

***Sabbath School Today***  
**With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

***The Holy Spirit and Spirituality***  
**Lesson 6. The Holy Spirit and Living a Holy Life**

“Holiness is wholeness. That which is perfect is holy. But man is imperfect. He was perfect at its creation, but he sinned and lost his uprightness. Body and soul and spirit became tainted with sin and therefore subject to death; for sin is a cancer that, left to itself, eats its way steadily into the soul, until death is a result. Bringing man again to a state of holiness, is bringing him back to the condition that was his before the fall. And this is done not by any visible outward change, but by the gift of Christ,—the substitution of His perfection for all that is imperfect in man. Christ gives Himself to us, so that His perfection is our perfection, whether of body or soul or spirit. ...

“Holiness, therefore—or wholeness—comes only from the presence of Christ, bringing His perfection. Nothing that man can do can bring holiness, ... God only can make that which is holy, and that which is not so can be made so only by His presence.” [1]

Ellen White saw how the message of the two 1888 “messengers,” A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, riveted attention on the *practical* aspects of Christ’s high priestly ministry. The message didn’t cause frustration by *calling* for holy living, it provided *the means* for it. This is where those two great “rivers,” the sanctuary truth and justification by faith, flowed together.

The Jones-Waggoner message clearly recognized that the forgiveness of sins is a judicial declaration that rests solely on the atonement made at the cross. But they also saw that the Bible word for *forgive* means an actual “taking away” of the sin. Thus, from the time of the 1888 General Conference they recognized the distinction between the daily or continual ministry in the sanctuary, and the yearly ministry. There is a difference between *the forgiveness* of sins and the *blotting out* of sins.

The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary is a work that includes the people and extends to them. It provides for the perfection of their character in Christ on the one hand; and on the other hand in the final destruction of sin and sinners and the cleansing of the universe from all taint of sin. This is the “finishing of the mystery of God.” It is Christ fully formed in each believer. The sanctuary itself cannot be cleansed so long as God’s people continue to pour into it a constant stream of sinning. The stream will be stopped at its source—in the hearts and lives of God’s people. The ministry of Christ in the Most Holy Apartment does make “the comers thereunto perfect” and does perfect “forever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:1, 14).

So, how does sanctification fit in?

Anybody who is justified by New Testament faith is automatically in the process of sanctification. He never has to change gears from salvation by faith to salvation by works. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: ... established in *the faith*" (Col. 2:6, 7). By his expression "*the faith*," the Apostle Paul does not mean a creed or set of doctrines, but the phenomenon of a heart-appreciation of Christ's cross. The method remains the same: *by faith*.

In sanctification, it is the Lord who brings us along our way, as He did in justification. Faith *keeps on* working by love, always in the present tense.

In no way does the Lord leave us to fly on our own, to keep up our speed or crash. Sanctification is never by works; neither is it a mixture of faith and works in the sense of self-motivated efforts to chalk up merit so we can earn a reward. Clearly, Christ told Paul that He was sending him to open people's eyes and "turn them from darkness to light, ... that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are *sanctified by faith that is in Me*" (Acts 26:18). We do not read anywhere in the New Testament that it is our job to sanctify ourselves. Instead, we are "sanctified ... by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11). Jesus prays the Father to sanctify us (see John 17:17); and Christ also sanctifies and cleanses His church (see Eph. 5:26).

It is all summed up in Paul's comprehensive statement: "[*May*] *the very God of peace, sanctify you* wholly, ... blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thess. 5:23, 24).

The Lord doesn't give up easily. "He which hath begun a good work in you will [carry it on to completion] until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). *This work that He does is sanctification*.

Regarding the question in the "quarterly," "If someone were to ask you, 'How do I get the victory over sin that is promised to me in the Bible?'" (Tuesday's lesson), the 1888 message provides a clear answer. The "victory" isn't "won" by our own good works, but by allowing the Lord to carry *His* good work in us until completion.

"The work of the Holy Spirit on the heart is to break down and expel self-love, ... The soul temple must be emptied and cleansed from its moral defilement, that Jesus may find room to abide in the soul as an honored Guest, that [He] the pure, true Witness may be the power exercised in a holy life. Then Christ is revealed in the heart by faith and precious victories are gained." [2]

In all past ages "the Lamb's wife" has never yet made herself ready, but how can the heavenly Bridegroom get His church's attention? By burning down the Review offices and the grand Battle Creek Sanitarium? (This all happened after the 1901 General Conference Session.) Can He bring His people to attention by an unprecedented fear-motivated demand for holy living? The answer has to be in the text: "To her [His bride-to-be] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:8).

The means the Lord will employ will not be a thunderclap from heaven or an earthquake, but a tender, quiet, heart-warming message of “the righteousness of saints.” A message that woos the heart—“righteousness by faith,” the Bridegroom coming close in an appeal, a gentle touch of truth.

—*From the writings of Ellen G. White, Ellet J. Waggoner, and Robert J. Wieland*

**Endnotes:**

[1] Ellet J. Waggoner, “Mistaken Conceptions of Holiness,” *The Present Truth*, Oct. 12, 1893.

[2] *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, diary entry Oct. 30, 1889, p. 467.

**Notes:**

Pastor Paul Penno’s video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://youtu.be/KDdWsF1BLnA>

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