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Entire Sanctification

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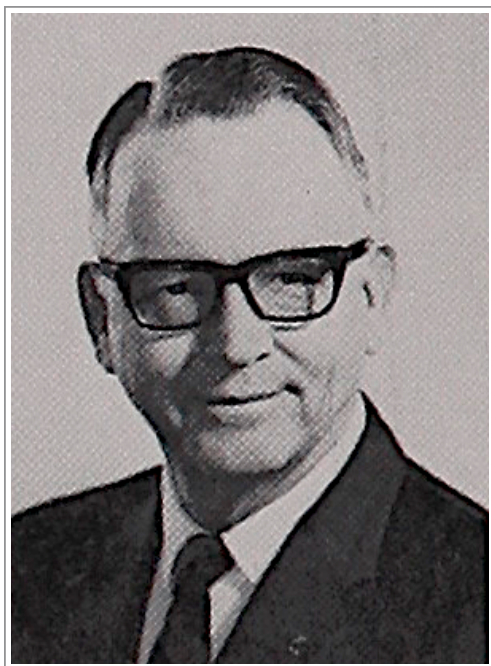
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William M. Arnett

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Introduction

In his illuminating study, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, Dr. Timothy L. Smith traces the permeating influence of the evangelical revival in the latter half of the nineteenth century. He tells us “the quest of personal holiness became in some ways a kind of plain man’s transcendentalism, which geared ancient creeds to the shaft of social reform.”¹ With irrefutable documentation Dr. Smith reveals that most of the great social reforms of that period grew out of the work of dedicated evangelicals, many of who were leaders in the holiness movement. Commenting on this revival that gave impetus to social reconstruction, Shirwood Wirt states that

The evangelical preacher, the revivalist, the mass evangelist, carried the doctrines of holiness and Christian perfection into the seamy aspect of the day. They revealed a boundless passion for the welfare of humanity. Anything that stood in the way of making America great—and Christian—they opposed. Thus they spoke frequently for the friendless, the jobless, the drunkard, the illiterate, the Indian and the Negro, the widow and the orphan.²

The immoral climate of the last half of the twentieth century needs a like visitation from God with a similar penetrating moral revolution. Very recently, Bishop Paul W. Milhouse, resident bishop of the Oklahoma Methodist area was asked this question: “If you could cause one trend, or emphasis, or change, or program, or event, or attitude to develop across the United Methodist Church today, what would it be?” He replied, “I believe my answer can be stated best as an intensified concern for ‘scriptural holiness’, understood in its broadest sense.”³ In a recent television interview, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen of the Roman Catholic Church was asked what the greatest need of the Catholic Church is at this time. Bishop Sheen answered with just one word: “Holiness.” Granted the difference with which these Episcopal leaders would interpret

and apply this theme, the fact remains they declare the greatest need of our time is “holiness.”

The subject of this paper, “Entire Sanctification,” is a special area of the broad theme of sanctification. The term “sanctification” in a general sense means “the hallowing of the Christian believer by which he is freed from sin and enabled to realize the will of God in his life.”⁴ Whatever we may know concerning personal sanctity, however, has its source in what is revealed about the holiness of God. This must be our starting point, as the Scriptures plainly teach (1 Peter 1:15, 16).

I. The Holiness of God

Because the Israelites believed in a perfectly holy God they came to believe also that God’s people should be holy. Their belief was not based on human ingenuity or discovery, but on Divine revelation. It has been divinely disclosed that holiness characterizes God’s essential nature. He is uniquely and absolutely holy. The Old Testament, for example, rings with the thought of God’s holiness. Leviticus 11:45, “I am holy”; 1 Samuel 2:2, “there is none holy as the Lord”; Psalms 145:17, “the Lord is holy in all his works”; Isaiah 6:3, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.” These passages hardly begin the list.

Four elements revealed in the holiness of God are relevant to our topic, namely, the awesomeness of God, the glorious majesty of God, the moral purity of God, and the communicability of the Divine nature. Rudolph Otto calls our attention to these emphases.⁵ Everything else that is said about holiness in the Christian revelation has its basis in one or the other of these four elements of the holiness of God.

These Divine elements are disclosed or experienced in various ways in the Old Testament.⁶ The element of awe, for example, which produces in us a sense of fear and reverence, was experienced by Jacob at Bethel. “And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, how dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of

heaven” (Genesis 28:16, 17). It is observed at the call of Moses at the burning bush: “And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God” (Exodus 3:6). It appears also in the vision of Isaiah in the Temple (6:4), in the vision of Ezekiel (1:28), as well as by Job (13:21) and the Psalmist (114:7).

God’s glorious majesty is described in the song of Moses after crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 15:11); in the cry of the Psalmist (99:2,3; 68:35); in the disclosures to Isaiah (40:25); in the teaching of Ezekiel (38:23); in the understanding of Amos (4:2). The moral excellence and ethical perfection of God’s holiness were variously revealed, for example, to the Psalmist (15:11 24:3,4); to Isaiah, whose vision of God’s holiness made him conscious of his own impurity (6:5); and in God’s Law and requirements (e.g., Leviticus 19). Finally— and this is the most glorious factor of all— God’s holiness is communicable and available to man on certain conditions. That God’s holiness is contagious and communicable is the pledge and promise that God’s command can be realized: “Ye shall be holy; for I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44; 19:2).

II. The Holiness of Jesus

God is best revealed in Jesus, “the Holy One of God” (John 6:69). He is the One who has declared or exegeted God. “No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God (Son), who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*” (John 1:18 NAS). The Holy God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness “hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6). Jesus came to live a holy life, to fulfill a holy vocation, and He is supremely the Holy Man of the world. Since man’s primal fall, Jesus Christ is the only man who ever walked the earth who could ask without embarrassment the question, “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” (John 8:46).

The four basic elements in the holiness of God, which we noted above, burst forth in the holy life of Jesus.⁷ The sense of awe is there, for frequently in his earthly ministry we come

across an expression like this: “They were all amazed” (Mark 2:12). Peter experienced this after the unusual catch of fishes (Luke 5:8). Even the encroaching shadow of the Cross was the occasion for one of the most vivid pictures of awe resting on Jesus and His disciples, as Mark records: “And they were in the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going before them: and they were amazed; and they that followed were afraid” (10:32).

The glorious majesty of our Savior is abundantly evident as we observe His stilling the storm, walking on the sea, healing the sick, and raising the dead. His moral purity and excellence are likewise evident. He not only was “without sin” (Hebrews 4:15), He was also “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). The contagiousness of His holiness is also manifested. Mark, for example, tells us, “whosoever he entered, into villages, or into cities, or into the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the borders of his garment: and as many as touched him were made perfectly whole” (6:56; cf. Matthew 14:35,36). Out of His innermost being flowed rivers of living water (John 7:38, a prophecy concerning Him and those who believe in Him that has been fulfilled across the centuries. Small wonder that J. Baines Atkinson concludes: “How great are the blessings that are bestowed through the holiness of Jesus— eternal life, everlasting rule, grace, anointing, utmost salvation, spiritual authority... the believer is sanctified in the sanctification of Christ.”⁸ Such is the meaning of Jesus’ High Priestly prayer, “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth” (John 17:19). As P. T. Forsyth puts it so succinctly, “The same holiness which satisfied God sanctifies us.”⁹

III. Sanctification in the Old Testament

Sanctification or holiness permeates the Old Testament.¹⁰ Its prominence is reflected in the fact that the primary term for holiness, *qadosh*, occurs in the canonical books

approximately 835 times. The basic meaning of the term is separation, that is, it implies being set apart from the common and unclean (Exodus 3:4,5; Numbers 6:5), and a dedication to the divine (Exodus 13:2; Deuteronomy 15:19; Numbers 6:5,6). The biblical term “sanctify” occurs 102 times in various forms in the Old Testament, and often has the meaning we have come to associate with “consecrate.” It was in this sense that men were told to sanctify themselves, as well as places, garments, vessels, days, priests, and people to the Lord. The meaning, of course, is to separate or set apart as dedicated to God. Although the primary usage was in a ceremonial sense, the deeply spiritual and ethical significance was not lacking in regard to inner holiness or sanctification in the Old Testament (e.g., Psalms 51:7,10; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Isaiah 4:3; 6:7). Our survey must necessarily be limited to this brief digest.

In summary, then, sanctification or holiness in the Old Testament means (1) separation, (2) recognition of the divine, and (3) to purify or cleanse.

IV. Sanctification in the New Testament¹¹

The New Testament teaching on sanctification or holiness is built solidly upon the Old Testament foundation. The Greek word *hagios*, the equivalent of the Hebrew word *qadosh*, and its cognate forms, convey the basic meaning of separation in the New Testament. It is the primary word used for “holy” in the Greek New Testament, and occurs a total of 234 times. Its use in the New Testament is illustrated by the fact that all Christians are described as saints, or “holy ones” (*hagioi*). The words “holy,” “sanctified,” and “saint” are used synonymously for all members of the Christian Church. 1 Corinthians 1:2 is typical of this usage, “sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints” (Cf. Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11). It is important to observe, however, that “sanctified” in this context is not a description of a mature level of Christian experience, but of the initial stage of Christian conversion. The Apostle Paul

was using the term in regard to Christians whom he later described as “carnal” (1 Corinthians 3:1,3,4).

Three areas of sanctification can be discerned in the New Testament: (1) Initial sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11); (2) Entire sanctification (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Ephesians 5:25-27); and (3) Progressive sanctification (1 John 1:7; 2 Corinthians 3:18). These areas will be analyzed or described later.

V. Entire Sanctification: (A) Definitions and (B) Distinctions

In order to ascertain the main elements in the experience of Entire Sanctification, several representative statements or definitions are given, and some important distinctions are made.

(A) Definitions

1. John Wesley – Entire sanctification, or Christian perfection, is neither more nor less than pure love; love expelling sin and governing both the heart and life of a child of God.¹² The Refiner’s fire purges out all that is contrary to love.

Pure love reigning alone in the heart and life, —this is the whole of scriptural perfection.¹³

Perfection is another name for universal holiness: Inward and outward righteousness; Holiness of life, arising from holiness of heart.¹⁴

I believe one that is perfected in love, or filled with the Holy Ghost, may be properly termed a father.¹⁵

2. The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 1972 – Sanctification is that renewal of our fallen nature by the Holy Ghost, received through faith in Jesus Christ, whose blood of atonement cleanseth from all sin; whereby we are not only delivered from the guilt of sin, but are washed from its pollution, saved from its power, and are enabled, through grace, to love God with all our hearts and to walk in his holy commandments blameless.¹⁶

3. Asbury College – Entire Sanctification is that act of divine grace, through the baptism with the Holy Ghost, by which the heart is cleansed from all sin, and filled with the pure love of God. It is a definite, instantaneous work of grace wrought in the heart of a believer, through faith in the cleansing merit or the blood of Jesus Christ, subsequent to regeneration and is attested by the Holy Spirit.¹⁷

4. Henry Clay Morrison – Entire sanctification involves the baptism with the Spirit, applying the cleansing blood and the purging out the natural depravity, the indwelling, or natural, sin, restoring the heart of the believer to the original state of purity, as God created it.

As we have been taught and understand; entire sanctification not only embraces a gracious baptism with the Holy Ghost cleansing from all sin, but it also includes the shedding of the love of God abroad in the heart, and manifests itself in a most important and convincing way among one's fellow-beings.¹⁸

5. W. Curry Mavis – Entire sanctification is that work of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to regeneration, by which the fully consecrated believer, upon exercise of faith in the atoning blood of Christ, is cleansed in that moment from all inward sin and empowered for service. The resulting relationship is attested by the witness of the Holy Spirit and is maintained by obedience and faith. Entire sanctification enables the believer to love God with all the heart, soul, strength and mind, and his neighbor as himself, and prepares him for greater growth in grace.¹⁹

There are several important factors that are more or less common in each of these statements.

- 1) It is a definite cleansing away of indwelling sin.
- 2) It is subsequent to regeneration, hence for believers.
- 3) It is the work of the Holy Spirit as Divine Agent.
- 4) It is procured by the blood of Jesus Christ.

- 5) The heart is filled with the pure or perfect love of God.
- 6) It is attested by the witness of the Holy Spirit.
- 7) It prepares for greater growth in grace.
- 8) It empowers for service.
- 9) It is maintained by faith and obedience.
- 10) It is manifested in holy living, including interpersonal relationships.

(B) Distinctions

1. Justification and Sanctification – Broadly speaking, justification refers to the whole work of Christ wrought *for us*; sanctification, the whole work wrought *in us* by the Holy Spirit (Romans 3:24-26; 1 Peter 1:2). Justification is a relative change, that is, a change in relation from condemnation to favor; sanctification, in a broad sense, is an inward change from sin to holiness. Justification secures for us the remission of actual sins; sanctification in its complete sense, cleanses the heart from indwelling sin or inherited depravity. Justification is an instantaneous and completed act, while sanctification is marked by progressiveness, that is, it has stages and degrees (e.g. initial or partial sanctification and entire sanctification). Justification is a forensic and judicial act in the mind of God; sanctification is a spiritual change wrought in the hearts of men.²⁰

2. Three Phases of Sanctification – (a) *Initial sanctification*, which is concomitant with justification and regeneration, signifies an initial cleansing from the acquired depravity that attaches to the actual sins of unbelievers, for which the sinner is himself responsible (e.g., Titus 3:5; Ephesians 5:26 “...having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word”). (b) *Entire sanctification*, a completed work, realized experientially in a definite, second work of grace (1 Thessalonians 5:23). (c) *Progressive sanctification* is a continuous relation to Christ and his atoning blood by faith whereby there is preservation in purity and holiness (1 John 1:7, e.g., 2 Corinthians 3:18). There is a sense in which a Christian

can have perfection in quality, but not in quantity, “remaining imperfect in that he has not the graces in sufficient intensity.” Here is the distinction between purity and maturity.

Dr. Turner distinguishes three phases of sanctification in this manner: (a) Positional sanctification (Romans 1:2; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:1); (b) Actual sanctification (2 Peter 1:4; 1 Corinthians 6:11); (c) Entire sanctification, the negative aspect (2 Corinthians 7:1), and the positive aspect (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:6,11; Galatians 3:3).²¹

3. What It Is Not – John Wesley warned that to set Entire Sanctification or Christian Perfection too high was tantamount to driving it out of the land. He was careful to point out that it is not absolute perfection, accorded only to God, or the perfection of Adam prior to the Fall, or the perfection of resurrection glory, neither is it exemption from ignorance, mistakes, infirmities, temptations, or forfeitability.²²

There are natural imperfections due to physical or mental limitations. Faulty judgment may arise from imperfect knowledge. Involvement in social injustices is possible because we do not live in a totally Christian environment, though a conscientious Christian does not or should not smugly acquiesce to the imperfections of our social order. Entire Sanctification or Christian Perfection is not freedom from trouble, or natural instincts (i.e., self, herd, sex), or growth. It is not sinless perfection. There is a difference in not being able to sin (i.e., sinless perfection) and being able not to sin (cf. Romans 6:22; 1 John 3:6,9; Luke 1:71,74,75; 2 Corinthians. 9:6). It is not a perfection of knowledge, judgment, memory, power or service. It does create in the believer a clean heart, and it does empower for witnessing and for service. We do have “this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency (“greatness”) of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Corinthians 4:7), for God has not “given us the spirit of fear (fearfulness); but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (i.e., a disciplined mind, 2 Timothy 1:7).

VI. Entire Sanctification: Terminology

The experience of Entire Sanctification is known by various terms representing its different phases, such as Christian Perfection, Perfect Love, Heart Purity, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, and the Fullness of the Spirit, Full Salvation, and Christian Holiness. John Wesley used a variety of words or phrases to express it, though he preferred scriptural terminology or descriptions. More than twenty terms or expressions have been observed in his writings. For Wesley, the essence of Entire Sanctification or Christian Perfection is “perfect love.”

VII. Entire Sanctification: Biblical Basis

There are important references in the New Testament where sanctification is referred to as “whole” or “entire,” or is strongly and implicitly inferred. Of special significance is 1 Thessalonians 5:23,24, “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” The context clearly indicates that Paul’s prayer for the Christians of Thessalonica anticipates an advanced stage of sanctity or holiness. Prior to the Apostle’s prayer in chapter five, there is evidence of his concern for a deeper work of grace. In 1 Thessalonians 3:10 Paul expresses a desire to see the recent converts in order that he might “perfect” what was lacking in their faith. Paul’s burden breaks forth in the prayer that God might “establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God” (3:13). The work of grace for which he prays in verses 12 and 13 is that these Christians may abound in love and be established in holiness.

Entire sanctification, it seems, is the concern of the Apostle in Ephesians 5:25-27 where the Greek verb form *hagiazdo* is used (“to sanctify”).

Christ loved the church and gave himself for her, That he might *sanctify* her, having cleansed

her by the washing of the water with the word, that the church might be presented to him in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing that she might be *holy* and without blemish.

Jesus' prayer for his disciples in John 17:17,19 has a similar concern.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth... And for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

The Apostle's admonition in 2 Corinthians 7:1 implies full or entire sanctification, "let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." All of these foregoing passages anticipate a level of Christian experience beyond the elementary stages of conversion.

In addition to these passages, there was Jesus' command for his disciples to tarry in Jerusalem for the enduement of power (Luke 24:49) and the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5), which was realized on the Day of Pentecost when "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4). Also in Acts 8 the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit as a second crisis, the chief significance of which was not power (Acts 8:10,19) but purity of heart (cf. Acts 15:9). Paul's summons to the Christians at Rome to "reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin" (Romans 6:11) and "to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (Romans 12:1) infers a deeper work of grace and a level of holy living beyond the initiatory stages of the Christian life.

There is implicit inference to Entire Sanctification in the following passages: Acts 20:32; 26:18; Romans 6:19,22; 15:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:21; Hebrews 2:11; 10:10, 14,29; 12:14; 13:12; and 1 Peter 1:2.

VIII. Entire Sanctification: Vitally Related Themes

(A) The Doctrine of Sin

George A. Turner warns that “no doctrine of sanctification is valid unless related to a sound doctrine of sin.”²³ Indeed, the doctrine of Entire Sanctification rises or falls on whether or not sin is basically two-fold in nature: sins as acts or deeds, and sin as an attitude or disposition, a principle or instinct of indwelling corruption. Sins committed and the guilt incurred are clearly in mind when Paul wrote, “There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 31:22b, 23). But when Paul said that “I am carnal, sold under sin” (Romans 7:14b) and spoke about the “sin that dwelleth in me” (Romans 7:17,20), he was not confessing wrong doing, but expressing an awareness of an inner disposition or condition of which he now was fully cognizant. John Wesley’s significant sermons, “On Sin in Believers,” “The Repentance of Believers,” and “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” probe this area of inner sin which exists as a latent correlation or state, a principle or propensity within rather than an activity.²⁴

Various terms, biblical or historical, are used for this propensity: the carnal mind, the mind of the flesh, the flesh, the root of bitterness, the seed of sin, indwelling or inbred sin, original sin, or inherited depravity. This bias in human nature, or bent to evil, while dynamic, is not an entity in the strict sense of the term. God’s remedy for inner sin is His sanctifying grace that cleanses “through and through” (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

In a discerning, scholarly discussion on “The Dual Nature of Sin,” Merne A. Harris and Richard S. Taylor warn us concerning attenuated views of inbred sin or carnality. Their warning is so vital it is appropriate to include it in this discussion.

The holiness movement needs constantly to be on guard against any gradual erosion of a clear-cut doctrine of inbred sin. To permit views to

be disseminated among us, and finally pervade our literature and theology, which

— think of the carnal nature as spiritual ignorance, which can be corrected by knowledge;

— or as debility or weakness or infirmity, which can be corrected by discipline and growth in grace;

— or as dislocated relationships, which can be set right by repentance and forgiveness;

— or as estrangement from God, which is confusing the consequence with the cause;

— or as the natural drive toward self-fulfillment of the normal personality, which is not in itself an evil but needs to be made a “living sacrifice” to the service of God;

— or as an immature search for freedom, which will be chastened by maturity;

— or as some form of mental illness, or physical disorder, which will respond to proper treatment and needs the counselor or physician more than the altar;

— or as merely a habit-pattern toward selfishness acquired in infancy which needs to be replaced by new habit-patterns,

— *is to surrender a key pillar in our doctrinal structure.*

All such views are sub-biblical and sub-Christian.²⁵

To ignore inbred sin or carnality, or to regard it superficially, results in spiritual shallowness.

W. Curry Mavis calls attention to two general classes of interior urges to wrongdoing: (1) there are the inborn tendencies toward wrongdoing, which the Bible calls the carnal mind (2) there are those urges and tendencies toward wrong

that arise out of repressed complexes.²⁶ The first is inherited; the second is acquired. Dr. Mavis says both are rooted in the unconscious. Carnality is hostile to God, but repressed complexes generally are not. The latter may be resolved in a moment of faith, though this may not always be so. If not, the Holy Spirit can give guidance and insight into an understanding of the nature of the problem, or Christian counsel may prove helpful.

In regard to the acts of sin, it is important to discern the distinction between a legal definition and an ethical definition of sin.²⁷ In a legal doctrine of sin, the essence of sin is in the act, not the motive, intention, or knowledge behind the act. This normally is the Calvinistic view. In the ethical doctrine of sin, generally Wesleyan, “the moral quality of an act in the sight of God is primarily determined by the spirit and intentions of the agent in relation to his knowledge of God’s will and his duty, and only secondarily by the act itself.”²⁸ The legal view would virtually preclude the possibility of full deliverance from sin. But the Scriptures remind us that it is possible to be “free from sin” (Romans 6:7,18,22), to be cleansed from “all sin” (1 John 1:7) and from “all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9), and our definition and understanding of sin should be consistent with this possibility.

(B) The Death of Christ

The death of Christ has as much to do with sanctification as it does with justification. “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate” (Hebrews 13:12). “Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify it...” (Ephesians 5:25b, 26a). “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all... For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” (Hebrews 10:10,14).

One of the most significant questions in the Bible is asked in the book of Hebrews:

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (9:13,14)

It is abundantly clear that Entire Sanctification has a vital part in God's scheme of redemption. The procuring cause of this gracious experience is the blood of Christ. What His nature requires, His grace has wonderfully provided.

(C) The ministry of the Holy Spirit

Sanctification is identified in the New Testament as being the special work of the Holy Spirit. We are "sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:16), and both Paul and Peter speak of the "sanctification of the Spirit" as the subjective aspect of salvation (2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2). Thus, viewed morally, salvation *is* sanctification. Salvation is subjectively the hallowing of our lives by the gracious work of the Holy Spirit. As John Wesley observed, "The Holy Spirit is not only holy in himself, but the immediate cause of all holiness in us." God has called His children to holiness and has given the Holy Spirit to effect sanctity of heart and life (1 Thessalonians 4:7,8).

It is generally believed in Wesleyan circles that Entire Sanctification is effected through the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The promise of this baptism was clearly enunciated by John the Baptist and his statement is recorded in all three of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16). Matthew records: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." When was this promise of Jesus' baptism with the Holy Spirit fulfilled? Obviously it occurred on the Day of Pentecost, and if not then, it was never fulfilled.

Paralleling the promise by John of the Holy Spirit's baptism as the prerogative of Jesus is the implied promise in the prayer of Jesus for His disciples: "sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). When was the prayer of Jesus for the sanctification of the disciples fulfilled? In view of the transformation wrought in the disciples in the Book of Acts, one would have to say the answer came on the Day of Pentecost. The obvious conclusion is that the promise of John the Baptist and the High Priestly prayer of Jesus were fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost and were but different aspects of the one experience.

Acts 1:5 records the promise of Jesus to his disciples: "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." The fulfillment of Jesus' promise is in Acts 2:4. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." In this first instance, to be baptized with the Holy Spirit is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This activity of the Holy Spirit is distinct from the Spirit's baptism mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:13. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," which is an obvious reference to conversion when the believer is incorporated by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. As the Apostle Paul observed, there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are diversities of administration or ministrations, but the same Lord (1 Corinthians 12:4.5).

IX. Entire Sanctification: Vital Aspects of a Pauline Prayer

In 1 Thessalonians 5:23:24, we have the Apostle Paul's prayer for the sanctification (entire) and preservation of the recent converts at Thessalonica. We can only indicate the important aspects of this prayer as it relates to the petition, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly..."

- 1) It is a prayer for Christians, not for unbelievers or sinners.
- 2) It is the work of God, not the mere efforts of man.
- 3) It is a completed work, not a mere process.
- 4) It is a necessary work, not a mere option.

X. Entire Sanctification: (A) How Obtained and (B) How Retained

(A) How Obtained

Having made sure that one is in a clear saving relationship with Jesus, then briefly the human conditions are (1) full consecration to God (Romans 12:1), and (2) appropriating faith in Jesus Who suffered beyond the Jerusalem gate to sanctify His people. Appropriating faith involves seeking and asking: (a) earnestly (Luke 11:13), (b) yielding (Romans 6:13), and (c) believingly (John 11:24).

More elaborately, there is the necessity of (a) recognizing the need of a sanctified or pure heart; (b) a realization of God's provision for that need, first in the death of Jesus (Hebrews 13:12; Ephesians 5:25,26), and secondly, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11,12; Acts 1:8); (c) facing courageously this spiritual crisis (d) confessing honestly and forthrightly the barriers, remembering the chief barrier is carnality or the carnal mind which hates God (Romans 8:7), and particularly any personal manifestation or manifestations of the carnal mind; (e) committing fully the self to God (i.e., full consecration), and (f) appropriating God's sanctifying grace by faith.

John Wesley's very wise advice was to "hold fast what you have, and earnestly pray for what you have not,"²⁹ in regard to Christian perfection or Entire Sanctification. Finally, "there is an inseparable connection between these three points, expect it *by faith*; expect it *as you are*; and expect it *now*."³⁰

(B) How Retained

Very simply, Entire Sanctification is retained by faith and obedience. Obedience embraces the Holy Habits: feeding on God's Word, a vital prayer life, a faithful stewardship of time,

talents and possessions, and fellowship and worship with God's people in the ongoing life of the Church, the Body of Christ.

H. Orton Wiley wisely suggests (a) there must be perfect and continuous consecration; (b) the cultivation of a spirit of watchfulness; (c) daily living as in the presence of God; (d) the cultivation of a spirit of faith; (e) the sharing of testimony on every proper occasion; (f) seeking more and more the mind of Christ; and (g) telling others of this gracious experience, with a view of leading them to the sanctifying Christ and the rest of faith (Hebrews 4:9,11).³¹

XI. Entire Sanctification: (A) Proclamation and (B) Interpretation

Two important aspects of our Christian task are to proclaim the Gospel of Christ and to interpret it to others. There is no greater responsibility than this, and certainly no more rewarding or gratifying service.

(A) Proclamation

There has never been a time of greater opportunity or need to proclaim the message of Entire Sanctification. It must be admitted, however, that the doctrine of sanctification has been a neglected truth, speaking of this theme in its broader perspective, Billy Graham declared, "God has called every Christian to a life of sanctification. Yet very few have any idea what it is all about. The subject of sanctification is one of the most neglected truths in the entire Scriptures."³² Graham calls it a "precious doctrine," and says "silence in regard to sanctification, from both pulpit and pew, is doubtless responsible for the failure of many professed Christians to live separated, dedicated, disciplined lives."³³

In volume one of *New Directions in Theology* (1966), William Hordern includes a chapter on "Sanctification Rediscovered" and stresses that the renewed interest in sanctification is an important development in recent theology.³⁴ The church generally pays a very high price for its neglect of

truth in the long run. But the revived interest is a hopeful sign of encouragement.

(B) Interpretation

Equally challenging is the task of interpreting the Christian message. There is a great storehouse of vital truth concerning Christian holiness in the Holy Scripture. Explanation, exposition, and exegesis will always be a continuing challenge. There are dangers in the task of interpreting the doctrine of Entire Sanctification, and W. T. Purkiser sounds a discerning note of warning:

There is a vast difference between explaining a truth and explaining it away. Some calls for “reinterpretation” seem not so much the desire for better understanding as the wish to get rid of the truth entirely. But we must be interpreters, not corruptors. We are to be translators, not transformers, of the truth. We are to explain and apply the doctrine, not change its content.³⁵

Dr. Paul S. Rees concluded a sermon on “The Beauty of Holiness” by calling holiness “that three-petaled flower of doctrine, experience and life.” That conclusion is an appropriate challenge for us today. Holiness, he said, is what some of us are commending and seeking to exemplify wherever we go. It is a radiant, reasonable, royal Christian reality of which I can never be ashamed. I ask you not to be ashamed of it. Believe it heartily. Accept it obediently. Experience it personally. Cling to it loyally. Witness to it joyfully. Live it consistently. Promote it enthusiastically.³⁶

This many faceted challenge has its beginning with the heart – forgiven and redeemed, purified and filled with the Holy Spirit, through the workings of Divine grace. Christian holiness is shared by proclamation, and then understood more fully

through explanation and interpretation. Thus the outreach of the holy life is fulfilled in obedience to Christ's Great Commission in a stewardship of the whole of life.

XII. Entire Sanctification: The Testimony of Experience

In a little more than a year prior to his death, Wesley made this observation: "Gradual sanctification may increase from the time you was [sic.] justified; but full deliverance from sin, I believe is always instantaneous—at least, I never yet knew an exception."³⁷ A similar observation is made in his sermon "On Patience," asserting that he had not found a single exception to instantaneous sanctification in either Great Britain or Ireland among the many who professed Entire Sanctification, and added: "Not trusting to the testimony of others, I carefully examined most of these myself; and in London alone I found six hundred and fifty-two members of our society who were exceeding clear in their experience, and of whose testimony I could see no reason to doubt."³⁸

(A) Wesley's Indirect Witness

Writing to one of his preachers (Thomas Maxfield) who had fallen into error. Wesley gave his witness objectively to the instantaneousness of Entire Sanctification.

I like your doctrine of Perfection, or pure love; love excluding sin; your insisting that it is merely by faith; that consequently it is instantaneous though preceded and followed by a gradual work), and that it may be now, at this instant. But I dislike your supposing man may be as perfect as an angel; that he can be absolutely perfect; that he can be infallible, or above being tempted; or that the moment he is pure in heart he cannot fall from it. I dislike the saying, This was not known or taught among us till within two or three years. I grant you did not know it. You have over and over denied

instantaneous sanctification to me; but *I have known and taught it (and so has my brother, as our writings show) above these twenty years* (emphasis added).³⁹

(B) E. Stanley Jones

An outstanding alumnus of Asbury College and renowned missionary to India, E. Stanley Jones bore joyful witness to God’s sanctifying grace. Approximately one year following his conversion, which made a very decisive change in his life as a young man, he experienced an equally decisive filling with the Holy Spirit.

....Suddenly I was filled. Wave after wave of refining fire swept through my being, even to my finger tips. It touched the whole being, physical, mental, and spiritual. I could only pace the floor with tears of quiet joy streaming down my cheeks. The Holy Spirit had invaded me and had taken complete possession. He was cleansing and uniting at depths I couldn’t control. The subconscious mind, which is the special area of the work of the Holy Spirit, was being purified and empowered and united with the conscious mind. So that now conscious mind and subconscious mind were under a single control—the Holy Spirit. Life was on a permanently higher level.⁴⁰

(C) Henry Clay Morrison

There is one testimony to Entire Sanctification that has especial significance on this 50th Anniversary occasion. Just inside the main entrance to the Henry Clay Morrison Administration Building there is a plaque with this simple but significant message:

Administration Building
Erected 1947 in memory of Rev. Henry Clay

Morrison D.D.

Founder Asbury Theological Seminary

He preached and professed the experience of
entire sanctification as taught in the Holy
Scriptures and interpreted by John Wesley

Bishop Arthur J. Moore of the southern Methodist Church stated that his ministry was influenced more by Henry Clay Morrison than by any other man; he considered Morrison as the greatest champion of Entire Sanctification within Methodism. Here is a portion of Bishop Moore's eulogy:

Throughout his lifetime he was the exponent and champion of the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification as a second work of grace. He not only proclaimed but exhibited in his life this doctrine of perfect love. To him, more than to any other one man, we are indebted for keeping this original standard of Methodism alive in the modern church.⁴¹

What John Wesley's heart-warming experience at Aldersgate in 1738 was to the origin and growth of Methodism, Henry Clay Morrison's experience of Entire Sanctification is to the founding of Asbury Theological Seminary. It involves an obscure segment of religious history that has had remarkable significance. It contained in embryo the founding of this institution, the survival of Asbury College, and the eternal destiny of literally multitudes of people.

Actually, it can all be traced to a flash of spiritual illumination in the life of a young preacher in the year 1887. The immediate occasion of that burst of spiritual light was a revival meeting in the Highlands Methodist Church, located in what is now known as Ft. Thomas, Kentucky, overlooking the Ohio River. The recipient of the spiritual illumination was the young pastor of that church, Henry Clay Morrison. The truth illumined to his mind and heart was the doctrine of Entire Sanctification. Previously he had completely rejected this doctrine, which he had first heard presented by a preacher

whose theology was a strange mixture of free grace, predestination, final perseverance, the higher life, and universalism. In the shaft of light that eventually shone across his path on that memorable day, “the vision of the whole truth came to him then and there. He saw the doctrine, and that it was for him,” as C. F. Wimberly, his biographer, points out.⁴² Concerning this significant experience, Morrison himself gave the following testimony.

...the truth broke in upon me like an inspiration; I saw the doctrine and experience of full salvation as clearly as the sun in a cloudless noonday sky. My whole heart said, “It is the truth,” and I laughed and wept for joy. It seemed as if the following conversation went on within my breasts: “I am the Lord’s child. Yes, but not his holy child. He wants me to be holy, but I cannot make myself holy. That is so, but he can make me holy.” “Yes, he can,” was the response of my whole heart. I saw clearly the reasonableness of it all, and the will and power of God in the matter.⁴³

The ensuing spiritual quest resulted in the experiential reality of a “pure heart,” another term for Entire Sanctification. Wimberly calls it “an epoch-making event” in the life and ministry of Henry Clay Morrison.⁴⁴ Notwithstanding his gifts as a preacher, apart from this experience, Morrison, among others, was well on his way to obscure mediocrity, as Richard S. Taylor has correctly observed.⁴⁵

Some significantly related factors should be delineated. Before he became established in this great truth, Morrison was to twice lose its glowing reality because of his failure to testify publicly to it. Though the event at Highlands was epochal, he had not yet paid down the full price. He was not yet willing to bear the reproach of Christ and holiness, as the writer to the Hebrews enjoins (Hebrews 13:13). The following year, 1888, while pastoring in Danville, Kentucky, Morrison tells us that the

Holy Spirit often spoke to him about the lost blessing, and put an impelling power upon him to seek anew the reality of God's sanctifying grace which he had forfeited. The issue became very sharply enjoined.

One night in October I awoke with a great sense of fear—it was two o'clock, the town clock was just striking—and felt that I must get up at once and pray. I leaped out of bed and began to beg Christ to help me; He seemed to deal with me very positively; He impressed me with His great patience and forbearance, bore in upon my consciousness that I must loose from some things to which I seemed to be clinging almost unconsciously and enter into a closer and a more faithful relationship with Him, or there must be a final separation.⁴⁶

There was all intensive struggle that followed, lasting fifteen days – a time of mental suffering, fasting, and prayer. This soul-searching, and at times, agonizing experience, had intermittent seasons of hope and comfort. There was an unusual degree of Divine unction on his preaching in this period, but the turmoil and struggle would be renewed when he stepped down out of the pulpit. Morrison frankly admits:

I was in an awful school; it would hardly be lawful for me to go into details and tell what the Lord revealed to me of the nature of sin, and the hatefulness of it. He so withdrew all comfort from me and all witness of acceptance, that I had a foretaste of what it would be to be separated from Him forever. In addition, Satan buffeted, ridiculed, taunted, and tempted me almost beyond endurance.⁴⁷

When the situation became virtually unbearable, Morrison sought the advice and counsel of Dr. Lapsley McKee, an elderly, highly respected Presbyterian minister and professor

of theology, then residing in Danville. This pious, scholarly gentleman gave Morrison much comfort with these words:

My young brother, the Lord has not forsaken you, but is leading you into what Mr. Wesley called “Christian Perfection,” the Baptists call it “rest of faith,” the Presbyterians call it the “higher life,” or the “fullness of the Spirit.”⁴⁸

Further, Dr. McKee testified that he had received the same experience when he was a young pastor in Louisville.

Morrison was convicted, among other things, concerning his quick, evil temper, and a disposition to excessive levity. In addition, there was a strong desire to be a mighty preacher. “There was far more selfishness in these desires of mine than I knew of at the time, and I was startled and surprised when all the depth of my heart was laid open to me.”⁴⁹ As Wimberly points out, there is no seeker of full salvation who has a harder death to die than a young preacher with gifts, graces, and a reasonable ambition. “This class of seekers must literally die out to the future— of place and promotions.”⁵⁰

In due time Morrison became fully rooted and grounded in the experience of Entire Sanctification. As a result of the process of sifting and refining, there was burned into the soul of Henry Clay Morrison the biblical truth of a definite, second work of grace. “Once Morrison became established, faces of clay, social and religious preferment, the tongue of criticism and ridicule were unable to move him,” says Wimberly.⁵¹ The needle was never truer to the pole star than he was to this great truth. It was out of the spiritual loins of this man that Asbury Theological Seminary was born with the avowed purpose “to prepare and send forth a well-trained, sanctified, spirit-filled, evangelistic ministry,” and to propagate “a free salvation for all men, and a full salvation from all sin.” In addition, it was this man who at one time saved Asbury College by accepting the presidency when the Board of Trustees was faced with the alternative of closing the College on account of

financial difficulties. He is truly one of the great heroes of the Cross.

Morrison was a zealous proponent of evangelical Christianity, especially during the time of rising tides of liberalism and apostasy. It was the encroachment of these destructive forces of theological compromise and unbelief that prompted the founding of Asbury Theological Seminary. Morrison was the dominant personality on a committee which drew up the Articles of Incorporation which state that all instruction in the Seminary is to “truly recognize the fallen estate of mankind, the necessity of individual regeneration, the witness of the Spirit, the remains of the carnal nature, and entire sanctification as a definite second work of grace subsequent to regeneration.”⁵²

Our Seminary today is inseparable from that epochal, spiritual illumination which came to our founder in 1887. The doctrine of Entire Sanctification is our main distinctive, as well as our power and our glory. Our heritage and our stewardship for this precious biblical truth are very great, and to whom much is given, much will be required (cf. Luke 12:48).

Notes

¹ Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 8.

² Sherwood Eliot Wirt. *The Social Conscience of the Evangelical* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 39.

³ *The United Methodist Recorder*, 1, No. 46 (November 2, 1973), p. 2.

⁴ Harris Franklin Rall, "Sanctification," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), IV, 2682.

⁵ Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 13ff.

⁶ J. Baines Atkinson, *The Beauty of Holiness* (London: The Epworth Press, 1967), p. 16.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44. Quoted from *The Work of Christ*, p. 222.

¹⁰ Cf. George Allen Turner, *The Vision Which Transforms* (Kansas City.: Beacon Hill Press, 1964), Ch. 1, "The Old Testament Witness to Holiness," pp. 13ff.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Ch. 3, "Sin and sanctification in the New Testament," pp. 85ff.

¹² *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, John Telford, ed. (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), V, 223. Hereafter referred to as *Letters*.

¹³ *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, Thomas Jackson, ed. (London: John Mason, 1729), XI, 401. Hereafter referred to as *Works*.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, IV, 414.

¹⁵ *Letters*, V, 229.

¹⁶ *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1972), p. 60.

¹⁷ The Articles of Incorporation, Asbury College, by Laws, Article II, Section 6.

¹⁸ Percival A. Wesche, *Henry Clay Morrison, Crusader Saint* (Published for the Fortieth Anniversary Committee, n.d.), pp. 164-65.

¹⁹ J. Paul Taylor, *Holiness the Finished Foundation* (Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1963), p. 14. This is Article Thirteen in the Articles of Religion of the Free Methodist Church. It was written by Dr. Mavis.

²⁰ H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1941), II, pp. 470-71.

²¹ Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. 119ff.

²² John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (London: The Epworth Press, 1952), pp. 28, 106.

²³ *The Distinctive Emphases of Asbury Theological Seminary* (Published for the Fortieth Anniversary Committee, n.d.), p. 78. Cf. Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. 65ff. Ch. 111, "Sin and Sanctification in the New Testament."

²⁴ *Wesley's Standard Sermons*, Edward H. Sugden, ed. (Nashville: Lamar & Barton, Agents, Publishing House M.E. Church South, n.d.), II, pp. 360ff., 379ff., 442ff. Hereafter referred to as *Sermons*.

²⁵ *The Word and the Doctrine*, Kenneth E. Geiger, comp. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1965), p. 116.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 307f.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 94f.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 97.

²⁹ Wesley, *Works*, XI, 426.

³⁰ Wesley, *Sermons*, II, 460. Sermon L, "The Scripture way of Salvation."

³¹ H. Orton Wiley, "How to Retain Holiness of Heart," *The Flame*, XXVI, 31 (March-April, 1960).

³² *The Word For This Century*, Merrill C. Tenney, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 88. Cf. Ch. 5 "Christ sin the Believer," pp. 87ff.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 89

³⁴ William Hordern, *New Directions in Theology Today*, I, *Introduction* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), pp. 96ff.

³⁵ W. T. Purkiser, *Interpreting Christian Holiness* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1971), p. 6, "Preface."

³⁶ Paul Stromberg Rees, *If God Be For Us!* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1944), pp. 64-5.

³⁷ Wesley, *Letters*, VIII, 190.

³⁸ Wesley, *Works*, VI, 491.

³⁹ *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M.*, Nehemiah Curnock, ed. (London, Robert Culley, n.d.), IV, 536.

⁴⁰ *Flames of Living Fire* (Testimonies to the Experience of Entire Sanctification), Bernie Smith, comp. & ed. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1950), p. 57.

⁴¹ Percival A. Wesche, *The Life, Theology, and Influence of Henry Clay Morrison* (A Thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty for the Doctor of philosophy degree at the University of Oklahoma, 1954). pp. 350-51, published in an abridged edition, Henry Clay Morrison, *Crusader Saint*, n.d., *supra*.

⁴² C. F. Wimberly, *A Biographical Sketch of Henry Clay Morrison, D.D.* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1922), p. 95.

⁴³ Wesche, *op. cit.*, *Theology, and Influence of Henry Clay Morrison*, p. 57.

⁴⁴ Wimberly, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

⁴⁵ Richard S. Taylor, *Preaching Holiness Today* (Kansas City Beacon Hill Press, 1968), p. 16.

⁴⁶ Wimberly, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 98.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁴⁹ Henry Clay Morrison, "My Pentecost" (Booklet), p. 6.

⁵⁰ Wimberly, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁵² The Articles of Incorporation, Asbury Theological Seminary, Article IV, Section D.

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Franklin Morrison at 50th Anniversary Banquet.

In honor of Asbury Theological Seminary's 90th anniversary, First Fruits Press has released several historic works published by the seminary in the past.

For its 40th anniversary in 1963, President Frank Stanger had three books published to celebrate the special event. These included a biography of Asbury Theological Seminary founder Henry Clay Morrison by Percival A. Wesche, a brief history of Asbury Theological Seminary by Howard Fenimore Shippo, and a volume of chapters on special theological emphases written by various faculty members. All three of these out-of-print works will now be released again as part of this special 90th anniversary set.

On the 50th anniversary of Asbury Theological Seminary in 1973, President Stanger celebrated with a series of special lectures and scholarly papers to be given throughout the academic year of 1973-1974. Key faculty were assigned important theological topics and orally presented these papers in Estes Chapel. They have never been published until now in this special 90th anniversary set.

First Fruits Press is delighted to bring the voices of some of Asbury Theological Seminary's past to a new audience as we celebrate 90 years of serving God and spreading scriptural holiness throughout the world!



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