

## GOD'S THREE STEP RECOVERY, PART 2

*"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God "* Hebrews 6:1.

The experience of pardon and justification in the outer court is to be the beginning of that walk which leads to a full recovery from the damage that sin has done. We need all of Christ's redeeming work in order to be saved. Here is where many are deceived. *"They get the impression that when they take the first steps in conversion,--repentance, faith, and baptism,--this is all that is required of them. But this is a fatal error. The arduous struggle for conquest over self, for holiness and heaven, is a lifelong struggle. There is no release in this war; the effort must be continuous and persevering"* 5T p.412. When we first receive Christ into our hearts, we are just babes in religion. But we are to grow up into Christ, rooted and grounded in Him, and becoming witnesses before the world of the goodness and mercy that we constantly receive from Him. We are to walk the road of sanctification, doing what Paul did when he wrote, *"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus "* Philippians 4:13-14.

There has been much discussion about whether we are saved through justification alone, or whether justification has to be combined with sanctification in order to inherit eternal life. The Bible tells us, *"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication... because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth "* 1 Thessalonians 4:3 & 2 Thessalonians 2:13. And then we have a further illumination on this point from Inspiration. *"Justification means the saving of a soul from perdition, that he may obtain sanctification, and through sanctification, the life of heaven. Justification means that the conscience, purged from dead works, is placed where it can receive the blessings of sanctification"* 7BC p.908. Here we see that justification is to clear the way to experience sanctification. Inspiration defines sanctification in these terms. *"True sanctification means perfect love, perfect obedience, perfect conformity to the will of God. We are to be sanctified to God through obedience to the truth. Our conscience must be purged from dead works to serve the living God. We are not yet perfect; but it is our privilege to cut away from the entanglements of self and sin, and advance to perfection"* AA p.565. *" Let us be growing Christians. We are not to stand still. We are to be in advance today of what we were yesterday; every day learning to be more trustful, more fully relying upon Jesus. Thus we are to grow up. **You do not at one bound reach perfection;** sanctification is the work of a lifetime "* 3SM p.193.

The experience of sanctification is illustrated in the first apartment of the sanctuary. This is the second step in man's recovery from the damage that sin has caused. And it is a cooperative effort, with Christ and the Holy Spirit working in us *"both to will and to do of His good pleasure"* Philippians 2:13. Man's will has a vital role to play in getting rid of sin as it comes to his knowledge. DA p.466 tells us that, *" **The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself.** True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God."*

There are numerous false ideas of the relationship between faith and works in the Christian experience. Some people believe that any effort that the Christian makes to overcome sin and to obey God's commandments is legalism, that it is trying to work your way into heaven. If diligence in trying to perfectly obey God's commandments was legalism, then certainly Christ would have to be included in that category. No one on earth was more diligent than Christ to do everything that God had commanded. And that is what Christ enjoined upon His people as they were about to enter the promised land. *"Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee. And thou shalt do*

*that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers “ Deuteronomy 6:17-18.*

Even Elder A.T. Jones became confused regarding the relation of faith and works a few years after the 1888 Conference where he delivered some powerful messages on righteousness by faith. In 1893, Ellen White was directed by God to send him a communication, warning him that he was becoming unbalanced in his presentations. The following is from 1SM p.377 & 381.

*“ I was attending a meeting, and a large congregation were present. In my dream you were presenting the subject of faith and the imputed righteousness of Christ by faith. You repeated several times that works amounted to nothing, that there were no conditions. The matter was presented in that light that I knew minds would be confused, and would not receive the correct impression in reference to faith and works, and I decided to write to you. You state this matter too strongly. There are conditions to our receiving justification and sanctification, and the righteousness of Christ. I know your meaning, but you leave a wrong impression upon many minds. While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works...*

*Let no man present the idea that man has little or nothing to do in the great work of overcoming; for God does nothing for man without his cooperation. Neither say that after you have done all you can on your part, Jesus will help you. Christ has said, "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). **From first to last man is to be a laborer together with God.** Unless the Holy Spirit works upon the human heart, at every step we shall stumble and fall. Man's efforts alone are nothing but worthlessness; but cooperation with Christ means a victory.”*

In the first apartment of the sanctuary, there were three articles of furniture. On the right side stood the table of showbread with its twelve loaves or cakes of bread. The bread symbolized the ‘Bread of Life’ by which the Christian is to grow and mature. In John 6, Jesus used this symbolism to illustrate the importance of receiving His words into our hearts. Also in PP p.277 we read, *“ It is not enough even that we believe on Christ for the forgiveness of sin; we must by faith be constantly receiving spiritual strength and nourishment from Him through His word. Said Christ, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life." John 6:53, 54. And to explain His meaning He said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”*

If the Christian wants to make advancement in His spiritual walk, he will have to be ready to receive more and more light and to walk in that light. *“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” Proverbs 4:18.* That is vitally important if he wants to maintain his experience of sanctification. *“There is **no Bible sanctification for those who cast a part of the truth behind them.** There is light enough given in the word of God, so that none need err” 1T p.338.* The only way that Christ can purify His people from their hidden faults is by shining more light into their souls which will expose ignorant sins and habits. In GW p.162 we read, *“We must receive every ray of light, and walk in it, that it may not be our condemnation in the judgment. Our duties and obligations become more important as we obtain more distinct views of truth. Light makes manifest and reproveth the errors that were concealed in darkness; and **as light comes, the life and character of men must change correspondingly, to be in harmony with it.** Sins that were once sins of ignorance, because of the blindness of the mind, can no more be indulged in without incurring guilt. As increased light is given, men must be reformed, elevated, and refined by it, or they will be more perverse and stubborn than before the light came.”*

The main reason that the loud cry didn't go forth in 1888 was due to the resistance of the additional light that Christ was sending His people. The stubborn rejection of that light resulted in a prolonged wandering in the wilderness from which the church has not yet recovered. The resistance of increased light has always been perilous to the church. Christ said *“I am the way, the truth and the life” John 14:6.* And the Holy

Spirit is called the Spirit of truth. So to reject truth is to reject Christ and the Holy Spirit. *"We do not want to be found receiving dangerous error as truth. We do not wish to imperil our souls by rejection of God's messages of warning and counsel. Our greatest danger lies in our tendency to refuse increased light, and our only safety is to see and understand for ourselves "what saith the Lord" ST April 22, 1889.* It is especially important for those living in the last days to fortify the mind with the truth which will be a protection against the many subtle deceptions of Satan. We are told that *"So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true, that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures"* Therefore *"None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict"* GC p.593.

In order for us to understand divine truth, we need the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. The Spirit was symbolized by the seven branched candlestick which stood on the left side of the first apartment. Revelation 4:5 identifies it as *"the seven Spirits of God."* The Holy Spirit is what sanctifies and transforms the character more and more into the likeness of Christ. 2 Thessalonians 2:13 tells us that God has chosen us *"to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."* And 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."*

Without the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul to make effectual the benefits of Christ's atonement, no one could be saved. DA p.671 tells us that *"The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail."* But *"Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive"* DA p.672. We will elaborate more fully on the mighty power of the Holy Spirit when we discuss the outpouring of the latter rain in step three.

Because the Holy Spirit is such a vital connecting link between God and man and is an integral part of the at-one-ment that is to be completed in the heavenly sanctuary, Satan has introduced some serious errors regarding the Holy Spirit. He has convinced some that the Holy Spirit is not a third person of the Godhead. He has deceived people into thinking that the Godhead consists of only two divine persons, and that the Holy Spirit is merely a manifestation of the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Those who do that cut themselves off from the lifeline connection between them and the Godhead. Christ warned the people in His day that *"All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come"* Matthew 12:31-32.

Christ died as our sacrifice in order to provide us with the measureless gift of the Holy Spirit. *"He died on the cross as a sacrifice for the world, and through this sacrifice comes the greatest blessing that God could bestow,-- the gift of the Holy Spirit"* SD p.242. This is what unites us to Christ. *"The union between Christ and His people is to be living, true, and unending, resembling the union that exists between the Father and the Son. This union is the fruit of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit"* SD p.293. In the Bible, the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of adoption. That is how we are adopted into God's family. That is how we become sons of God. Romans 8:14-15 tells us, *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."*

And it is the Holy Spirit that enables us to pray effectively. *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities:*

*for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered “ Romans 8:26. Prayer to God was symbolized by the altar of incense that stood just before the veil separating the holy from the most holy place. The sweet smelling incense was continually rising from this altar. Likewise, we are admonished to pray without ceasing. “Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice” Psalm 141:2 “The silent, fervent prayer of the soul rises like holy incense to the throne of grace, and is as acceptable to God as if offered in the sanctuary. To all who thus seek Him, Christ is a present help in time of need. In the day of trial they will be brave and strong” ST Jan.29, 1902. And with th prayers of His people, Christ mingles His own merits so that they come before the Father without any imperfection. “The prayer of the humble suppliant He presents as His own desire in that soul's behalf. Every sincere prayer is heard in heaven. It may not be fluently expressed; but if the heart is in it, it will ascend to the sanctuary where Jesus ministers, and He will present it to the Father without one awkward, stammering word, beautiful and fragrant with the incense of His own perfection “ DA p.667.*

Satan knows the importance of prayer in our Christian experience and he has introduced his subtle counterfeits to draw us into a union with himself rather than with Christ. We have in recent times heard of the different modes of praying that are not according to what is taught in Inspiration, such as centering prayer, contemplative prayers, and other techniques used in Spiritual Formation. It is hard to understand how there could be any danger in praying, but the great deceiver has perfected his hellish arts where he can even use the art of praying to become a tool to draw the minds of people to himself.

After Christ changed His ministry from the holy place to the most holy, Satan began answering the prayers of those who didn't follow Jesus into the most holy. Early Writings p.55-56 describes the masterful deception of Satan of drawing the attention of the people to himself, leading them to think that Christ was answering their prayers when it was his Satanic majesty that presided over them. Likewise, those who are being deceived into following the praying techniques which originate in Spiritual Formation will also think they are praying to Jesus while they are actually praying to Satan. And we are told in EW p.55 that Satan answers the prayers that are offered to him by sending light and power. This makes it all the more convincing that it is Jesus who is answering those prayers. Those who reject present truth are subject to strong delusion, as indicated in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. *“ because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”* Where is our safety from the strong delusions of Satan. EW p.256 tells us *“ Many saw the perfect chain of truth in the angels' messages, and gladly received them in their order, and followed Jesus by faith into the heavenly sanctuary. These messages were represented to me as an anchor to the people of God. Those who understand and receive them will be kept from being swept away by the many delusions of Satan.”* Our only safety is in the 'present truth' of the Three Angel's Messages as revealed in the sanctuary.

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