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A New Testament Study of the Problem of Sin After Sanctification

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A NEW TESTAMENT STUDY OF THE PROBLEM OF
SIN AFTER SANCTIFICATION

by

Norval Hadley

A Thesis

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the Faculty of the
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

I. HISTORY AND ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. Very much has been written on the subject of sanctification, but many of these writings were found to contain comparatively little clear teaching on the subject of sin after sanctification. Furthermore, there has existed in the minds of many with whom the writer has been personally acquainted some questions on this subject, indicating a need for more sound instruction in this field. This study has sought to answer some of these questions. The problem here presented was: Can a fully sanctified person sin? If so, how should sin after sanctification be explained doctrinally, and how can it be prevented experientially?

Objectives. It was the purpose of this study to try to determine clearly and accurately what the Scriptures teach concerning the extent to which salvation from sin is possible in this life. With this general objective in mind, the work was guided by the following specific objectives:

- (1) To find the New Testament definition for sin.
- (2) To discover just how thoroughly and how permanently Jesus is able to save the human soul from sin in this life.
- (3) To find some of the things sanctification leaves undone.
- (4) To find the relationship of sanctification to temptation and

the possibility of sinning.

- (5) To find what can be done if one has lost the blessing.
- (6) And finally, to find the New Testament teaching concerning the way to keep from sin after sanctification.

Justification of the Study. While in evangelistic work, the writer found among other criticisms leveled at the holiness movement the one that some people who got sanctified had the idea that they had "arrived". They felt they had attained a state of grace from which it was impossible to fall, and in which it was unnecessary to grow. Though these people identified themselves with the holiness movement and claimed the cleansing experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, they sometimes have offered the least cooperation and the most criticism to Holy-Spirit-led evangelistic efforts. Their lives afforded manifold evidence that if they ever knew the freshness and the reality of this experience (and it is believed many of them had known it), they had lost it. Apparently having the idea that it was impossible for them to sin, they quit watching against sin while they continued to witness to the experience that destroys sin. They waived all apprehension as to their spiritual condition, and sin reappeared. It has been the purpose of this study to uncover material that will be useful in dealing with this class of people.

There is another class who may be interested in this problem. It is composed of those Christians who desire to enter into sanctification, but hesitate because they do not understand just what this cleansing is to accomplish in man. The writer was one of these. Questions hindered progress, such as these: If the very root of sin was taken out when one was sanctified, then how could one ever sin

again? How can one reconcile I John 1:7, 9 and 3:9 which teach that he can be cleansed from all sin, with I John 1:8 which says, "if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves?"¹ Or if one ever slips after having been sanctified, will he have to start all over again? If sanctified people never sin any more, then what is a sin, and what is a mistake?

Perhaps one of the reasons these questions lingered even after hearing many sermons on holiness was because holiness preachers and teachers were anxious to sell their product, and they feared that if they said too much about sin after sanctification the candidate would be discouraged. The best holiness teachers, of course, have not shunned to touch on these questions. Still the writer failed to find any one book dealing exclusively with this problem.

II. LIMITATIONS AND METHOD OF PROCEDURE

Limitations. This has been primarily a New Testament study. It was the desire of the writer to restrict data only to that which had foundation in Scripture. It was not a complete study of sanctification, but was limited to a study of sin after entire sanctification.

Method of Procedure. Because this was a New Testament study, the first step was to locate as many passages as possible which had bearing on the problem by the use of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible with Dictionaries of the Hebrew and Greek Words.

Since this did not by any means constitute a complete study of the Bible teaching on this subject, the next step was to conduct a special reading of the entire New Testament noting every passage that shed light on the problem.

1. A.S.V.

Further material was gathered through a study of writings of various Bible scholars about this New Testament teaching. An effort was made to list all the books available which contained any chapters or sections dealing with the problem of sin after sanctification. In the study, then, of these chapters and sections, special attention was given to scripture passages used, and to comments on these passages. Thus, while much time was spent in the study of the writings of men, the objective was to learn just what God's Book teaches concerning the problem of sin after sanctification. The comments of these scholars were cited in connection with various Bible passages. If in any case, however, an interpretation seemed inconsistent with the meaning of the passage, the inconsistency was noted. All through the study important help was obtained from faculty members of the Western Evangelical Seminary through personal interviews and class lectures.

The American Standard Version of the Bible has been used primarily in this study and has been quoted in most instances throughout the dissertation. When another version was used to show the idea of some author, or for some other reason, it has been clearly indicated.

III. DEFINITIONS

Just Just two words connected with the statement of the problem have required definition: sin and sanctification. Since a separate chapter has been given to an understanding of the first term, the need here is only an explanation of the meaning of the term sanctification.

"Sanctification", as used in this dissertation, refers only to entire sanctification, also called holiness or Christian perfection. Scripture describes it using such terms as sanctified wholly (I Thess.

5:23), cleansed from all sin (I Jn. 1:7), cleansed from all unrighteousness (I Jn. 1:9), the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5), the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4), deliverance from the body of this death (Rom. 7:24), love made perfect (I Jn. 4:17), crucifixion of the old man (Rom. 6:6), and many others. The following definitions were found to conform closely to New Testament teaching:

Brengle. "Holiness is nothing more nor less than perfect love for God and man...holy love is the surest safeguard against all kinds of sin."²

Wesley. The experience of one entirely sanctified is a total death to sin and an entire renewal in the love and image of God, so as to cause one to "rejoice evermore," to "pray without ceasing," and in everything to give thanks.³ "Both my brother Charles and I maintain that Christian perfection is that love of God and our neighbor which implies deliverance from all sin."⁴

Adam Clark. "What then, is this complete sanctification? It is the cleansing by the blood of that which has not been cleansed, it is washing the soul of a true believer from the remains of sin."⁵

The following statement by Mr. A.M. Hills clearly summarizes these definitions and defines sanctification as used in this thesis:

-
2. Commissioner S.L. Brengle, The Way of Holiness (Atlanta, Supplies and Purchasing Departments, 1949), p. 13.
 3. John Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection (Louisville, Pentecostal Publishing Company, n. d.), p. 24.
 4. John Wesley, quoted in J.B. Chapman, The Terminology of Holiness (Kansas City, Beacon Hill Press, 1947), p. 63.
 5. Adam Clark, quoted in J. B. Chapman, op. cit., p. 64.

Entire sanctification is a second definite work of grace wrought by the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer subsequently to regeneration, received instantaneously by faith, by which the heart is cleansed from all inward corruption and filled with the perfect love of God.⁶

The Word "Entire". Since the word sanctification as used in Scripture has a broad application, the word entire has been added to express the meaning as used in this thesis. The Bible indicates that there are different stages in the process of sanctification. The Greek word from which the word "sanctify" comes is ἁγιάζω. This term and its derivatives occur in the Scriptures with reference to men and things over one hundred times. It occurred thirty times in the New Testament and was rendered (A.V) "sanctify" twenty six times, and, in several cases, means inward moral purification (Jn. 17:17, 19; Eph. 5:26; I Thess. 5:23).⁷ In these verses and in Hebrews 13:12 the verb "clearly looks for a purification of the Christian from the inner defilement of sin as well as pardon for the guilt of his sinful acts."⁸ Thus a two-fold meaning is implied in the word itself. This term was used in regard to Jesus' followers in the New Testament as it was used of priests in the Old Testament to show that they belonged to God, not to describe their conduct. It declared what God required them to be, not what they necessarily were.

Paul said the Corinthians were sanctified (I Cor. 6:11), yet they were not spiritual, but carnal, "babes in Christ", full of

6. A.M. Hills, Scriptural Holiness, quoted in J.B. Chapman, op. cit., p. 64.

7. George Allen Turner, The More Excellent Way (Winona Lake, Ind., Light and Life Press, 1952), p. 13.

8. Ibid., p. 84.

jealousy and strife, walking after the manner of men (I Cor. 3:1-3).

Sanctification is a work wrought in believers by the Holy Spirit, a spiritual change wrought in the hearts of men. Every one who has been converted or born again has experienced the work of "initial" or partial sanctification. This was the experience of the Corinthians mentioned above. It was an initial cleansing of the guilt and defilement attached to sinful acts. This was not a half-way cleansing. It was a definite cleansing, but was limited strictly to that guilt and acquired depravity attaching to actual sins, for which the sinner himself was responsible. On the other hand, entire sanctification is a work wrought in the heart of the believer subsequent to regeneration, and it includes the cleansing from original sin or inherited depravity. Sin is two-fold. There is the act of sin, and the state or condition of sin. Sanctification, therefore, must be two-fold.⁹

So Wesley, observing that Paul used the term for those who were justified, believed that, referring to those who were saved from all sin, the word "wholly" or "entirely" should be added.

Other Terms for Sanctification. Of the several terms used to describe the experience of entire sanctification, "holiness" was probably the one most generally used to refer to the totality of the state. The word "holy" in the German language also means healthy. The English word whole--all in one piece, without any hole in it--is the same word. Holy really means healthy, completely healthy. It means more, however--the gracious endowment of perfect love, and

9. H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology (Kansas City, Beacon Hill Press, 1947), Vol. II, pp. 480-81.

the abiding fulness of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰

A second term, purity, was never found to be a synonym of holiness. Although without purity one cannot be subjectively holy, yet holiness is much more than purity. Purity is the negative excellence. It is without activity. Holiness implies the most intense mental and bodily activity of which one is capable.¹¹

Perfect love refers especially to the filling of the heart with the Holy Spirit of love. Christian perfection describes the state or condition resulting from the cleansing and filling.¹² The word "sanctification" has particular reference to the cleansing side of this work of grace.¹² Thus the term sanctification has been most generally used in this thesis which deals with the reappearance of sin after this cleansing has been performed.

These definitions and explanations have been given to tell what entire sanctification is. The discussion of what it does in man has been reserved for a later chapter.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The main body of the thesis was begun with a discussion of the meaning of sin (chapter two). A distinction was made between sin as a condition and sin as an act. Some things which are not sins were discussed. Chapter three dealt with the extent to which salvation

10. Ibid., p. 60.

11. Joseph Agar Beet, Holiness as Understood by the Writers of the Bible (New York, Phillip and Hunt, 1889), p. 51.

12. Rev. H.W. Middleton, Aspects of Holiness (Mingo Junction, Ohio, H.W. Middleton, 1949), p. 80.

from sin is possible in this life. Various answers were given, then the Bible answer. Objections were answered and the conclusion was stated. Chapter four was a discussion of some of the things sanctification is not and does not do.

In chapter five the relationship between sanctification and temptation was noted. Special attention was given to the nature of temptation after sanctification and to the promise of victory. Then chapter six noted the relationship of sanctification to the possibility of sinning. Scripture writers were quoted, objections were answered, and the advantages of sanctification were cited. Chapter seven discussed what is to be done when one has lost the blessing of sanctification. A distinction was made between backsliding and apostacy. In chapter eight the Bible formula for keeping from sin after sanctification was found in two words, trust and obey. Chapter nine, giving a summary and some conclusions, closed the thesis.

CHAPTER II

THE MEANING OF SIN

It has seemed fitting that this writing begin with a clear explanation of the meaning of sin. Richard Taylor said, "Sin, as one doctrine of the Christian system is the common denominator of the other doctrines...Many, perhaps most, of the errors which have protruded themselves into Christian theology can be traced to a faulty conception of sin."¹ A clear understanding of the true doctrine of sin is essential to this study.

The Bible teaches that sin has a two-fold nature: it is a condition and it is an individual act. In a study of the problem of sin after sanctification it was felt necessary to understand sin, first, as a condition from which it is or is not possible to be saved in this life. Then if it is possible to be saved from this condition, the problem is to know whether or not it is possible to commit acts of sin after this salvation has occurred. The second need, then, was to know what constitutes an act of sin. What, then, is sin according to the New Testament?

I. SIN AS A CONDITION

Dr. Turner has noted that the New Testament vocabulary includes some twenty eight synonyms for sin, making a total of 386 occurrences.

1. Richard S. Taylor, A Right Conception of Sin (Kansas City, Nazarene Publishing House, 1939), pp. 9, 10.

This gives some idea of the importance of this subject in the Bible. There are eight different roots of which these twenty eight synonyms are derivatives. The most frequently occurring root is ἁμαρτ which appears 214 times out of the total of 386.²

The use of the noun form of this word, ἁμαρτία, occurring 171 times, opened up a truth which was very important to our study, that sin has a two-fold nature. Turner has shown that, among the several ways in which this word was used, there was that of an evil principle declared to denote, not sin as an action, but sin as a quality of action, that is "sin generically". Romans 5:13; 7:13; 7:20, 21; and 6:12, 14, were cited to show sin as not merely the quality of an action, but a principle manifesting itself in the conduct of the subject.³

Another Greek word, ἀσκήα, expressed the idea of iniquity as a state of unrighteousness; the state of righteousness displaced by a false one. The word translated ungodliness, ἀσεβεια, (Titus 2:12) implies not just actions, but a wrong attitude or relation to God, a character unlike God, tending toward doom.

This state or principle of evil, called in theology inbred sin, was described in various ways by the New Testament writers. As recorded in the American Standard Version, the following expressions were found to bear some relation to the basic idea of inbred sin: a "law" (Rom. 7:21-23), "the body of this death" (Rom 7:24), "sin" (Rom. 7:17), "our old man" (Rom. 6:6), "the body of sin" (Rom. 6:6), "the mind of the

2. George Allen Turner, The More Excellent Way (Winona Lake, Indiana, Light and Life Press, 1952), p. 74.

3. Ibid., pp. 74-75.

flesh", and "enmity against God" (Rom 8:7), "unrighteousness" (I Jn. 1:9), "iniquity" (Tit. 2:14), "evil" (Luke 11:13), "defilement of flesh and spirit" (II Cor. 7:1), "sinful passions" (Rom. 7:5), "the flesh" (Rom. 7:5), "the sin which doth so easily beset us" (Heb. 12:1), "root of bitterness" (Heb. 12:15), "the law of sin and of death" (Rom. 8:2), "the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof" (Gal. 5:24), and "the body of the flesh" (Col. 2:11).

This sin condition exists in man but as a foreign, and therefore separable principle. It is like fever in a body. It permeates the whole body, making it less effective, but it is not essential to the body. It can come out. It is like dirt in a sheet. The whole sheet is dirty. This condition depraves the whole nature of man but it can be washed out. It dwells in man (Rom. 7:17), but it can be removed from man (Rom. 8:2). It is not bodily appetites, but is expressed through bodily appetites. In the next chapter the writer has shown the extent to which Jesus can save men from this kind of sin.

II. SIN AS AN ACT

What constitutes an act of sin? The holiness people have been accused of having a dim sense of sin. Opponents charge that instead of bringing personal experience up to the standard of divine law, the law has been brought down to the level of experience. They quote Matthew 5:48 as the standard, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." There is no higher standard than this for angels or for Adam, and this is commanded of men. Therefore, they would ask, is not any lack of conformity to the standard of God's

perfection sin?⁴

Webster has defined the noun "sin" as a transgression of the law of God; disobedience of the divine will; any violation of or lack of conformity to God's law, either in purpose or in conduct; moral deficiency in character; iniquity. As a verb, sin means to depart voluntarily from the path of duty prescribed by God to man; to violate any known rule of duty.⁵ Wesley said, "Sin properly defined is the willful transgression of a known law of God."⁶

There are these three definitions for sin. The first has called any lack of conformity to the absolute standard, whether known or unknown, sin. The last said only willful transgression of a known law is sin. And Webster has kept between the two.

The verb form, ἁμαρτάνω, occurring thirty nine times in the New Testament, in the Classical Greek meant to miss the mark, to fail of the right, or to go wrong, and commit iniquity.⁷ The question which has arisen is: What is the mark?

A less common word is ἁνομία (fifteen times), which is usually translated (A.V.) "iniquity." "Basically it means lawlessness", wrote Turner, "whether willful or from ignorance; in Romans 6:19 it is the

4. Henry A. Boardman, The Higher Life Doctrine of Sanctification Tried by the Word of God (Philadelphia, Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1877), pp. 181-86.

5. W.T. Harris, ed. in Chief, "Sin", Websters New International Dictionary of the English Language (Springfield, Mass., 1911), p. 1960.

6. John Wesley, quoted in Daniel Steele, Steele's Answers (Chicago, The Christian Witness Co., 1912), p. 58.

7. Turner, op. cit., p. 74.

antithesis to 'righteousness'...and 'holiness'." ⁸

It is the etymological usage of these two words which has given rise to the two theories of sin. The Wesleyan definition of sin as a willful transgression of a known law came from ἀνομία, and that characteristic of Calvinism--"a falling short of the perfect law of God"--came from ἀμαρτία.

The variety of New Testament seems not to warrant such hardened distinctions--they arise from necessities of logic rather than exegesis...In James 4:17 the sin of omission is described, ("to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin"), with the implication that without wrong intention there is no evil. Likewise, in John 9:41, the sin of the Pharisees is declared to be in proportion to their light. There is thus no sin apart from responsibility. ⁹

At the Bristol Conference of Methodism of 1758 a distinction was made between sin as a voluntary transgression of a known law and sin as an involuntary transgression of a divine law, known or unknown. The former was sin "properly so called", and the latter was sin "improperly so called." ¹⁰ Such a distinction became fundamental for Wesleyan theology.

It has been noted in justification for this definition that God's quarrel is not with our humanity, but with our disposition to set our will against his. Belief in a "sinning religion" has resulted from too broad a definition of sin. Too much has been included, hence the idea that none could live above sinning in this life. God does not require

8. Ibid., p. 75.

9. Loc. cit.

10. Harold Lindstrom, Wesley and Sanctification (London, The Epworth Press, 1946), p. 148.

that kind of legal righteousness which necessitates a perfect head as well as a perfect heart. He asks for perfect fulfillment in heart--in motive, intention, choice, and affection--of the law of love. The first commandment is to love God and neighbor. "Love is the fulfillment of the law."¹¹ This is the mark--the possession and expression of perfect love. Sin is a transgression of the law (I Jn. 3:4), the law of love (I Jn. 3:23; Rom. 13:10). The law may be unwittingly transgressed without, but if it has been honestly kept within, no sin is ascribed. On the other hand, the law may be broken before the act is ever performed, when the thing is decided in the heart. When evil is committed in the imagination without even the intention of committing the act, it is sin (Matt. 5:28). "God looketh upon the heart" (I Sam. 16:7).¹² "Sin is the transgression of the law, but it can be committed only in the heart; the outward act is but the expression of that sin."¹³

"Ye are not under law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). Those who insist on placing mistakes, sins of ignorance, and human shortcomings into the same bracket as a stubborn spirit and evil affections and conscious choice of evil, and labeling every act that falls below the absolute standards of righteousness a true act of sin, are putting themselves back under the law.¹⁴

Boardman asked what about John Newton who for several years after his conversion continued to prosecute the slave-trade on the

11. Romans 13:10, A.S.V. Cf. Gal. 5:14.

12. A.V.

13. Taylor, op. cit., p. 64.

14. Ibid., p. 67

coast of Guinea. He quotes Newton as saying, "I never knew sweeter or more frequent hours of Divine communion than in my two last voyages to Guinea..." Newton lived, in so far as the slave trade was concerned, without conscious sin. Boardman asked, "Did the Divine law, in its requisition upon him, pause at the precise line where its 'light' became darkness and absolve him from all responsibility as to what lay beyond?" Then he reminded, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Prov. 28:26).¹⁵

It has seemed to the writer that the Scripture just quoted has been mis-used. The context shows that he who trusteth in his own heart which is deceitful above all things before the Lord cleanses it is a fool. Newton was apparently born again, and the verse above did not so much apply to his condition as I John 3:21, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (A.V.). "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."¹⁶ Newton seemed to have been enjoying this fellowship.

Steele agreed that he was excusable in God's sight. He was blinded by the darkness of his times and guided by his fallible moral judgment which the Holy Spirit did not correct immediately.¹⁷ Thus it has been shown that some things that are sometimes labeled sin are

15. Boardman, op. cit., pp. 188-90.

16. I John 1:7, A.V.

17. Daniel Steele, Love Enthroned (New York, Eaton and Mains, 1902), p. 339.

not sin. The discussion following has dealt with some of these things.

Infirmities are not Sins. Jesus said of the traitor who willingly betrayed him, "Good were it for that man if he had not been born" (Matt. 26:24); but to the sleeping disciples in Gethsemane he tenderly said, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). Judas had sinned. The disciples had been overcome by an infirmity.

Acts 17:30 says, "The times of ignorance (not sin) therefore God overlooked."¹⁸ This was because God's standard has never been absolute holiness, but relative holiness, according to revelation.

Steele has given eight clear distinctions that are worthy of attention: (1) Infirmities are failures to keep the law of perfect obedience given to Adam in the Garden. This law no man on earth can keep; sin has impaired the powers of universal humanity. Sins are offenses against the law of love. (2) Infirmities are an involuntary outflow from our imperfect moral organization. Sin is always voluntary. (3) Infirmities have their ground in our physical nature. Sin roots itself in our moral nature. (4) Infirmities entail regret and humiliation. Sin produces guilt. (5) Infirmities need not interrupt communion with God. Sins do. (6) Infirmities hidden from ourselves are covered by the blood of Christ without a definite act of faith in the case of a soul vitally united with Him (Heb. 9:17). Sins demand a special resort to the blood and an act of reliance on Christ. (7) Infirmities are without remedy so long as we are in the body. Sins, by the keeping power of Christ, are avoidable through every hour of our regenerate life (Jude 24). (8) A thousand infirmities are

18. A.S.V.

consistent with perfect love, but not one sin.¹⁹

A perfect man may still have wrong judgments, from which wrong words and actions may flow, and in some cases wrong affections, but these are not sins. The difference between sins and mistakes is in the heart attitude.²⁰

Satan's Accusations are not Sins. One of the favorite devices of the enemy of our soul is to accuse the believer of sin when he is guiltless and thereby discourage him (Rev. 12:10). But a watchful Christian may distinguish the accusation of Satan from the convicting of the Holy Spirit. Satan uses a sudden flash impression that one has failed. If the Spirit is convicting for sin, there is an abiding quiet feeling that one needs help.²¹ He tempted Jesus with sudden suggestions (Matt. 4:1-9), especially when he showed him all the kingdoms of the world at one time. Satan may be overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of testimony (Rev. 12:11).

Temptations are not Sins. If temptations were sins, Jesus would have been a sinner. Few have difficulty along this line except to know just where temptation leaves off and sin begins. Foster wrote that it is not at the point where evil is suggested that sin begins, for then temptation and sin would be inseparable. It is not necessarily where the evil thing suggested awakens a movement of the passion to which it is addressed, for sin does not reside in mere impulses of nature. Sin

19. Daniel Steele, Mile-Stone Papers (New York, Nelson and Phillips, 1878), pp. 44-47.

20. Rev. Eldon Fuhrman, Class Lecture, "Theology of Holiness", Western Evangelical Seminary, January, 1953.

21. Ibid.

begins precisely at that point where the soul is conscious of a disposition to yield to what it supposes to be sin.²² When the will indulges the desire or even fosters it against the remonstrance of conscience, lust is beginning to conceive, "and lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin" (James 1:15).

Anger is not Necessarily Sin. Jesus looked upon the Pharisees "with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart..."²³ Ephesians 4:26 says, "Be ye angry, and sin not." Yet some kinds of anger are carnal and therefore sinful. Chapman suggests that, "the line between human and carnal emotions is the point at which ethical content becomes involved. A spirit of angry revenge is carnal."²⁴

Heaviness is not Sin. Peter wrote, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations."²⁵ But he went on to show that this is not sin, but is given that the faith of these elect sojourners might be found unto glory. There is a difference between heaviness and darkness. Heaviness may be caused by some things for which we are not responsible. Darkness is caused by things for which we are responsible--sin: disobedience, unbelief, lack of watchfulness, prayerlessness, lack of love, neglect of duty, carelessness, trifling, and other such things.²⁶ John

22. Rev. R.S. Foster, Christian Purity (New York, Hunt and Eaton, 1869), p. 25.

23. Mark 3:5, A.S.V.

24. J.B. Chapman, Ask Dr. Chapman (Kansas City, Nazarene Publishing House, 1943), p. 171.

25. I Pet. 1:6, A.V.

26. Colonel S.L. Brengle, Heart Talks on Holiness (fifth ed.; New York, The Salvation Army Printing and Publishing House, 1910), p. 12.

1:19 shows that men are condemned for darkness, but no where was it found that men are condemned for heaviness.

III. SUMMARY

Sin has a two-fold nature. A study of Greek words for sin and of passages which speak of sin as a body or a principle of evil has shown that besides being an act, sin is a state or a condition of unrighteousness, which, though dwelling in man, can be removed from man.

Difference of opinion was found as to what constitutes an act of sin. A study of Scripture on this question has led to the conclusion that a true act of sin must involve a willful choice. It must be accompanied by two facts: (1) the knowledge of evil, and, (2) a consent to the evil.

CHAPTER III

SALVATION FROM SIN IN THIS LIFE

To what extent does Jesus, in this life, save from sin? Christendom is quite generally agreed that there is in every man, as a result of the Fall, the tendency toward evil, which was discussed in the previous chapter under the heading, "Sin as a Condition". The universal experience of mankind testifies so assuredly of this condition that few have tried to deny it. There was found to exist much difference of opinion, however, concerning the question of whether or not man can, in this life, be freed from this tendency.

Certainly the soul defiled with sin cannot properly be called holy. The Bible teaches, furthermore, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12:14). Men have agreed that this sinful condition must be treated, but they have disagreed again as to when and where this treatment takes place.

I. VARIOUS ANSWERS

Rev. Carradine has listed several theories as to when and how sanctification is obtained: (1) According to the Purgatorial theory (Roman Catholic), one may have cleansing from both actual and original sin here by baptism, but purification from "concupiscence" which remains is obtained only by flames burning in a kind of a middle world called Purgatory. (2) Most advocates of the death theory believe that sin

dwells in matter. This theory holds that purity can come only in the moment of death--when the flesh and soul are separated. (3) The reformation theory holds that people should stop doing wrong and live clean lives by an exertion of their own will power, and they will attain purity. (4) Zinzendorf fathered a theory which is still prominent today--that purity is obtained in regeneration. God does it all in one work of grace. (5) Some hold a growth theory, that holiness comes as a development. (6) The imputation theory, held by many opponents of Wesleyan holiness, holds that the heart is never made entirely clean in this life, but purity is imputed to it through Christ.¹ This is the idea that we are fitted for heaven, not because of our own holiness, but because of the holiness of Christ. Carradine then referred to the true theory of cleansing from all sin as "an instantaneous work of God, wrought in the soul of a regenerated man or woman in answer to perfect consecration, unswerving faith, and importunate prayer."²

The writer has not dealt with each one of these specifically except in showing the true answers of Scripture in contrast. A few, however, have demanded special attention.

Fleetwood, a proponent of the imputation theory, wrote a tract against Wesley's position, entitled Perfectionists Examined, which sought to refute Wesley on Biblical grounds. He defined "perfection" as inherent absolute perfection, and then proceeded to refute it.

1. Rev. B. Carradine, The Sanctified Life (Cincinnati, Office of the Revivalist, 1897), pp. 6-15.

2. Ibid., p. 17.

"The only perfection possible," he said, "is the perfect righteousness of Christ which is imputed (i.e., attributed) to the believer. Salvation from sin is only forensic, not an actual, change; it is nominal but not real."³ This idea is called Antinomianism, the idea that man is perfect only in his heavenly representative. This has seemed unreasonable to the writer. Can an impenitent adulterer boast that, in the Lord, he has chastity and righteousness? Revelations 7:14 reads, "they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The writer believes that man is to be perfect in himself, but not of himself. Perfection of humility and love are to be inherent, not in another.

At one time, Dr. H.A. Ironside held that sin dwells in the mortal body, and therefore, to the question, "Does the Divine Deliverer cleanse the heart from the vile indwelling pollution?", he answered, "No," for this would be perfection in the flesh.⁴ He used Galatians 5:16, 17 for the purpose of showing that the inner conflict was definitely declared to go on in every Christian.⁵ This led to the conclusion that the only way to attain perfection was to be separated from the flesh.⁶ If this were true, then when Paul prayed that folks might be perfected, as in II Corinthians 13:9, he was praying that they might die. When he said, "Be perfected" (II Cor. 13:11), did he mean commit

3. George Allen Turner, The More Excellent Way (Winona Lake, Indiana, Light and Life Press, 1952), p. 190.

4. Henry E. Brockett, Scriptural Freedom from Sin (Kansas City, Beacon Hill Press, 1941), pp. 45-46.

5. H.A. Ironside, Holiness the False and the True (New York, Loizeaux Brothers, Publishers, n.d.), p. 125.

6. Ibid., p. 129.

suicide? There must be a more reasonable concept.

An examination has been made of Galatians 5:16 and 17 which was used to prove this "two-naturist theory" that flesh and the spirit must continually war against each other, and that there is no deliverance. "But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, for these are contrary the one to the other..." The error lies in the identification of the "flesh" with indwelling sin, and in the thought that the term implies an inevitable dualism between matter and spirit. If one were to substitute the term "indwelling sin" where Paul uses the word "flesh" (Rom. 7:18; Gal. 3:3), in many passages he would make the apostle speak nonsense.

The "flesh" in Galatians is simply human nature in its fallen condition regarded as apart from divine grace. It includes spirit, soul, body, reason, affections, appetites, and is the seat of sin (Rom. 8:3). It is not, however, synonymous with "the sin". "Hence when Paul said, 'the flesh' lusteth against the Spirit, he stated what is characteristic of 'the flesh' regarded as an instrument of sin, and therefore in a condition of opposition to the Holy Spirit."⁷

The proponents of most of the theories mentioned have felt that the best one can do in this life is just to repress the tendency toward evil all his days and look forward to a better state in the world to come. They have not believed deliverance is possible, therefore they do not have an incentive to seek it or expect it. These positions were found to be out of harmony with the Bible answer to this question.

7. Brockett, op. cit., pp. 119-123.

II. THE BIBLE ANSWER

The New Testament has called this sin condition by various names and tells to what extent man may be delivered from it. The following passages have been noted: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death" (Rom. 8:2). The believer is to be delivered from "the body of this death" (Rom. 7:24). The "old man" is to be crucified (Rom. 6:6); also to be put away (Eph. 4:22). The "body of sin" is to be done away (Rom. 6:6), or destroyed (A.V.). Men are to put away all "filthiness and overflowing of wickedness" (James 1:21). The Lamb of God taketh away "the sin" of the world (John 1:29). We can be cleansed from all "sin" (I Jn. 1:7); from all "unrighteousness" (I Jn. 1:9). Jesus put away "sin" (Heb. 9:26). The Son of God was manifested "that he might destroy the works of the devil" (I Jn. 3:8). "The body of the flesh" is to be put off (Col. 2:11).

Wesley used the following New Testament passages to show that God saves men from all sin: II Corinthians 7:1, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and Spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God"; I John 3:8 (quoted above), showing that all sin is the work of the devil; Ephesians 5:25-27, "Christ...gave himself up for it (the church); that he might sanctify it", and present it "not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish"; and Romans 8:3-4, "God...condemned sin in the flesh..."⁸

A closer examination of these verses has been made. Their

8. Turner, op. cit., p. 201.

language has left little place for an idea of only partial deliverance. In the opening verses of Romans 8 Paul wrote, "Walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Come under the entire control of the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. This is a glorious promise of deliverance, for the "flesh" and the "Spirit" are utterly opposed. When a person has come completely under the control of the one, he is freed completely from the control of the other.⁹ This appears to teach deliverance from the inner struggle which Ironside has declared to go on through all this life as was noted earlier.

Repression or Eradication. In connection with the idea that sin can only be repressed in this life, not removed, the language of Romans 6:6 has been examined. The word translated "destroyed" (A.V.) or "done away" (A.S.V.) is the word *καταργηθῆναι* and is in the aorist tense, signifying an instantaneous act of God's power. The word from which it comes, *καταργέω*, means to render useless or unproductive, to make empty and unmeaning; to destroy, annihilate, free from.¹⁰ It cannot be interpreted to mean merely repress, as some have taught. The full force of the word can be seen from the following passages in which it occurs, as translated in the A.S.V.: (1) "The last enemy that shall be abolished is death" (I Cor. 15:26). (2) "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity" (Eph. 2:15). (3) "She is discharged from the law of the husband" (Rom. 7:2). (4) "Whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away" (I Cor. 13:8). (5) "That it is done away in Christ"

9. Brockett, op. cit., p. 135.

10. The Analytical Greek Lexicon (New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d.), p. 219.

(II cor. 3:14). (6) "That he might bring to naught the things that are" (I Cor. 1:28). (7) "When he shall have abolished all rule and all authority" (I Cor. 15:24).¹¹

Paul said in the same verse (Rom. 6:6) that "our old man was crucified (συνεσταυρώθη) with him." This verb comes from the word σταυρώω which means to affix to the cross, to crucify, to mortify; in the passive voice, as in this verse, it means to be cut off from a thing as by violent death, to become dead to.¹² This speaks of more than repression.

Wesley allowed that in justification the sin which remains in believers is merely "suspended", but in entire sanctification it is "destroyed".¹³ What has been most generally accepted is that Paul here spoke of the "body of sin" as a unitary principle rather than separate acts. "Not only are sins to be forgiven, but this principle is to be destroyed."¹⁴

Brockett cited Romans 6 as one of the clearest expositions of glorious freedom from sin Paul ever wrote. Paul used drastic terms such as "dead to the sin", "free from the sin", and the body of sin "destroyed" to express full deliverance. "The sin" (Rom. 5 and 6) was personified as a tyrant reigning over the world, and was regarded distinct from and external to the individual sinner. Scripture reveals

11. Brockett, op. cit., p. 61.

12. The Analytical Greek Lexicon, op. cit., p. 374.

13. Turner, op. cit., p. 195.

14. Ibid., p. 80.

blessed deliverance from sin in this aspect.¹⁵

Romans 6:1-11 shows that when Christ died on the cross, He died to "the sin," and in God's mind and purpose, each believer was identified with Christ in His death to "the sin." Likewise, when Christ rose from the dead, in God's mind and purpose, each believer rose with Christ to "walk in newness of life." Brockett concluded that "God will so utterly and completely set the believer free from 'the sin' as a tyrant, that it can have no more power or authority over him than a dictator can exert over a dead man."¹⁶

In other passages the language was found just as strong. When John wrote that "he was manifested to take away sins" (I Jn. 3:5), he used an aorist form of the word αἵρω which means to take up, lift; take away, remove; destroy, or kill. This is what He does in justification. John went right on to say He was manifested to "destroy the works of the devil" (I Jn. 3:8). Here the word is an aorist form of λύω which carries the idea of loose, unhitch, free from. This is what He does in sanctification. It seems to the writer that Bible language clearly shows the idea of repression to be insufficient.

II Thessalonians 2:8 speaks of the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall "...bring to naught by the manifestation of his coming". No one imagines that when the Lord brings to naught the lawless one He will merely keep him under, repress him, but that he will still be able to strike again. No! Christendom is agreed that the Lord will destroy him. *After the Millennium, yes. Premillennially, no.*

15. Brockett, op. cit., pp. 54-56.

16. Ibid., pp. 56-57.

The same language was used in Romans 6:6 in connection with the destruction of "the body of sin" and there it carries the same force of meaning.¹⁷

Daniel Steele concluded that if sin is not destroyed, then Christ's mission was a stupendous failure, because He does not destroy the works of the devil, and perfect holiness is impossible, either in this life or in that to come.¹⁸

Many people have objected to the word eradication. They have said it is not Scriptural. It is true that the word, as such, is not found in our English translation of the Bible, and that it has carried with it, in the minds of some people, ideas that are not Scriptural, but in the light of the foregoing Bible study, one must admit that some form of eradication is taught in the Bible. To "eradicate" means to "pluck up by the roots; to root up or out; hence, to destroy utterly."¹⁹ A synonym is "expiate".

Besides the passages already cited which imply that this is what Christ does to "the sin", notice II Timothy 2:21, "If a man therefore purge himself from these (profane babblings), he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, meet for the Master's use." Compare John 15:2, "Every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth (A.V., purgeth) it." The word used here, and in I Corinthians 5:7, is a form of καθαίρω

17. Ibid., pp. 63-65.

18. Daniel Steele, Steele's Answers (Chicago, The Christian Witness Co., 1912), p. 84.

19. W.T. Harris, ed. in Chief, "eradicate", Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language (Springfield, Mass., 1911), p. 743.

which means to cleanse from filth, to clear by pruning, make expiation. In II Timothy 2:21 and I Corinthians 5:7, ²ek is prefixed to it which makes it mean to cleanse thoroughly, to purge out, eliminate.

In Matthew 15:13, Jesus said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, ^swhall be rooted up." ^{when?} The Latin word here is "eradicated".²⁰ Matthew 3:5 says, "He will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor." ^{when He comes again} These words indicate that the idea of eradication is not unscriptural.

If, where these words were used the Bible writers meant to convey the idea of repression, they could have used other Greek words, such as the ones translated in the A.S.V. "bind" (Mark 3:27), "shut up" (Gal. 3:22), "restrained" (Acts 14:18), "laid hold", with the idea of choke or subdue, (Matt. 18:28), "hinder" or hold down (Rom. 1:18), and "held" (Luke 22:63).

Perhaps one of the difficulties in the use of the word eradication has arisen out of the fact that it is used in some cases to express ideas which do not apply in connection with "the body of sin". Eradication, as used in this sense, does not mean (1) that some physical entity is taken out, some thing you can weigh. (2) It does not mean that the humanity of a person is denatured. It is rather renatured. The natural desires of the body remain, but their perversions are removed. They are now disciplined into subjection to an obedient will. One may still be tempted and may fall as did Adam and Eve. (3) It does not imply the destruction of any of man's constitutional instincts,

20. Rev. Eldon Fuhrman, Class lecture "Theology of Holiness", Western Evangelical Seminary, February, 1953.

appetites, or susceptibilities.²¹

On the other hand, eradication does mean that (1) the sin that dwells in man, as an inherent principle resulting from the Fall, is cleansed completely (I Jn. 1:7). (2) The bias of the human will is removed and the soul delights in the law of the Lord. (3) The defilement of the affective nature is removed so that one is enabled to live in the spirit and practice perfect love to God and man. (4) The shadow upon the understanding is taken away so that the spiritual man has the mind of Christ (I Cor. 2:14-16), and can understand the things revealed by the Spirit.²²

Various other passages that teach complete deliverance from sin were noticed. I John 1:7 says, "The blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Steele cited John's definition of sin ("sin is lawlessness") to show that the term, as John used it, may refer to either an act or a state.²³ Then this passage means to the regenerated man the cleansing away of all sins, guilt, and depravity that are personal and that pertain to the individual; to the sanctified man it means all this plus utter removal of inherited depravity or inbred sin.²⁴

"If we confess our sins (plural), he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins (plural), and to cleanse (aorist) us from all

21. "Symposium of the term 'ERADICATION'", The Preachers Magazine, 23:1, January-February, 1948, p. 7.

22. Ibid., p. 7.

23. Steele's Answers, op. cit., p. 132.

24. Rev. B. Carradine, Sanctification (Nashville, Tenn., Publishing House of the M.E. Church South, 1891), p. 134.

unrighteousness" (I Jn. 1:9). This verse clearly teaches deliverance from both kinds of sin.

"And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly" (I Thess. 5:23). The Greek word translated wholly is ὁλοτελής which is a combination of the word for "all" and the word for "perfect" or "complete". The sanctification of each believer is to extend to the whole man in every part, just as sin and depravity have extended to the whole man (Isa. 1:6).

John 14:23 speaks of such a love relationship between man and God that the Holy Trinity will come unto man and will make their abode with him. Can anyone imagine God and sin abiding together? This certainly speaks of the possibility of a condition of complete deliverance from indwelling sin.

I John 4:18 says that "perfect love casteth out fear". The context shows this fear to be a result of sin. As long as sin remains this fear could not be cast out.

Matthew 5:8 implies that people can be "pure in heart". Compare Acts 15:8, 9. I Thessalonians 3:13 teaches that the Lord may establish hearts unblameable in holiness before God. Hebrews 7:25 says Jesus saves to the uttermost. Ephesians 3:19 shows that one may be filled with all the fulness of God, so full there will be no room for sin. The twentieth verse should not be separated from the thought of the verse before it. He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think".

The Idea of Perfection. The root from which words are formed which express the idea of perfection is τέλ. Derivatives of this root occur about 117 times in the New Testament. Twenty of these

indicate moral quality in man. While perfection is often future (I Cor. 13:10; Phil. 3:12), yet sometimes (I Cor. 2:6; Phil. 3:15), it is already present.²⁵ If some kind of perfection is possible in this life, men need to understand it.

The following passages imply that men should, in this life, possess perfection: Matthew 5:48; John 17:23; II Corinthians 13:9, 11; Ephesians 4:12, 13; Colossians 1:28, 4:12; II Timothy 3:17; Hebrews 6:1; Hebrews 13:21; James 1:4; I Peter 5:10; II Corinthians 7:1; and Colossians 3:14.

Others indicate that some kind of perfection or purity is possible in this life: James 3:2; Hebrews 10:14; I John 4:12; I John 2:5; I Timothy 1:5; Titus 2:13, 14; I Peter 1:22; I John 3:3; I Timothy 4:12; and II Timothy 2:22.

To live by a standard of Adamic or absolute perfection is obviously impossible in this life. If this were what God required, He would be unjust and unreasonable, for the effect of the Fall has rendered man incapable of living up to such a standard. What kind of perfection is meant, then, when Paul said, "Finally, brethren, ...Be perfected" (II Cor. 13:11)? Wesley called it Christian perfection, and defined it as "negatively, not exemption from ignorance, mistakes, infirmities, or temptation. Positively, it means 'a Christian so far perfect as not to commit sin'".²⁶

The holy man, then, is like God (Matt. 5:48), not in God's

25. George Allen Turner, The More Excellent Way (Winona Lake, Indiana, Light and Life Press, 1952), p. 95.

26. Ibid., p. 192.

natural perfection of power and wisdom and knowledge and omnipresence, but in patience, self-control, purity of heart, and in love. He is like God as a drop out of the ocean is like the ocean, not in its bigness, but in its essence. As the branch is like the vine (Jn. 15) not in its self-sufficiency, but in its nature, its sap, its fruitfulness, its beauty, so is he that is holy like God.²⁷ Christian perfection, then, is the state of glorious and complete deliverance from sin, as such deliverance has been discussed in the previous sections of this chapter.

III. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

To the idea that a Christian may be delivered from all sin in both aspects, sinful actions and sinful condition, many objections arise. Some feel that if one were to be saved to such an extent that he had no more sin in the heart, spiritual pride would so lift itself up that the person would become Pharisaical, self-righteous and take on a "holier than thou" attitude. There could be no greater mistake. One of the elements of holiness is perfect humility. If any profess it, yet are proud and Pharisaical, it is proof that they are deceived. Sin in the heart humiliates, but it does not mean that one is humble. To say that one needs sin to be humble is to say that he needs to be sick to be healthy.²⁸

27. Colonel S.L. Brengle, Heart Talks on Holiness (fifth ed.; New York, The Salvation Army Printing and Publishing House, 1910), p. 11.

28. Rev. Eldon Fuhrman, op. cit.

Some have honestly questioned the idea of living without sin because of certain passages of Scripture which seem to teach that this is impossible. One of these is Ecclesiastes 7:20, "Surely there is not a righteous man upon the earth that doeth good, and sinneth not."

II Chronicles 6:36 expresses the same idea. Dr. Chapman has explained that these two Scriptures are given to enforce the liability of all men to sin. He wrote, "Hebrew scholars, without exception, I think, agree that the rendering most consistent with the evident meaning is, 'There is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and may not sin'. This is a fact beyond dispute."²⁹

There are many problem passages in the first Epistle of John. I John 1:8 has often been quoted by the opponents of entire sanctification as if it finally settled the matter and proved the necessary continuance of indwelling sin. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." To properly understand John's meaning one should bear in mind that he had specially in view certain false teachers termed "Gnostics". One class of these taught that all matter was ineradicably evil and, therefore, as long as man dwells in a physical body he cannot possibly be free from sin. Then they allowed all sorts of sinful indulgences of the body but claimed all the time that the soul was pure and without sin, denying that they needed the cleansing blood of Jesus.³⁰

This dreadful heresy struck at the very foundation of the Christian

29. J.B. Chapman, Ask Dr. Chapman (Kansas City, Nazarene Publishing House, 1943), p. 169.

30. Henry E. Brockett, Scriptural Freedom from Sin (Kansas City, Mo., Beacon Hill Press, 1941), p. 82.

faith, and John wrote to expose the error of these false teachers (I Jn. 2:26). Verses five to ten of I John:1 are in three couplets. In the first verse of each couplet he declared the truth; in the second he thundered against the error. Thus in verse seven he declared the truth for believers that if they walk in the light the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. Then in verse eight he exposed the error of the false teachers who claimed they had no sin from which they needed to be cleansed. "There is nothing in this verse, therefore, properly understood, that affects in the slightest the truth of 'scriptural freedom from sin', through the cleansing efficacy of the precious blood of Christ."³¹

Wesley, speaking of I John 1:8-10, explained that the difficulty vanishes when one sees that the tenth verse fixes the sense of the eighth:

As if he had said, "I have before affirmed, 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin;' but let no man say, I need it not; I have no sin, to be cleansed from. If we say, that we have no sin, that we have not sinned, we deceive ourselves and make God a liar; but 'if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just,' not only to 'forgive our sins,' but also 'to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;' that we may 'go and sin no more.'"³²

I John 2:1, 2 has been cited by some as evidence that man is not expected to attain such a state of grace as to live without sin. However, a careful reading of these verses supports rather than weakens the teaching of scriptural freedom from sin. Notice, John wrote "These things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man

31. Ibid., pp. 83-84.

32. John Wesley, Sermons, quoted in Turner, op. cit., p. 193.

sin..." These verses are like the antidote on a bottle of poison. It is not put there so that every one may drink the poison, but just so that if any one should, he may be spared.

IV. AVAILABLE IN THIS LIFE

Later chapters in this dissertation have shown more completely just what this complete cleansing includes and what it does not change. A few verses have been examined which speak of this cleansing as available in this life.

Jesus "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). The purification for men while they are here on earth, alive and capable of good works, is available.

I Thessalonians 5:23 says, "And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then Paul added, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it." That is, He will not only sanctify men wholly, but will preserve them in that state until He comes to receive them unto Himself. What need is there for the idea of preservation if it is not attainable in this life?

Several verb tenses, as "casteth" (present tense) in I John 4:18, and "cleanseth" (present) in I John 1:7, show this deliverance to be a possible present attainment. According to Luke 1:74, 75, the Lord has sworn to grant us that we should "serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days." All of the exhortations to enter into holiness would be mockery if it were not possible in this life. Surely this miraculous deliverance is available

now. (See also I Jn. 4:17). How can men be satisfied with anything less?

The results of this blessing have been experienced by men in this life. There is a constancy of spirit. The soul finds its perfect balance in God. The warring element within is cast out. There is perfect peace. The fear of back-sliding is gone. Self no longer struggles for supremacy. Jesus has become all and in all. Anxiety about the future and worry are gone. Carnal fear is gone for "perfect love casteth out fear" (I Jn. 4:18). This, according to Brengle, is the experience of the one delivered from all sin.³³

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Christendom quite generally agrees that the sin principle exists in every man, but to the question as to whether or not Jesus saves from sin in this aspect, during this life, many answers have been given. These are that complete cleansing comes only by purgatorial fires, that it comes only at death, that it comes through reformation by the exertion of human will power, that it is obtained in regeneration, that it comes through growth, that holiness is imputed through Christ, and that it comes as an instantaneous work of God, wrought in the heart of the believer in answer to consecration, faith, and prayer.

The language of Scripture, however, seems to leave little room for controversy. To the question, "To what extent does Jesus, in this life, save from sin?", the Bible answers that he "cleanseth us from all sin" (I Jn. 1:7). Such expressions as "destroy", "free from",

³³. Brengle, op. cit., p. 28.

"deliver from", "crucify", "put away", and "cleanse from all" are used to show what treatment this body of evil is to receive.

This language draws one to the conclusion that "the sin" is not to be merely repressed, but in the Scriptural sense eradicated. When this has been performed by Divine power, the soul enters into the state Wesley called Christian perfection. Though many objections to the idea of perfection have arisen, they have been answered by a careful study of Scripture, and the conclusion has been maintained that Jesus, in this life, completely saves from all sin.

CHAPTER IV

LIMITATIONS OF SANCTIFICATION

In this examination of the problem of sin after sanctification, it was the desire of the writer to avoid being negative as much as possible. The foregoing chapter, therefore, has stressed the greatness of the effects of the second work of grace in the heart of man. Because of the subject matter of the following chapters of this dissertation, it has been shown in chapter three that God's power and ability to cleanse from all sin in this life is not limited, and that the believer who has devoted all his powers to God has been completely delivered from the reigning control of the tyrant sin into such a state of perfect love as to enable him to live days, weeks, months, or years without sinning. To properly understand the blessing, however, it is necessary to know that God has chosen to leave some aspects of life in this world unchanged even after sanctification. This chapter has attempted to explain what sanctification is not, and what it does not do.

I. SOME THINGS SANCTIFICATION IS NOT AND DOES NOT DO

In the first place, entire sanctification is not a state of freedom from infirmities (II Cor. 12:9). It does not bestow a perfect head nor a perfect body, but a perfect heart toward God. In chapter three on "The Meaning of Sin", an effort was made to distinguish be-

tween infirmities and sins. Infirmities such as the scars of sin which the blood does not erase, lack of knowledge, defective memory, fallible judgment, and hours of apathy and spiritual dullness by reason of our bodily organism or the condition of the nerves, remain in the believer though sin may be completely removed.¹ Fletcher says, "Christian perfection extends chiefly to the will, which is the capital moral power of the soul; leaving the understanding ignorant of ten thousand things."² Sanctification, then, is not a substitute for learning and knowledge (I Cor. 13:12; Acts 10). "The highest perfection which man can attain, while the soul dwells in the body, does not exclude ignorance, and error, and a thousand other infirmities."³

A truth very important to the theme of this study is that holiness is not a state in which there is no further development. Rather it is a state in which the hindrances to growth are removed and the soul is freed to grow much faster than before, as flowers in a garden grow better when the weeds are dug out. Sanctification eliminates the weeds that hinder development. Christian purity admits of no finality. It does not save from undiscovered faults. Thus, there is no state of grace in this life when the soul may sit back in an easy chair and relax and say, "Ah, at last I have arrived." Rather, one must, with Paul, strive as a runner in a race; "press on toward the goal unto the prize..." (Phil. 3:14).

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1. Daniel Steele, Love Enthroned (New York, Eaton and Mains, 1902), p. 83.
 2. Ibid., p. 86.
 3. John Wesley, Sermons (New York, Phillips and Hunt, 1788), II, 168.

Sanctification does not take one to a state beyond the need of atonement. He constantly needs the precious blood. Dependence is more acute in perfect love than before. "If we walk in the light... the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth (present tense) us from all sin" (I Jn. 1:7). This cleansing is continuous. It is only as and while the soul is under the full power of the blood of Jesus that it can be cleansed from all sin.

John Wesley wrote of some who objected to the idea of perfection because they thought if it were possible then the sanctified soul would not need to pray in the Lord's Prayer, "forgive us our debts." Wesley believed that though the fully sanctified cannot be said to be burdened with guilt, nevertheless, even these stand in need of the blood atonement, "because of their transgressions."⁴ In an absolute sense even the fully sanctified transgress the law because of their inescapable defects, and these mistakes, he says, would expose to eternal damnation, were it not for the blood atonement. He concludes then, that the most perfect may say, for themselves as well as for their brethren, "forgive us our trespasses." Wesley recognized that John said, "All sin is a transgression of the law", but he did not believe that "all transgression of the law is sin."⁵ It is for those transgressions which he believed should not be called sins that we need to ask forgiveness in praying the Lord's Prayer. This little couplet occurs very often in Wesleyan writings:

4. Harold Lindstrom, Wesley and Sanctification (London, The Epworth Press, C 1946), p. 151.

5. Wesley, op. cit., II, 172.

Every moment, Lord, I need
The merit of thy blood.⁶

Holiness is not a state of freedom from temptation, from spiritual warfare. In fact, there is a great deal of evidence that the enemy tempts a holy soul with stronger temptation because he knows it will take more to cause his downfall. This subject has been discussed more fully in a later chapter.

It follows that holiness is not a state of sinless perfection so that one can never sin again. Scriptural freedom from sin does not mean a static state of sinlessness nor "automatic" victory. It means a condition of freedom maintained moment by moment by active faith and obedience on the part of the believer.⁷ He is not unable to sin, but he is able not to sin.

Wesley declined to call it sinless perfection because that would imply absolute perfection, whereas the scriptural standard is relative perfection, or what he called Christian perfection. The former is objective and independent of man's potentialities.⁸

It is not necessarily a state of perpetual rapturous joy. There may be times of heaviness, but the holy soul has an indwelling principle of praise (I Pet. 1:2-9).

Christian perfection does not mean freedom from trials and from afflictions (I Pet. 4:12-13). Paul was buffeted by a thorn in the flesh and weakness (II Cor. 12:7-9). Neither does it mean freedom

6. Henry E. Brockett, Scriptural Freedom from Sin (Kansas City, Beacon Hill Press, 1941), p. 51.

7. Ibid., p. 94, 97.

8. Lindstrom, op. cit., p. 149.

from sorrow, for Jesus sorrowed (Matt. 26:37, 38).

The sanctified soul will not always appear perfect in the sight of men, but he can live in holiness and righteousness before God all his days (Luke 1:74, 75).

Sanctification is not an extreme unction, to be sought just before death. It is a possible present attainment provided and extended to help Christians live this life (Luke 1:74, 75).

It is not a guarantee of eloquence and victory in every effort of service, but it is an unction and it means perfect motive and desire for service. Many of Paul's efforts in the Jewish synagogues were without great victory (Acts 13:44-46).

It is not a special provision of heaven for apostles only, for, Peter said, the promise is "to all that are afar off" (Acts 2:38, 39). If it were not for all, it would not be obtainable by faith.

It is not a destruction of our essential humanity. There is still the power to choose, and there is still the individual personality. It was apparently differences in personality and choice which caused the sharp contention between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark (Acts 15:36-40).

It does not destroy the bodily appetites. They must be disciplined. Paul said, "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage" (I Cor. 9:27).

It is not a state of love to Christ so strong as to exclude every wandering thought in prayer. Wesley thought it was at first, but later saw his error.⁹

9. Steele, op. cit., p. 85.

There is no assurance that the soul believing in Christ for cleansing from all sin will be delivered from all unpleasant and improper dreams. The Bible teaches that dreams come from a multitude of business or travail, and not necessarily from carnality (Eccl. 5:3).

"Perfect love casteth out fear" (that is, fear that results from a wrong heart relationship to God), but it does not save the Christian from sudden trepidation when anything startling occurs. This is instinctive. Neither is he saved from the kind of fear that keeps him from jumping off a high building or touching a hot stove. These things are not carnal, but are essential to humanity. Mary was startled at the appearance of the angel (Luke 1:28-30). An angel exhorted Paul not to fear in the storm (Acts 27:23, 24).

It is not final perfection which Christians attain only when they are glorified (Phil. 3:12), but present perfection (Phil. 3:15). The first is like the perfection of a runner who has completed the race and received the prize. The other is like the perfection of a runner in a race. He is perfectly healthy and fit and able to put forth all his energies to press on toward the goal, but he is not beyond the possibility of stumbling and losing the race. Even Jesus disclaimed this final perfection (Heb. 2:10). The sanctified man is not perfect in that he has attained the final goal (Heb. 12:23), but in that he is perfectly fitted to fulfill the purpose of God in this life.¹⁰

All of this has been summarized in this one truth: that the perfection now attainable is not angelic perfection nor the kind that

10. Brockett, op. cit., p. 52-53.

Adam possessed before the fall. It is instead a perfection achieved through faith, a perfection which means perfect love, a perfect fulfilling of the law in so far as all disposition, thoughts, words, actions and attitudes have their source in love (Rom. 13:10). It is perfect purity in intention and will, and in actions in so far as these are determined by the individual will. "It is not absolute moral perfection," Turner wrote, "but the condition of progress towards it."¹¹

Lindstrom has provided a table of comparison which expertly explains the difference between Adamic perfection and the perfection attainable in this life.

Adamic Perfection

Based on the covenant of works: Man must fulfill the law of works.

Signifies perfect obedience to every point in this law. This holiness must be perfect in degree and continue without intermission throughout the whole life.

This is perfect fulfillment of the law and perfect deliverance from sin in the absolute and objective sense.

Christian Perfection

Based on the covenant of grace; Man must fulfill the law of faith.

Signifies perfect obedience in so far as this is attainable in the present circumstances of man. It means perfect love. This holiness is perfection of motive, not of degree. It concerns man's will and intention.

This is a perfect fulfillment of the law and perfect deliverance from sin in the relative and subjective sense.¹²

The relation between Christian perfection and atonement varies in aspect according to the point of view from which perfection is regarded.

11. George Allen Turner, The More Excellent Way (Winona Lake, Indiana, Light and Life Press, 1952), p. 111.

12. Lindstrom, op. cit., pp. 153-154.

From the absolute and
objective standpoint:

He who is fully sanctified
is imperfect.

This means that because of
innumerable defects he must
transgress the absolute
law. In this sense he is
not free from sin.

For this reason he is not
free from guilt.

Therefore in order that
he may not suffer damnation
for his sin and guilt,
he is every moment depen-
dent on the merit and
intercession of Christ.

From the relative and sub-
jective standpoint:

He who is fully sanctified
is perfect.

This means that he perfectly
loves God and his neighbor
and is perfectly free from
sin properly so-called.

For this reason he is also
free from guilt.

Yet in order to remain
perfect he is every moment
dependent on the merit
and intercession of
Christ.¹³

Finally, into the framework of the teaching that has just been
considered we are ready to place the central truth of this dissertation:
entire sanctification is not a state from which the believer cannot
fall (I Cor. 9:27; 10:12). He still has to watch and pray that he
enter not into temptation, for though the spirit may be willing, the
flesh is weak (Matt. 26:41). Satan planted the seed of sin in the
pure heart of Adam, and he will do the same in the sanctified Christian
unless in cooperation with God he works out his own salvation with fear
and trembling; for it is God who worketh in him, that he may become
blameless and a harmless child of God without blemish (Phil. 2:12, 13,
15).

II. SUMMARY

These, briefly, are the things which sanctification is not and

13. Ibid., p. 154.

does not do. It is not a state of freedom from infirmities, or from further development. It does not take one beyond the need of atonement. It is not freedom from temptation. It is not sinless perfection. It is not necessarily a state of continuous rapturous joy. It is not freedom from trials and afflictions. It is not necessarily perfection in the sight of all men. It is not an extreme unction. Nor is it a guarantee of eloquence and victory in every effort of service. It is not for Apostles only. It is not destruction of essential humanity, of bodily appetites, of wandering thoughts in prayer, of unpleasant dreams, or of natural fear. It is not final perfection, not angelic or Adamic perfection, in other words, it is not a state from which one cannot fall.

Because of the nature of this study, two of these things sanctification is not have received special attention in the two following chapters. First, if entire sanctification does not free from temptation, what is the relation of sanctification to temptation? And second, if entire sanctification is not a state from which the believer cannot fall, what is the relation of sanctification to the possibility of sinning?

CHAPTER V

SANCTIFICATION IN RELATION TO TEMPTATION

God chose to make man in His own image, a free moral agent, a moral being with intellect, sensibility, and will. In order to make man a free moral agent, God was obliged to give him the power of choice, and the opportunity of choice. Thus He placed the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Ever since creation man has had the power to love and obey God or to hate and reject Him. It was necessary to make man like this, or to make him to be ruled by necessity, and God chose the former for it glorifies God more for man to love and serve Him of his own free will than to be forced to do so. Along with the opportunity to choose, God permits (not authors) temptation. This is like the testing a manufacturer gives his product to see if it is fit for distribution. God wants in heaven only those who have been tested by trial and temptation and proved faithful.

God does not change this relationship in sanctification. Therefore sanctification is not a state of freedom from temptation. The idea of the impossibility of temptation after sanctification is unscriptural. Eve was created a holy soul and she was tempted. Jesus was the very Son of God and he was tempted. "The disciple is not above his teacher, but every one when he is perfected shall be as his teacher" (Luke 6:40). If to the last Jesus had to watch and pray, even one who is perfected will not be free from this responsibility. In fact, it not infrequent-

ly happens that holy persons find temptation greater than before, in exact proportions to their holiness. The cleaner one is, and the closer he tries to walk with God, the harder and more desperately will Satan fight to destroy his soul.¹ He must ever be watchful, for his "adversary the devil as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8), and, as Dr. Wesche expressed it to the Chinese, "he prefers fat Christians."²

God intends that man shall live a physical life, and consequently, He created man with physical desires, appetites, and passions. These are for the preservation, promotion, and propagation of the race. Man has the power to use these rightly or wrongly. If he chooses right and God, God chooses him to be His eternal companion. If he chooses wrong, he proves himself unfit for heaven. God cannot take away this power and opportunity to choose, and along with it temptation, and still maintain His method for selecting a people fit to live with Him through all eternity.

I. THE NATURE OF THIS TEMPTATION

What is the nature of the temptations that come to a sanctified man? How is one who is dead to sin tempted to sin? What is there in him that would respond to a solicitation to evil?

Brengle applied Ephesians 6:12 to these questions. He said the holy soul will no longer wrestle against flesh and blood--the sensual,

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1. Rev. R.T. Williams, A Neglected Theme (Temptation) (Kansas City, Nazarene Publishing House, 1920), p. 77.
 2. Dr. Kenneth Wesche, Dean, Western Evangelical Seminary, personal interview.

worldly, fleshly temptations that once overpowered him. He will not respond to Satan's temptations to get drunk, be vain and proud, or to covet honor and praise of men, and riches. He will flee from Satan's temptation to adultery as Joseph did.

The Son has made him free and he is free indeed (Jn. 8:36).

But while Christ has set the sanctified man free from the fight against his old worldly passions and fleshly appetites, yet he has a continual warfare with Satan to keep this liberty. For he wrestles "against principalities, against powers, against the world, rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). This is the good fight of faith (I. Tim. 6:12).³

The Christian holds to his inheritance by faith (I Pet. 1:3-5), and so long as he thus holds on, Satan's power over him is utterly broken. The devil knows this, so he carries on a systematic warfare against the newly-sanctified man especially seeking to cause him to lose his faith (Heb. 3:12).

One of the ways the enemy seeks to destroy faith is to make one dissatisfied because he does not find feeling or because nothing very unusual occurs. Paul was aware of this and he wrote to the Corinthian Christians:

I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ (II Cor. 11:2-3).

3. Commissioner S.L. Brengle, Helps to Holiness (Atlanta, Supplies and Purchasing Departments, 1948), pp. 23-26.

Dougan Clark suggests that another device of Satan is to suggest evil and blasphemous thoughts to the minds of the sanctified, especially while they are praying, then discourage them by accusing them of being themselves the authors of these wicked imaginings. They cannot avoid these whisperings, but they must at once repel the accusation of the enemy, fully assuring themselves that he is the author, and not they.⁴ "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not we have boldness toward God," (I Jn. 3:21), and Satan will have to flee in the face of boldness founded on a pure heart.

The important distinction is that the temptations of a sanctified man come not from within, for the carnal mind that would be a source of temptation is destroyed. They come from without. Jesus said, "The prince of the world cometh, and he hath nothing in me" (Jn. 14:30). This was true only of Jesus in the absolute sense, but there is a very real sense in which it is true of every holy person in whom temptations are not reinforced by traitors within the citadel of the soul. It is the difference between having the enemy in the room with you and having him locked outside the door.

Clark suggested that besides the temptations of Satan from without, the tremendous power of antecedent evil habits may help explain why a sanctified soul should still have to watch against sin.⁵ If this be so, perhaps this power should be classified among the scars of sin mentioned earlier, which the blood does not erase.

4. Dougan Clark, The Offices of the Holy Spirit (Portland, Ore., Evangel Publishers, 1945), pp. 142-43.

5. Clark, Ibid., p. 140.

Man is subject to temptation because he is human, not because he is carnal. And Satan will appeal to that physical desire or appetite where he knows man to be weakest. "Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust (or desire), and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin" (James 1:14, 15).

II. THE PROMISE OF VICTORY

Daniel Steele has expertly expressed the truth that victory is possible through a pure heart. He called attention to two ways of resisting temptation. The first is by direct antagonism through exercise of the will-power. This sometimes fails, depending on the strength of the will. The second is indirect resistance by complete renovation of the man's desires and pleasures. The chief power of temptation lies in his heart. The extinction of the heart appetite for sin breaks the power of every solicitation to moral evil. The only safety from sin lies in opening up new fountains of joys within the heart, so sweet, so full and so lasting as to extinguish utterly all base delights.⁶ "When all heaven is warbling in the believers ear, the whispers of the tempter grate upon purified sensibilities as saw-filing rasps the nerves."⁷ Yielding to temptation is never excusable in any Christian state, for victory is possible to all who are born again (I Jn. 5:4), but with the sanctified believer it is much more probable.

6. Daniel Steele, Mile-Stone Papers (New York, Nelson and Phillips, 1878), pp. 169-171.

7. Ibid., p. 172.

Scripture affords manifold evidence that victory is available.

One of the promises which has been most helpful to the writer is that:

There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it (I Cor. 10:13).

Wesley stated it this way: There will be temptation even after sanctification but God controls the tempter. He can either limit temptation to one's strength and ability to bear it, or he can increase one's strength to meet the temptation. In either case, the Christian need not fall.⁸

"Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world" (I Jn. 4:4). By the permission of God, Satan operates a sort of a government in the world over his subordinates, but his power and malice are restrained within certain limits, and controlled by the will of God. Thus, though Satan is free to tempt, God retains the power to control his activities. God will make a way out—either by removing the very ground of the temptation; or by leaving the occasion of it but removing the bitterness of it. A burden is never too heavy to bear unless it is too hard for God.⁹ When one is "filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:19), his resistance against "he that is in the world" is much stronger.

"We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Williams believed that

8. Rev. John Wesley, Sermons (New York, Phillips and Hunt, C 1788), II, 215-16.

9. Ibid., pp. 217-18.

Jesus did not employ more divinity, or more divine power in His own fight than He will give any struggling soul in the fight with temptation.¹⁰ And because He won the fight, He is able to make us victors (Heb. 2:18).

Ephesians 6 gives the formula for strength. "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:10, 11). If one has taken up the whole armor previously, he may be able to withstand in the evil day. But there is no assurance that one who waits till the day of trial to begin looking around for the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, and the shield of faith will have sufficient strength to stand. Notice how important is the shield of faith, "wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one" (v. 16). Certainly total victory is promised in these verses.

Another verse expressing this complete victory is II Corinthians 2:14: "But thanks be unto God, who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through us the savor of his knowledge in every place".

If the Christian will first be subject unto God, then he can resist the devil and he will flee (James 4:7). Notice, this is "the good fight of faith" (II Tim. 6:12). Nowhere is victory promised apart from reference to dependence on the divine power to "guard you from stumbling" (Jude 24). The just live by faith (Rom. 1:17). Withstand the devil steadfast in faith, knowing that the same sufferings

10. Williams, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

are accomplished in other brethren who are in the world (I Pet. 5:9).

"They overcame him because of (their faith in) the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony" (Rev. 12:11).

Whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world:
and this is the victory that hath overcome the world,
even our faith. And who is he that overcometh the world,
but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God
(I Jn. 5:4, 5).

Many passages refer to temptation as a means to maturity in perfection. This is one of the reasons God does not take it away even in sanctification. Every temptation yielded to weakens faith and makes one feel that he cannot stand and therefore he tends to quit trying. But every temptation resisted strengthens faith for the next battle. On the other side, the temptation yielded to becomes stronger, and the temptation resisted becomes weaker. Thus, by consistent expert wielding of the shield of faith against the fiery darts of the evil one, the Christian is perfected. This is why James could write:

Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations; knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing (James 1:2-4).

I Peter 1:7 and James 1:12 also speak of temptation as the pathway to glory. It was that even to our Lord, for, "though he was a Son, yet (he) learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:8-9).

III. SUMMARY

Because God wants to receive love and service out of a heart

that chooses to love and serve Him, He gives every man the power and the opportunity to choose right or wrong. He also permits (not authors) temptation. This opportunity to choose, and with it temptation to choose wrong, is declared by Scripture to be the portion of even the most holy person. However, when the sin principle is cleansed out of the human heart, the temptations from without lack the reenforcement of the traitor within, and victory for the Christian is abundantly promised. Consistent victory in this good fight of faith bears fruit unto perfection and "the crown of life which the Lord promised to them that love him" (James 1:12).

CHAPTER VI

SANCTIFICATION IN RELATION TO THE POSSIBILITY OF SINNING

Jesus does, in this life, save from all sin. He frees the believer completely from all the dominion of sin in both its aspects. The evil tendency is completely removed. The body of sin is done away. The old man is crucified. Because of the finality of Bible language in this regard, there was found a tendency for some to feel that if this purging were ever to actually take place in the heart of man, he could never sin again. The use of the term "eradication" may have contributed this idea. If sin is completely plucked up by the roots, how can it ever spring up again? If one is going to contend for such a complete cleansing, must he not accept the conclusion that sanctification makes a man incapable of sinning? The answer is no. It is never impossible for a human soul to fall into sin. The writer has not sought to be negative at this point, but has sought to reveal the importance of watching against sin unto the end.

I. SCRIPTURE ON THE POSSIBILITY OF SINNING

It is an unscriptural and dangerous doctrine that there is any state of grace from which one cannot fall in this world. Probation does not end the moment the soul gets sanctified. The Book of the Revelation expresses repeatedly the truth that only those who endure to the end will be saved (Rev. 2:26; 2:7, 17; 3:5; ³12:21).

Angels and Adam. The angels and Adam came right from the Maker's

hands "with no proclivity toward disobedience, yet there was that possibility of sinning which is implied in free agency."¹ The entirely sanctified soul is neither angelic or Adamic, but human. His liability to sin is grounded on both his free agency and on his human disabilities. Genesis 3 shows that the perfected man is not morally paralyzed. If he can, Satan will lead the sanctified back into sin just as he led Eve into sin.

How can a holy being sin? Man is not holy of himself. It is a derived holiness, and is dependent on faith. Eve sinned because by distraction and doubt Satan cut the link of faith that held her in holiness. Salvation is contingent on faith, and when faith ceases, salvation is lost.

How can a holy being sin? Essentially holiness is love, and in this aspect it is the subject of constant increase. "Because of this it may be lost, just as human love may wane and cease."²

If all possibility of sinning were removed for the sanctified Christian, he would be placed above Adam and Eve. He would be a moral machine. The evil inclination is taken out, but not the liability to sin. Rev. Carradine has distinguished between these two. The first is the proneness to sin; the latter is the power to sin. Because this power to sin is not taken out in holiness, angels fell, Adam fell, and regenerated and sanctified souls have fallen in this present world.³

1. Daniel Steele, Love Enthroned (New York, Eaton and Mains, 1902), p. 323.

2. George A. Turner, The More Excellent Way (Winona Lake, Indiana, Light and Life Press, 1952), p. 111.

3. Rev. B. Carradine, The Sanctified Life (Cincinnati, Office of the Revivalist, 1897), p. 41.

Jesus. Our Lord taught that there would arise false Christs and false prophets who would show signs and wonders, "that they may lead astray, if possible, the elect" (Mark 13:22). No one needs to feel that being led astray is unavoidable as Jesus shows in the next verse, but neither should anyone feel that such a thing is impossible. He taught in Luke 11:24-26 of the craftiness of the enemy who seeks to devour. He told how the unclean spirit when it is gone out of a man moves around seeking rest, and finding none goes back to the house from which it came, and though that house be swept and garnished, still with the help of seven other spirits more evil than himself he enters, and they dwell there. If the one with a clean heart allows this to happen, Jesus warns, "the last state of that man becometh worse than the first."

Paul. The Apostle Paul testified to an experience of entire cleansing, yet he never quit striving. In Galatians 2:20, he gave his testimony of the crucifixion of the old man:

I have been crucified with Christ (Cf. Rom. 6:6);
and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth
in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I
live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved
me, and gave himself up for me (Cf. Gal. 6:14).

He referred to his own testimony when he said, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded" (Phil. 3:15). He was perfect in desire (Phil. 3:13-15). He was able to write to the Thessalonians, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and righteously and unblamably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe" (I Thess. 2:10). Yet he wrote, "I buffet my body, and bring it unto bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be reject-

ed" (I Cor. 9:27). He did not consider himself already perfect as he would be in the resurrection, therefore he continued to press on toward the goal (Phil. 3:11-14).

Paul spoke very much in his writings of the need for constant vigilance against sin. He said to the Colossians who were in time past alienated and enemies in mind and in evil work:

Yet now hath he reconciled (you) in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprouvable before him: if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and ~~not~~ moved away from the hope of the gospel (Col. 1:22-23).

These were people who had "put off the old man with his doings", and "put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:10). Yet they were repeatedly exhorted to keep doing, by an exertion of their own will; to keep striving, to put on a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering (v. 12), to forbear and forgive one another (v. 13), to put on love, the bond of perfectness (v. 14), to let the peace of Christ rule their hearts (v. 15), to let the word of Christ dwell in them richly teaching and admonishing one another (v. 16). Here there is certainly no indication that the one who has put off the old man has also put off all necessity to watch against sin.

The whole section, Ephesians 4:25-32, was given to Paul's exhortation that the Ephesians, who had put off the old man (v. 22) and "put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (v. 24), should turn away from sin and not let it enter their lives again. Evidently Paul believed it was possible to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, even after one had been sealed in Him unto the day of redemption (v. 30).

Wesley said that men grieve the Holy Spirit by their sins. And when one thus offends Him, he perceives the change in his soul toward darkness, distress and despondency. At these times the Spirit retires and conceals His presence from him till he humbles himself before the Lord, and by deep repentance and active faith obtains a return of divine mercy and peace. But it is a dangerous thing to so grieve the blessed Spirit. For frequent breaches will necessarily occasion estrangement between us.⁴

If there be left any uncertainty as to how Paul felt concerning the possibility of sinning, it should be dispelled by the notice of his admonition in I Corinthians 10:12, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." "Thinketh" is written in the present tense, and "standeth" is in the perfect tense, denoting perfected action. Let the one who is thinking that he will stand forever take heed lest he fall. It is true that this was written to a people who were declared to be carnal (I Cor. 3:3), but Paul's other writings show that if babes in Christ need this warning, the sanctified need it even more.

Hebrews. The Epistle to the Hebrews is full of exhortation to watch against falling away. The author of this Epistle was writing to holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1), when he told them that they were God's house if they would hold fast their boldness and the glorifying of their hope firm unto the end. Then, quoting Scripture to show how their fathers fell away after they saw

4. John Wesley, Sermons (New York, Phillips and Hunt, C 1788), II, 515-517

God's works forty years, he writes:

Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God...for we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end (Heb. 3:12, 14).

Wesley, with the support of Scripture like these, dismissed the doctrine of unconditional perseverance. He taught that grace does not operate irresistibly; its effectiveness is dependent on human cooperation. Those who believe in Christ are not regarded as incapable of apostasy. The Christian is saved in faith, but at the same time he is ceaselessly exhorted to continue in faith by means of obedience.⁵

There was a time when Wesley thought the entirely sanctified could not fall from grace. In 1743, he said, "There is a state attainable in this life from which a man cannot finally fall, and...all who are perfected in love (I John iv) were thus elect."⁶ He also thought at this time that holiness meant freedom from mental infirmities, but twenty-two years later he affirmed:

Formerly we thought one saved from sin could not fall; now we know the contrary. Neither does any one stand by virtue of anything that is implied in the nature of the state. There is no such height or strength of holiness as it is impossible to fall from.⁷

"We do not find", wrote Wesley in his Plain Account of Christian

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5. Harold Lindstrom, Wesley and Sanctification (London, The Epworth Press, C. 1946), p. 214.
 6. John Wesley, "Wesley's Variations in Belief, and the Influence of the Same on Methodism", quoted by George A. Turner, The More Excellent Way, (Winona Lake, Indiana, Light and Life Press, 1952), p. 166.
 7. John Wesley, Plain Account of Christian Perfection, (Louisville, Pentecostal Publishing House, n.d.), pp. 44-45.

Perfection, "any general state described in scripture from which a man cannot draw back to sin...They who are sanctified may yet fall and perish, Heb. x, 29."⁸

Fletcher referred to the doctrine of absolute perseverance of the saints as the first card which the devil played against man: "Ye shall not surely die, if ye break the law of perfection." This fatal card, he says, won the game. Mankind and paradise were lost. He played the same card against Christ when he tempted Him saying, "Cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee" (Matt. 4:6). And he is still playing it today, only with some variations.⁹

The necessity of holding the confidence firm is again manifested in the sixth chapter of Hebrews which speaks of "those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away" (Heb. 6:4-6). They not only backslid a little, they crucified "to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (v. 6). Thus one who has as high a state of grace as is described in these verses is not above the possibility of falling even into apostacy.

The author has taken up this theme again in the tenth chapter where he speaks of sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of truth (v. 26). He explained in the verses below just what he meant.

8. Ibid., p. 39.

9. John Fletcher, Christian Perfection (Nashville, Publishing House, M.E. Church, South, 1917), p. 107.

He was talking of one "who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (v. 29). This is falling into apostasy. All of these passages are found in a context of very clear teaching as to the seriousness of such a fall. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).

Then after a chapter on faith which is the means for keeping from shrinking back into perdition (Heb. 10:39), and exhortation to lay aside every sin and run as in a race (Heb. 12:1), and teaching that the chastening that comes to the sons of God is "that we may be partakers of his holiness" (Heb. 12:10), the writer again pleads that they watch against falling.

Follow peace with all men and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord: looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you and thereby the many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person (Heb. 12:14-16).

Referring to this passage Wesley maintained, "He that through the power of faith endureth to the end in humble gentle patient love; he, and he alone, shall, through the merits of Christ 'inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.'"¹⁰ To Wesley, continuing in faith stood out as the fundamental and ultimate condition of final salvation.¹¹

Peter. II Peter 2:20-22 shows that it is not impossible for one

10. John Wesley, quoted in Harold Lindstrom, Wesley and Sanctification (London, The Epworth Press, c. 1946), p. 199.

11. Ibid., p. 204.

to know the way of righteousness, to have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and become entangled again in the world, turning back from the holy commandment.

In the first chapter of his second epistle, Peter gave the list of traits that should be added to faith: virtue, knowledge, self control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Then as if he believed it took an effort on the part of the believer to stay in grace, he wrote, "Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never stumble" (II Pet. 1:5-10).

These passages give evidence that there is not a state of grace, not even sanctification, in which anyone may feel he need no longer watch and pray and strive to keep from falling again into sin. Though sin be completely taken out by the roots, as weeds may be taken out of a garden, still it is not impossible for the soul to yield to Satan's efforts to plant again the seeds of sin, as did Eve. There was only one spot in father's garden where weeds never grew, and that was where he always burned the trash. So it is in the human heart. The only way to be sure the weeds of sin will not spring up again is to keep the fire of the Holy Spirit burning constantly. The Christian must remember that he is in the enemy's country, and while he is here, he needs to watch and pray and daily examine himself in the love of God, lest he fall from His grace.

"Rev. John Fletcher, whom Wesley thought was the holiest man who had lived since the days of the apostle John, lost the blessing five times before he was finally established in the grace of holiness, and Mr. Wesley declared that he was persuaded from his observation that people usually lose the blessing several times before they learn the secret of keeping

it."¹² It need not be so, especially in this day when the teaching is more wide spread than it was in Wesley's day. Nevertheless, this is evidence from experience that the Scripture is true, and it should encourage those who have the blessing to watch constantly against losing it.

II. OBJECTIONS

Certain Bible verses, when taken alone, have been interpreted by some to teach the impossibility of sinning. These have been considered briefly in connection with the theme of this chapter.

I John 3:9. "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God." This is one of the verses which contributed a great deal to the writer's interest in the problem of sin after sanctification. The one begotten of God may refer to the justified as well as to the sanctified, but if either are rendered unable to sin, then the theology of this chapter is completely undermined.

From a study of the Greek tenses, Steele has found this meaning, "Whosoever has been born (perfect, brought into permanent sonship) of God is not habitually sinning, for his seed is abiding in him, and he is not able to be sinning because he has been born (perfect) of God."¹³ Steele added that instead of teaching "once in grace always

12. Commissioner S.L. Bringle, Helps to Holiness (Atlanta, Supplies and Purchasing Departments, 1948), p. 155.

13. Daniel Steele, Mile-Stone Papers (New York, Nelson and Phillips, 1878), p. 89.

in grace", as Calvin would have this verse do, it, in fact, bears witness to the opposite, that one needs God's grace every day to keep him in the state of salvation, from which every act and thought of sin puts him in peril of falling away.¹⁴

In another place Steele has written concerning this verse that God removes from the one begotten of God the aptitude or capacity for wickedness. "Capacity is not to be confounded with possibility. It was possible for Adam to sin, but he must first acquire a capacity or aptitude for it by listening to those suggestions which weakened faith and chilled the ardor of love." This, said Steele, explains I John 3:9, "He cannot sin", "John having in mind one in whom the work of regeneration has been fully accomplished by the perfection of the regenerating principle of love, asserts the incapacity or inaptitude of such a soul, while abiding in Christ, to commit known and willful sin."¹⁵ This explanation most satisfied the writer in the light of a study of the tenses of this verse. It is impossible for one to abide in Christ and go right on committing known and willful sin. He must choose one or the other. This interpretation is consistent with the thing the Apostle John was teaching throughout his first epistle.

I John 1:7. "The blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Some have tried to make this verse mean too much. The deliverance here described does not imply the annihilation of the capacity to sin so that the Christian will no longer find it a force against

14. Loc. cit.

15. Daniel Steele, Love Enthroned (New York, Eaton and Mains, 1902), pp. 50-52.

which he must watch and contend. But when he has the victory of I John 1:7, then he is "guarded in the power of God through faith" (I Pet. 1:5) and "dead to sin" (Rom. 6:11). Through the death of Christ, his old life of sin has altogether ceased and evil cannot obtain his consent and thus soil his conscience. The Bible expression of cleansing from sin does include removal of the inner tendency toward evil, but nowhere does it imply a removal of the possibility of sinning.

I John 3:6. "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him." This verse has been used to support the argument that if a person falls into sin he never really was saved in the first place, therefore, one cannot say that it is possible to fall from grace. This is another instance when the Apostle used drastic language to emphasize his point against Gnosticism that sinning and abiding in Christ do not go together. Dr. Chapman thought the whole difficulty arises from a mixture of tenses. He felt it would be plainer for us if we read it, "...Whosoever sinneth does not (at the same time) see him or know him."¹⁶ This is undoubtedly the meaning which the Apostle intended, but in the light of the Greek tense (perfect) of the word translated "hath not seen", Chapman's translation appears questionable. Actually, what John was saying here is that whosoever abideth in him does not continue in sin (present tense), does not go right on sinning, but the one who goes right on sinning like he did before, has never seen him and does not know him. He was not speaking of one who was saved and had fallen again into sin.

16. J. B. Chapman, Ask Dr. Chapman (Kansas City, Nazarene Publishing House, 1943), p. 170.

He was dealing with those, like the Gnostics, who claimed to be Christians but never had changed their way of living. They had never seen him. This does not support the idea of "once in grace always in grace." It actually refutes it unless those who claim it live without sin. The main point is clear, that one cannot sin and at the same time be saved and right with God.

Hebrews 10:14. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Dr. Ironside, seeking to prove the theory of an imputed, non-forfeitable sanctification, used this verse to show that the sanctified are declared to be perfected forever. Then he pointed out the inconsistency of the doctrine of the perfectionists who speak continually of the possibility of the ultimate falling away.¹⁷ Brockett answered that these perfectionists do believe in the eternal security of the Lord's "sheep" (Jn. 10:28). They are kept by the power of God through faith (I Pet. 1:5). But the Lord's "sheep" are only those who hear (continuously) his voice and follow (continuously) Him (Jn. 10:27). This involves human responsibility. "The two truths of God's sovereign grace and human responsibility run side by side like two parallel railway lines through the Word of God." Then he listed for comparison Romans 6:23 and 2:6,7; I John 5:11 and 2:24; Colossians 1:22 and 1:23; I John 1:7b and 1:7a; Hebrews 10:14 and 3:14, 5:9.¹⁸ It is not just the perfectionists who have continually taught the possibility of the ultimate falling away. This is the

17. Henry Brockett, Scriptural Freedom from Sin (Kansas City, Beacon Hill Press, 1941), p. 157.

18. Ibid., p. 160.

teaching of the Bible, yes, even the Epistle to the Hebrews as was shown earlier in this chapter.

This verse (Hebrews 10:14) to which Dr. Ironside has referred calls attention to the one perfect sacrifice of Christ and all that it accomplished. "The sanctified" who are "perfected forever", according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, are clearly only those who are holding the beginning of their confidence steadfast to the end (Heb. 3:14).¹⁹ This verse cannot mean that Christ has made them sinless, in the sense of having freed them from all the power to sin forever. It means, obviously, that he has put them in the ideal religious relationship to God. The writer prefers to think of the "for ever" in this verse and the "once for all" in Hebrews 10:10 as referring more to the offering of Christ than to the perfection of them that are sanctified. This seems to be the meaning of these verses in their context. The priest made often the same sacrifices day by day, "but he (Christ) when he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:11, 12).

Romans 8:35-39.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ...For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

These verses furnish a stronghold for the doctrine of the impossibility of separation from the grace of God. But they do not at all weaken

19. Ibid., p. 165.

the position of this chapter. For none of these things listed ever necessarily separate the soul from God. Just one thing does. That is sin, and it is not in this list.

III. WHAT, THEN, IS THE ADVANTAGE OF SANCTIFICATION?

If even one who is sanctified is still in danger of falling, the question naturally arises, What, then, is the advantage of being sanctified? The advantage is very great in every way. The inclination and tendency to sin, the proneness to wander is utterly removed.

As was implied in an earlier chapter of this writing, the sanctified man has a great advantage over the unsanctified in the matter of temptation. Not in the number and severity of the temptations, for Satan will try harder to break down the sanctified life. The advantage is in the inner condition of the soul. The justified man is on God's side, he hates sin, he is not of this world, but he still has to fight the carnal mind. In sanctification the carnal mind has been destroyed. This alien enemy within is no longer there to take sides against the soul in the battles with temptation. In its place the Holy Spirit is enthroned without a rival. It is thus easier for the sanctified to live the Christian life and be overcomers. All that is left on the inside is human nature, and that is consecrated to God.

Besides being more certain of victory in temptation, the sanctified have the advantage of closer fellowship with God through perfected love. It is as much better than regeneration as perfect love and peace are better than simple love and peace. An abiding inward joy is more to be desired than one which is as variable as the winds and

fluctuating as the tides.²⁰ Holiness is the best God has provided for the soul, and no real earnest Christian wants to get along with anything less.

IV. SUMMARY

Sanctification does not effect the possibility of sinning, only the probability. The teachings of Jesus, Paul, the writer to the Hebrews, and Peter all indicate plainly that there is no state of grace in this life from which the believer cannot fall. The scripture passages which seem to teach otherwise may be seen to present no difficulty when interpreted in the light of related scripture.

This chapter has shown that sanctification does not destroy the possibility of sinning. This does not, however, make the experience any less desirable. No experience in this life destroys this possibility. Therefore, in view of the great advantage of being sanctified, that of closer fellowship with God and greater resistance to temptation, the experience is to be greatly desired, earnestly coveted, and carefully guarded.

20. Rev. B. Carradine, The Sanctified Life (Cincinnati, Office of the Revivalist, 1897), p. 42.

CHAPTER VII

RESTORATION TO SANCTIFICATION

Naturally following a discussion of the possibility of falling from the grace of sanctification the question arises: If one has lost this blessing--what? Is there any hope for him? Can he be restored? Must he get justified all over again, or just sanctified again?

Jesus was teaching a lesson on forgiveness:

Then came Peter and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven (Matt. 18:21-22).

He who said this to his disciples will certainly be no less full of pity than the men he was instructing in mercy. Our God is great in mercy, and he will abundantly pardon (Isa. 55:7). In his Plain Account of Christian Perfection, Wesley asked, "Can those who fall from this state recover it?" Then he answered, "Why not? We have instances of this also. Nay, it is an exceeding common thing for persons to lose it more than once before they are established therein."¹

The Methodist Discipline states that:

...after we have received the Holy Spirit, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin and, by the grace of God, rise again and amend our lives. And therefore

1. John Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection (Louisville, Pentecostal Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 45.

they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here; or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.²

The Bible is full of promises of pardon and mercy. One of the most applicable to this subject was found in Psalms 37:23-24. "A man's goings are established of Jehovah; and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for Jehovah upholdeth him with his hand." The stories of the "prodigal son" and of the "ninety and nine" show the Father and the Savior to be more anxious to receive back the wandering one than to pamper the ones who never stray.

I. THE WAY BACK

But how is the one who has lost the blessing of sanctification to regain the treasure? If one has lost sanctification, has he also lost his justification? And does he have to be forgiven and justified before he can again claim sanctification? Foster answered that the sanctified may lose sanctification and justification. Or he may lose sanctification and retain justification. Not everything that would mar a perfectly holy character would destroy the filial relationship of a believer. That relation subsisted prior to sanctification and may remain when the sanctified state ceases. He added that the procedure of return, therefore, will depend on the extent of the lapse. Even if he has gone clear down into the abyss of sin, if he awakens and desires to return there is hope. He may find it hard to trust in

2. Doctrines and Discipline of The Methodist Church (Nashville, The Methodist Publishing House, 1952), p. 62.

mercy which he has so much abused, but God is as willing to save him as ever. If he has a heart to seek mercy, let him come as first he came. He must commence again, at the beginning, and re-lay the foundation.³

Brengle answered simply that if one loses the blessing he can, by hearty repentance, confession, and faith, get back in one step to the place from which he fell. Some have entered into a deeper experience than they had before. Take I John 1:9 and do not worry about fine distinctions.⁴

The most important thing is hearty repentance, confession and faith. If these are present, fine theological distinctions will seem unimportant. The seeker must start over again. The blessing is regained the same way it was gained in the first place, through consecration, faith, and prayer. Wesley writes:

If any of you should at any time fall from what you now are, if you should again feel pride of unbelief, or any temper from which you are now delivered, do not deny, do not hide, do not disguise it at all, at the peril of your soul. At all events, go to one in whom you can confide, and speak just what you feel. God will enable him to speak a word in season, which shall be health to your soul. And surely the Lord will again lift up your head and cause the bones that have been broken to rejoice.⁵

The Word of God and the provisions of grace are given that God's children might not sin. But in case any one of them should sin, there

3. Rev. R.S. Foster, Christian Purity (New York, Hunt and Eaton, 1869), p. 86.

4. Colonel S.L. Brengle, Heart Talks on Holiness, 5th ed. (New York, The Salvation Army Printing and Publishing House, 1910), p. 85.

5. Wesley, op. cit., p. 53.

is provided an "Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins" (I Jn. 2:1). One may, even after he is sanctified, discover that he has failed his Lord, but if the minute he makes that discovery, he immediately appeals to the blood of propitiation, he may retain his relationship with God. This is not license for a sinning religion. It is like the antidote on the bottle of poison, as mentioned above, to be used only if by chance one has taken some poison. It is like the fire escape on the old school building. The teachers clearly stated that it was to be used only in case of fire, and the boys who played there during recess were severely punished. Sin is not to be trifled with.

Foster suggested that one may feel a loss of the high grace of a former experience, yet know he has not entirely forsaken the Savior. He may not doubt his relation, yet all is not right with God. That person should confess to the one or ones he has wronged, make a full, hearty return to the Lord, with an entire offering of himself again, and he will find peace.⁶

One of the grave dangers in breaking fellowship with the Lord lies in the fact that it is extremely difficult for a man to turn back and to trust One he has wronged, especially when that One has been a tender, loving Friend. Pride rebels against this kind of humbling. But it is still a very small price for so great a treasure. He must return if he would save his soul. He must seek the Blessor, not the blessing. He must renew his consecration and trust--whether he has the same feeling as before or not. The Lord may require faith without feeling, at

6. Foster, op. cit., pp. 88-89.

least for awhile, to test the sincerity of his desire to be God's peculiar possession. He must trust God to make him strong when future battles come up; to give him victory even where he failed before. He may hold on to the promise the Lord gave Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness." And he may take hope with Paul who responded, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me... for when I am weak, then am I strong" (II Cor. 12:9, 10).

II. BACKSLIDING AND APOSTASY

Two sections in the Epistle to the Hebrews speak of the impossibility for one who has turned away to be renewed again unto repentance. These would discourage an earnest soul if they were not understood properly.

Hebrews 6:4-8:

For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (Heb. 6:4-8).

"It is impossible to renew them to repentance." Does this mean it is impossible for a truly penitent backslider to get back to the Lord? Bible scholars are agreed that it does not. This was written to Hebrew Christians. When they turned away from Christ, to find favor with their Jewish kindred, they had to abandon not only the practice of Christianity, but the theory also. Before they could be restored in the synogogue, they had to declare Jesus an accursed imposter, a

malefactor, a "hanged man".⁷ This was what these verses called crucifying "to themselves the Son of God afresh", and putting "him to an open shame." Herein lies the key to a proper understanding of the possibility of being renewed. It is most generally agreed that these verses apply not to the backslider who gets careless and desires to come back penitently, but rather to the apostate, who purposely, willfully, renounces Christ and puts Him to open shame.

Brengle explained that a sanctified man who backslides and even goes into open sin may still be restored if in his inmost heart and soul he does not utterly go astray, away from God, curse God in his heart, and crucify Jesus to himself. As long as he hates himself rather than Jesus, and feels secret sorrow in his heart for his backsliding, and longs to get back again, he has not passed the deadline. But backsliders are on dangerous ground, and the deceitfulness of sin may harden them till they will never find God anymore. They need to repent and pray as David did (Ps. 51).⁸ Carradine agreed with this interpretation. He felt that Hebrews 6:4-6 referred not to the loss of sanctification or even justification, but to the fearful sin of apostacy. A backslider does not put Christ to open shame, but is ashamed of himself.⁹

Some would hesitate to say that these verses draw a deadline.

One must be careful about teaching any doctrine that will make people

7. Daniel Steele, Steele's Answers (Chicago, The Christian Witness Company, 1912), p. 147.

8. Brengle, op. cit., p. 98.

9. Rev. B. Carradine, The Sanctified Life (Cincinnati, Office of the Revivalist, 1897), p. 57.

think God will not take them back. The writer has found that there are already too many who have the idea that they have committed the unpardonable sin, who have no basis in fact for this idea. Wesley interpreted Hebrews 6:6 to mean that if they do fall away, it is impossible, "that is exceeding hard", to renew them again to repentance.¹⁰ Steele found a meaning from the Greek tenses which enabled him to interpret these verses in a very optimistic manner. He called attention to the fact that the verb "crucify" (v. 6) is in the present tense denoting continuousness. Thus the verse means that so long as one is crucifying Jesus to himself afresh, putting him to an open shame, cursing him as an imposter and a malefactor, it is impossible for God, who respects free agency, to save him.¹¹ He hereby implied that if one who was doing even this would turn from his denunciation of Christ, he could find hope.

Hebrews 10:26-31. "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins" (Heb. 10:26). This verse, if taken alone, would present a real problem, since it has been shown that all sin, properly so-called is willful. The difficulty has been resolved in several different ways. Daniel Steele explained this verse as he did Hebrews 6:6. Here again he showed that sinning willfully is in the present tense. So long as willful sin continues, the apostate can find, in the

10. Rev. John Wesley, Sermons (New York, Phillips and Hunt, 1788), II, 167.

11. Steele, op. cit., p. 147.

Judaism to which he has turned, no effectual sacrifice, but if he will turn to Christ he will find that His sacrifice has not lost its virtue. The sinner shuts the door himself, and he alone can open it.¹²

Carradine agreed with Steele. He felt that the key is in the fact that the verse does not say there is no more forgiveness for sins, but no more sacrifice for sin. If one turns his back on Christ and looks elsewhere he will find no other sacrifice for sin.¹³ In other words, the sacrifice is there and available for him all the time, but while he is looking elsewhere or until he looks to Christ again, he will not find it. Dr. Chapman explains these verses as a warning that the Jewish sacrifices had lost their efficacy and that one who thought to turn from Christ back to these would find no safety.¹⁴

The writer has noted the possibility of these verses also being interpreted to show that there is a deadline for the apostate, and after he has gone so far in his renunciation of Christ, he has crossed it, and there remaineth no more opportunity for forgiveness, but only a "fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:27). This interpretation has seemed possible if the following verses may be used as a commentary on verse twenty six. If so, the one sinning willfully "hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant where-

12. Loc. cit.

13. Carradine, op. cit., p. 56.

14. J. B. Chapman, Ask Dr. Chapman (Kansas City, Nazarene Publishing House, 1943), p. 170.

with he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (v. 29). Jesus said, "Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" (Mark 3:29). There seems to be foundation in Scripture for the idea that a man can go too far in playing with sin and in spurning the mercy of God (Rom. 1:18-32). But all of these passages make it very clear that God never rejects until man, in the light of very much truth and grace and mercy, first rejects God utterly. It is the writer's conviction that any one, who still finds in his heart a desire to come back to God, may find forgiveness and pardon. No man has the wisdom to know when one has crossed the deadline, therefore Christ's ambassadors should plead and preach so that anyone who comes into the hearing of the gospel will feel welcome in the Savior's sheepfold. Such gracious pardon is available, not because backsliding is not serious, but because grace is so great. For "where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly" (Rom. 5:20).

III. SUMMARY

As it is possible for one to lose the blessing of sanctification, so it is also possible to recover it. The way back will depend on the extent of the lapse. One may lose sanctification and retain justification, or he may lose both. Even so, he can, by hearty repentance, confession, and faith be restored even to a deeper experience than he had before. One need not worry about fine theological distinctions if he will go clear to the bottom again, re-lay the foundation, and start over.

The Bible indicates that there are some who may not be renewed

again unto repentance. Some scholars have felt this means they may not only so long as they are willfully sinning and crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh. Others have felt these verses speak of a deadline; that it is possible to go so deep into apostacy that forgiveness is no longer available. Nevertheless, the Bible clearly offers mercy and pardon for any penitent backslider who finds in his heart a desire to come back to God.

CHAPTER VIII

MAINTAINING SANCTIFICATION WITHOUT SIN

John Wesley said, "It is a small thing to get a soul saved and sanctified compared with keeping it saved and sanctified."¹ After the strong emphasis in this dissertation on the necessity of human cooperation with divine grace in the accomplishment of salvation, it seemed fitting that this study should close with a survey of Bible teaching on how to keep from sin.

As in the case of justification, one keeps sanctification by maintaining the conditions he met to get it. "As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him" (Col. 2:6). It was stated in chapter five, that the sanctified man is more easily kept from sin than the unsanctified because inbred sin, the disturbing factor and bosom foe, is cast out. The internal war is over. The battle continues, however, against outward temptation, and it behooves the earnest Christian to be well acquainted with the scriptural formula for victory.

The writer of the beloved old hymn, "Trust and Obey," must have made a Biblical study of this question also, for all of the teachings on how to keep from sin have been found to fit quite naturally under two headings, Trust and Obey.

1. John Wesley, quoted in Joseph H. Smith, Things of the Spirit (Chicago, The Chicago Evangelistic Institute, 1940), p. 94.

I. TRUST

Faith. As it takes faith to obtain a work of grace, so it takes faith to keep it. Here is where the Israelites failed, through an evil heart of unbelief (Heb. 3:12, 19). Faith is the link that holds man to God, and consequently Satan makes his strongest attack on faith. So the Christian needs faith like that of Abraham, of whom it is written, "He wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:20-21).

The strong Christian cultivates a spirit of faith. He casts himself in utter abandonment on the promises of God, and claims them as his own. He spurns all temptation to unbelief and doubt. One act of faith will remove mountains of doubt and unbelief. Christians full of faith have not been satisfied with small things. God has promised to do exceeding abundantly above all that one can ask or think (Eph. 3:20).²

Daniel Steele has noticed a striking absence of the aorist and the presence of the present tense whenever the conditions of final salvation are stated in the Greek Testament. In writing on faith as one of these conditions, he referred to John 1:12. "But as many as received (aorist) him (by a momentary and definite act) to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that are believing (present) perseveringly on his name." An aorist participle would have been used here if a single act of faith could secure ultimate

2. H. Orton Wiley, "How to Retain Sanctification", excerpt from a tract (Kansas City, Beacon Hill Press, n.d.).

salvation. He translated John 5:24 to mean, "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, He that is always hearing my word, and constantly believing on him that sent me, hath everlasting life." Some other verses which were cited by him to show by their tense reading that faith must be continuous are John 3:15; 5:44, 47; 6:35, 54; 11:25, 26; and Romans 1:16.³

Certainly no one imagines that he is able to stand against sin in his own strength. Jude 24 says He "is able to guard you from stumbling and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy." Paul told Timothy to guard through the Holy Spirit that good thing which was committed unto him (II Tim. 1:14). Paul desired for the Thessalonians that their spirit, soul, and body be preserved entire without blame, and he said, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it" (I Thess. 5:23-24). Jesus asked the Father to keep his disciples (Jn. 17:11).

It is the power of God that keeps. The Abiding Comforter within the soul prevents improper excitement of the innocent sensibilities and reenforces the will. But one is linked to that power by faith, and faith is man's part in the battle. "He that was begotten of God keepeth himself" (I Jn. 5:18) by continually exercising faith in the One who is able to keep.

Paul, who was crucified with Christ, said, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God"

3. Daniel Steele, Mile-Stone Papers (New York, Nelson and Phillips, 1878), p. 61.

(Gal. 2:20). "In all these things (tribulation, anguish, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword) we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). Again he said, "I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12). The wonderful, incorruptible, and undefiled inheritance that fadeth not away is reserved in heaven just for those "who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Pet. 1:4-5). "In him (Jesus) dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in him ye are made full" (Col. 2:9-10).

God keeps in perfect peace the one whose mind is stayed on Him, because he trusteth in him (Isa. 26:3). "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth (or is believing) that Jesus is the Son of God" (I Jn. 5:4-5). Salvation includes entire sanctification, and salvation is both obtained and kept by faith (Jn. 3:14-15; 6:29; Acts 15:9; 26:18; I Jn. 3:3, and II Thess. 2:13).

Consecration. One may say he believes in the strength of a chair, but if he is unwilling to rest his whole weight on the chair and relax, he does not really trust the chair. One may also say he believes in God and in Jesus, His Son, but if he is unwilling to consecrate himself completely to the Lord, he does not really trust. Thus consecration may be considered a part of trust.

Many scripture passages show consecration to be a condition for sanctification (II Cor. 8:5; Matt. 10:37, 38, 39; Luke 14:33; Rom. 12:1; Heb. 10:33, 34). In order to get sanctified, one must lay his all on

the altar. If he would keep sanctified he must keep all on the altar (Col. 2:6). The continuance of a right relationship with God is contingent on the continuance of complete consecration.

There must be perfect and continuous consecration. Having once placed all on the altar, nothing must be removed through carelessness or neglect. There must be the same spirit of devotion manifest in retaining the experience as in securing it. Growth in grace and knowledge there must be, but full consecration is an abiding essential to preservation in holiness.⁴

The Christian must be willing to forsake everything and follow Christ. If he loves father or mother more than Christ, he is not worthy of Christ (Matt. 10:37). He must deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow Him (Luke 9:26). This is necessary if he would be a good soldier of Jesus Christ. "No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier" (II Tim. 2:4). The best soldiers are sent on the most difficult and dangerous expeditions. If the sanctified are the best soldiers of Jesus, they are likely to be called upon to drink the deepest cup and carry the heaviest burdens (Phil. 1:29). "But love can never do or suffer too much for its divine Object."⁵

Humility. Trust involves humility, for one cannot exert faith enough to obtain and retain a work of grace without utterly abandoning all confidence in himself and leaning wholly on God. He who would be greatest in the kingdom of heaven must humble himself as a little child (Matt. 18:4). "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the

4. Wiley, op. cit.

5. John Fletcher, Christian Perfection (Nashville, Publishing House, M.E. Church, South, 1917), pp. 122-123.

humble" (I Pet. 2:5). Holiness is perfect love (I Jn. 4:17), and love is humble. He who would keep from sin must therefore be clothed with humility (I Pet. 5:5). He must always be ready to own any fault he has been in. Wesley said that love is rather inclined to bashfulness and silence than to talkative forwardness.⁶ I Peter 3:15 says, "Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear." Wesley advised men when they had done something for God or received some favor from him, to "retire if not into your closet, into your heart and pray 'I come, Lord, to restore to thee what thou has given, and I freely relinquish it, to enter again into my own nothingness'."⁷ Notice the Scripture usually says, "humble yourselves" (I Pet. 5:6). If one humbles himself he will not have to undergo the bitter experience of being humbled by God (Luke 14:11).

II. OBEY

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth (present tense) us from all sin" (I Jn. 1:7). The way to maintain this continual cleansing is to continually obey all the will of God as far as it is known.

Commenting on the continual cleansing power of the blood, Brockett said that the spiritual and moral atmosphere of this world in which believers dwell is sin infected like air is germ infected. Christians

6. Ibid., p. 116.

7. John Wesley, quoted in Fletcher, op. cit., p. 129.

are surrounded by a world in which sin reigns. Hence they are continually in contact with sin. Moreover, evil spirits are ever present waiting for opportunity to inject thoughts of pride, unbelief, envy, covetousness, and impurity into the minds. The blood of Jesus Christ is the divine antiseptic which protects the heart just as the continuous flow over the eye protects and cleanses the delicate pupil from particles of dust in the air.⁸

There can be no genuine trust without obedience. If one is really trusting the Lord, he is quick to obey. When God asked Abraham to take his son, Issac, and offer him for a burnt-offering, the Bible says he rose up early in the morning to go out and obey (Gen. 22:3). God does not want obedience to blind impulses, but an intelligent "Yes, Lord", to the known will of God. Obedience is important in guarding against sin for if one walks by the spirit he will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). To walk is to keep moving. Paul said this walk includes:

Casting down imaginations and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be made full" (II Cor. 10:5-6).

Certainly one who thus obeys will not fall into sin.

As was true of faith, obedience, as a condition of final salvation, was most often expressed in the present tense denoting that it must be continuous. "Blessed are they that wash (are constantly washing) their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and

8. Henry E. Brockett, Scriptural Freedom from Sin (Kansas City, Beacon Hill Press, 1941), p. 99.

may enter in by the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14). Paul said, "I press on (continually with earnest endeavor to acquire) toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14).⁹

Paul gave instruction to the Colossians who were raised together with Christ which if obeyed will keep one from sin. "Seek the things that are above...set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are upon the earth." Put to death, put away, quit all the sins that go with the old man, and put on with the new man:

A heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another and forgiving each other...and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule your hearts...Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God. And whatsoever ye do, in word, or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him (Col. 3:1-17).

Be in subjection to those who have authority over you according to the flesh (Col. 3:18-25).

Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving...Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one (Col. 4:2-6).

As Paul has suggested in this passage, one of the greatest helps to continuing in holiness is faithfulness in worship (Col. 3:16). Worship is one of the highest exercises in which the human can engage, and the most helpful. If one would keep from sin by obedience, he should do good works, watch, study, pray, press on, and witness.

9. Daniel Steele, op. cit., pp. 64-65.

Do Good Works. Obedience as a means for keeping sanctification involves the performance of good works. Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). The following question and answer appear in the minutes of the Methodist Conference of 1744: "Q, 11. Are works necessary to the continuance of faith? A. Without doubt; for a man may forfeit the free gift of God, either by sins of omission or commission." Faith cannot be lost through want of works, these minutes continued, unless that want amounts to disobedience. "For present salvation faith is the only condition, but for final salvation works are also necessary." Therefore, works, that is, loving God and neighbor and keeping God's commandments, are an important factor in maintaining the Christian life.¹⁰ Exercise from good works, spiritually as well as physically, keeps one strong. One of the good works that helps one to keep the faith, according to Scripture, is telling others of the gracious experience of holiness, and seeking to lead them to Christ and the rest of faith. Jude points this out in his formula for keeping in the love of God (v. 21). His exhortation is to "keep yourselves in the love of God," and is surrounded by five present tense participles. This is accomplished by:

...building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit...looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life...snatching them (some) out of the fire; and...hating even the garment spotted by the flesh (vs. 20-23).

Watch. If one would keep from sin after sanctification or any

10. Harold Lindstrom, Wesley and Sanctification (London, The Epworth Press, c. 1946), pp. 205-209.

other time, he must obey Jesus' command to "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26:41). The Christian is exhorted over and over to watch. This word most adequately expresses the duty of every Child of God to be alert against the subtlety of sin. Especially in regard to the coming of our Lord, Christians are commanded to watch and pray for they know not when the time is. Jesus will return as the Lord of the house who has gone away into another country and left authority with his servants. When he returns, His servants must not be found sleeping (Mark 13:33-37). Peter asks, in view of the fact that the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night when the heavens and the earth will pass away, "What manner of person ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God?..." (II Pet. 3:11-12). He gives the answer in the question. To keep from sin one must watch against sin constantly. There is no place or time so sacred that the devil will not dare to intrude himself. Christian teachings usually slip away little by little, not all at once (Heb. 2:1). That is why one needs to watch. The blessing of holiness is like gold only more precious. One has to dig to get it, then he must guard it to keep it. The servants of the devil are always trying to steal other treasures, but this treasure is so precious that the devil himself is constantly trying to steal it.¹¹

Wiley wrote that holiness purifies the heart so that it is like a garden without weeds or extraneous growths. But there is an enemy

11. Commissioner S.L. Brengle, Helps to Holiness (Atlanta, Supplies and Purchasing Departments, 1948), p. 94.

who sows tares while men sleep (Matt. 13:25), and constant watchfulness is necessary in order to prevent the enemy of souls from gaining admission to the heart. Holiness is like a well defended city but with enemies on the outside who are constantly seeking to gain admission. Christians must therefore watch and pray lest they enter into temptation.¹²

They must absolutely refuse to comply with temptation under any circumstance to any degree. The slightest compliance is fraught with the danger of death. Jesus was the most holy and the strongest morally of any man that ever lived. Yet even He did not feel strong enough that he could afford to play with sin. He immediately repelled every effort of Satan to make Him fall. How can his disciples treat sin so lightly, being so much weaker than He? They need not only watchfulness, but also refusal. One may see sin coming and still receive it. If a thing is doubtful, "abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thess. 5:22, A.V.).

The main entrance for temptation is at the door of attention. Williams wrote, "Do not permit attention to be centered on any person, object, or mental picture that would have a tendency to arouse a feeling or desire that if satisfied would lead astray."¹³ One should be armed against temptation by having his mind already made up as to what course he will take when it arises. He should watch the will to see that he does not consent to anything that is wrong or questionable.¹⁴ Ephesians 6:10-18 gives the armor that will enable one to stand against

12. Wiley, op. cit.

13. Rev. R.T. Williams, A Neglected Theme (Temptation) (Kansas City, Nazarene Publishing House, 1920), p. 60.

14. Ibid., pp. 61, 63.

the wiles of the devil. The figure of a Christian who would guard against sin, watching as a soldier on guard in full armor, is a good one and a scriptural one. He must not only stand guard, he must also be aggressive and overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21).

Hebrews 12:14-16 tells what the sentinel is to guard against-- a falling short of the grace of God, the springing up of a root of bitterness, and any fornicator or profane person. Professor Fuhrman cited the following as evidence that sin is creeping in: when one finds doing God's will a duty rather than a delight, or when he finds it easy to do wrong but hard to do right, or when he discovers a presence of inward attitudes that tend to be un-Christlike, or when he discovers an unwillingness to be crucified with Christ as Peter did, or when he feels any spiritual dullness. A sinner is dead to spiritual things. A carnal man is alive but dull. A spiritual man is alive and alert.¹⁵ Carradine said that when darkness begins to come over the soul the first thing to go is the joy. Then the soul loses the liberty it once knew, especially liberty in witnessing. Then there is loss of power; power in preaching, prayer and in testimony. Finally the blessing itself, as a work of grace, goes. These are the alarm bells, he wrote. Anyone can take warning in time. Sin enters the soul through the intellect--a thought or a picture of evil. Man has the power to reject this thought, but if allowed to remain it passes into the region of the sensibilities and a commotion is felt within.¹⁶

15. Rev. Eldon Fuhrman, Class Lecture, "Theology of Holiness", Western Evangelical Seminary, January, 1953.

16. Rev. B. Carradine, The Sanctified Life (Cincinnati, Office of the Revivalist, 1897), p. 45.

When this has happened, the believer should immediately appeal to the propitiation of I John 2:1 in humble confession (I Jn. 1:9).

Wesley warned that those who would retain sanctification should watch especially against pride, enthusiasm, Antinomianism, sins of omission, desiring anything but God, and against schism--making a rent in the Church of Christ. He concluded by saying, be exemplary in all things, particularly in outward things.¹⁷

Study. Jesus said, "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:31-32). One cannot expect to be free by just an occasional dip into the study of the Word. He must abide in the word, live in it, meditate therein day and night (Ps. 1:2). John wrote, "As for you, let that abide in you which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father" (I Jn. 2:24). Every Scripture is profitable "for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete (A.V. perfect), furnished completely unto every good work" (II Tim. 3:16). Love for Christ and a study of the Word cannot be separated. Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (Jn. 14:21), and again, "if a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him" (Jn. 14:23). When the Holy Trinity is abiding with a man, the devil will fail to find a very warm reception for his solicitations.

17. John Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection (Louisville, Pentecostal Publishing Company, n.d.), pp. 45-53.

A knowledge of God's Word through diligent continuous study is a very important weapon of the spiritual warfare. It is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17), with which the soldier of Christ may cut down every attempt of Satan to destroy faith. It can be used most effectively if it is memorized. "Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11). One may have the shield of faith, but if all he can do is stand and quench the fiery darts of the evil one with his shield, pretty soon faith will weaken. If he is also armed with the Sword of the Spirit and skilled in wielding it, he may spring into the offensive and drive the enemy away. This was what Jesus did. Every time the devil tempted Him, He quoted scripture and "the devil leaveth him: and behold, angels came and ministered unto him" (Matt. 4:1-11).

Besides studying the Bible, one should read holiness literature if he would keep fresh in the experience. A good practice is to read one holiness book a month. If this is followed there will not be time to clutter up the mind with reading matter that is not uplifting. Such material should be carefully avoided. A systematic regular program of diligent study of God's Word and good literature is a very essential means of abiding in perfect love.

Prayer. If in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving one lets his requests be made known unto God, the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6, 7). Prayer goes right along with Bible study as an essential to maintaining faith. So often when a person backslides, the first thing to go is the regularity of his private devotions. To keep from sin, one needs to continue steadfastly

in prayer (Rom. 12:12), especially closet prayer. "Enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut the door, pray...bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (Matt. 6:6, 13). If one were praying without ceasing (I Thess. 5:17), sin would never find an entrance into his soul. Steele reported again that exhortations to prayer and to spiritual endeavor in the resistance of temptation were usually expressed in the Greek New Testament in the present tense. This strongly indicates persistence. John 16:24 might be rendered, Ask, (present) repeatedly and ye shall receive, that your joy may be permanently filled (perfect)." "Persistently agonize to enter in (aorist) once for all, at the strait gate." ^{Matt. 7:13} Matthew 7:7; Mark 11:24; Luke 11:10; 18:13; James 1:5-6; and Hebrews 11:6 also expresses the necessity for persistence. Live as in the presence of God, wrote Wiley. "There must be constant and unbroken communion between Christ and the soul. Gazing into His glory, we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory. Walk and talk with God day by day."¹⁸

Press on. When one is walking by the Spirit so as not to fulfill the lust of the flesh, he is not standing still. There must be no resting in present attainment. After Paul had listed all the reasons whereby he could have "confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3-6), he testified that he counted all those things loss for Christ, so that he might attain unto the resurrection from the dead. Then he said:

Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect (in the sense that the resurrected saints are perfect): but I press on...forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which

18. H. Orton Wiley, "How to Retain Sanctification", excerpt from a tract (Kansas City, Beacon Hill Press, n.d.).

are before, I press on toward the goal into the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:12, 13, 14).

Then he added, "Let us therefore, as many as are perfect (in the sense that perfection is attainable in this life), be thus minded" (v. 15).

Peter also indicated that there is no place for resting in present attainment when he wrote to "them that have obtained a like precious faith with us" (II Pet. 1:1). After they had become "partakers of the divine nature; having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust" (v. 4), they were to give diligence to add to their faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. "For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (vs. 5-8). When one is standing still spiritually he is not walking in the light (I Jn. 1:7), and cannot receive the continuous cleansing. Love and holiness may increase day by day. One may seek more and more the mind of Christ. "If you do not grow in holiness you will decline in holiness. Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man."¹⁹

Witness. Finally, if one would keep the blessing of holiness, he must witness to it. Like all the other good gifts of God, he keeps it by sharing it with others. Jesus made witnessing appear very essential to salvation. "He that is not with me is against me" (Luke 11:23).

Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven (Matt. 10:32-33).

19. Loc. cit.

Paul said confession of the Lord Jesus is a condition for salvation, "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). If it is necessary to obtain salvation, as was shown before, it is necessary to retain it. Some think it is wrong to witness to holiness, for people will feel such a testimony is boasting or that it is a sign of pride. It must be done with simplicity, in the Spirit, and to the glory of God, but it cannot be condemned entirely for John witnessed to perfect love, "Herein is love made perfect with us" (I Jn. 4:17). Wiley said that one should never neglect testimony on every proper occasion. Christians are to overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony (Rev. 12:11). Definite, joyous testimony greatly aids in keeping the witness of the Spirit clear and strong.²⁰

Peter wrote, "Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear" (I Pet. 3:15). Witness in season and out of season (II Tim. 4:2), but always kindly and humbly.

III. SUMMARY

The conditions for getting sanctification are the conditions for keeping it. They must be maintained continually. There was found clear teaching in the Bible that human cooperation with divine power is essential if one would keep from sin. He must, by an effort of his

20. Loc. cit.

own will, trust and obey.

Trusting involves constant faith in the One who is able to guard from stumbling, and with that faith, complete consecration to Him. If there is anything the soul would rather have than Christ, that soul is not worthy of Christ. Trust also involves humility, for if one is still trusting in self, he cannot actually trust Christ.

To obey is to walk in the light, and this is the condition for being continually cleansed from all sin. Obedience also must be maintained continually. That means doing good works, for holiness may be forfeited by sins of omission as well as by sins of commission. It also means constant watching against sin as a soldier on guard. It involves study of God's Word, for the truth makes free, and prayer in everything with thanksgiving. To obey is to press on, never being satisfied to rest on present attainments. Holiness and love may increase. It also means witnessing kindly and humbly to all God has done in the heart on every proper occasion. To abide in perfect love is to live in the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians.

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to answer the question: Can an entirely sanctified person sin? If so, how does one explain the re-appearance of sin doctrinally, and prevent it experientially? This dissertation has been an effort to alert Christians to the need for continual careful watchfulness lest at any time they fall short of the grace of God (Heb. 12:15). It has also been an effort to show the earnest seeker after understanding that the fact of the possibility of the reappearance of sin in the holy soul does not lessen the validity of Scriptural freedom from all sin. It was the desire of the writer to restrict data only to that which had foundation in Scripture.

The findings of chapter two showed sin to have a two-fold nature. In one of its aspects, sin is a principle of evil or a condition of unrighteousness. In its other aspect, sin is an act. The chapter concluded with a discussion of what constitutes an act of sin. It must be accompanied by two facts: (1) the knowledge of evil, and (2) consent to the evil. An act which does not involve a willful transgression of a known law cannot properly be called sin, according to Wesley, and evidence is strong that his concept of sin was Scriptural.

While many answers were given as to the extent of salvation from sin available in this life, the one found to be Biblical was the the

answer that Jesus in this life saves from all sin, in both its aspects. The Bible language strongly indicates that the sin principle, the tendency toward evil, is not to be merely repressed, but completely removed and destroyed. Being cleansed from this inner pollution, the believer is made perfect in so far as a man can be perfect in this life. That is, he is made perfect in love toward God and neighbor, and in attitudes, intentions, and motives. He is not made perfect in head or in body, but in heart. He still is plagued with a thousand infirmities, he still needs the blood of atonement, he still may have trials and temptations. He still has his essential humanity and bodily appetites, but these are purged from all perversion and consecrated wholly to God. Because he is still, to this extent, human, he will still have to face temptation and the possibility of falling from grace.

God gave man the power and the opportunity to choose either to love Him or reject Him. It glorifies God more for man to love and serve Him of his own free will than for him to be forced to do so. Along with this opportunity to choose, God permits temptation. He does not change this relationship, even in sanctification, because He wants in heaven only those who have been tested and proved faithful. Though temptation is declared by Scripture to continue throughout this life, victory is promised for the Christian, and especially the one who is cleansed from the inner tendency toward evil will find it abundantly available.

In the sixth chapter, evidence was given from the example of the angels and Adam, and from the teachings of Jesus, Paul, the writer to the Hebrews, and Peter that there is no state of grace in this life from which the believer cannot fall. Some Scripture passages that

seemed to indicate there is, presented no difficulty when interpreted in the light of related Scripture and the setting in which they were written. This does not make the experience of heart holiness less desirable. Rather, in view of the constant possibility of falling, sanctification should be most earnestly desired, for it offers the closest fellowship with God and the greatest resistance to temptation available in this life.

The assertion of the possibility of falling raised two final questions: If one has lost the blessing--what? And how does one keep from sin after sanctification? To the first, the answer given was that the way back depends on the extent of the lapse. But even when one has lost sanctification and justification, and has gone into open sin, if he awakens and desires to return, there is hope. He must come again as he came first, with hearty repentance, confession, and faith, re-laying the foundation. The Bible indicates that there are some who may not be received again unto repentance. Some scholars have felt that this means they may not be received only so long as they are willfully sinning. Others have felt that these verses speak of a deadline; that it is possible for one to go so deep into apostasy that God will give him up into his uncleanness. The Bible promises pardon and mercy, however, for all who find in their heart a desire to come back to God.

In response to the last question, the Bible formula for retaining holiness was given in the words of the song title, "Trust and Obey." Trust involves constant faith, consecration, and humility. Obedience means to walk in the light, doing good works, watching constantly against sin, studying and praying to know God's will in order to walk therein, and witnessing humbly on every proper occasion. Most of all,

one must continually press on toward the goal, never resting on present attainments.

II. CONCLUSIONS

1. Sin is both an act and a condition.
2. The idea that a true act of sin must involve a willful transgression of a known law is not a dim view of sin. Rather it is Scriptural.
3. Complete deliverance from inbred sin is declared by Scripture to be obtainable in this life. This deliverance occurs in entire sanctification. The one so delivered is given greater strength to live day by day without committing acts of sin.
4. The sanctified believer is still subject to temptation.
5. The sanctified person is still able to sin. It is never impossible for one to sin in this life. But he is also able to keep from sinning.
6. The sanctified person has not "arrived" in the sense that he need not seek to develop and improve. Instead, he is rendered able to grow faster than before. Entire sanctification is both preceded and followed by gradual development.
7. Even the most holy soul must continue the "good fight of faith" against principalities and powers. He must continually watch and pray, trust and obey, that he enter not into temptation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

A more thorough study should be made of the Scripture used by the opponents of entire sanctification to discount the idea of complete

deliverance from sin. Some of these passages are: I Kings 8:46; II Chronicles 6:36; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Job 9:2; 9:20; Psalms 14:1-3; 51:5; 119:96; 130:3; Proverbs 20:9; 24:9; Isaiah 64:6; Jeremiah 13:23; 17:9; 17:10; Matthew 19:17; Romans 7; I Corinthians 15:31; 9:27; I Timothy 1:15; and James 3:2.

Passages which show that it is possible to live without sin in this life furnish a field for a very interesting study. Some of these are: Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:74, 75; John 5:14; 8:11; Romans 5:20, 21; 6:1-23; 8:1-4; 8:10 cf. Phillipians 3:21; II Corinthians 5:21; Phillipians 1:1; Titus 1:1; James 1:1; I Peter 1:1; I John 1:7-9; 2:1, 6; 3:3-9; 5:18; Jude 1:1, and Revelation 1:1.

The subject of temptation has been a neglected theme. An investigation of the place of temptation in the perfection of believers might prove interesting and helpful. The importance of human responsibility in conditions for final salvation has been minimized by some groups and neglected by others. Any work in this field would be of great value.

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