God's Extension:  
Ground for Sanctification

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Any realistic process of salvation must originate in the holiness of God, which is redemptive by nature. Redemption begins in the nature of God and culminates in the heart of man. Clearly, salvation is not complete until God puts the finishing touch to sin as a state of pollution in the immortal soul. Hence we believe that the only hypothesis open to Christian theology is one which calls for the radical and complete eradication of sin from the soul as the end-product of God's redemptive urge and procedure.

"Be ye holy for I am holy" is not a scriptural injunction prompted by cosmic musing. To the contrary, it is the expressed will and the authoritative command of God which rests on existential necessity. It is made logically mandatory by the relationship involving God and man in redemption. No alternative is permissible so long as God's holiness is the primary and constant factor in human recovery.

It is the position of this article that God's extension is the **bona fide** ground for entire sanctification. That is to say, all territory surrendered by the believer will immediately and fully be possessed by God. As George A. Turner expresses it, "The extent of one's consecration is the measure of the Spirit's hallowing and energizing."¹ To the extent that God's divine thrust pervades the human personality, holiness is indwelt and sanctification is confirmed. And by **entire** sanctification we understand the culmination of the biblical promises of a full salvation from sin.

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assists that it culminates a salvation not only "from the guilt and reigning power of sin, but also from its defilement and inbeing."^2

PARTIAL AND ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

Before entering into a discussion of entire sanctification, it is without doubt well to take account of the distinction between partial and entire sanctification, "between a work of grace begun, but incomplete, and a work of grace mature and perfect."^3 Sanctification has already begun in the born-again believer. As part of the effect in the life of the believer, sanctification involves personal dedication and separation unto God. The new birth is matriculation in sanctification; at the moment of conversion God invades the relinquished life, imparting a new dimension to it, the quality of eternity. "And I give unto them eternal life," said Jesus.^4

The initial surrender by which the sinner receives Christ as Savior sets in motion a process of sanctification which eventually serves to crown Him Lord of all. Dr. Delbert R. Rose casts helpful light on the question of the process of sanctification of the heart in the following words, "Coupled with this cleansing is the Spirit's work of perfecting of the believer's heart in love to God and to his neighbor."^5 But careful reflection will reveal that sanctification as a process within the life of the newly regenerate comes short of the true objective of salvation. Unless the process culminates in a crisis of full and final surrender, with the resulting full and final purification of the heart, salvation remains an unfinished project, beset by a vital and damaging want.

Any phase of sanctification short of entire sanctification is thus properly designated as partial. Partial sanctification moves toward crisis, and this process is continuous, and not to be regarded as disjoined from the end product.

Process and crisis in the movement of spiritual life in the believer involve stages or levels, these being occasioned by the believer's need. The achievement of a new level in the believer's spiritual process does in no sense necessitate a break in the continuity of spiritual maturing. John Doe in passing from boyhood to manhood experiences no perceptible

interruption in the ongoing of his personality, yet he has passed from one level or period of growth to its normal succeeding level. Similarly, the Christian in the crisis of entire sanctification sustains no fracture in his development. He does pass discernibly from the level of spiritual infancy to that of spiritual adulthood, from the stage of struggle with the carnal nature to the state of inward victory and peace. Nothing gained in the new birth is lost; rather, its gains are consolidated.

PERFECTION: PROMISED AND REQUIRED

Any careful discussion of entire sanctification requires a consideration of a closely related aspect of salvation, Christian perfection. Dr. Rose reminds us that “few words need more careful and constant definition than do the words perfection and sin.” For the purposes of this discussion, perfection is understood to mean complete, whole, or entire. Complete implies the inclusion of all that is needed for the integrity or fulfillment of something. Whole and entire imply unbroken unity of parts, so that nothing vital has been omitted. When applied to Christian character, these terms connote a state or quality of Christian existence which answers to the divine demand for full-orbed commitment and devotion.

Perfection is unquestionably the aim of any form of development. Christian progress may be expected to aspire to perfection, for the Bible promises and requires spiritual excellence. One can only ask, in what sense does perfection apply? Revelation and reason have but a single answer: in love. Whereas a human being can never transcend the defects and shortcomings of his finitude, he can experience and enjoy an idealism and perfectness in love while in the body. In fact, this seems to be the exclusive type of perfection man can experience in time or eternity. Even though the mortal shall put on immortality, the redeemed soul will still be finite in eternity, and therefore limited in knowledge, station and power. Thus even final perfection as man shall experience it will be essentially faultlessness in love—and he must and may reach this standard in this life.

Our Lord set the norm, “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 neighbor as thyself.” In other words, Christian love in the

6. Ibid., p. 117.
full New Testament sense is total and all-encompassing. In addition, it is all-pervading: it touches and qualifies the heart, the seat of affections; the soul, the seat of being; the strength, the seat of willing; and the mind, the seat of understanding. The total person is thus involved; and it is difficult to see how any person could, in theological candor, avoid the conclusion that a genuine element of perfection is implied here. As John Wesley said, referring to perfection in love, "Pure love alone, reigning in the heart and life, this is the whole of Christian perfection." 8

In its deep sense, love purifies and transforms everything it touches. Love is redemptive. In a heart filled with divine love and made perfect in its devotion to Christ, there is no room for self-love and world-love. And love not only purifies, but it also thoroughly preserves. The soul thus made perfect cleaves to God by the strong bonds of love and is safe, for no power can successfully challenge its righteous claim.

ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION AS SALVATION FULFILLMENT

Redemption begins in the restorative urge in the holiness of God, and culminates in the entirely sanctified heart of man. This is the spiritual narrative and course of salvation, its historical and chronological inception and development. By its very nature, redemption is a tale untold until it eventuates in heart purity for man. No matter how noble and expansive its potential efficacy, its inherent purpose and power are not realized until it has reached man's deepest self. At his heart, where the springs of life issue, there is found the deep-seated and deep-rooted need for a full salvation.

That sanctification needs to be entire in this life is clear, for otherwise it would become necessary to extend the process into eternity. There is no scriptural evidence that moral change will thus be effected beyond the boundaries of this life. "There will be advancement in the future state, but it will be advancement in exaltation, light, wisdom and glory," 9 and not in matters of moral adjustment, since sin's defilement cannot enter heaven. And while the positive side of entire sanctification involves the perfection of the believer's love, its negative benefit is the elimination of the sin principle from the heart as a cardinal preparation for entry into the Eternal City.

Entire sanctification, we conclude, is the redemptive extension of God's holiness into the heart and life of man. It is the logical outcome of

the desire of the Creator to bring all of creation into the orbit of His high purposes. Hence God's extension is the ground for entire sanctification. Divine teleology unerringly seeks to fulfill itself, and thus there is no place where God is present where at that time and place redemption is not being effectual. As there is no redemption apart from God, it is equally valid that where God is, redemption will be actualized. The presence of God is the reality of redemption.

God's abiding presence is provisionally dependent on purity. Hence, the heart and life in which He dwells must be cleansed from the obstructing entrenchment of sin. How else could this end be reached than by the eradication of inherent evil from the yielded soul? Then, after cleansing, comes the fullness of the Holy Spirit's occupancy, commonly known as full salvation.

The new birth is a stage or station-stop on redemption's right-of-way leading to the blessed destination of full salvation. When we understand this, and perceive the relation between the two crises of Christian grace, then we see that the saying that "God saves to sanctify" is a valid one. That which He saves initially, He cleanses and fulfills by the extension of His purpose and presence.