

(Salvation) 11. Leaves no cloak for sin

~Other Speakers S-Z: D.S. Warner:

By nearly all sin serving professors it is admitted that the Bible requires us to be pure and holy, and to live free from sin. But most of them claim that we can not in this life meet those requirements. That the commands, "be ye holy," "be ye perfect," etc., are simply set before us as the standard toward which we should ever approach, but can not, while living in this world, hope to attain. For instance, before us is a letter from a man who subscribes his name, Stixtus, [49] from Brookville, Pa., in which the sectish Dunkard seeks to cloak over his sins. He speaks against what he calls our "ridiculous attempts to bolster up that old and long since exploded doctrine of perfect sanctification in this life." On the next page appear these words: "All admit that perfect sanctification ought to be, and in feet is the aim of every child of God in every stage of his progress here on earth. It is also certainly true that God requires all capable and responsible men everywhere to be holy as he is holy and perfect as he is perfect. No one denies this, or in feet ever did deny it. The real question is simply this: Are true believers all they ought to be? Are they as holy, as perfect, as sinless, as they ought to be, and as God requires them to be? The true church universal answers emphatically in the negative. The reply of your dupes is an emphatic yes. Thus you, in effect, say, we are as holy, as perfect, as sinless, and immaculate as we ought to be, or in feet can be. From this it follows that those who claim, to be perfectly sanctified in this life will not be, and do not expect to be any more holy, sinless, or spotless, when singing the song of redeeming love in heaven, than they are here on earth.

"The apostle says, speaking of true believers after death, 'We shall be like him [Christ], for we shall see him as he is.' But those who believe in perfect sanctification in this life, as represented by you, believe themselves now to be as pure, as holy, and as sinless, as the Lord Jesus Christ. Permit me to say that such a belief is simply disgusting to any one who realizes that the human heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. It is worse than disgusting, it is blasphemy."

"Let us notice some of the leading passages of scripture you rely on to give authority to your belief. 'Be ye holy for I am holy.' 'Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect.' These commandments you seem to think prove that the true believer is holy in this life. This simply proves your lamentable ignorance of the scriptures. These commandments declare what the true believer ought to be and must be, not what he really is, your arrogant gabble to the contrary notwithstanding."

How does this last sentence sound from a man who accuses us with being "scurrilous to the extreme in most, if not all, our articles" ? Nay, Mr. Stixtus, we have no time nor inclination to condescend to such words. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God." We have no need of anything stronger than the truth, nor sharper than the word of God.

This disputer of the power of God to fulfill in us his Word, and make us what we ought to be, is a fair sample of Babylon confusion in general. He calls the doctrine of "perfect sanctification in this life," "old and long since exploded." And yet admits that it is just what God requires of all men everywhere. So the man seems to think that the requirement of God is long since exploded, i. e., proved a fallacy. But, says he, "The real question is simply this: Are true believers all they ought to be? Are they as holy, as perfect as sinless as they ought to be, as God requires them to be?" That is always the way with hirelings. "The real question" with them is not what God requires, and what men "ought to be;" but what they are, and what will please them. He would have us drop the standard of the divine requirement, because the masses of sectism are far below it. How forcibly the words of the apostle apply here. "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ."—Gal. 1:10. There is a variance between God and the people. He requires them to be holy, perfect and spotless in his sight. But they are far from this. So if they become one with God, he will have to come to them, or they to him. He must either recall his commandments, or the people measure to them. What shall we, as God's ambassadors, do in the ease ? "Do we persuade men or God?" Persuade him to modify his Word, or the people to change their ways? "Or do I seek to please men?" God forbid; "for if I yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

This man pleasing and God dishonoring policy is all foretold in prophecy. "Which say to the seers, see not, and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things; prophesy deceits."—Isa. 30: 10.

"Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?"—Jer. 5:29 31.

The position taken by crooked Stixtus is virtually this: "God requires all capable and responsible men everywhere to be holy as he is holy, " etc. But all men everywhereâ€”down in Babylon where he livesâ€”are unholy and imperfect. Therefore, what God requires is " old and exploded. " Well, if we accept the standard of Babylon, God's word is exploded and fallen; but, on the other hand, if we accept the Bible standard, behold, Babylon is exploded and fallen. Which is true? "A voice from heaven" answers, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit."â€” Rev. 18:2.

But we might apply the above logic with equal propriety to repentance and a hundred other demands of God that the people come short of. It is certainly true that God requires all capable and responsible men everywhere to repent of their sins. But the real question is simply this: Have the world of sinners and professors repented as they should? By no means.

Therefore the doctrine of genuine repentance in this life is an "old and long since exploded" thing. And all who teach it are "lamentably ignorant," and all who believe their teaching, "dupes." The reasoning is the same; and if it has any weight against perfect sanctification, it weighs equally against repentance and justification. But of course it is ridiculous falsehood, blind confusion.

According to this strange Stixtus, a "true believer" is one that does not believe the truth, is "not what he ought to be, nor what God requires him to be." But a man that really believes the word of God, and lives and testifies accordingly is pronounced "lamentably ignorant," "disgusting," "blasphemer. "

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"â€”Isaiah 5:20, 21.

After quoting, "Be ye holy for I am holy," "Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is Perfect." "Darkness for light" says: "These commandments you seem to think prove that the true believer is holy in this life. This simply proves your lamentable ignorance of the scriptures. These commandments declare what the true believer ought to be and must be, not what he really is."

We confess that we are very ignorant indeed of all scriptures which teach that a true believer is yet an unholy man. That he is not what he "ought to be," nor what he "must be." Our knowledge of the Bible is so limited that we have not learned how a man can serve two masters; can be a Christian and a sinner at the same time. We have never yet learned in that sacred volume that a "good tree can bring forth evil fruit, nor an evil tree good fruit." Nor have we attained that modern wisdom which maintains that a true believer is one who does not believe the word of God, and he that does believe and teach the same is a blasphemer

Our friend Stixtus is greatly shocked by the testimony of God's children that the blood of Christ has made us "as holy, as perfect, as sinless as we ought to be." Will he please prove by the Word that it is consistent, and to the glory of God to be anything else? Remember that all we contend for in the provisions of divine grace he admits we ought to be, and must be, and God requires it of us. There is no question of this. But the real question with him is, "Are we all we ought to be?" A very questionable thing in Babylon. But this has nothing to do with the word of God, nor yet with those who have come out of her and are complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power." God pity the dwellers in the dark city of confusion. Like the disciples of Christ who became offended at the words of Christ. The very thing they admit God requires of all his children they pronounce a "hard saying." "Thus you in effect say, we are as holy, as perfect, as sinless, as we ought to be, or in feet can be," and "do not expect to be any more holy, sinless, or spotless, when singing the song of redeeming love in heaven than you are on earth." To all of which we answer, Why not? Read the preceding chapters, and answer before the Almighty, Where is there a cloak to cover your sins? What man is fool enough to think he can stand before the judgment bar of God and say, "Lord, we knew you required all capable and responsible men everywhere to be holy as you are holy, and perfect as you are perfect. No one denies this' but we confess we are not as holy, as perfect, as sinless as we ought to be, and as God requires us to be. But this is our plea: We could not be what you demanded of us." Will you thus stand before the bar of God and make him a liar who says, "My grace is sufficient for thee"? And in a thousand other promises which leave absolutely nothing wanting to perfect in holiness and preserve blameless in soul and body, in heart and life, all who are willing and obedient ? Will you say to the Judge, "Our preachers told us we could not be pure and perfect while living in the flesh"? Then shall the Judge say, "I never sent them."â€”Jer. 23:21, 22. "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God. "â€”John 3: 34. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. "â€”Jer. 17:5.

Again we ask, Why not be pure and holy and sinless in this life? Was not Christ "manifest to take away our sin,

and in him is no sin"? Is it not true that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin? Are we not "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time?" Is not the power of God sufficient to do all this for us?

Thus answers Stixtus: "The apostle says, speaking of true believers after death, 'We shall be like him [Christ], for we shall see him as he is.' " This is a perversion of the word of God, a quiet, soothing deception of the devil. The reference is to 1 John 3:2, 3.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1 John 3:2, 3.

While this includes saints of God whose bodies have fallen asleep, it does not refer to a condition that was produced by death, nor is it confined to the departed; but equally refers to the faithful who will be living at the instant of Christ's coming. "We shall see him as he is," in the morning of his glorious coming, and shall be found like him. We know there will a change take place then which will fashion our mortal bodies like unto his glorious body. That will be the resurrection. But that change is not alluded to in the above words. Else would the apostle have said, "When he comes we shall be made like him." But he refers to the moral condition into which the grace of God has transformed us. The "image" of our Creator (Col. 3:10), which is perfect holiness. This is positively proved in the next verse. "We shall be like him for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he [Christ], is pure." 1 John 3: 2, 3. Whosoever expects to be like Christ, must attain that condition before his coming; must purify himself even as Christ is pure. Then, of course, he will be like him when he appears. The third verse explains the second. To be like Christ is to be sanctified wholly, "pure in heart;" for such the Savior said shall see him. The same state is again referred to in chapter 4, verse 17. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is so are we in this world."

This does not defer the likeness of Christ in our soul until the next world. It does not speak of a state after death. But our love being made perfect we are already like him. This state is not produced by death, but love made perfect is the result of heart purity. A heart so perfectly cleansed by the blood of Christ, that nothing remains but the love of God, shed abroad by the Holy Spirit. Perfect purity and perfect love are co relative, and inclusive of each other.

So the only text cited to prove that we will not be like Christ until after death, with its context proves that we are like him in this life. "As he is so are we in this world." Reader, are you now, in this world, like Christ in moral purity, as he sits at the right hand of the throne of God? If not, your hope to stand in the day of judgment will prove a fatal delusion.

Observe that the opposer of Bible sanctification in this life, freely admits that we ought to be holy and sinless in this life. Even said we "must be." Now these terms very positively enjoin moral obligation. If we ought to be holy, we are morally bound to be such. No doubt in other things he has told people that they could not enter heaven if they leave undone commands of Christ they ought to do. How, then, can he expect to stand in the day of judgment, if not what he ought to be in perfect holiness, and what God requires him to be? If a person can set aside God's law and solemn command, "Be ye holy," what part of the Bible is binding? Be not deceived, the word of God is forever settled in heaven, and will judge us in the last day. Then "be ye holy" will speak in thunder tones to all the unholy; will strike terror to their souls, and drive them back from the presence of God and the glory of his power. If not pure as Christ in this life, some sin remains in you. Death will not remove sin. Therefore if you, die in that condition, the judgment day will find you the same, and drive you from the presence of God.

But here is the key to Mr. Stixtus' unbelief: "Permit me to say that such a belief, i. e., that of being pure, holy, and sinless as Christ in this life, such a belief is simply disgusting to any one who realizes that the human heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. " Alas ! here it all comes out what kind of a heart is back of this wretched unbelief in perfect sanctification.. "Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." Titus 1:15 No wonder the man is so extremely disgusted with the idea of a heart purity in this life; for "it is abomination to fools to depart from evil. " Prov. 13: 19.

Now we do not call in question the statement of the prophet that "the human heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. " But who is so blind as not to see that this refers to the human heart in its natural depraved state? Surely Jesus had reference to a very different heart in the beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in

heart; for they shall see God." The application of the description given by Jeremiah to Christians, and all indiscriminately' sadly betrays ignorance of the work of heart cleansing in the blood of Christ. Yea, his words clearly imply that such is his own heart. Surely great darkness reigns in Babylon, else her teachers would know better than to use the deceitful and wicked hearts of sinners as a standard for Christians, and hope thereby to cloak over their sins. Surely if Hezekiah had been in possession of a heart that was "desperately wicked," he could not have testified in the face of God that he had "walked before him in truth, and with a perfect heart." If such were the case of Christian hearts, we would like to know what Christ has done for us? What virtue is there in his blood? What benefit in his salvation? Then what did Paul mean when he wrote Timothy to "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." "2 Tim. 2:22. Oh when will men cease to drag the word of God and their obligations down on a level with their deceitful hearts and unholy lives, rather than measure their responsibilities by the word of God, and then appropriate his almighty grace to lift them up to its holy standard? One minute's reflection with common sense upon the theme must lead every candid mind to the conclusion that, since salvation is of God, and is no more limited than the Infinite himself, no person needs to fall short of what he ought to be, what he must be, and what God requires him to be. Who dare for a moment deny that the Almighty is able to remove all sin out of our entire being, restore our soul to the same holy image in which he created man; "bruise Satan under our feet, " and give us power over all the power of the adversary; "make a way of escape in every temptation, " and preserve us "holy and unblamable and unreprouvable" in his sight; living free from sin every moment and second of our lives? The omnipotence and omnipresence [61] of God stop every mouth! "Where is the disputer of this world" that will question His ability to do these things for us?

Then one of two things must inevitably follow. Either we can "live holy, and righteous, and godly in this present world," or else God can, but will not, keep us. If he will not do so, then it is evident he does not want us to live pure and holy; in other words he allows sin in us and justifies us in sin. Which would prove that he himself has pleasure in unrighteousness. And that would prove him unholy.

Again, let it be remembered that to make and keep us perfect, pure and spotless, is just what he has pledged himself to do in all his "exceeding great and precious promises." If he will not do so, his word fails, and his character is divested of truthfulness; which would again strip him of holiness.

Then it follows that to doubt God's ability to make and keep us perfect in holiness, denies his infinity. And to question his willingness, is to deny his holiness. Therefore, any attempt to apologize for sin in any form and to any extent, robs God of his attributes, and reduces him to no God. Here then is the conclusion of the whole matter: The Christian is no sinner, or God is no God. Therefore, thus saith the Lord, "If I had not come and spoken unto them' they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sins." "John 15: 22 In the margin it is "No excuse for sin." If, therefore, any man on earth who has heard the gospel of God, supposes he has an excuse for sin and uncleanness, for not being what he "ought to be, and must be, and what God requires him to be," he is deceived of the adversary of his soul; and will hear at the bar of God, these awful words: "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity, for I never acknowledged you." Oh what multiplied thousands Satan has in this very trap ! The words of Jesus are truly being fulfilled: "Many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many." They, "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." "2 Tim. 3:5. Reader, for your soul's sake, get saved in Jesus from all sin, and live holy and unblamable before God. For if you are not what you ought to be now, you will be weighed in the balance and found wanting in the day of judgment.