

YOUR SANCTIFICATION.

Order is indispensable in the study of the word of the God of order. Order is heaven's first law. Through lack of order many Christians confound sanctification with justification. Sanctification is a distinct, separate work, and never precedes, but should follow justification. The term sanctification means setting apart for a special work or office. It is partly our work and partly God's work. When justified from sin through faith in the ransom, we may consecrate, sanctify or set ourselves apart to the will and service of God. Then, when God accepts our consecration, he sanctifies or sets us apart to whatever work or office he pleases.

This double work is made very plain in the language of Lev. 20:7,8: "Sanctify yourselves, therefore, and be ye holy"; and again, "I am the Lord which sanctify you." Compare, also, Rom. 12:1 with 1 Thes. 5:23.

It always has been and always will be a thing acceptable in God's sight for justified persons to sanctify or fully set themselves apart to his will and service. During the Gospel Age sanctification is a special privilege. The service to be performed and the office to be filled by those sanctified during this age is the grandest service and the highest office in the gift of Jehovah – grand in its privilege of scattering universal blessing.

No one can be sanctified who is not first justified by faith in Christ Jesus; for "God heareth not sinners" – the unjustified. Such cannot approach him. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," are the words of our Lord. All who, during the Gospel Age, sanctify or set themselves apart to do the will of God find it his will that they "present their bodies living sacrifices unto God," which being

justified, free from sin, holy, Paul assures us, will be acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ (Rom. 12:1).

It is only when made whiter than snow by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus that any sinner can have communion with God or set apart himself in acceptable service. Thus we offer up* sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5). In a word, nothing imperfect or sinful is acceptable to God in sacrifice. Hence the necessity that all who would sanctify must be justified or freed from sin first; then, being made free from sin, you can bear fruit, you can do works acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

*The oldest Greek text – the Sinaitic MSS. – omits spiritual here. The propriety is seen when we remember that it is our human nature which is being sacrificed, as with Jesus.

Thus we see that the ransom for our sins – Jesus' death – does not sanctify us, but it is the means of our justification, and justification must precede, or be a stepping-stone to sanctification. This relationship is clearly shown by Paul, who says: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace [sanctification] wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1,2). Every divine favor we enjoy comes by Jesus. Justification first, as the direct result of his death, then the acceptance of our sacrifice and consequent hope of glory, honor, immortality and joint-heirship with Jesus.

If, then, our sanctification be the presenting of our justified humanity as a sacrifice or offering to God, when may it be done? We answer that it – the sanctifying for the high calling – could be done by justified believers at any time since Jesus died and rose and ascended, until the "royal priesthood" is entirely selected. The selecting of this priesthood commenced not with Aaron and Moses

– no, these were only types [R442 : page 3] and shadows of the real – it began with Jesus, the High Priest of our profession. He was first selected as our Leader, Forerunner and Captain, and not until he had fully sanctified himself and sacrificed the human nature, thus finishing his course and opening for us a new and living way by justifying us – not until then did any follow him in sanctification and sacrifice.

Even the disciples, though they had consecrated fully and had forsaken all to be his disciples – though they had thus done their part of the work of sanctification, yet God did not accept of their sacrifice until Jesus had actually paid their ransom price and ours, and presented it upon the "mercy seat." But immediately, when their justification was fully accomplished, the Pentecostal blessing – the sealing acceptance of their sacrifice – came.

This Gospel Age, then, has been "the acceptable year (time) of the Lord" – i.e., the time during which God has accepted as candidates for the priesthood every heart presented in sacrifice – coming in the only name given. This acceptable time, to our understanding, is now ended – since October, 1881. The present time we believe to be not a [R442 : page 4] to finish their course with joy by fully carrying out their covenant of sacrifice. Soon the sacrificing and sufferings of the Church will give place to glory when she shall be united to her Lord, and when one with him she shall be Jehovah's time for consecration with a view to the high calling, the priesthood, but rather the time for those who have so consecrated channel for blessing the world.

Yes, we believe that the quarrying of living stones for the temple is ended – we wait till the few now being finished and polished shall be perfected and fitted to their places, and then the structure will be completed; and the headstone shall be brought forth with shoutings of grace, grace unto it (Zech. 4:7). May the privilege

"Of the little while between
In its golden light be seen,"

and let all the consecrated run with renewed vigor the remainder of their course.

The present time, we repeat, is for the perfecting of those who have consecrated all to the Lord. It is a harvest rather than a sowing time, a gathering rather than a planting time. It is mentioned thus by the Prophets: "Gather my saints together unto me – those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice"; "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels" (Psa. 50:5; Mal. 3:17).

But while sanctification is spoken of as though it were completed at the moment of consecration, yet it actually is a progressive work to all whose earthen vessels were marred and tainted by sin. Even after the human will is subjected to the divine, we need, as did Paul, to keep our bodies under (1 Cor. 9:27).

SANCTIFIED THROUGH TRUTH.

To enable us to be and to continue sanctified, God has provided a means, viz., truth. Not every truth – not historic or scientific truth – but as Jesus said, "Sanctify them through thy truth." Other truths are very good in their place, but it is a mistake to suppose that they sanctify. But what is God's truth? Jesus said, "Thy word is truth." God's word through the prophets? Yes, we have a sure word of prophecy to which we do well to take heed; and not only so, but God's more recent words through the Apostles also, for "all Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable."

But does some one inquire of the necessity of the New Testament and suggest that Jesus was sanctified by the word of God through the prophets? Our reply is, Not so; for Jesus himself was the living word – "the word made flesh." It is nowhere said that he was

sanctified by the word of the prophets. They testified of, but not to, him. He was sanctified by the truth, but he himself said, also, "I am the truth" (John 14:6); and again, "I sanctify myself" (John 17:19). Ah, beloved! "This" is the living bread ("truth") which came down from heaven, without which all the words of prophets would have been meaningless and tasteless husks.

For sanctifying power, Jesus pointed us forward to the truths to be revealed by the Spirit through the Apostles, saying: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). He shall take of mine and show them unto you (John 16:14). Any reference to the prophets was rather as corroborative of his own higher teachings (Matt. 24:15; Dan. 11:31). And thus all students have found it; the prophets' words are valuable as showing many of the interests of the Jew and natural men and events, but, except in types and shadows, discernable only by the Spirit's revelations through the Apostles, they contain little spiritual food. This is that bread which came down from heaven – this "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" – and since his ascension it has been revealed through his Apostles, who "preached the gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven" – to take of Jesus' things and show them unto "the sanctified in Christ" (1 Pet. 1:12; 1 Cor. 1:2).

Since God's truth is the sanctifying power, how important that we should live "by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). Let us seek and feed upon God's word in its purity, remembering that sectarian creeds and catechisms are so many attempts to "teach for doctrine the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9), and that the result of even mixing truth with error is confusion – Babylon.
