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Holiness Writers

Common Sense in Religion

By

George Asbury McLaughlin

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION

or

REASONS WHY WE SHOULD BE HOLY

By

George Asbury McLaughlin

Author

of

Commentaries on

The Four Gospels and Acts

Inbred Sin

A Clean Heart

A Living Sacrifice

Saved and Kept

Old Wine in New Bottles

The Promised Gift

The Vine and the Branches

96 Page Edition

Published in 1920

By Christian Witness Co.

Digital Edition 09/19/97

By Holiness Data Ministry

From A Non-Copyrighted Reprint

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PREFACE

A religion not in harmony with common sense cannot be from God. God is the Author both of common sense and of true religion and His works never conflict. Hence the religion that cannot stand the test of common sense is good for nothing either in this world or in the world to come.

It is currently objected to the doctrine of holiness, as an experience of this life, that it is fanaticism. We propose to show that far from being fanaticism it is the purest common sense, and that the objector is the fanatic.

In fact the real fanaticism is contained in that religion that does not save us from all sin. It is the most absurd thing in the world, to be religious when our religion does not save us from that which ails us—sin.

It is often the case that Satan throws the blame of his own crowd upon the Lord's people. And this is the case in the matter of holiness. He would take the eyes of men off the unreasonableness of a sinning religion and make a holy religion appear unreasonable. A sinning religion or a religion that would permit sin is of the devil, because he is the author and inspirer of all sin.

A holy religion is of God because God is holy and can never tolerate or encourage sin and especially not among His own people.

It is therefore time that we "carried the war into Africa" and that we charge home on the devil and his folks fanaticism and unreasonableness. We have allowed the charge of fanaticism to be made against God's holy religion long enough.

Reader, which do you choose, a religion that permits sin, which is the work of Satan or the divine religion that saves from sin? Down in your heart you know which religion you prefer and your preference shows what manner of man you are. This book is written to show the reasonableness of the experience of holiness in this life and to show at the same time, the unreasonableness of the opposite not being saved from sin in this life.

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Chapter 1

COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION

We propose in showing that it is in harmony with good common sense that supernatural religion should save us from all sin, to take the negative side, and show the folly and absurdity of a religion that does not save from all sin. In other words, a religion that does not save from all sin is a sinning religion. And for people to call themselves Christians and yet declare that they cannot, and are not, saved from all sin is grotesque and ridiculous. See what follows if the religion of Jesus does not save from all sin.

A religion that permits sin is ridiculous; because it represents God as pleased with sin. The system of religion revealed in the Bible has God as its Author. God is pleased with His religion and if He has given a religion that permits sin, then God is pleased with a system that permits sin. If He is pleased with such a system, then He is pleased with sin. There can be no escape from this conclusion. If God is pleased with sin, then He is not holy. Consequently those who deny that we can be saved from sin, really attack the holiness of God. There is no escape from this conclusion. A sinning religion is therefore a contradiction of a holy God. For whatever God does is good and His plan of salvation is therefore good. But to call it good when it permits evil is a contradiction.

A religion that permits sin encourages sin. It encourages men to remain sinful. For why should man seek for purity if he can get along without it? Why should he seek to be free from sin when the highest standard of his religion allows it? Why should he seek to be free from sin when his religion permits it? Why should he cut off the right hand and pluck out the right eye of his darling lusts if there is no need of it? Why should he try to be free from sin if his religion does not promise divine help in achieving freedom from sin? Men do not earnestly seek what they think is an impossibility. When George Fox was preaching the glorious gospel in England in one place, a man remonstrated saying, "You put it too strong." George Fox replied, "The Scripture says," "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin." The man replied, "To be sure, but all we can do is to keep striving." Fox replied, "What is the use to keep striving if we cannot do it?" It cuts the nerve of all effort if a man believes he can not accomplish the thing he is seeking to do. They, who deny that we can be saved from all sin, really make the Author of Christianity an encourager of sin.

A religion that permits sin makes the author of that religion a partner in the sins of his followers. This is severe logic but there is no escape from this conclusion. He who encourages others in any enterprise becomes a partner in it, as far as his influence, at least, is concerned. Whatever we encourage others to do is our own enterprise as far as our influence is concerned. A father, who does not discourage the disposition to dishonesty in his children, becomes responsible for their dishonesty. He is responsible because he did not encourage them to be honest. The professed Christians, who declare that they cannot be saved from all sin are really publishing to the world that God has made no provision to save from sin. And if He has made no provision, in His plan of salvation, to save

from sin, then He does not discourage sin. And if He does not discourage it, His silence on the subject is an encouragement of it.

A religion that does not save from sin breaks down at the point where it is most needed. If man does not need to be saved from sin, what does he need to be saved from? Sin is the worst thing in the world. It is the great source of all our trouble. It is the cause of all the woes of mankind. It is our great hindrance in serving God. It is the only thing that can shut us out of heaven. If we need religion at all, we need it at this point, for if we are saved from sin we are saved from hell, for hell is but the result of sin. Therefore a religion that will not save us from sin is not needed for it breaks down at the vital point. A doctor that cannot cure disease fails at the very point where a doctor is needed. And so does a sinning religion.

On the other hand it is reasonable and probable that God would give us a plan of salvation that saves from sin. We have been showing the absurdity of a sinning religion. We now wish to show the reasonableness of a religion that saves from sin, or at least we wish to show that the Christian religion reasonably must save us from sin in this present life. It is reasonable to expect that God would give a religion that will save from all sin because no other religion can glorify God. He is holy and His plan of salvation glorifies Him in making His people like Him. It is the glory of an honest man to have honest children. It is the glory of a holy God to have holy children. Does this seem unreasonable? It is not unreasonable for a man to have children like him. No one objects to a child being like his parents. If we are the children of God it would be most unreasonable if we were not like Him.

Holiness glorifies God, for He is the Author of holiness and sin glorifies Satan, because he is the author of sin. Everybody in the world is glorifying either God or Satan.

A religion that saves from sin proves that the grace of God is mightier than sin. It puts a premium on divine grace. People who are saved from sin are samples of what God can do and people who are not saved from sin are samples of what Satan can do. There has been a great contest between God and Satan in all ages of the world. And it is still going on. The battle never was hotter in any age than today. When God would save Israel from its backsliding, He took Joshua, the high priest, and his fellow priests and made them symbols of His saving grace and declared they were types of what He could do in saving men from sin. (See Zechariah 3:7.) There are plenty of people who preach up the power of Satan and declare that he can make sinners but deny that our God can make saints. Let them preach up the power of Satan if they will, but we will magnify the grace of God and declare that the divine remedy is more than a match for the disease of sin.

A religion that saves from sin is necessary to prove that the Bible is true. Either our Bible is "a cunningly devised fable" or it is the Word of God. If it does not produce holy character then the infidel has the best of the argument. The infidel knows it teaches a holy life and he says, "But no one has ever lived such a life." And when professed Christians deny that it is their privilege to be saved from all sin, they join hands with infidels. They help tear down the temple of Christianity. Christlieb many years ago said, "The Christian is the world's Bible. They read us instead of the Bible." This was considered a very pretty sentiment and was voiced by the pulpit and religious press. But it means still more. It means that the Bible is a holy book. It is a treatise on holiness. It professes holiness on the

outside when it carries the title, "Holy Bible." It has holiness on the inside. And in that sense the real Christian is the world's Bible. He has the profession of holiness on the outside and the experience of holiness on the inside.

Bishop Taylor in his evangelistic work in India had a remarkable convert, who gave his experience like this. He came across a New Testament somewhere and read it. He was filled with delight and amazement. He said to somebody, "It is a wonderful book. But of course there are no people that live as that book teaches." The reply was, "Oh, yes. There are many of them in Bombay." He said "Show them to me." He began to mingle with and watch the professed Christians of a nominal church of Bombay. He saw how they did business; how they treated their servants and families and came away sick at heart, saying, "Alas! the book is not true. I am disappointed." And he gave the matter up. When the great revival under Bishop Taylor's preaching broke out in Bombay, this man came and looked on. He saw drunkards, thieves and harlots saved from their sins and believers sanctified, and he said, "The book is true after all," and fell down at the foot of the cross and got salvation. Holy people are necessary to prove that the Bible is true. If a man can not be saved from all sin, then the Bible is the most inconsistent, contradictory and deceptive book in the world, for no unprejudiced man can read it and not know that it commands and promises holiness. How ridiculously inconsistent are those followers of Jesus, who oppose and fight the work of holiness! Better be an out and out infidel than an inconsistent professed Christian. "I would thou wert either cold or hot," said Jesus.

Holiness is a reasonable experience because it is divinely commanded. God constantly commands it all through His Word. This command is so frequent that we need not quote. Every Bible student is aware of the fact. Whatever God commands is reasonable. He is too good and wise to ask impossibilities. Average Christians, in spite of the command again and again, "Be ye holy," look upon its realization as fanaticism. Pharaoh very unreasonably commanded the Israelites to make brick without furnishing the material. Our God asks nothing beyond our ability or possibility. When He says, "Be ye holy," He means we can be holy. Every command implies the power to obey. Every command has a promise in its bosom. A command means "I will give you the grace and power to obey Me, whenever your own strength fails."

It is said that John Wesley once asked his brother, Charles, "If the Lord commanded you to fly, what would you do?" The reply was, "If the Lord asked me to fly, I would expect Him to furnish me wings." John in turn replied "If the Lord commanded me to fly, I would fly, wings or no wings."

When the man with the withered hand stood before Jesus, the latter said, "Stretch forth thy hand." That was what he had been unable to do. The link between the mind and body was missing. When he willed his hand would not obey. But at the command of Jesus he exerted his will and the missing link was supplied by divine power and his hand went forth. So it is in obeying the command to be holy. We are as unable to make ourselves holy as this man was to stretch forth his hand but if we will to be holy with all our souls, He will supply the power and make us holy. We do not have to try to persuade God to make us holy. He has been persuaded for thousands of years.

Holiness is reasonable because it is deeply imbedded in the human conscience, that man ought to be holy. We find men seeking to be holy even among the heathen. They are bathing in sacred

rivers, torturing their bodies, measuring their length across continents, fasting, torturing themselves, to be made holy.

In Christian lands men are criticizing the faults of their neighbors and demanding a perfect humanity. The need of holiness is felt by all men, under the urging of a guilty conscience. In its last analysis what is holiness? It is being right. That is all. And the universal conscience of the race demands that man be right. Whatever is universally admitted as a trend of our nature is right. Innate ideas are current ideas. This is common sense in religion.

John Fletcher, the saint of early Methodism, reasons with opposers who deny that God instantly makes man holy, thus, "For where is the absurdity of the doctrine? If the light of a candle, brought into a dark room, can instantly expel the darkness; and if, upon opening the shutters, at noon, your gloomy apartment can be instantly filled with meridian light; why might not the instantaneous rending of the veil of unbelief, or the sudden and full opening of the eye of faith, instantly fill your soul with the light of truth and the fire of love, supposing the Sun of Righteousness arise upon you with healing in His wings? May not the Sanctifier descend upon your waiting soul as quickly as the Spirit descended upon your Lord in baptism? Did it not descend as a dove; that is with the swift motion of a dove, which swiftly shoots down, and instantly alights? A good man once said, 'A mote is little when compared with the sun, but I am far less when compared with God.' Alluding to this comparison, I ask, if the sun could instantly kindle a mote; nay if a burning glass can in a moment calcine a bone, and turn a stone into lime; if a dim flame of a candle can, in the twinkling of an eye, destroy the flying insect which comes within its sphere; how unscriptural and irrational is it to suppose that when God fully baptizes a soul with His sanctifying Spirit, and with the celestial fire of His love, He cannot in an instant destroy the man of sin, burn up the chaff of corruption, melt the heart of stone into a heart of flesh, and kindle the believing soul into pure seraphic love."

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Chapter 2

HOLINESS GLORIFIES GOD

There are many reasons why we should be holy. But the chief reason is because it glorifies God. He says, "Be ye holy for I am holy." That is, "My child, I am holy and that is sufficient reason why you should be holy." Whatever glorifies God is reasonable. It is founded on the laws of common sense.

Let us see more fully how holiness in man glorifies God. In order to more clearly illustrate this truth, let us see how else God is glorified.

Inanimate nature glorifies God. It manifests His glory everywhere. The Psalmist says, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth forth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge." By a beautiful rhetorical figure he represents one day, as it departs, telling the succeeding day the glories of God, which it has witnessed, and each night telling the succeeding night what of divine glory it has seen. The glorious sun by day and the countless orbs of night are unceasingly reflecting the glory of God. No devout mind can gaze on the starry heavens without awe and devotion. The sun shining in majestic glory reminded David of his God and he exclaimed, "The Lord God is a sun." His glory, like the beams of the sun shines upon those who love Him. When we look into the mighty heavens, we see millions of preachers who are telling of the glory of our great and wonderful God, "who stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain and spreadeth them out as a tent." No wonder someone has said, "An undevout astronomer is mad." No sane man can view the heavens and not believe in God. How the glory and pomposity of man fade into insignificance! No wonder that David said, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man that thou visitest him?" The heavens and earth show the divine glory by exhibiting Him as a Designer. The supreme Architect of the universe has revealed everywhere the proofs of His greatness in design.

Go through a house or even view it from the outside and you will see the thought of the architect wrought out as clearly as if he had written it out in full and signed his name. He may never have seen the house himself, but his thought is seen in it.

As one visits Westminster Abbey, which contains the monuments of the illustrious dead of England, he sees an inscription at the entrance like this, "Sir Christopher Wren, the architect of this building. Would you see his monument? Then look around you. Would you see the monument of the great Architect of the Universe? Then look around you by day and by night. St. Paul says, "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." See the evidences of design in the movements of this little world. It turns on its axis a complete revolution in twenty-four hours. And thus we have day and night—a time for toil and a time for rest. Then while it is spinning like a school boy's top, it also goes around the sun once a year

in an elliptical pathway, inclining at an angle sufficient to produce the changes of the seasons. What force or power could have accomplished this? Only an intelligent being. Day and night and the changes of the seasons are in exact succession.

Look at our little moon, our lamp by night, which causes the rise and fall of the tides with the utmost exactness. Or consider the wonderful comets that visit our skies on exact time after absence of centuries; the eclipses of sun and moon, so exact in their time as to be foretold by astronomers; or the courses of the millions of stars and planets. Truly the heavens glorify God as a designer.

The heavens also show the glory of God in the manifestations of His power. Twirl a school boy's top and it will go for a moment or more. It would be wonderful if the school boy could impart force enough to overcome friction and make it spin for an hour or a day. Think of the mighty power that sent millions of planets in motion, that still go on after thousands of years, without collision. One of the many comets — Haley's — for instance, comes to our view once in seventy-five years, traveling constantly at the rate of sixteen hundred miles per minute. Job says, "He stretcheth out the north over the empty places and hangs the earth upon nothing." Everywhere His power is manifest. It flashes in the lightnings, booms in the thunder, roars in the cataract, sweeps in the tornado and chants in the waves, ceaseless rhythm on the rock-bound shores of old ocean.

His power is revealed in the creation of the worlds of space. Our little world (one of the smallest of them) displays His glorious power and wisdom, when He scooped out the ocean, and carved the mountains, fashioned the lowly valleys, smoothed out the plains and prairies, cut out the channels of the rivers, wrapped the fiery core of the earth with belts of minerals and fuel, put on a cover of soil, carpeted it with green and garnished it with the majestic forests, decorated it with its ten millions of flowers, hung up on its walls the paintings of gorgeous sunrises and sunsets and hung out the lamps of heaven to illuminate its nights. As the poet says:

"The valleys and the mountains,
The woodland and the plain,
The rivers and the fountains,
The sunshine and the rain,
The stars that shine above us,
The flowers that deck the sod,
Proclaim aloud the glory of our God."

Then He swathed it in an atmosphere of oxygen, fifty miles deep, for the lungs of man and beast. He gave its soil fertility, that it might bring forth "seed for the sower and bread for the eater," and gave the vegetable creation—a perfect organization in families from the "hyssop that grows on the wall," to the tall cedars of Lebanon, and the giant trees of California. These are thy works, O Parent of Good. "In wisdom hast Thou made them all."

The animal creation manifests the glory of God. His works are perfect in the construction of the various species, from the cricket on the hearth to the behemoth who churns the waves of old ocean; from the insect that lives but a day to the megatherium, who lifted his head above the ancient forests. The divine wisdom has shown as much care and skill in the delicate tint on the wing of the butterfly

as the majestic form of the royal lion. He knows every animalcule who sports with his million brothers in a single drop of water. His care is over the sparrow. He sees and causes the happiness of the myriad insects that sport in the sunshine of the summer's day. He has made arrangements for the food of the beast of the field. He has adapted the fish to the sea and the birds to the air. He endows them all with marvelous instinct. We have no space to enlarge on the wonders of the animal kingdom. But it everywhere manifests the glory of God.

The spiritual and physical nature of man glorify God. The soul of man created in the image of God! What a nature! What power and capabilities! Psychologists are still studying it and have not yet fully comprehended it, after thousands of years. See its triumph over nature and the brute creation. It has not only overcome much of the ruggedness of nature and gained dominion over the brute creation but it has climbed to the stars and measured their velocity and discovered their substance and laws of motion. By its inventions it has enabled man to whisper through the seas and air; to live beneath the waters and mount into the sky. It has harnessed the lightnings and made them do its bidding. It has been gifted with a free will that can even defy the Omnipotent One Himself.

God has incased this indescribable soul in the tabernacle of a wonderful body. Scientific men are still studying its mysteries. It is one of the most perfect instruments ever made. What a variety of processes are constantly going on in this marvel of the Creator's handiwork. In man's body are a chemical laboratory, an observatory, a telephone, a system of sewerage, hydraulics, a system of ventilation, a telegraph system, a refrigerating process, a talking machine, a system of levers and mechanical powers, a reproductive agency, a system of musical instruments, and other wonders all in a small compass. There never has been anything ever made or dreamed of in the world that contains so much in so small space. It is a manifestation of the power and skill of our wonderful Creator.

The angels glorify God. They tell forth His glory and holiness. Without doubt reference is made to them in Job 38 where it says "the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy" in creation's morning. Isaiah had a glimpse into heaven and heard the seraphim crying, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts, the whole earth is full of thy glory." Over the plains of Bethlehem, they shouted, "Glory to God in the highest." Yes, the angels glorify God. The Psalmist says in Psalm 148, "Praise ye the Lord from the heavens; praise ye him from the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels; praise ye him, all his hosts."

But alas! there is a sad side to the picture. Devils and wicked men do not praise God or glorify Him. While the angels and all nature are glorifying God there are two classes that do not glorify Him. They are devils and wicked men. There is a dark abode where "no Sabbath's heavenly light shines." Where no praise or glory is ever given to God. Hallelujahs never break the awful monotony of its wails and curses. There wicked spirits and men show forth only the heinousness of sin. The very absence of praise, by contrast, shows what a blessed privilege it is to live where men do glorify God. Wicked men, who do not glorify God, are like devils. What company are unsaved men preparing themselves for!

We have now reached the point where we may inquire what is the highest glory of God. It is not in His attributes. Omnipotence, wisdom, and goodness as displayed in the universe are not the

manifestations of the highest glory of God. His real glory is something far beyond these. His highest glory is in His holy nature. He is unique in this respect. He is the only absolutely holy being in the universe.

Inanimate nature cannot manifest His holiness. Nature cannot display His perfect love. It can tell His wisdom, but fails to display His love. The lightning displays His terrific power, but cannot show His mercy. Gravitation and magnetism display His potent arm but never can reveal His holiness or His love that stoops to save a fallen race. When God overthrew Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea, Moses and the children of Israel sang a song of triumph and thanksgiving to God. If ever there was a time or an occasion for celebrating the displays of omnipotence that overthrew the great army of Pharaoh, it was at this time. But they sang about His holy character saying, "Who is like unto thee, O, Lord, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises." The theme of their song was the holiness of Jehovah.

Moses prayed that God would show him the divine glory. Doubtless Moses expected something spectacular, that would appeal to the senses—a vision seen by the natural eye. The divine answer to his prayer was, "I will make my goodness to pass before thee." His highest glory is in His goodness, not in His attributes. When the angels spoke to the shepherds they said "Glory to God in the Highest." That is, in the highest degree. The announcement of Jesus, the Saviour, the announcement of the love and mercy of God in sending a Saviour to a lost world.

Consequently man is the only being who can properly glorify God, in all the world. Inanimate nature cannot display his holiness. The animal creation can display and glorify His wisdom and power only. Angels are not permitted to come to earth to display it. Devils neither would nor could. So man is the only being who can properly show that God is holy. This means much, for God is not only holy, but He is a specialist on holiness, as is shown all through the Bible. The first thing he did after He brought the Israelites out of the degradation of Egypt was to give them lessons in holiness. They were so ignorant that He began His instruction by object lessons. He separated the animals into the two classes—the clean and unclean—and commanded the Israelites to offer only the clean animals in their sacrifices, thus teaching them that He was a holy being, who demanded the clean and best offerings. A recent writer has said, "God has a passionate desire and love for holiness. When He punishes sins, He at the same time shows His love for holiness. He not only punished the antediluvian world but at the same time He showed His love for holiness by washing the earth clean with water. He not only showed His hatred for sin by punishing filthy Sodom but showed His love for holiness by purging the whole country with fire and brimstone. He not only drove out the Canaanites as a punishment for their sins, but He settled the country with His own people, and made it the location of His own temple." He gave us only one book, and that book makes a specialty of holiness. Browning in his Epistle of Karshish gives the experience of Lazarus after he came back from the dead and says he came back to earth with new sense of spirituality and a passion for holiness, such as he never had before.

If we should be allowed, like Lazarus to return from the dead, what enthusiasm we would have for holiness. Some of us are called enthusiasts on holiness, but if we should come back from the dead, our present interest in holiness would be but as child's play, in comparison. No wonder the angels shouted, "Glory to God in the highest," as the plan of saving men from sin and making them

holy began to unfold, after a preparation of four thousand years. No wonder Isaiah, as he caught the vision of Him, who was coming from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah" mighty to save, cried "Who is this?" No wonder Gabriel told Joseph, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins." John the Baptist wished his disciples to know that the great mission of Jesus was to "take away the sin of the world." And John, the beloved disciple, declared that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, and that His blood "cleanseth us from all sin." No wonder Paul declares, "Wherefore Jesus that he might sanctify the people with his own blood suffered without the gate," and Peter says, "Who his own self bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we being dead to sin might live unto God, by whose stripes we are healed." The great event of history is that God gave His Son to make us holy. This was the greatest act of God, ever yet revealed. This is the crown of His glory. The great glory of Jesus Christ, who came to earth to represent God, was His holy character. His death exhibited the divine glory in its power to save sinners from sin. What was His hurling tens of millions of newly created worlds off the tips of His fingers into space, compared with the displays of His holiness and His atonement to make holy. As the poet says:

'Twas great to speak a world from naught,
'Twas greater to redeem."

The angels shouted for joy at the creation of the world, but they did not shout, "Glory to God in the highest," until they came to announce a Saviour that should save men from sin. This was glory in the highest degree.

Inanimate nature cannot be holy. The animal creation cannot reflect the holiness of God. Angels are not allowed to come to this world to do it. Theirs is the subordinate position of guarding the saints. Devils neither can nor will glorify God. Consequently only men can glorify God in the highest, by being made holy, through the blood of Jesus.

Let us see more particularly why Christians glorify God by being holy. 1. Because we are His children. We have been adopted into the divine family by reason of the new birth and have become "partakers of the divine nature," and are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ," who is our Example. His great life purpose was to glorify His Father. He said to the Father, "I have glorified thee upon the earth," and He said of His disciples, "I am glorified in them." We then are to glorify God as Jesus did. How did Jesus glorify the Father? In wisdom and in power? But others had done that. Elijah brought glory to the power of God in raising the widow's son. Solomon glorified God in displaying the wisdom he received from God. But, besides displaying divine wisdom and power in His wonderful words and works, Jesus glorified Him in the highest degree by the display of His holiness. After two thousand years of the study of His holy character, like His seamless garment, men find no flaw in it. The holiness of Jesus is greater than all His miracles. It is the miracle of the ages. We are to be like Him, our Elder Brother, in glorifying God in holiness. Nor is this unreasonable. An honest child glorifies an honest parent, and a holy child of God glorifies a holy God. Why should it be thought unreasonable for a child to be like his parent? That is the reason God wants His children to be holy, because He is holy. "Be ye holy for I am holy." St. Peter therefore says, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye might show forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Anyone, viewing the sunset for the first time, might conclude that it had disappeared forever. But there is a way of proving that the sun is still shining although we cannot see it, for the light of the moon is but the reflection of the light of the sun, as in a mirror. The holy man is like the planet that borrows its light from the sun. As long as we see his holy life we know there is a holy God, for he shines in the light of holiness that is not natural to him, and cannot be accounted for on natural principles. It comes from God. This is what Jesus meant when He said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." A holy man proves the holiness of God. Jesus says, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." And Peter says, "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts, but as he that has called you is holy so be ye holy in all manner of living for it is written, Be ye holy for I am holy." We never can truly glorify God until we are holy. Any sin in us glorifies Satan.

2. We ought to be holy to glorify Him because we are His workmanship. God originally created man in His own image, which is "righteousness and true holiness." And every individual restored from sin to holiness is a specimen of His saving work. Paul says, "We are his workmanship." We are "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets." A building reflects the mind of him who designed and built it. God is showing the world that He can make saints out of sin cursed humanity. There are some wondrous processes of making things of beauty, called the byproducts, out of refuse. Go to the great stockyards of the land and we find nothing wasted. Every bit of refuse is made useful. God has been doing this for centuries. It is related of a beautiful cathedral in Europe, that the most beautiful window was made by an apprentice. The young man took the broken bits of glass that his master had thrown away and made the window that surpassed the best work his master had ever done. The master could not endure to be eclipsed by his apprentice and committed suicide. This is just what Jesus Christ has been doing for two thousand years. He has been taking the ruined broken bits of humanity and making saints of them, when it would seem that the devil had ruined them forever. Paul spoke of some at Corinth who were samples of the divine saving power thus, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither idolaters, nor fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of God."

He says a little farther on, "Ye are the temple of the living God." What a transformation, from the worst of moral conditions! Without doubt the Apostle John is the most saintly character in the New Testament. We love to think of him as the most Christlike character of the Bible. But what was he before he was transformed by divine power? A rough, turbulent, vindictive, revengeful man. He and his brother, James, were called the "sons of thunder" because of their turbulent dispositions. They wanted, at one time, to pray down fire from heaven upon those who slighted them. They wanted the best places in the kingdom. John wanted Jesus to forbid others to work in His name. But what a change came over him! He testifies to a glorious experience. Hear him: "Of his fullness have we all received. Herein is our love made perfect." "We ought to love one another." How such cures extol and glorify the Great Physician. A holy heaven filled with saved sinners will be the glory of God throughout eternity. It must delight the angels as they see one after another who have escaped the pollution of sin enter eternal glory with their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

The glory of the material universe pales into insignificance before the glory of redemption. Is it any wonder then that God says in Psalm 50, "Gather together my saints. They that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice"? In another place He calls them His jewels.

3. Holiness in man glorifies God because it is His vindication. Holiness is not at a premium in this world at present. Sin and error are popular. There are millions of people, who do not believe that God can make and keep man holy in this world. They believe Satan has more power than God in this world. We see an instance of this in the experience of Job. The Lord said he was perfect but Satan denied it, claiming that Job was living a sham holiness. Notwithstanding all this unbelief, even among professed Christians, the Bible has always taught it. It is the nucleus of the Ten Commandments. David and Solomon urged it. Hezekiah came up to it. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Joel prophesied it. John the Baptist and Jesus preached it. John and Paul professed and taught it. All this when the devil was getting in his strongest blows against God and righteousness. The devil and wicked men are sneering at it today. Infidelity is saying, "Your Bible teaches holiness, but it is an impossibility; therefore your Bible is a cunningly devised fable."

But God always has a way of vindicating Himself and His truth in all ages. See for instance how He vindicated the claims of Jesus on the cross. He had been condemned for blasphemy in claiming to be the divine King of the Jews. What ridicule they poured upon His kingly claims. They arrayed Him in mock royal robes; put a reed in His hand for a scepter and placed a thorny crown on His head, and shouted, "Hail, King of the Jews." Oh, what a jest it was with them that this despised Man should claim to be the King. But see how God vindicated His claim. To their dismay and chagrin, Pilate wrote over the cross in the three great languages of the world, "This is the King of the Jews." In spite of their opposition the truth came out. But still more astonishing was the utterance of the dying thief. While the chief priests and rabble and soldiers were deriding and mocking His claim as king, the dying thief cries, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." He recognized the King; believed that that suffering, abused, thorn-crowned Man at his side had a kingdom, and prayed to be in it. The divine claim of kingship was vindicated in the eyes of impartial people.

And, so have we seen it, in the thickest of the fight. When men were denying the possibility of being holy in this life, humble souls have stepped into the cleansing fountain. Thank God the work goes on. This can be clearly seen by those who have eyes to see. "He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied," said Isaiah. Every sanctified soul vindicates the divine claim of making men holy. It is vindicated in the eyes of angels and good men. Let men take their brooms and try to keep back the tides of the ocean or attempt to pen up a cyclone in a pill box and they will have an easy task in comparison with stopping the vindication of the holiness that God has given those who take advantage of the atonement that saves from all sin.

Again we have proved that holiness is the most reasonable thing in the world, for it brings the highest glory to God.

COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION

By

George Asbury McLaughlin

Chapter 3

HOLINESS AUGMENTS OUR INFLUENCE FOR GOOD

It is a solemn thing to die; to leave home and friends and loved ones; to go out into the untried realities of eternity; perhaps in dying to struggle with pain and disease; to go to the Judgment; and to have our destiny forever settled. But it is a more solemn thing to live. We used to think death was the most solemn event but we have revised our opinion. It is more solemn to live.

What strange notions men have of life and death! When a child dies we weep and lament. It ought to be the reverse, for it has escaped the ills of this life. It will not be caught in the pitfalls and snares of sin (and they were never more numerous than now). The atonement of Jesus Christ covers its sinfulness. It is safe. Many a fond parent has had to lament that wayward children were not taken in infancy. We ought to rejoice that a bud has been transplanted to unfold in heaven. When a child is born, how we rejoice! How we receive the congratulations of others and congratulate ourselves. Whereas, we have good occasion for fear and trembling. We know not what awaits that child. Whether it shall so live as to make a safe run through the gauntlet of its foes and reach heaven or whether it will dwell in the regions of the lost.

Life is solemn because we are on probation for eternity. If we are saved and die today we will go safe to Abraham's bosom. We may live a century and be lost. This life is the stage where we are acting out eternal verities. Every day we are not only working out our salvation or damnation but we are also influencing all whom we meet. Our influence is making those about us better or worse. It is a difficult thing to live and be able to exert the right kind of influence all the time. It is indeed a difficult thing to do. we may be too gay or too grave; too serious or too gay; too repellent in our daily life or too frivolous. Either extreme may turn men away from God. It is a delicate matter indeed therefore to be able always to exert the proper influence.

We need therefore to be holy in order to have the best influence of which we are capable. Here is where the reasonableness of holiness appears. Many a Christian man or woman, who loves his children, is grieved at his influence over them, because he cannot control an evil disposition, that causes his life to contradict his profession. Holiness is therefore a merciful provision to help us in this respect. It is an emergency brake to keep us from crushing our hopes for the salvation of our families and neighbors. It is a reservoir to help us out when the streams of human love fail. It is a sinking fund to keep us from spiritual bankruptcy. Consider our influence. It is threefold.

First, there is the influence of words. How mighty they are. These impulses of sounding breath modulated by the organs of speech or these arbitrary characters written by pen or pencil or typewriter, how mighty they are, because they are the expression of ideas. They communicate thought. They fall on the ear or meet the eye of others and influence them. We are giving and receiving such influence all the time. The mighty rushing wind of the tornado is eclipsed by the power of words.

Consider the power of our own words upon ourselves. St. James says of the tongue, "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." Our own wicked words inflame our own anger. Our lustful words add fuel to our lust. Our words of unbelief increase our own unbelief. Our words of discouragement increase our own discouragement. Or our words of faith and courage increase our own faith and courage. Our tongue has much to do in its influence upon ourselves.

Then there is the influence of oratory, and the witchery of song, upon others. A poor monk in Europe visits the sepulcher of Jesus in Jerusalem. He is so grieved that it should be in the possession of the infidel Turks, that his soul rises in hot indignation, and he travels from country to country of Europe with burning words urging the rescue of Jerusalem from the Turks. All Europe is aroused and the Crusades take place. Hundreds of thousands of men and children march upon Jerusalem. Thousands perish and only after centuries does the movement stop. The Crusaders return defeated, but they bring back the arts and sciences of the East, which revolutionize the civilization of all Europe. Martin Luther stands before the Emperor, who commands him to recant. He replies, "Here on the scriptures I take my stand. I can do no otherwise." These words produce an effect on the whole world that is indescribable. The Emperor knows not what to do. The whole world is astonished. The Pope is dumfounded. The courage of every lover of liberty is revived and the Reformation is born. The Virginian statesman declares, "Give me liberty or give me death," and the American Revolution is born, with results as far reaching as eternity.

Oh, the power of our words! You can quench the fires of the forest, when the last tree is burned, but you cannot stop the influence of that hasty, harsh, angry word spoken yesterday. It cannot be recalled. You may obtain forgiveness of God and man, but still the influence of that word will go on, cutting, scorching the sensitive soul to whom it was spoken, and influencing character forever.

Think of the influence of the words of Him, who spake "as man never spoke." How they have influenced the centuries and are more quoted today than the words of any other man who ever lived. His word brought Lazarus from the tomb and it will call the sleeping millions from the grave.

Secondly: we have the influence of actions. It is often said that "actions speak louder than words." This is true. Words are not always an index of character but actions are. Our actions may make our words more emphatic or they may neutralize them. Jesus said of the Pharisees, "They say and do not." This is dissembling and hypocrisy. "'It is easier to preach than practice" is an old and true saying. We have heard of preachers, who when in the pulpit, their parishioners wished they never would come out; and when out of the pulpit the parish wished they never would again enter it. Aesop has a fable of a crab who reproved his son for walking backwards. The son replied, "Father, why do you walk backwards?"

We teach more by example than by words. During the first three years of the life of a child he learns more than in any subsequent three years of his life. He learns by watching his elders. He is a creature of imitation and when he grows to manhood, he is still influenced by example. We are all creatures of imitation. One goose drinks because another goose drinks. One man drinks whiskey because the other does. The silly fashions are in vogue because most people are too weak to resist the example of others.

When actions go with words, the power of words is wonderfully increased and intensified. When words say one thing and acts another, the one neutralizes the other. It has been well said, "Some people talk cream and live skimmed milk."

A third kind of influence is that of ourselves. It is something besides words or even acts. It is the inner man speaking through our words and acts. It is "the man behind the gun," the preacher projecting his spirit and inner self upon his congregation. It is beyond definition. It is the atmosphere a man carries with him. It causes people to take an inventory of their moral and spiritual quality. It is the impression of ourselves on others.

For instance, when Jesus had finished praying in a certain place, His disciples asked Him, "Lord, teach us to pray." There was such a sanctity, such a holy influence that proceeded from Him that the disciples wanted to learn to pray. Our silent influence is our real influence. It proceeds from us when we are off our guard and are not making strenuous effort or doing or trying to do some great act. It is the spirit that saturates our words and actions. It is the way we take slights and affronts. It is the man behind the testimony that gives it effect. We have all seen the locomotive headlight shine its rays, hundreds of yards ahead on the track. We have lamps in our houses just as large. But the lamp of the locomotive has a reflector behind it, that makes its light so effective. And so is a holy life behind a testimony to give it effect.

It is possible to advocate holiness in such an unholy manner as to destroy the effect of sound doctrine and straight testimony. One can throw a bone to a hungry dog in such a manner as to cause him to flee. On the other hand a cup of cold water may be given in the name of a disciple, with such a gracious spirit as to merit the favor of heaven and enrich both the giver and receiver.

The man himself may neutralize his best efforts, by his evil spirit. Paul says that if we could speak like angels, yet without love, it is empty sound. This is the reason that so many infidels are bred in professed Christian homes. Father and Mother failed to have a religion that sweetened their lives and in spite of their profession of religion, children did not want it. Some of the most noted infidels in America were brought up by parents who professed to be followers of Jesus Christ, whose religion did not save them from an evil disposition. Apples that grow in the shade are the sourest.

Mankind estimate men from the standpoint of their moral character, no matter how great their gifts. In reviewing the lives of the great men of the world, the estimate is always based upon their moral character. Who thinks of the military genius of Napoleon without having loom up in the background of the picture his inordinate ambition that led him to seek his own selfish interests at the price of the blood of thousands? Who thinks of the talented Henry Clay without also calling to mind his assertion, "I had rather be right than to be president"? Who can think of Daniel Webster, with his colossal intellect, without a regret at his compromise of principle in his ambition to obtain the presidency?

Such is the penetrating power of a holy man that it cannot be hid. He may be shut up in the most adverse surroundings. He may be hid away in the desert, but the world will find him out. Holy character is at a premium in this world. It is more rare than precious stones. John the Baptist was a

man "filled with the Holy Ghost." He preached in the wilderness and all the nation left the cities and went to sit at his feet and listen to his ministry.

Some years ago in New York City, a woman lost her husband. She was exceedingly rebellious against God. Mrs. Sarah Lankford Palmer visited her and showed her that her spirit was wicked. Her heart was melted. She repented of her sins and was reclaimed from a backslidden condition. Later she was wholly sanctified and a most remarkable career followed. She was prostrated on a sick bed for over fifty years. Her holy character shone from that bed of sickness all over the world. People came to that sick room from foreign lands. Hundreds were converted at her bedside. She became the medium through whom the rich disbursed their charity to the poor. Her face in her portrait shines like the face of an angel. People found her out although her little cottage was in the poorer locality of the city, located behind a saloon, for holy character cannot be hid. She was called "The saint of Rose Hill." The street commissioners of New York deferred the widening of the street while she lived, for it would require the destruction or removal of her humble cottage. Such is the influence of a holy life.

We knew a little, sainted woman, who lived a humble life. She obtained the blessing of a pure heart after a great struggle. From that time she shone. Everywhere she went people felt the quiet, persuasive influence of her life. It was her delight to visit the homes of the people in a great city and recommend the religion of Jesus Christ. When she died, a great city church was filled with a weeping throng of mingled Protestants, Catholics and Jews. She was not a public character, but this was the tribute to a holy life. The officiating preacher said, "Holiness is at premium today." The pastor said, "I always knew she was praying for me in the pew, in the public service." Church leaders among the laity said, "There is something more than the ordinary religious life in this woman's experience." Early acquaintances smote on their breast and cried, "She lived a saint but we are failures." Such is the power of a holy life.

The greatest power of Jesus was not in His miracles but in His holy character. This has influenced the world more than anything that ever came to it. Francis Willard said she visited a small town in England, that was eminently moral and spiritual. An old man gave the reason for it thus: "There was a man named John Wesley, who once came to this town and it has never been the same since." We may say in a larger sense, there was a Man, named Jesus of Nazareth, who came to this world and held up His perfect life and character and this world has never been the same since He lived here.

We see then with our threefold influence what a solemn thing it is to live. How much we need holiness of heart—not merely to help us speak and act right, but to saturate our words and acts. Without it we shall fail in our influence upon others. With it our influence will be a savor of life in spite of our mistakes. People will overlook our blunders if they can feel the genuine sincerity of our hearts. This is a weighty reason why everyone, especially parents, should have the blessing of a holy heart.

There are five languages, four of which all of us talk. There is the language of the hands; handwriting and that spoken by the deaf and dumb and read by the blind. There is the language of the tongue. Then there is the language of the ear, of those who can understand a language who cannot speak it. Then there is the language of the eye, which takes in a language although we cannot speak

it. Many an Englishman can read the French language which he cannot speak. But most important of all is the language of the inner man who speaks in our tones and gestures and gives a meaning often times entirely different from the words we use. We may be talking one thing in our words and saying an entirely different thing in our tones and facial expression. This latter language is what counts. How important then that "the hidden man of the heart" be holy, in order to glorify God!

We therefore arrive at the conclusion that we must be holy in order to have the right influence over those we love in winning (and not repelling) them to Christ. We are responsible for what we are, therefore as well as for what we say or do. If we saw a man drowning and could help him and would not, we are responsible for his life. Under the Jewish economy if a man owned an ox that was vicious and he knew it and the ox gored another man to death, the owner was held guilty of murder, and he and the ox were stoned to death. If you had a mad dog and he bit someone, who died, if you knew he was mad and did not take proper precaution, you would be guilty of murder. If you had a deadly disease and did not seek to avoid healthy people, but they took the disease and died because of your contagion, you would be guilty. If you have not been sanctified wholly you have something worse than physical disease. It is soul disease, called depravity, that has a baneful influence on those with whom you associate. It manifests itself in your spirit as well as your words and just as far as you see your privilege to get rid of it and will not, you are responsible for your influence. Tremendous thought! We are our brother's keepers in this world. No man can properly glorify God who has in him that mortgage held by Satan. We mean the carnal mind. Therefore it is most reasonable that our religion should save us from it.

COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION

By

George Asbury McLaughlin

Chapter 4

HOLINESS EQUIPS FOR SERVICE

"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," said our Lord in His last talk before He ascended to the skies. This assurance was given not only for the disciples of that day but for the disciples of all time. We have shown in the last chapter how great is the power of a holy life in its influence. This is the unfolding of that idea.

There have been many interpretations of the "power" promised at Pentecost. Some have thought it was the power to work miracles, but Jesus had already given the disciples that power, when He sent them out two by two, to preach the kingdom of God. Some have thought it was a magical power to cast a spell over men as they preached. But the verse following seems to naturally explain it. He adds "And ye shall be witnesses unto me." "The power" qualified them to be witnesses for Jesus. There is much in the ministry of testimony, for Spirit-baptized Christians to prove the religion of Jesus Christ to be true. Testimony is the great agency for spreading the gospel. It is on a level in importance (if not more important) with preaching. God does not call all Christians to preach, but He does call all to testify. He expects all preachers to be witnesses. Satan tries to make it appear that it is so difficult to believe the Christian religion that the preacher must be always trying to prove it by powerful discourses, but he does not like to have testimony for men are so constituted, that not to accept the testimony of competent witnesses proves them either dishonest or mentally deficient.

A witness is the most important person in a court of justice. A trial can be held without a jury for it may be a justice trial. It may be held without a judge for it may be held by referees. It may be held without a lawyer, for a man may plead his own cause. But it cannot be held without a witness. So God chose the most important agency for proving disputed points; when He saw fit to make us all witnesses, who have a Christian experience, for if there be no experience, then Christianity is "a cunningly devised fable."

Much depends on the character of the witnesses. Therefore the empowerment of Pentecost was two-fold. First, it is negative. It comes by the elimination of the hindrances to consistent testimony. It removes the inbred sin or depravity-the great hindrance to testimony. We have shown in the previous chapter that the influence of a holy life is almost omnipotent in removing doubt as to the truth of our holy religion. Let us notice still farther that with the blessing of holiness goes the removal of the hindrances to testimony. An inconsistent life is a great hindrance to testimony. But there are also other elements that are removed. The baptism with the Holy Ghost removes cowardice. There are many well meaning people who would really like to recommend Jesus Christ by testimony and exhortation, who lack the courage. They are ever trembling under their duty, which they have not the courage to discharge. But Pentecost brings courage. It was so in the experience of Peter. A maiden frightened him into a positive denial of his beloved Lord. So shocking was his cowardice, that it led him to profanity. But a few days later he stood before the Jewish high court and accused them of the murder of Jesus Christ. What made the difference? Pentecost. In that short interval his

heart had been purified. (See Acts 15:9.) The cowardice had been burned out by holy fire. Now he was ready and anxious to testify. This is what the fiery tongues that sat on the heads of the disciples at Pentecost symbolized. It meant tongues set on fire to testify for Jesus Christ.

But still farther, indifference, or apathy in the matter of the salvation of men is a hindrance to testimony. The entire sanctification of Pentecost takes away indifference as to the salvation of sinners and substitutes a passion for souls. It means perfect love to mankind. It makes us anxious — more than anxious — to see men saved. It does not give all the gift of evangelism, but it makes them efficient up to their capabilities and gives a constant longing to see sinners saved and believers sanctified. This is one of the infallible proofs that we have received the purifying baptism. But more than this it is positive. There is a peculiar unction that attends the testimony of fully saved men. This is the New Testament spirit of prophecy. Peter declared that it fulfilled the prophecy of Joel, "Your sons and daughters shall prophesy." It is unfortunate that the term prophecy has been limited in these days to the foretelling of future events. This is a narrow view of the word. To prophesy means to speak for another. The Old Testament prophets probably were speaking for God and prophesying as truly when they brought the messages of God to kings and potentates, as when they predicted future events. It is the same under the New Testament dispensation. They who speak for God, whether in sermon or testimony, are New Testament prophets, and especially so when they have been filled with the Holy Spirit.

St. Paul says this is more effective than to have great and shining gifts. Speaking of the gifts of the Spirit in I Cor. 14:1, he says "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." In verse 39 he tells them to "covet to prophesy." In some quarters today there is a great coveting to possess gifts, especially of tongues, but there is not much coveting to tell of the power of the blood that cleanseth from all sin. This is New Testament prophecy indeed. There is a very remarkable passage in I Cor. 14:23-25 which we quote: "If therefore the whole church be come into one place, and all speak with tongues and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down upon his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." In other words, New Testament prophecy—the testimony of Spirit filled believers will put the unsaved under conviction. This is the divine method of carrying on the saving power of the Gospel by the testimony of Spirit filled men and women. The modern method is to leave the whole matter of the conviction and conversion of the world to the pulpit. But Jesus gave the first place to testimony. He did not say, "Ye shall be My pulpit orators," but "Ye shall be witnesses of me." When Lyman Beecher was asked the reason for the great revivals under his ministry he replied, "I preach to my church on Sunday and they go out and preach to the outside world through the week and so we have six hundred sermons preached all through the week."

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is the divine equipment for this highest service. It is the divine endorsement and authorization. A true testimony has the authority of Jehovah behind it. When a noted prize fighter was in the ring one day, the sheriff stepped up to him, read a warrant and told him to follow him. He submitted to arrest. He could have killed the sheriff, who was a small man. But the small man had the authority of the state behind him and the great brute meekly yielded. State authority means much. When the government swears in the witnesses in court, it means that the

authority of the whole commonwealth is behind the witness. His testimony has to be considered in making up the verdict. And when God gives His witnesses the baptism with the Spirit, they have the authority of Jehovah behind them and they have to be heard. God said, "My word shall not return unto me void." The Word of God does not return to Him void. This does not mean that it always meets with apparent success. This is not expected. Its purpose is to force men to a decision for or against the truth. When the saints prophesy those who hear are forced to a decision. Such is the office of testimony that is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

We have some notable instances of the truth that holiness increases efficiency. D. L. Moody was a lay evangelist in Chicago, accomplishing little. He tells us in his autobiography that at one time he was greatly bothered by two women, who were constantly telling him that he needed the Holy Spirit. He said that at first he was vexed. But after a time he began to believe they were right. So he appointed a meeting every Friday afternoon to pray for the Holy Spirit. It was our privilege a few years ago to meet one of these women. We asked her if Mr. Moody seemed very much in earnest. She replied that he was so desperately in earnest at the last Friday meeting that he was prostrate and literally rolled upon the floor, as he prayed for the Holy Spirit. The Chicago fire broke out the next week and no more meetings could be held. A little later Mr. Moody received the baptism with the Spirit, which put an unction on his labors and from that time, he became a great worldwide, evangelistic power. He urged this experience upon the church the remainder of his days. Owing to the Calvinistic theology in which he was trained he failed to make the matter clear, definite and positive in his teaching. He was always urging it, but we have never heard of anyone receiving the experience under his teaching or preaching.

James Brainerd Taylor was a young man in Princeton College. He had been instructed by a pious Methodist concerning the experience of entire sanctification. He sought and obtained. His memory is still precious in the Congregational churches of New England. He became a spiritual power. Wherever he went his saintliness beamed upon the people. God used him for the salvation of men. One day two men on horseback met at the intersection of two roads and while the horses were drinking from the water trough, one said to the other, "My dear Sir, I trust you are acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ, and if not I hope you may make His acquaintance." It was a simple sentence. Just a few words but there accompanied it an unction, an air of sanctity that carried the message to the heart of the stranger. He could not shake off the impression made by the holy light that radiated from that face. He yielded to God; was called to the ministry and later to the foreign field. He began to inquire who the man was who spoke to him at the water trough. No one could tell him. One day as he was preparing for his voyage to heathendom, he received a library as a gift. In opening one of the books, he saw a portrait on the inside of the cover. He exclaimed, "That is the man who spoke to me at the water trough." On looking at the title page he read, "The Life of J. B. Taylor."

Holiness is the divine equipment. It is in harmony with common sense that God would equip His people with more than mortal energy because of the fearful opposition which they meet in carrying on the work of God against the combined forces of "the world, the flesh and the devil." Human power, unaided, always has and always will fail.

COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION

By

George Asbury McLaughlin

Chapter 5

HOLINESS IS THE GREAT SAFEGUARD AGAINST BACKSLIDING

Man is a backslider. The first man was an apostate from God. He not only backslid but he transmitted a tendency to backsliding to his posterity. Every child born into this world comes on the stage of action handicapped with this disposition of drawing away from God. It is even worse than that. He possesses a spirit of hostility to God. Says Paul, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." So fatal is this disposition that every dispensation since Adam has closed in a backslidden state of the general church. Any student of Bible history knows this to be true, whether he contemplates the patriarchal, the dispensation of the Law, that of the Prophets, the short dispensation of the Son of God, the Apostolic dispensation or the various religious movements of the past eighteen centuries. Backsliding is the sad history of the church after every great revival of history.

Every convert under the Christian Dispensation has felt within himself this same deadly disposition that when he would do good prompts him to evil. Happy and rare are the instances of those who have never yielded to this tendency to draw away from God. On it Satan works as a musician touches the keys and pulls the stops of an organ.

We have numerous instances of backsliding in the Scriptures—too numerous to mention.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." He shows here that the cause of backsliding is 'an evil heart of unbelief' which deceitfully hardens the heart.

The history of modern revivals corroborates this statement. We do not believe it is the divine plan to have great revivals followed by great reactions. The country is full of backsliders. It is a great hindrance to the progress of Christianity. Thousands of people have started in the Christian life with a bright experience, who have been overtaken and defeated by the foe within their own bosoms. Their evil disposition has caused them to break over and commit sin for which they were genuinely sorry, and they have renounced the Christian life, saying: "It is impossible for me to live it," or "I have such a peculiar disposition that I cannot be good. Other people can be good, but I cannot."

Young converts have gone to their elders saying, 'I thought I was converted but I think I was mistaken for I get angry sometimes.' The reply in some instances has been, "Oh, yes, you are converted, but you must expect that, as long as you live." This has discouraged them. If we cannot be saved from this disposition then the way to heaven is very difficult. This has been voiced truly by thousands in the hymn,

"Prone to wander, Lord I feel it;
Prone to leave the God I love."

And in still another hymn thus:

"Look how we grovel here below
Fond of these earthly toys,
Our souls how heavily they go
To reach eternal joys."

There can be no doubt that this is the weak place in the religion today. It may be said that many people are only seeming backsliders. They were never really converted. No doubt this is true. But even after that, it must be confessed that there are thousands who have been genuinely converted, who have been led away from God by following the tendencies of "an evil heart of unbelief." This is a most discouraging condition of affairs.

We repeat that God never intended such a condition. The modern church effort is to get men "converted" and very little (comparatively) is done to keep them converted. A great many ministers are so busy getting sheep into the fold that they fail to see how many are getting out at the other end. Of what use to bring children into the world to let them starve to death? Of what use to plant a crop if it cannot be harvested? Better not launch the ship if it cannot be kept afloat.

Paul said to the backslidden church at Galatia: "Ye did run well. Who did hinder you?" The trouble with that church was they were switched off the track. He says, "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Notice some things about this church. 1. They began. 2. They began right. They began in the Spirit. They began by regeneration through the Holy Spirit by faith. 3. They continued for a time. It is of no use to begin unless we continue. 4. They continued in a wrong manner. They expected to be made "perfect by the flesh." They felt their need of a perfect Christian life. Every real Christian does. They had before them the alternative of being made perfect through the Spirit or of attempting it by the flesh. They chose the latter alternative and backslid. They undertook to get rid of the carnal mind (the great drag in Christian life) by works of their own and failed. The result was they backslid. Had they trusted God for their sanctification, as they did for their justification, they would have continued in the way of the Spirit.

An event of history illustrates the agency of inbred sin in backsliding. An army had laid siege to a city. Month after month they had tried to take it. But the brave people within had repelled every attack. So they resorted to treachery. They bribed a young woman to let them in. One dark night she opened a gate in the walls and the town was taken. A little traitor undid the work of a host of armed men. So does inbred sin, that traitor in the heart, respond to Satan, our outward foe, and betray us. Inbred sin belongs to the devil and he works in co-operation with it. A pure heart has nothing within to respond to the tempter's voice. Jesus said, "Satan cometh and hath nothing in me."

We see this illustrated in the experience of Judas. He was once a good man, a preacher of the gospel, for certainly Jesus would not have chosen a bad man to preach and urge men to repent. This is an inconsistency inconceivable. But he had a covetous heart and it betrayed him and "Satan entered into him," says the inspired writer, and he backslid. Peter had a cowardly spirit which led him to deny his Master when outward temptation assailed him. John and James were men of fiery

dispositions before Pentecost, who wanted to kill those who did not treat them well. It was this depraved disposition of heart that caused all the disciples to forsake Jesus and flee when His enemies seized Him.

The elimination of inbred sin lessens the danger of backsliding. We do not mean to say that it is a sure remedy for backsliding, for angels fell even in heaven, and Adam, the perfect man, fell. But elimination of sin lessens the danger of falling. It is in harmony with common sense for God to make provision for the eradication of this evil principle in our nature, or it is well nigh hopeless for us to expect to gain heaven.

COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION

By

George Asbury McLaughlin

Chapter 6

HOLINESS IS THE CONDITION OF SATISFACTORY GROWTH

The Scriptures not only teach the possibility of growth or development in grace but make it a duty. We are commanded to "grow in grace." None of us will be so saved from sin as to make growth in grace either unnecessary or impossible. The holiest of beings, in this world, grow in grace. It was said of the holy child Jesus, "He increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man." The word favor is *karris* in the Greek. It is nearly everywhere in the New Testament translated, grace. Adam Clarke says, "Even Christ Himself who knew no sin, grew in the favor of God; and as to His human nature, increased the graces of the Holy Spirit. From this we learn that if a man were as pure and perfect as the Man Christ Jesus Himself was, yet he might, nevertheless, increase in the image and consequently in the fear of God." John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb and yet he "grew and waxed strong in spirit." We note these two illustrations because some have thought that when a soul is cleansed from all sin, it implied, that growth in grace stops.

The term growth is a figure taken from the natural world. It means that the soul increases and develops in the divine graces just as animal and vegetable life grows in the natural world. The same laws of development exist in the spiritual as in the natural world.

There are two errors that well meaning people have embraced right here. Had they kept to the figure as seen in the natural world, these errors might have been avoided. The first error consists in confounding purity with maturity. They would not make this mistake in the natural world. Perfect fruit may increase until it comes to maturity. For instance an apple in June may be perfect in quality and yet increase in quantity until October. And when October comes it will not be of more perfect quality, although it is fully developed. Or the apple may be mature in October and have impurities in it, so that purity and maturity are not the same. Nor did growth of all the months make the apple sound. If it had a rot in it in June the growth of months could not out develop the rot. No amount of growth or development can remove sin from the heart. There is nothing that can do it but the blood of Jesus. This is the second error which is very popular. Nothing impure ever becomes pure by growth in the natural or spiritual world. Is it not singular that people who never heard of a dirty child growing clean, or a field of corn outgrowing the weeds and thus killing them, or an apple outgrowing a rot or a tree outgrowing a blemish, should boldly affirm that the soul can outgrow its uncleanness?

There is no recorded instance of the outgrowing of sin in all ages of the Christian church. Is it not strange that anyone should hold to a theory that has no practical illustrations to prove it? The fact is that the reverse is true. After a growth of five, ten, twenty, thirty, and seventy and eighty years we find under certain circumstances and provocations the old sinful nature will assert itself as readily as in youthful days. Thousands have acknowledged that a long life of growth in the Christian life had not destroyed the old carnal nature.

The theory that sin is destroyed by growth in grace is not only contrary to the analogy of growth in nature, and contrary to human experience, but also has no scriptural support. There is no such teaching in the Word of God.

We have never heard but one passage of Scripture quoted in its favor. It is this: "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." (Mark 4:28.) An examination of the passage shows that it refers to the spread of the kingdom of God by successive stages, over the world. But if an objector deny this, even then, it does not prove that sin is destroyed in the heart by growth in grace. For if sanctification is taught in the passage then "the full corn in the ear" must mean entire sanctification and "the blade" must mean the experience of justification. And if entire sanctification is by growth then "the blade" of justification must be wrought the same way. This is proving too much for we know the Scripture teaches that we are justified by faith, not by growth.

The difficulty with these objectors is (as has often been pointed out), they make no distinction between growing in grace and growing into grace. The old familiar illustration is this: We can swim in water but we cannot swim into water. We can grow in grace but not into it. All grace, whether the grace of justification or the grace of entire sanctification, is obtained by faith. Having entered into the state of grace by faith we can then grow in it and not until then.

Entire sanctification means the removal of the hindrances to growth. It would be untrue to say that there is no growth in grace until we are entirely sanctified, for there is a growth in grace in the justified life, but it is feeble and usually very unsatisfactory. It is like the growth of the field of corn in which the weeds are left to grow unhindered. The state of normal growth as God intended is in the entirely sanctified life. The growth is so much more satisfactory and substantial that the scriptural passages that speak of it are always in connection with statements concerning heart purity or entire sanctification. We quote them. They are in the Second Epistle of Peter: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." It will be seen here that entire sanctification is taught in the phrase, "having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Faith in these exceeding great and precious promises brought this sanctification to these people, to whom he is writing. He continues thus, "And besides this, add to your faith." That is, add to the faith, by which you appropriated the promises and escaped the corruption of lust. It means, having been cleansed from all sin by faith, now add, increase, grow. So we are to grow by adding "virtue [or courage]; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity."

The only other passage enjoining growth in grace is found in Second Peter 3:18 — the last verse of the epistle. "Grow in grace." This follows the injunction, "that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless."

This is as it should be, for growth is so truly best promoted by purity in the spiritual world as in the animal and vegetable worlds. Strange that people cannot see that we get purity in order to grow, rather than grow in order to obtain purity. They have, by this inconsistent, unscriptural theory reversed the order both of nature and of grace. We clean our corn fields in order that they shall grow

better. We do not make them grow in order to clear them of weeds. We purify the blood of our children in order to have them grow and develop. We do not seek to make them grow in order to make their blood pure. But when it comes to spiritual matters, some expect to make the soul free from sin by development. Their mistake is in not realizing that growth is addition. But what we need is subtraction of sin. Growth never subtracts, but it develops that which exists already.

Holiness is a state of heart where the weeds of sin have ceased to exist. The soul is freed from internal hindering evil and can put all its effort upon God and His salvation. A religion that cannot accomplish this fails at the point where it is sadly needed. Again we say holiness is in harmony with good common sense. It saves just where we need it.

COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION

By

George Asbury McLaughlin

Chapter 7

HOLINESS BRINGS PROSPERITY TO THE CHURCH

The enemy of all souls is a wily strategist. He knows how to plan the defeat of the cause of God, by the most insidious and crafty plans and schemes. No general conducting a military campaign was ever more skillful in devices to hinder his foe.

One of his favorite methods is to make it appear that the strongest defenses of the army of God are the weakest. He attempts ever to bring ridicule to bear upon the strongest bulwarks of the armies of the living God. His object is to make the good appear bad; to make men believe that white is black; to make his attacks on the strong points of Christianity. In harmony with this policy, he attacked, through his emissaries, the character of the immaculate Son of God, and tried to make it appear that He was possessed with a devil. The character of the Son of God is the great center of the Christian faith. It is the irrefutable evidence of the divinity of our holy religion. This is the reason that some of the evil spirits in the time of Christ said, "I know thee whom thou art, the Son of God." Jesus understood the plot and rebuked it. He did not propose to have it appear that He was in league with or possessed by evil spirits.

Since this is the policy of Satan, it need not be wondered at, that he should try to make it appear that holiness, which is "the central idea of Christianity," is a fanaticism and an impossibility in this life. It could hardly be expected that truth could have a fair chance. Consequently we find all sorts of misrepresentation. Satan has had great success in frightening people from holiness by misrepresenting it. It is safe to say that the majority of church members today have listened so much to these misrepresentations that they have scarcely any idea at all of the real nature of this—the central doctrine of the Bible. There are thousands of honest people who would accept it; if they knew its real nature. Their hearts are hungry for this bread, but they are kept away because they have been told that the witnesses to entire sanctification claim to have reached the state where they cannot sin, nor make mistakes, nor be tempted.

In this same propagandism of Satan is found the assertion that holiness is a narrow minded specialty, a side track that leaves the greater part of the doctrines and experiences of Christianity and holds entirely aloof from them, and that to embrace it makes one narrow and unfitted for the practical duties of Christianity. The fact of it is, that this is the central doctrine around which all the other doctrines of Christianity revolve, like the planets around the sun. Jesus said the all embracing commandment was, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and soul and mind and strength." This is perfect love. This is holiness. Paul says "the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart" All the claims of the advocates of holiness are found in these two utterances of Jesus and Paul.

In the divine economy it is intended that holiness and holiness only is the divine essential to the prosperity of the cause of God in all its branches. Strange that an unbelieving church does not grasp

the fact! That keen observer of spiritual things, John Wesley, says again and again that "where holiness is preached constantly and explicitly the work of God prospers in all its branches." He says, "I examined the society at Bristol, and was surprised to find fifty members fewer than I left in last October. One reason is Christian perfection has been little insisted on; and wherever this is not done, be the preachers ever so eloquent, there is little increase, either in the number or grace of the hearers." (Wesley's Works, Vol. IV, page 220.) "I preached at Bradford where the people are all alive. Many have lately experienced the great salvation, and their zeal has been a great blessing. Indeed, this I always observe wherever a work of sanctification breaks out, the whole work of God prospers." (Vol. IV. page 437.)

"I found the plain reason why the work of God had gained no ground in this (Lavenston) circuit in all the year. The preachers had given up the Methodist testimony. Either they did not speak of perfection at all (the peculiar doctrine committed to our trust), or they spoke of it only in general terms, without urging believers to go on unto perfection, and to expect it every moment. And wherever this is not done the work of God does not prosper." (Vol. IV, page 459.) We could fill a chapter with similar quotations from Wesley. This is just as true in this day as in his day. Individual churches are still among us where holiness has the right of way and prosperity is the result. The only handicap is that they are almost isolated. Holiness does not have a fair chance. If those isolated churches had the sympathy of all the other churches greater success would follow. But they succeed in the face of the lack of sympathy, if not opposition.

We can locate on the map to our actual knowledge such churches that have succeeded and are succeeding because holiness has the right of way. Let us note the points of their successes.

1. Success in soul saving. There is a vast difference between the old-fashioned protracted meeting and the modern "revival." The former was prayed down from heaven. The latter is "got up." The former depended upon the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The latter is brought to pass by human methods and appliances. In the former the fathers prayed until they prayed through and the revival came and whole communities of sinners were put under conviction. Men could not sleep nights. Hardened sinners made restitution, gave up their wicked ways, confessed their sins and went forth to lead new, changed lives. In the modern revival, reliance is put mostly on organization: committees, union meetings, great chorus choirs, extensive, adroit, advertising, signing of cards, shaking hands with the preacher and joining the church. Very little or nothing is said concerning repentance or restitution or the witness of the Spirit.

If the modern revival is the divine method then we confess that holiness preaching and experience is not a success in this connection. But if the old time revival is the divine method which laid the foundation of the Christian church in these lands, then it is greatly helped and brought to pass by holiness preaching and holy living.

We have shown in a previous chapter that the New Testament method of putting sinners under conviction is to have the church filled with the Holy Spirit and that under its prophetic utterances men are moved to acknowledge the truth. (See I Cor. 14:24-25.) We do not believe God has ever authorized any other method for saving the world, except through a holy church, for the great hindrance to the spread of the gospel is because the professed church is not holy. This is what the

world demands and before such a church it will ever bow, for, as Mark Guy Pearse well says, "Whatever theories the churches may hold, the world has for the Christian but one standard, and that is entire sanctification. It trips and stumbles over the defects of Christian people and makes no allowance for them. The world's conviction and conversion depend upon the holy lives of religious people."

But the old time revival depended also on the intercession of God's people. It began with preparation on the part of the church; heart searching, confession and mighty soul travail. They prayed and prayed until their consecration and unity were complete and then down came the fire from heaven and sinners were saved. Complete consecration made their prayers effective.

The modern holiness movement has made the consecration permanent. The fathers seemed to think entire consecration was enough just for the time of the protracted meeting. Then gradually they relaxed back to the old life. The modern holiness movement teaches that consecration is to be eternal; never to be relaxed and that the church should be in a revival state all the time. There should be a full tide all the time, without any ebbing and flowing. This we believe is the divine plan. A really entirely sanctified church is always on the alert to get men saved. It is not a revival limited to "the week of prayer" or the "annual revival." It sees newborn souls constantly at its altars. A careful, candid investigation will prove this to be the fact even in these modern days. What a pity that ecclesiastics seem ignorant of this fact to such an alarming extent.

2. Liberality in giving. Holiness promotes liberality in giving. It kills covetousness. How pitiful the modern expedients to raise money to support the gospel. It looks to the world as if the cause of our God were on the verge of bankruptcy a good deal of the time. There is no cause that does so much for man, that is so poorly supported. More than that, the modern methods of supporting the gospel develop covetousness and stinginess, whereas the Scriptural method enlarges the heart and brings blessing to the giver. The great Head of the Church said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Modern methods of supporting the gospel give the lie to his assertion. They have practically made it appear that it is more blessed to receive than to give. The mercantile idea has crowded out the gospel method of direct giving. Fairs, festivals, feasting prove that people want something back in return when they give to the cause of God. They seek not enlargement of heart, but fun, frolic and entertainment. And the worst of it is the financial returns are not what they should be even then. More money comes out of the spontaneous heart than can be squeezed out of the unwilling. A fountain is more profitable than a sponge.

The holy people are liberal givers. If anyone feels disposed to deny this let him see how easily and promptly finances are raised by the Scriptural method. Paul speaks of the churches of Macedonia who "first gave their own selves to the Lord." (II Cor. 8:5.) No wonder he boasts of their great liberality. Holy people have had the old man crucified and covetousness is gone. They delight to give to God in gratitude for His great gift of salvation.

This has been disputed. We call attention to the facts, which can easily be pointed out and verified, in many churches.

3. Missionary effort. Jesus Christ linked holiness to foreign missions, when the lawyer said that the great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." This is perfect love to God and man. This is the fruit of holiness. He told the lawyer, in explaining what the term neighbor meant, that it included foreigners, even as the hated Samaritan cared for the unfortunate Jew. There has been no class of people so willing to go to the ends of the earth to carry the gospel, as the holy people. Entire consecration has created thousands of foreign missionaries. And none have the success that they have as a class. A company of missionaries in Japan got together one night to pray. They consecrated themselves to God and were baptized with the Holy Spirit, and a great revival broke out in Japan as the result. A modest, retiring young lady is puzzled as to some of the possibilities of holiness as an experience. Her pastor explains the doctrine. She consecrates herself entirely to God, and receives the blessing of a pure heart. A holy ambition fills her heart, to go to tell the story of salvation to the heathen. She takes special training and is the first deaconess consecrated by the Methodist Episcopal Church. She goes to Western China and gives more than twenty-five years to the foreign mission work. The great school at Cheng Tu is the result of her labors.

Phoebe Palmer, the pioneer holiness evangelist of America, whose name was a household word in America and England a generation ago, and under whose labors thousands were converted, suggests to her husband that they give sufficient money to found a mission in China. As the result Methodist Episcopal Missions are founded in China, which have become a great enterprise.

Bishop Taylor is providentially appointed missionary bishop to Africa. He calls for volunteers to go with him, without salary or promise of any home support. The holiness people rally to the call. A large company of men and women meet in a holiness convention in Brooklyn, N. Y, in an M. E. Church, and at its close sail one stormy day for Africa. The holy people at home contribute to their support and today regularly organized missions are flourishing in Africa as the result.

And what shall we say more, for time and space would fail us to tell of the hundreds in foreign fields (scores of whom we personally know) who became missionaries, as the result of the experience of entire sanctification. Are their names not recorded in the book of life!

4. Gifts. "God has His plan for every man." He made no two of us just alike. This shows that He has a special mission for each of us, and if we fail, His plan as regards us is defeated. This is shown in the parable of the talents. To one man He gave five, to another two and to another one talent. He divided them to each one "according to his several ability." The man who had one talent failed to improve it. In the modern church, it is not merely the man with one talent that fails to improve it, but there seem to be many who have five talents who are doing nothing. We have seen in our American forests noble fallen trees, rotting and going to decay, when there is a great demand for such timber. It has made us think of the talent lying idle in the American church. It is a great pity when so much is to be done, and the cause of Christ languishes for helpers. The average church member cannot be relied upon for spiritual exercises—such as prayer or testimony. This is relegated to the pastor and a few of the faithful. It is very difficult to get Sunday school teachers, too. The family altar has almost disappeared. Lay preaching is almost unknown. The old time class meeting has gone forever and one reason of it is, the lack of material for leadership.

But when the Holy Spirit is poured out on a church in sanctifying power, it develops the latent gifts as at Pentecost. Then every one has a testimony, and many like Peter become preachers at once. There is no lack in gifts. Preachers, missionaries, class leaders, teachers spring up like magic. And we have seen it thus in our short lifetime.

5. Holy people are the spiritual nucleus of the church. God has made them the custodians of the interests of His spiritual kingdom. They can be depended upon to keep up the prayer and social means of grace. They stand by the revival meetings. They are ready to point sinners to the Saviour. They have compassion for the lost. If all the professors of entire sanctification should be suddenly caught away to heaven, the cause of God on earth would go limping and halting. The church would never know their value until they were gone. Suppose every church member were truly sanctified, what a difference it would make in Christendom. Our prayer meetings would be crowded. Testimonies and praises would fill the air. The pulpit would fire up and great conviction would be on sinners and revival fires would constantly blaze and the millennium would be upon us.

6. Holy people give no trouble as to the enforcement of discipline. They keep the rules. You never hear them requesting that the laws of the church against worldly amusements be amended. They have no lusting after the fleshpots of Egypt. They have something better—a daily feast of salvation in the soul. The easiest way to discipline a church is to preach full salvation from all sin. The humble will seek the blessing and if the preaching be really aggressive Ishmaelites in the church will pack up their baggage and go.

7. Holy people are engaged in good works. This is their specialty. So said Paul: "Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a people zealous of good works." They love to give, realizing that it is "more blessed to give than to receive." They can be reckoned on in the cause of prohibition, temperance, charity, the uplifting of the fallen, the Red Cross, etc. Their sympathies and love go out to all mankind. In short holiness makes us all round in our development. When we were young we worked in a cotton factory. Great bales of cotton were brought from the South. They were opened in the picker room and thrown into the picker and torn all to pieces. Then the cotton went through the breaker carding machines, which removed much of the dirt and straightened its fibers; then through the "finishing" carding machines, and it came out pure white. Then it was ready for the spinning machines and was made into the "warp and woof," which were put together into fabric in the looms; then in the cloth room it was piled up, stamped and boxed for market. And one big water wheel did the whole business. As it turned, all the machinery was busy. The pickers tore the cotton into pieces. The first and second carding machines removed all the dirt, the spinning machine twisted the fiber and the looms wove the cloth and it was prepared for market—all going on at once as the big wheel revolved. And so have we seen it in a church where holiness had right of way. The picker of conviction, the first set of carding machines of justification, the finishing carding machines of entire sanctification that removed all defilement and the spinning and weaving of holy character through trial and testing were all going on at once and God was taking them one by one to the heavenly market—all done by the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Thank God! There have been and there are such churches. May their number increase.

COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION

By

George Asbury McLaughlin

Chapter 8

HOLINESS BRINGS HAPPINESS

Happiness is what everybody wants and yet few find. It is rarer than the most precious jewels. When our English language was made we created the word happiness — that which haps or happens, because there is so little of it. The ancient heathen philosophers declared there is no such thing as happiness in this world. Solon, the famous wise man of Greece, said, "No man ought to be called a happy man as long as he lives," because he could not know what his life was to be. Varro reckoned up two hundred and eighty different opinions of what constitutes happiness. Lucian gives a long catalogue of the ideas of the philosophers on the subject and refutes them all. Byron, the gay voluptuary, who had sought happiness in the pleasures of the world, while still a young man writes:

Though gay companions o'er the bowl
 Dispel awhile the sense of ill,
Though pleasure fill the maddened soul,
 The heart, the heart is lonely still.
To die, and go where all must go;
 To be the nothing that I was
 E'er born to living woe.
Count o'er the joys, thine hours have seen
Count o'er the hours from sorrow free
And know whatever thou hast been
 'Twere better not to be.
And as for me, so dark my fate,
 In every state of life hath been,
Man and the world, I so much hate
I care not when I quit the scene."

We used to think as we saw the crowd rushing to the theaters by the thousands, that they went because they were happy but we have discovered that they go because they are not happy, but are seeking happiness. The character of the slush, that they seek, shows how desperately unhappy they are, who

"Vainly seek with earthly toys
 To fill an empty mind."

The great secret that mankind have not yet learned is that happiness does not consist in what we have or see or hear, but in what we are. You thought you would be happy if you had this or that or were in a more favorable position in life, but happiness is in the soul and not in its surroundings.

God never intended that man should be unhappy. He created him to be happy. To deny this is to accuse our Creator. Who dares to say the good and merciful God ever desired man to be unhappy? The fault is with man. He is out of harmony with his Maker's plan because out of harmony with his Maker.

All through nature God shows His desire for our happiness. He gave us a beautiful world to please our senses. He gives us fruitful seasons and harvests. He might have had the trees bring forth their fruits without a blossom, but He gives the blossoms to delight us as well as the fruit to nourish us. And that nothing might be wanting, He has in salvation provided a remedy for our unhappy souls.

The cause of unhappiness is sin in us. This is the cause of all the troubles of the human race. Man has lost God out of his soul and cannot be happy until he is right with God. As soon think of a fish at ease out of its native element, or an eagle happy, taken from its native cliffs and put in a cage.

When sin is cleansed from the heart by the blood of Jesus Christ, the friction is gone. The soul is at ease and is happy in God, even when storms rage on the outside. Paul said, "I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content." The martyrs were happy even when the fire was devouring their flesh; happier than many ever get, who see no tribulation. Madame Guyon finds the experience of entire sanctification by faith in spite of the darkness of the Roman Catholic Church and fairly reveled in happiness. Persecution, estrangement of family and prison walls could not dampen her happiness. She declared that when put in prison "the very stones of my prison appear like rubies in my eyes." And in that four years' confinement for her profession and preaching of holiness she wrote these lines:

"A little bird am I,
Shut from fields of air
And in my cage I sit and sing
To Him, who placed me there,
Well pleased a prisoner to be,
Because my God, it pleaseth Thee,
Naught have I else to do;
I sing the whole day long;
And He whom most I love to please,
Doth listen to my song.
He caught and bound my wandering wing,
And still He bends to hear me sing.
My cage confines me round;
Abroad I cannot fly,
But though my wing is closely bound
My heart's at liberty.
My prison walls cannot control
The flight, the freedom of the soul.
Oh! it is good to soar,
These bolts and bars above,
To Him whose purpose I adore,
Whose providence I love,
And in Thy mighty will I find
The joy, the freedom of the mind."

Jesus says, "Blessed (happy) are the pure in heart."

If the religion of Jesus did not provide for happiness, then it breaks down where most needed, for this is a world of unhappiness. We declare then, that holiness is in harmony with good common sense, in providing for happiness in this world as well as the world to come.

COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION

By

George Asbury McLaughlin

Chapter 9

HOLINESS GLORIFIES THE TRIUNE GOD

"I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever" (John 14:16). Here we have mentioned the three Persons of the Godhead. Here is Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity declaring that He will pray the Father, the first Person of the Trinity to send the Holy Spirit, who is the third Person of the Trinity. This is only one of hundreds of passages in the Bible that clearly teach the Trinity of the Godhead. This one passage alone is enough to prove the doctrine. This is not a book on theology, but it may be well to state the doctrine of the Trinity. It is claimed that it is mysterious and beyond our comprehension. So is the existence of God beyond comprehension. We behold a thousand things each day that are beyond our comprehension, but we do not deny or throw them away. We like the old Indian's illustration of the Trinity. He said, "Go down to the river in the winter and you come to snow. Dig through the snow and you come to ice, dig through the ice and you come to water. They are different, but they are all water." If we can admit this, we should go slow in our failure to understand the fact that there are three in the Godhead.

These three Persons are all interested and more than interested in the work of holiness. Let us see how vitally they are connected with the work of holiness.

God, the Father has always willed that we should be holy. He created man in His own image of righteousness and true holiness. That was what He wanted man to be. But He did not want man to be holy because he was so created. He wanted man to be holy from his own choice. So He gave him freedom of his will. And all those whom He makes holy in all ages are those who are holy from choice.

When man chose sin in place of holiness and became depraved, God instituted the plan of salvation, for a greater purpose than to save man from hell or to bring him to heaven. It was to restore him to holiness. This is the one point to which all revelation tends. This is the end of the commandment. Says Paul: 'Now the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned.'" Consequently we may look on the Bible as the unfolding of the plan to make man holy.

First: God had to hint at the nature of holiness, by symbols and object lessons, because His people had become so ignorant and debased by their bondage in Egypt among the heathen. So he divided the animals into two classes-the clean and unclean, and refused to have any but the clean offered to Him in sacrifice. Then He required the worshipper to be ceremonially clean, who offered sacrifice to Him. Thus He taught them that He was a Being that would accept nothing unclean. Thus gradually He instilled into their minds the idea of His moral cleanness or holiness.

Second: Having thus by symbol taught the idea of moral cleanness or holiness, He commanded them to be holy. Again and again is the command given. He does not give a reason for all His

commands, but He does when He commands us to be holy. He says, "Be ye holy for I am holy." That is sufficient reason for our holiness, because He is holy.

Third: He promises it again and again in His Word. Such passages as, "I the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed that thou mayest love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and a host of others clearly give His promises. Zacharias under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit says God took an oath to make us holy. "The oath which he swore unto our father, Abraham, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life."

Fourth: He has made ample provision to make us holy. He gave the Bible for that purpose. "All scripture," says Paul, "is given by inspiration and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction in righteousness that the man of God might be perfect." Peter says, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that through them ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Jesus prayed for His disciple-preachers, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."

God has given the divers orders of the ministry for the sanctification of man. In Eph. 4:11-13 we have a very important statement. Paul likens Jesus when He arose from the grave victorious over his enemies, to the ancient conquering general, who on his return from war was allowed a triumphal procession through the streets of Rome. As the procession filed through the city, the conqueror threw showers of gold and silver among the crowd. These handfuls of money were called donations or gifts. So Jesus when He triumphed over death gave as donations the different gifts of the ministry. "He gave some [people] apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and some teachers for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the church, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ." Paul says: "'Whom we preach warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

The church is given to help to holiness. As the Methodist Discipline says of the Church, "Among its privileges are peculiar incitements to holiness." Rightly improved the ordinances of God's house are helps to holiness. We "believe in the communion of Saints." So we say in the Apostles' Creed. The real church is an association of saints to help build up each other in holiness. Is it any wonder that the Apostle says "This is the will of God, your sanctification"?

God the Father planned holiness for mankind far back in the ages of eternity, before the world began, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world," says Paul to the Ephesians.

Holiness in man therefore glorifies the adorable First Person of the Trinity, who created man holy and has provided all needful agencies to make him holy.

Holiness glorifies Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity. He came to this world to make possible and procure the elimination of sin from the human heart. His blood is the procuring cause

of salvation from all sin. Gabriel in announcing His birth said, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." His mission was not to save His people in, but from their sins. He lived a holy life as our example. He preached holiness and antagonized the churchmen of the day because they lacked it. He told them they made "clean the outside of the cup and platter but within were full of ravening and excess." He likened them to putrid sepulchers, white and glistening on the outside only. He prayed for His disciples just as He went to Gethsemane that they might be sanctified.

He died that His church—those who had already been regenerated—might be sanctified. Paul says, "Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it, that it might be sanctified." John says, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son cleanseth us from all sin." The inspired author of the epistle to the Hebrews says, "Jesus that he might sanctify the people with his own blood suffered without the gate." If anyone claims to love Jesus Christ and is not moved when he reads that Jesus died that His church might be sanctified, he has made a mistake in supposing he is a follower of Jesus. This, then, was the mission of Jesus to teach holiness, to set the example of holiness and to make an offering of Himself to provide and by His death prepare the way for man to be holy. Therefore holiness glorifies the Second Person of the Trinity.

Holiness glorifies the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Adorable Trinity. If language means anything, it means the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is a Person as truly as the Father and Son. He has been called the "Executive of the Godhead." It is His office to actually perform the work in the heart that God the Father has planned and Christ the Son has made possible by His death. The Scripture so teaches.

St. Peter tells us that we are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God through sanctification of the Spirit." St. Paul says, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit." He comes to cleanse our hearts, that they may be fit temples for His indwelling, for "ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost." A holy heart is a sample of His office-work. It glorifies the Holy Spirit.

It is therefore in harmony with common sense that we should be holy for it proves that the plans and office work of the Trinity as regards holiness are effective.

COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION

By

George Asbury McLaughlin

Chapter 10

HOLINESS MAKES OBEDIENCE TO DIVINE LAW POSSIBLE

"Because we are not under the dominion of the law as were the Jews, before the Gospel dispensation, that does not free us from obedience to the law." Jesus set the matter in a clear light in The Sermon on the Mount, in which He said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." Men had been trying to work out their salvation by their works of righteousness, but had failed. Salvation cannot be obtained by our good works for all our good works will not atone for our sins. More than that, no man ever could keep all the law of God in his own strength. If he fails in one particular he is guilty. St. James says, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point is guilty of all." The law is not like a string of beads independent of each other, so that if one be broken the other is not affected. It is rather like a golden ring. A break in it is a break of the entirety of the ring. A break in the law of God is something done contrary to the divine will. The ten commandments are cautions to us, put up at the ten points or principles where it is possible to act contrary to the divine will.

Jesus came that we might obtain the power to keep the divine law, which the Jewish church had failed to do.

There are many people today, who assert that it is impossible to keep the law of God. If that be true then God has commanded an impossibility. We had rather be a Pharisee relying on our good works to get us into heaven than a professed Christian denying that there is power sufficient in divine grace to keep us from breaking the law of God.

Jesus came to save us by His atonement so that we can keep the law of God. He came to create us anew for good works. Paul says, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." The people who say we cannot be kept from committing sin, contradict this scripture as well as the whole trend and teaching of scripture.

Our actual sins or sins of action are voluntary. John Wesley defines voluntary sin as "The willful transgression of a known law." St. John says the same thing virtually when he says, "Sin is the transgression of the law." He also says that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" and "whosoever committeth sin is of the devil."

The prophet Jeremiah foretold this when he said, "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts." That is, God puts such a love for His commandments in the hearts of His children that they delight to keep His commandments. Jesus said to His disciples, "If ye love me ye will keep my commandments." Every regenerated soul keeps the divine commandments because he

loves God. This love has been "shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit." It is a supernatural love. Such a soul can say with Jesus his Elder Brother, "I delight to do thy will, O God."

This love-sacrifice is entirely different from the service of a slave. Those of the Jews who sought to keep the divine commands, were like slaves, who obey from servile fear or like the ritualistic devotees of today. We once went to a camp of volunteer soldiers during the Civil War. A spirit of cheerfulness and joviality pervaded the entire place. Later we saw a carload of substitutes, who for a certain sum of money had taken the place of drafted men. They had to be guarded by armed volunteers lest they run away. Their countenances were devoid of animation. It was an enforced service. This shows the difference between a love service and a forced service.

The illustration of two commanders and their followers taken from the classic legends of Greece is often used to illustrate the difference between love service and a forced service. When the first commander and his company sailed by the enchanted rocks, where the beautiful sirens sported, he was obliged to put wax in the ears of his men lest they hear the bewitching music of the sirens, and also to tie them to the mast of the ship lest they leap overboard to go to the charmers. But the second commander had Orpheus, a musician, whose music so surpassed that of the sirens as to make it sound discordant. He had the power of a superior service. It is so with a true child of God. Duty is a delight and disobedience is repugnant, because of the divine love in the heart. It overcomes the desire of doing evil.

But there is one drawback even in this love service. It is before divine love has been made perfect in the heart. Before that time, strange as it may seem, divine love within the heart at times has to struggle with the carnal nature in order to do that which we delight to do. Entire sanctification, as we have shown before, removes this warring element from the soul and makes it a delight to do the will of God.

But the objection is often made in the form of this question. Is not the love of God put in the soul at regeneration perfect? We reply, Yes, in kind but not in degree. This love is not perfect because it is mixed with the tendencies of the carnal mind or, to state it in another way, it is associated with the carnal mind. Just as other minerals are mixed with the veins of pure coal in the earth and when brought to market the whole mass is called mixed, although the coal itself is pure. This is what St. John means when he says, "Herein is love with us made perfect." This is the marginal translation of I John 4:17. When the man of sin is cast out of the heart, then our love service is free from all internal hindrances. This is religion made easy.

Is not this reasonable? Is it not in harmony with common sense that the hindrances to our loving God with all the heart should and must be removed from our nature that we may keep the great commandment, that includes all the other commandments, viz. to "love the Lord with all the heart?"

Thus far we have been considering voluntary sins. We now take up involuntary sins—those that we unwittingly commit, otherwise called sins of ignorance; sins that fall below the divine standard of rectitude. What is our relation to them? Can we render a perfect service to God? We reply, NO. Consequently provision has been made in the divine economy to justify certain people who fail in rendering a perfect service to God. Under the Old Testament economy a sacrifice was offered every

year for sins of ignorance. Under the New Testament dispensation, "love is the fulfilling of the law." For, says Paul, "the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned." God allows perfect love to fill up or supplement our imperfect service, just as a father accepts the love and devotion of a child who is making sad mistakes when trying its best to please its parents. He allows the love of the child to fill up the imperfection of its service.

Therefore if our hearts be full of love to God, we can come up to the spirit of the law even if we fail in the letter.

COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION

By

George Asbury McLaughlin

Chapter 11

HOLINESS FITS FOR HEAVEN

It is exceedingly popular to talk of going to heaven. Multitudes express their desire for heaven and talk of meeting their friends there, who act as if there were no such place. If a man is expecting to go to another country he acts as if there were such a country. But we hear certain people, in this Christian land, talk of heaven, whose conduct belies their assertions. We mean by heaven, not the heaven of Mohammedanism or any other sect, but the heaven of the Bible.

Many people's notion of heaven is not much different from the heaven of the Mohammedans. If they really expected to go to the heaven of the Bible, they would seek to be fitted for it.

It is the law of the universe that everything or person must be in harmony with their surroundings. Otherwise they cannot exist. For instance, God has given the fish scales, fins and gills that they may live in the water. He has given the birds downy plumage, and hollow bones that they may float in the air. If we were transported to the planet Jupiter, we should die for lack of oxygen. He has wrapped this earth in a robe of oxygen fifty miles deep and given us lungs to breathe it in to keep our blood pure. We are adapted thus to it. We could not live beneath the waters as do the fish. And if we get to heaven, we must be adapted to it. The atmosphere of heaven is holiness and we cannot live there unless we are holy. As we are now by nature, we are fitted for hell, the headquarters of Satan. We may well ask ourselves what good expectation we have of heaven, unless we have heaven in our souls, for heaven is a state of heart as well as a place. If we go to heaven, it must first come to us.

A clergyman riding beside a profane coachman, who discharged volley after volley of oaths, fixing his eyes upon him, said, "I cannot imagine what you will do in heaven! There are no horses, nor coaches, nor saddles, nor bridles, nor public houses in heaven. There will be no one to swear at, or to whom you can use bad language. I cannot imagine what you will do in heaven." Years after, the same clergyman was called to see a dying man, who told him he was saved by his rebuke, "I cannot imagine what you will do in heaven."

Some confusion of thought exists among some good people on the subject of the fitness for heaven. Entire sanctification is the fitness for heaven. This is not the same as justification. We get our title to heaven when justified, but not our fitness. A king's son might have a title to the kingdom, but he has to be educated and cultured to be fit to rule. Those people who object to entire sanctification, declaring that they got their fitness for heaven when converted, are both unscriptural and unphilosophical. Every day we can see the difference between a title and a fitness for an estate. The common law of our land makes this distinction. A child is an heir of his father's property, but he is not fitted to take possession until he comes to the age of twenty-one years. And then if he is an imbecile he is put under trustees. Thus the common law of the land distinguishes between a title and fitness. St. Paul makes the same distinction saying to the Galatians, "Now the heir as long as he is

a child differeth nothing from a servant, but is put under tutors and governors until the time appointed by his father."

Justification is the pardon of our sins. But that is not enough. It is like a man in prison condemned to die. He contracts deadly disease. He is therefore twice dead. If he escapes the hangman, the disease will kill him. The governor or president may pardon him, but he will die just the same. He needs the care of the physician just as much as the pardon of the governor. We, by nature, have the deadly disease of sin. It breaks out in evil thoughts, words and acts. We must have not only pardon for the thoughts, words and acts, but we must be cured of the disease of sin in order to enter heaven, for heaven is quarantined against sin. Ordinary morality will keep us out of the penitentiary, but it will take holiness to keep us out of hell.

Heaven is the palace of the King of kings and Lord of lords and we must be suitably conditioned to enter it. The man in the parable failed to have on the wedding garment and was cast out into outer darkness. The wedding garment is "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." And is not this reasonable? There is no harmony or real comfort in the intercourse of those who are not of the same affinity. The wicked, if in heaven, would be uncomfortable in the presence of the good of all ages, and their presence would mar the heavenly enjoyment of the good. A clergyman once visited a hardened criminal, condemned to be hanged. After trying in vain to arouse the man's mind to serious things, he portrayed heaven, the home of God and the good of all ages. When he spoke of being in their society forever, the criminal said, "Then I do not want to go there."

Christianity differs from all other religions in that it requires an ethical life or right living. Other religions have no connection with morals. In fact the other religions are so debasing that a man is a better man, who has nothing to do with them. The Christian religion has for its object not merely to save men from hell but to fit them for heaven. This being the case, it is in harmony with common sense that we should be holy in this life, for holiness is only the state of being right. Therefore from whatever angle we view the subject, it is in harmony with the highest reason that we should be holy in the present life, so that "sudden death would be sudden glory."