

HOW ARE WE SANCTIFIED?

**For this is the will of God, even your sanctification."
– 1 Thessalonians 4:3.**

THE words of our text are addressed only to the saints of God, as are all the Apostolic Epistles. In respect to His people, this is God's will, His desire, His design – even their sanctification, their full setting apart from the world to Himself and His service. This is not God's will in the sense that He has determined that certain ones shall be sanctified; but it is His will that there shall be such a class; and it rests with each of the called whether or not he shall belong to this class.

God has a great work to be accomplished, and hence He has a very particular reason for the selection of such a class. If we would be of this number when completed, we must make our calling and election sure by full compliance with the terms and conditions of the call, and this even unto death. We should bear in mind that the Lord is now selecting, electing, a sanctified class for a very special position, a very special work – First, for a thousand years they are to be associated with the Lord Jesus Christ in the regeneration of the whole world, including all who have lived since the time of Adam – for their uplift from sin and death to the heights of human perfection, from which Adam fell; and then they are to reign with Christ their Head and be associated with Him in all His future work throughout eternity. This is why it is called a High Calling, a Heavenly Calling.

So the will of God referred to in this text is not the will of God concerning the world in the Ages to follow the present Age, nor is it His will concerning angels. It is His will for the Church, called to be the Bride of Christ, members of His Body. This great Call was never issued before this Age, nor will it ever be issued after its close. There can be but one Bride of Christ; and when this class shall have been

completed, no addition to their number will ever be made. This Class have heard of the present grace of God offered through Christ and have accepted its terms and entered the race for the "Prize."

The Apostle in our text is practically saying, Here we are as Christians, the called of God. Now, what is the one thing God would have us do? Would He have us keep a seventh day? Would He have us abstain from eating meat? Would He have us adopt some certain forms or idiosyncrasies? No. The will of God is our *sanctification*. There is a certain difference between the words sanctification and consecration, though they are sometimes used almost interchangeably. The word *consecrate* has the thought of surrender. Consecration is a definite step, taken at a certain moment. It is the yielding up of the will and of *all* to God. Whoever has not thus definitely surrendered his will, himself, to the Lord, has never made a real consecration. We believe that there is no step more necessary to be seen clearly by God's professed people than this one, and none more necessary to be made [R5877 : page 99] plain to others. The word sanctification not only has in it the thought of this definite and complete consecration at the beginning, but also takes in the entire process of transformation of character and preparation for the Kingdom. It progresses throughout the Christian course until the character is fully developed and ripened, and it must then be maintained until the end of the way.

HOW TO ENTER THE HEAVENLY RACE

Many professed Christians do not see the initial step of full consecration as essential to one who would be a follower of Christ. In our conversation with people many tell us that they have been trying for years to be children of God, that they have been for years seeking to do God's will and live a holy life. We try always to get these down to the particular point: Have you *begun* right? Have you been trying to run the Christian race on the *outside* or on the *inside*? Then they ask us what we mean. And we tell them that

the matter is like a race-course, where there is a certain prize offered, with certain definite rules and regulations. The person who is to run in the race must be entered in the regular way. The contract must be made and signed. The man must agree to all the conditions. Then he will be entered as a contestant, and must run on the prescribed track and for the goal.

Now another, who had failed to make this contract and to enter the race in the prescribed manner, might run around and around on the outside of the track. He might run as fast and as well as those on the inside. He might boastingly say, "I can beat any one running on that track!" But would he gain the prize? Assuredly not. He would be only amusing himself or wasting his breath and his strength. The real race was run on that track. He had failed to meet the prescribed conditions, and all his running would be in vain so far as gaining the prize was concerned. And so it is with one who endeavors to live a Christian life without first having carefully learned and met the conditions and terms required in order to become a real disciple of Christ, and be recognized of the Father as His child.

We believe that this is the trouble with many who call themselves Christians. Many who talk with us express good desires and all that, but we pin them right down to **[R5877 : page 100]** the point: "Have you made a full consecration to God?" We had a case of this kind only recently – a gentleman who has now called upon us twice. In our conversation at his last visit we said, "Well, you remember what we spoke about when you were here before." He replied that he had been praying. We then told him that he had no right to pray, that he could not properly pray until he had an Advocate with the Father; for the Father does not hear sinners. We said, "You cannot pray until you have surrendered your will to God. And all access to the Father must be through the Advocate. 'No man cometh to the Father, but by Me.' There is a *definite* way. It is not that you can go in *your* way and I in *mine*. All the terms of discipleship are laid down by the Lord Himself. 'If *any* man will be

My disciple,' said the Lord Jesus, 'let him *deny himself*, and take up his cross, and follow Me.' Unless we take this step of denying *ourselves*, yielding up ourselves to the Lord, we may do a variety of things – go to Church, etc., etc., and yet not be Christians. We are not Christians until we have accepted Jesus as our Redeemer, and made a consecration to God through Christ."

TWO PARTS TO SANCTIFICATION

In one Scripture we read, "Sanctify yourselves, and I will sanctify you." This means, Set yourselves apart to God, and He will set you apart. We have a part in this work and God has a part. If we make a full consecration, God will consecrate us; He will accept us and set us apart for Himself. He gives us the indication of this acceptance in the begetting of His Holy Spirit. Such soon begin to realize that they have a new mind, a new disposition, a new heart. It is of this class that the Apostle Paul is speaking in our text. "This is the will of God" concerning *you*, "even your sanctification" – you who have consecrated yourselves to Him and whom He has accepted and consecrated, has set apart for His service.

The acceptance of us by the Father is only the beginning of the sanctifying work. And it is His will that this work should continue and progress in us, to its full completion. This sanctifying work should affect our minds, our hands, our eyes, our ears, our tongues – our all – that we may be fully used of the Lord. It is the will that is given up at first, and the will, of course, includes the service of our mortal body.

But this body has natural tendencies of its own. The giving up of the will means that the individual will seek to bring every thought, word and act into subjection to the will of God. It is one thing for the will to be made holy, and another thing to bring the mind and the body fully into line with this holiness of the will. The will is present with us, but how to perform is the problem. Not only are our wills to maintain this sanctified state, but we are to broaden our

appreciation of the Lord's will for us, and thus have more and more of the spirit of sacrifice.

SANCTIFIED THROUGH THE TRUTH

Now what powers, what spiritual forces, are there that will aid us in this work of sanctification? Our Lord Jesus, in His last prayer to the Father before His death, prayed, "Sanctify them through *Thy Truth; Thy Word* is Truth." (John 17:17.) Here He gives us the key as to how this work of sanctification will proceed. The one who consecrates himself to God will not at first have a full knowledge of himself or of sin. He is only a babe at the beginning. But he is to be helped onward by the power of the revealed Word, by the Message of Truth. How will this Message sanctify? The Apostle Paul answers that thus God works in us both to will and to do His good pleasure. He gives us in His Word exceeding great and precious promises. He gives us counsel and admonition. And as these enter our heart and impress themselves upon us, through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, we are constrained to work out in ourselves the peaceable, precious fruits of righteousness and holiness.

We realize that by faithfully walking in the narrow way which our Master walked, we shall be pleasing to our God and shall receive an exceeding great reward, even joint-heirship with Christ to "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1:4,5.) Thus we see how very important is the Word of Truth in this sanctifying process, whether we receive this Truth from the reading of the Bible or from a hymn or from the **STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES** or however. Whatever impresses upon our hearts the Word of God and increases our measure of the Holy Spirit is a part of that which does the sanctifying work.

THE METHOD OF SANCTIFICATION

There is another text which tells us how we are to be sanctified. It declares that by God's will "we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Hebrews 10:10.) The Apostle's thought here is that we were not sanctified in the beginning, but "were children of wrath, even as others." We could not sanctify ourselves; and the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, the sacrifice of His untainted life for us, was the basis whereby we might become God's sanctified people. No amount of consecration could have made us the people of God unless, first of all, the foundation for this should be made in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. His sacrifice opened the way. His merit cleansed us and made us acceptable to Jehovah.

Again, we read that we are of the Elect, "through sanctification of the Spirit." (1 Peter 1:2.) When we present ourselves in consecration, we are next accepted and begotten of the Spirit. This acceptance and begetting sets us apart; it inducts us into the Body of the Anointed. The spirit of the Truth inspires us and guides us in the Heavenly way. It first showed us that we were sinners needing a Savior. Next it showed us how to present ourselves to God. And after we had taken the steps thus shown, and were accepted as sons of God, it led us on step by step into the fulness of the stature of men in Christ. Thus the Spirit, through the Word, brings about our complete sanctification.

We are told again that it is "the blood of the Covenant wherewith we are sanctified." (Hebrews 10:29.) How is this? God has made a great Covenant with the Church. It was first made with the Head of this Church, and then with those who are to constitute His Body. It is a Covenant of Sacrifice. Jehovah said, prophetically through the Psalmist, "Gather My saints [My holy ones, My sanctified ones] together unto Me; those who have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Psalms 50:5.) The way to come into this class

thus called and gathered is to accept the terms laid down by Jehovah Himself. No one comes into this class except by the *blood of the Covenant*.

When our Lord Jesus entered into a Covenant with the Father, it was by the consecration of Himself at baptism. This consecration was carried out and finished in His death on Calvary. There the shedding of His blood – the sacrifice of His life – was finished. There was no other way to fulfil His Covenant. It was necessary that He do all this that He might enter into His own glory as well as be the Savior of the world. And we who have become His Body members must make this same Covenant with the Father. We are to drink with Him His Cup of [R5878 : page 101] suffering and death. We are to lay down our lives as He laid His down. Our blood is to be shed, our human lives are to be sacrificed, with His. There is no virtue in our blood other than it is made acceptable by the imputation of Christ's merit. But by this imputation, we, as members of His Body, share in His sacrifice. So our death is like His, a sacrificial death; and our blood is counted in as His blood. Thus by partaking in the blood of the Covenant, the blood of the sacrificial Covenant, the blood which is to seal the New Covenant, we are sanctified. This laying down of our lives is a gradual work, in its actual carrying out, as was that of our Lord's. It is the work of sanctification, progressing until its completion in death.

So it is true that we are sanctified through the *Truth*, which becomes illuminated to us through the Holy Spirit. The offering of the body of Jesus opened the way to this sanctification. And our Covenant of Sacrifice gives us a participation in the "blood of the Covenant," and this means our full sanctification unto death. Whoever does not share in the drinking of Christ's Cup, in His sacrificial death, will have no part in the Kingdom. The world will have a share in the eating of the Bread that came down from Heaven; but to be members of Christ's Body of sacrifice it is necessary that we also drink of His *blood*, and share with Him in His *death*. We

are to be conformed unto His death that we may share in His *resurrection*, the First (Chief) Resurrection. The world are to have no part in the drinking of the Cup. The blood of the Covenant wherewith we (the Church) are sanctified is to seal the New Covenant for the whole world. It is not sealed as yet; for the sacrificing is not yet completed. The Law Covenant was a type of the New Covenant, soon to be inaugurated. The Law Covenant was sealed by the blood of the typical bullock and goat. So the New Covenant will be sealed by the blood of the "better sacrifices."

SPRINKLING OF BLOOD, TYPE AND ANTITYPE

This is all an unmerited favor to the goat class. As in the type, when the Law Covenant was instituted, Moses took the blood of bullocks and goats, and sprinkled first the book of the Law, thus typically satisfying God's Justice, and then sprinkled "all the people," so in the antitype, the blood of the antitypical bullock and goat sprinkle first the Law, satisfying Justice on behalf of the entire world; and then the blood sprinkles "all the people," the whole world, who are dead in Adam. This will mean the Restitution, to be gradually attained by the world in the incoming Age as the result of the Ransom-sacrifice and its application on their behalf. This will be accomplished by the Millennial Reign of The Christ, Head and Body.

It may be asked, Why were there many bullocks and goats offered in the type, when there is only one bullock and one goat in the antitype? Why the difference? We reply, There is no difference. It was merely the duplication of the bullock and goat in the type. But why? Because it required much more blood than one bullock and one goat would supply, to sprinkle all Israel. But there is no difference in the thought. It typified the work of the one bullock and the one goat in antitype.

It is a marvelous privilege to be of this Lord's goat class, the sanctified in Christ Jesus, who are to share with Him in His

sufferings of the present time and then to reign with Him throughout eternal ages of glory. Let us prove to God our appreciation of this glorious calling, by faithfulness even unto death.

