of His Fullness. It is possible to receive the Holy Spirit in the fullness of His personality, but not yet know Him in the fullness of His operation in our hearts and lives. It is for this reason that Paul asks, "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?"

After receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, Andrew Murray prayed, "O Lord reveal within me what it means, lest I sin against thee by saying it and not living it." It is the baptism with the Holy Spirit that purifies the heart from all sin and perfects the love of God in the heart. It is then that one can "love one another with a pure heart fervently" I Peter 1:22.

I want to present three points:

I. The Receiving of the Holy Spirit II. The Reason for receiving the Holy Spirit III. The Requirements for receiving the Holy Spirit

I. THE RECEIVING

The question that Paul poses in Acts 19:2 is not, have you done? have you given? or have you joined? He doesn't ask have you been sprinkled, poured, or immersed? He doesn't ask any such questions, but instead he simply asks, "have you received?" Salvation is a gift at every stage whether it be pardon, purity, or power. Salvation is not something we do but something we receive. It is not by man's own grit that we receive the Holy Ghost but by God's grace.

Following Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus, God gave to him his commission. In Acts 26:16-18 his commission is recorded and in verse 18 it is stated that Paul was "to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." This was not something they could have as a result of their heritage, or education, or wealth, but it was rather a gift that they were to receive.

The whole of redemption is on the ground of a gift. "God so loved the world that He save His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" John 3:16. In Titus 2:14 we are told, "Christ save Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." I Corinthians 12:7-11 we are told that the Spirit gives gifts, "dividing to every man severally as He will." Man is not a Christian in the likeness of His Savior if he is not a giver to his fellowman.

We cannot give anything to God or our fellowman until we first receive from our God. James 1:17 says that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Until we receive from the Father of lights we are mere parasites and sponges, always taking but never giving. However, when we receive the Holy Spirit, we also receive the spirit of generosity, and like our generous heavenly Father, we find it a joy to give.

II. THE REASON

When Paul passed through the upper coast to Ephesus and found these twelve

disciples, he must have seen something in them that revealed to him that they had not yet received the fullness of the Holy Ghost. It was this discernment (I Corinthians 2:15), that prompted the question,

"Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" It was the same spiritual discernment that enabled Aquilla and Priscilla to acknowledge the need yet in Apollos and to expound to him the way of God more perfectly (Acts 18:26). These twelve disciples had been recipients of John's baptism but had not yet received the baptism of Christ.

John the Baptist prophesied of this baptism in (Matthew 3:11-12). He said one would come who was MIGHTIER and more WORTHY than he was, referring to Christ, and that He alone could perform this baptism. He distinguished the difference between his baptism and that baptism which Christ would perform. John's baptism was ceremonial, but Jesus' baptism is experiential. John's baptism was external, (outward sign of an inward work of grace), but Jesus' baptism was internal. John used an impersonal element in his baptism, (he baptized with water), but Jesus used a very personal agent in His baptism, (He baptized with the Holy Ghost Himself).

It was not until Jesus was glorified that one could receive the Holy Spirit in this capacity according to John 7:37-39. "In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. In verse 39, John gives the interpretation of this illustration: But this spoke He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." So it is that there must be a glorified Savior before we can RECEIVE the gift of the Spirit. This was God's coronation gift to His children in response to the Son's sacrifice. Daniel Steele says, If our inference from this passage is correct, then it follows that when penitents are justified through faith in Christ, they do not in the Pauline sense, "receive the Holy Ghost," in the peculiar office of the Paraclete, though they may receive the witness of the Spirit. It follows moreover that it is the duty of all who have been filled with the Spirit, whether preacher or laity, to testify of this great salvation, and to use many efforts to lead others, especially preachers of the Word, into the enjoyment of this grace.

Here we find that the old adage is true, "like priest, like people." They were in the same state as their former pastor, Apollos. They were like the disciples before the day of Pentecost; they were in the ante-Pentecostal state. They were in the same condition as many Christians are today. They know Christ in their sins forgiven but not in the mighty effusion of the Holy Spirit. They are born of the Spirit but have not yet experienced the baptism of the Spirit.

Paul knew that they were not ready, nor equipped for the evangelistic thrust of Ephesus until they received the promised Spirit. Paul laid his hands upon them, and the Holy Ghost came upon them. Following this experience they went into Ephesus in the power of the Holy Ghost, and a mighty revival broke out. E. S. Jones said that the revival shook Ephesus from its center to its circumference, even extending into Asia Minor. It lasted for over two years, and \$10,000 worth of false literature was destroyed. What a difference a Spirit-filled people make.

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is essential to salvation, it is the means to expiate sin, and is vital equipment for service. The tragedy is that many Christians have never

received the Holy Ghost since they have believed unto salvation. Let us examine why many, like these believers at Ephesus, have not experienced the Fullness of the Holy Spirit. I want to offer two possible reasons.

a. Perhaps they, like these disciples, have never heard that the Holy Spirit is given in this capacity.

Jesus knew that it was necessary for the disciples to tarry in the upper room following His ascension until they received the promised Holy Spirit. It was then that they would be witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. They were to herald the Gospel message to a lost world. This they did, and following the sermon that Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, three thousand souls were saved and the Lord added to the church daily many who were saved. Spirit-filled men preached the Good News and thousands were saved.

Romans 10:13-14, Paul says, " Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall he saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard ? How shall they hear without a preacher ?" I Corinthians 1:21 Paul says, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Here we are told that God's method of winning souls is through the preaching of the Word. It is no more irrational to suppose that the heathen world might be evangelized without the preaching of the Gospel, than to suppose that the Christian might be sanctified wholly without the preaching of scriptural holiness.

Some gainsayers might have supposed that the church would have been better served if Paul would have preached to the lost souls of Ephesus, rather than being concerned about these twelve disciples being filled with the Spirit. Here, as in many other instances, we are shown that until the Church is Spirit-filled, the world will continue to grope in darkness. The importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit cannot be overstated if we expect to win a lost world to Christ.

Jesus warns us of false prophets that would come espousing their false doctrines and errors. We also must be concerned about the Truth they omit, because sometimes the danger lies not in what they say, but what they leave unsaid. Many teach and preach that one must be born again and declare the doctrine of repentance, baptism, and the remission of sins; but refuse to admonish the Christian to "go on unto perfection" Hebrews 6:1.

We are told that, "the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" II Peter 3:9, but we also read in I Thessalonians 4:3 "for this is the will of God, even your sanctification." The church will be Spirit-filled only when its members appreciate the divine plan and appropriate the divine provisions that God through Christ has made available. Whatever the discussion may be as to the why of its necessity, perhaps Joe Brice's statement is most clarifying: "The human spirit fails unless the Holy Spirit fills."

b. The other reason is perhaps they have not met the conditions that God has laid down

in His Word. I want to present those required conditions under the following heading.

III. THE REQUIREMENTS

If one has not been filled with the Spirit, it is never because God is unfaithful in His promises. Oswald Chambers said, "Beware of saying I'm longing to be sanctified. If God has not sanctified you and made you blameless, there is only one reason and that is that you don't want Him to. This is His will for you and you have not to urge Him to do it."

- a. One must be UNWORLDLY and all that that word connotes. "/ will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; WHOM THE WORLD CANNOT RECEIVE, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but you know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." It obviously means that when one has been born of the Spirit he has turned from the old order and has entered into a new Realm (The Kingdom of God), has accepted a new Ruler (The King of Glory), and is enjoying Resources of which this world order has no knowledge. J. H. Jowett, "Worldliness is a life lived on the horizontal level, not the vertical level. It is a life that seeks success but not holiness. It is a life lived for self and not for Christ." These are not qualified to receive the Holy Spirit. The only ones who are eligible to receive the Holy Ghost are those who are not of the world.
- b. The second condition for receiving the Holy Ghost is an affectionate, loving obedience to Christ on the part of them who are not of the world. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments." That is loving obedience. When one comes seeking to obtain the Father's gift of the Holy Spirit, he must not be in any strained relationship with God as far as obedience is concerned. If there is any unconfessed sin or disobedience, if there is any drawing back or hesitancy in this relationship, he is not qualified for the Holy Spirit for the simple reason he is not justified. This is not for one in a backslidden condition, but rather he needs to repent and be restored in his relationship to God. This gift is only for the children of God who are separated from the world and living in loving obedience to God.
- c. Consecration must be made of the child of God in order to receive this gift. When making a total abandonment of oneself to God, one must not try to drive a hard bargain with God on a commercial basis. The altar is not a negotiating table. There are those who say, "Lord, I will give thee all of this if thou will give me the Holy Spirit." They use their consecration as a purchase price for the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Father's love gift to His children; He is the gift of a lover. He is received on the condition that you give God all your affections; it is where love meets love.
- d. Finally we must ask in faith believing. We are His children and therefore we do not need to come to the back door begging like a tramp. Jesus said, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

This promise of the Holy Spirit is as distinct from the new birth as the rivers overflowing are from wells springing up from within. It is this experience that burns up

the dross of base desire, and our prayer for a clean heart is answered, and our longing to be made perfectly whole is finally met. The fullness of the Holy Spirit will not only be evidenced by what we have received but also by what is noticeably gone.

Like the disciples following the day of Pentecost, ambition for the high places will be gone. A vindictive spirit toward those who won't receive our Lord will be absent. The cowardice spirit that threatens one to deny his Lord will have vanished, along with bigotry, lust, jealousy, envy, pride, malice and all manifestations of the flesh.

The battle lines have now shifted from our affections, desires, and will to other areas of life. We must be very circumspect as we walk with Him in our devotion and our discipline. With the help of the Holy Spirit as our Master we must govern our thoughts, sensibilities, weaknesses, and infirmities of the body and mind. That war within has been won, but the battle still rages from without. However, we are more than conquerors in Christ for "greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" I John 4:4.