

Hebrews 12:25-29

by D.S. Warner

D.S. Warner's sermon on Hebrews 12:25-29 emphasizes the call to holiness and the purging of the church through God's judgment and sanctification.

Scripture: Matthew 3:12, Luke 3:17, John 17:6, John 17:20, Acts 2:42, Acts 20:28, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 1 Corinthians 1:10, 1 Timothy 3:15

Topics: "Church Unity", "Sanctification"

Description

D.S. Warner preaches about the importance of thorough sanctification and the need to remove denominational divisions within the church. He emphasizes that true holiness destroys denominations and that personal consecration and faith are essential to purging the sin of division. Warner urges individuals to reject sectarianism, adhere only to the one church founded by Christ, and seek visible unity as prayed for by Jesus. He warns against the evils of party spirit, rivalry, and contention caused by denominationalism, stressing that the church must return to its original unity to exhibit God's love and truth to the world.

Transcript

On the 30th of August 1879, the Holy Spirit in a special manner gave me the foregoing scripture. I had never clearly comprehended its meaning and I felt impressed that the Lord was about to lead me into a new vein of truth. I shut myself up with God and the Bible, when "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost,"* took most of the things that are contained in what follows and showed them to me. Being fully assured that my mind had been led into the pure light of truth, we published it from the pulpit, much to the edification of the holy brethren. We feel confident that the following chain of Scriptures, correlative with our text, will conduct every meek and candid reader into the same light it has your humble servant. We shall find the foregoing words of the inspired apostle a key to the prophetic description of the great work of holiness....

Let us examine the same declaration elsewhere in the Holy Book. "According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts."* The rebuilding of the temple is the subject under consideration. This ancient abode of the great Shekinah was such a marked figure of the church of God that it is seldom spoken of by the holy seers but what the spirit of prophecy flashes forth in interspersed references to the

"spiritual house." Says the prophet, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."* Is it not in the midst of His church where God speaks peace to thousands who seek His face? Let us also thank God for the gracious intimation that the glory of the restored, latter-day church shall exceed that which preceded the dark-age captivity.

It is quite evident that the words in verses 5-7 were in the mind of the apostle when he wrote the words of our text. And we find here additional evidence that the "once more shaking" relates to the triumphs of the gospel, because it is associated with the coming of Christ, not as Judge, but the "desire [or Savior] of all nations."

God never designed that we should

"Roam through weary years

Of inbred sin and doubts and fears,

A bleak and toilsome wilderness."

If you have not passed through the Jordan, the death convulsions of the "old man" of sin, to the Canaan rest, it is because you have either ignorantly or willfully "refused him that speaketh,"* and "entered not in because of unbelief."*...

"I will fill this house with glory." Here is the glory that Christ gives: "The Spirit of glory and of God,"* that fills and rests upon the church when inbred sin and all weights are shaken out. What is here associated with the "once more" shaking corresponds with entire sanctification.

The prophet Ezekiel gives us a very interesting chain of concurring prophecy. Who with his spiritual eyes open can fail to see the application of the 34th chapter of Ezekiel to the ministry, in general, of this age? They "[eat] up the good pasture"*--fare sumptuously on fat salaries. "Ye... tread down... the residue of your pastures"* and "foul the [waters] with your feet."* They are the real cause of spiritual famine instead of the means of refreshing the flock. "Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool."* Make a lucrative merchandise of your Christless sermons, instead of administering the free gospel of salvation. "Ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock."* When any find their way to the true Shepherd and receive food, life, and holy fire in their souls, they annoy the dead and sleeping, who proceed at once to kill them. This is no idle fancy. It is an undeniable fact that in most of our present-day churches a real convert can scarcely maintain spiritual life. The few that are not killed are usually driven or thrown out. O ye shepherds, a crisis from the Almighty is coming upon you. As the Lord liveth, the fires from heaven shall sweep away your craft. "Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished."* Their time of feasting upon and dispersing the Lord's flock will come to an end.

"I will deliver my flock from their mouth,"* and "they shall no more be a prey."* "I will seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places [sectarian divisions] where they have been scattered [into several hundred parties] in the cloudy and dark day."* We talk of the dark age as in the past; but the seer of God declares that we are yet under its lingering fogs, and shall be until holy fire from heaven shall sweep away every partition-wall, human creed, and party name, and purge out that infamous god, the sectarian spirit; the vile "image of jealousy"* which sits in all the thresholds of Babylon.

"And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them."* Yea, "I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be."* "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David [Christ--David was already dead four hundred years]; he shall feed them, and shall be their shepherd."*

The perfect reign of the Messiah, and His love in the soul, is to succeed the dark day of party confusion. The two are not compatible with each other. "And I will make with them a covenant of peace."* Their own land, and this covenant-union with God, is simply entire sanctification. See Jeremiah 23....

In Ezekiel 35 we have the judgment of mount Seir. Seir--rough, shaggy--we presume is used [in the typical sense] to denote the Catholic power.

It was inhabited by the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, who were therefore brothers with Israel, the descendants of Jacob; but the Edomites had a deep-rooted and perpetual enmity against Israel, they harassed and distressed them by all possible means. (See Adam Clarke.) "Behold, O mount Seir, I am against thee, and I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate.... Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end."* Does not this look like the record of the "beast that sits upon the seven hills"? Martyrdom, it appears, is confined to such times when God's people have reached an "end of sin."

As the spirit of prophecy uses mount Seir to represent Catholicism in chapter 35, and the Caucasian mountains [Gog and Magog, see Bible dictionary] to represent sectism in chapters 38 and 39, so in chapter 36:1 the "mountains of Israel" are used to represent the true conscientious Christians. The Lord says, "Set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog... and prophesy against him"*; but in reference to the mountains of Israel, the order is changed to "prophesy unto," showing that the former were rejected, but the latter accepted of the Lord; to these very precious promises are made. In the latter part of the chapter we have associated together salvation "from all... uncleannesses,"* the gift of the Holy Spirit, and "[bringing] into the land,"* i.e., the land of perfect holiness.

The spirit of prophecy now takes up another figure to set forth the holiness crisis, and the glorious effect in those that "abide the day"* of the Refiner's coming. "Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel, his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: and join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand."*

Who does not know that this never was really fulfilled in the alienated sects of Jacob's literal seed? While it may apply to the formation of the church in the beginning of the reign of Christ, it was specially designed to typify the return of the church to God and the mount of holy union after the "falling away"* or "cloudy and dark day."* The figure does not properly suggest the formation of a new church state, hut the gathering again of a divided and starved-out church under the pastorate of corrupt and self-aggrandizing shepherds. "I... will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land... I will save them out of all their

dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them, so shall they be my people and I will be their God. And David [Christ, 'the root and offspring of David']* my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd."* Nothing but entire sanctification can unite the saints under the direct control and headship of Christ, through the Comforter.

"And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers [in the day of the church's purity] have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children forever: and my servant David shall be their prince [even Christ, for him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Savior] forever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them.... And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forevermore."* Here is the solution of the whole matter. The reception of the Spirit, uniting into one, placing in the land, cleansing, and the "covenant of peace" under the glorious reign of the "Prince of peace,"* is all summed up and consummated in the sanctification of the church through the indwelling of the Holy Trinity.

Instead of exterminating the idols and "Canaanite[s] in the house of the Lord of hosts,"* the "shepherds of Israel"* have catered to their unholy lusts. They have so long submitted to the world in the church, so long fawned and pampered sin under the cloak of religion, that a terrible conflict ensues whenever it is attacked by the sword of the Spirit. This crisis is described in the two following chapters, namely, Ezekiel 38 and 39.

"Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog."* The Bible dictionary applies Gog and Magog to the Caucasian mountains, a chain that extends from the Black Sea to the Caspian. The Scythians of those regions were a fierce and warlike people. For many years they had made their name a terror to the whole Eastern world. They were finally conquered and driven out, B.C. 596, a few years before the time of Ezekiel's prophesy. These events being fresh in the mind of the ancient seer, the prophetic spirit employs Gog and Magog to represent the acrid and intolerable spirit of sectarianism and its final overthrow.

Meshech and Tubal, allies of Gog, are noticed in history as "the remotest and rudest nations of the world." David, it is probable, spoke prophetically of the same contentious, unsanctified zeal: "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech.... My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war."*

In applying the army of Gog and Magog to the false, deceived, and sectarian forces, the enemies of the Lord's true and holy church, I am clearly sustained in Revelation 20:8-10, where they are declared to have been deceived by the devil, therefore have a spurious religion-are professors. "They compass the saints on the breadth of the earth"--hence are diffused throughout all nations and everywhere arrayed against the holy--but shall be finally destroyed by fire from heaven. This vast army Ezekiel represents as "[coming from their] place out of the north parts,"* indicative of a cold and heartless religion. The attack upon the "land" by Gog, shall be in the "latter years," "the latter days."* This language all through the prophets points to the last, or present, dispensation.

"In the latter years thou shalt come into the land [the sanctified] that is brought back from the sword [saved from the carnal, sectarian 'strife of tongues']*], and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste"*; i.e., more or less destitute of the apostolic faith and power.

God sets the testimony of his anointed against the worldly churches. Gog in return makes war upon them. But being dead to sin, and having a resurrected life, they are an invulnerable army. "They shall dwell safely all of them."*

"And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken. Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel."* When the sword of the Almighty is unsheathed against self-righteous orthodox sinners, there is soon war in the camp, and a general commotion in the heavens and the earth. The two-edged sword of definite testimony is now wielded in every church, which has never been the case in any of the past holiness reforms. Amen! Let the battle rage, though the heavens and the earth be moved. Send down the fire, O Lord, send fire from heaven, and burn every Gog-schism out of the church! Yea, saith the Lord, "I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the Lord."*

The burning of the weapons and burying of Gog is described as the cleansing of the land--the church. Therefore it is the special work of sanctification, and the heavens and the earth are now shaken by the tread of God's holy army, who are "[severed out to] continual employment, passing through the land... to cleanse it."*

Let us now begin with 1 Peter 4:17-18. "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Here is a trying ordeal, a judgmental shaking of the church parallel with that described in Hebrews. It is the execution of Christ's verdict of death to sin in the flesh. "The time is come." Scriptures thus introduced almost invariably refer to some previous prediction. In the prophecies of Isaiah we find what is doubtless the antecedent of Peter's words: "I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin... afterwards thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness."*

The judgment of Zion, the house of God, is her full redemption. It is the hand of the Almighty "purely purging away the dross and all the tin" from His church, that it might be called "The city of righteousness." This experience is not for the sinner, nor is it confined to the aged and dying; but the "converts" in Zion, saith the Lord, shall be redeemed from sin, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning. This purging is parallel with the removing of those things that are shaken.

"In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious [i.e., 'sanctified and cleansed, a glorious church*'], and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel [have 'escaped the corruption that is in the world*']. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning."* This explains the words of Peter very clearly; the judgment of the house of God is a divine washing and purging. The church, having passed through the spirit of judgment and of burning, all that are left therein "shall be called holy." Therefore, we understand the words of Peter as having reference to the sin-consuming flames of the Sanctifier, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which corresponds with the shaking of the church, of which Paul speaks in Hebrews; for he concludes by saying, "Our God is a consuming fire."*

If ever there was a time when Peter's words were pertinent, it is now. The hand of the Almighty is upon His church, and He will smite and humble it with His judgments; shake it with His voice from heaven, and consume it with the flames of His Spirit until every foul spirit is driven out and all the "works of the devil"* destroyed; that nothing may remain but the pure, unalloyed elements of the divine kingdom, "which cannot be shaken."* No wonder the churches so often fear and dread the coming of God's holy bands; yea, "a fire devoureth before them,"* which quite frequently closes all meeting houses and every other place where the sects can defeat their access. It is because they know that they are but a collection of ecclesiastical stubble, which cannot abide the fire which accompanies the Lord's army of definite witnesses. Here we also see that the charge that insisting upon the definite experience of entire sanctification destroys the churches is true only so far as they are composed of "wood, hay, and stubble."* Fire never destroys gold and silver....

In Joel we have the declaration: "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem [the holy church]; and the heavens and the earth shall shake."* A church that has no voice to shake sinners and professors, no voice that "[turns] the world upside down,"* that makes not the wicked flee, the devil howl, and persecution rage--that church may have "gods many,"* but has not the true God dwelling in her; for, following the foregoing the prophet says: "So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more."* The Lord wants His church so holy that no stranger to God will pass through her, much less dwell and carry on business in her.

Let us now trace the heaven- and earth-shaking hosts of the Almighty in the prophet Isaiah. "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee."* Here is the power that does the shaking. A church that has the great and Holy One in her midst always produces a commotion in the world.

But who are required to do these things? Thus saith the Lord, "I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness."* The sanctified soul rejoices only in the exaltation and glory of God; there is no principle left in the heart that seeks self-aggrandizement. They even glory in being abased, if God is thereby honored. Glory to His name!

Now observe the effect of lifting high the banner of holiness: "The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of Hosts mustereth the host of the battle."* A commotion soon follows the definite testimony and "lifting up of holy hands in the sanctuary" (Psalm 134:2) of the Lord: an army springs into existence; God Himself mustereth the host. Hallelujah!

"Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt.... Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it."* This conflagration from the Almighty sweeps, with a besom of destruction, all sinners from the land--out of the church. If, therefore, the holiness movement lays waste some churches in its course, it is simply because they are composed, in general, of sinners. This fact also proves that it is the very crisis we are here tracing in the Bible. It does not destroy true Christians nor spiritual churches; but, saith the Lord, "I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible."*

Separation of the Wheat and Chaff

The great war for the extermination of sin out of the heart, or sinners out of the church is destined to sweep over all the nations of the earth. "The isles saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came."* Thus saith the Lord: "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."* When sin and self are all destroyed there is barely enough left of Jacob to constitute a small worm. But by thus reducing her to "naught," God has prepared the church to exhibit His power in shaking the heavens and the earth and bringing "to nought the things that are"*--the great things of the world.

"Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing-instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel."* The characteristic of God's church here portrayed is nearly lost sight of at present. People think it is the business of the church to stand like a beggar at the door of the devil's kingdom and politely coax his subjects over; saying much about the duty and advantage of belonging to church and little about their sin and the duty of repentance, as though God were dependent, and the devil proprietor of the universe. Satan, having thus stolen the spikes out of the church--her power of execution--has distinguished himself in helping to run the empty machinery. But he that sitteth in the heavens will arise and bring to naught Satan's devices.

"The time is seen coming, by the prophets foretold,

When Zion in purity the world shall behold;

When Jesus' pure testimony will gain the day--

Denomination selfishness vanish away."

Already the Lord has begun to make Jacob new again; a sharp instrument, reset with the spikes of its primitive power, the "weapons of his indignation."*

A church or ministry that is destitute of these teeth will hurt no flesh, awake no persecution, thresh out no wheat, please the devil, and give no glory to God. But spikes are not the only essential to a first-class thresher. Anciently grain was threshed with flails or trodden out by cattle and horses. Then a great improvement was secured by the invention of what is called the "old open machine." But, oh, the heaps of chaff that piled up, and filled the entire floor! Then came the dreadful task of cleaning up--of separating and removing the worthless heap.

Such have been the crafty open machines that have for years imposed heaps of trash upon the Lord's threshing floor. They have not taken "forth the precious from the vile."* "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean."* "Ye have wearied the Lord with your words... when ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them."* Is not this perfectly fulfilled at present by preachers who invite sinners into their folds without requiring a particle of saving grace, and who even flatter them that they are already pretty good and need but to come and join the church?

And how many of their poor, deluded victims remain in the church for years and never hear the gospel preached straight enough to convict them of their unregenerated hearts! The policy of these teachers has

been to "gather of all kinds," but the next thing in order--to separate and "cast the bad away"--has been wholly omitted. But as the Lord liveth, He is going to clear away this ecclesiastical rubbish. "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."* Who would accept as a gift a few bushels of wheat scattered through a great heap of chaff and dirt?

And think you that God will accept the church in her present condition? No, indeed; the gold must first be separated from the dross. The bride must dissolve her unholy friendship with the world, in which she is guilty of spiritual adultery in the sight of God (James 4:4). She must put away all her rival gods, and adorn herself in robes of spotless white, before prepared as a bride for her husband. The Bible most assuredly teaches that God will separate the chaff from the wheat before He comes to garner home His church.

To accomplish this He is converting Jacob from an open machine to a separator.... When the "rushing mighty wind"* from heaven strikes the gathered heaps of stubble and chaff and begins to "scatter them,"* people think the church is being ruined; but this fan is in the hand of the Lord Jesus, and it will not carry a grain of wheat off His floor, and why fret about that which is not meet for the Master's use? "What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord."* Let the wind from heaven drive it, and the fire consume it, "and thou [even in this scatterment] shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel."* In Micah 4:1-2, we have the mountain of the house of the Lord (the church) established, and the law going "forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

In the 10th verse we have recorded the captivity, or "falling away" of the church--"Thou shalt go even to Babylon." And, in order to restore her purity, the Lord commands the following severe measures in verse thirteen: "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth."*

Threshing and separating, purging and consuming is the order of God, in the day of the Refiner. Many think we must so temper the gospel as to preserve peace in the church, notwithstanding her sin and idols. But, "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth [peace with sin]? I tell you, Nay; but rather division."* So answers the Lord. His "fan is in his hand,"* and he would rather blow the church to atoms and secure a little clean wheat by itself than see it prosper in peace and multitudes and under mortgage to Satan, and bearing his brand mark, i.e., spots of sin. For this purpose, says Jesus, "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straightened till it be accomplished!"* Jesus intimates that the work of refining the church with the Holy Ghost fire could not begin until He Himself had passed through the ordeal of suffering and death.

"For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many."* Here is the fire, sword, and division that Christ came to send on earth. Its shaking and purifying power was first manifest on the day of Pentecost. This light makes Israel see her condition and cry out, "My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me!"* "Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even, the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea."* "When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as a shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleanings of grapes when the vintage is done."* "And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit."* There is no escape from the sweeping fire of holiness but into the pit of sin; and all that cannot "abide... his coming"* are "like chaff which the wind driveth away."*

But nowhere in the Bible is the line more clearly drawn between the wheat and the chaff, the gold and the dross, than in our keynote text to this entire subject. What shall remain after the "once more"* shaking? Nothing but the divine elements of the "kingdom which cannot be moved,"* and which Paul represents as "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."* These only remain in the heart that has passed through the crisis. Hallelujah! But what is thereby removed? Answer: all "things that are shaken" and that "are made."* By the first class we understand everything that flinches and shakes before the searching light and sin-exterminating gospel of Christ; every vein of our nature, every motion of "flesh and spirit,"* every temper of the mind and habit in life that does not perfectly harmonize with the "righteousness of God revealed"* in the Bible, will naturally shake beneath the voice of the Holy One, and must, therefore, be removed. The second class--all "things that are made"--denotes every thing that is not original: every phase of our moral being that is not implanted by the hand of God. Or, in other words, everything adhering to us that was produced by Satan, sin, or the perversion of our moral being. As the Lord says, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."* This includes inbred sin. We have all along assumed the existence of this besetting foe. Yet we are aware that a very few deny the fact. But we think David settles this matter in Psalm 51, where he declares that, as fallen creatures, our very being is "conceived" and "shapen" in the mold of sin and iniquity. Paul also avers that we are "by nature the children of wrath"*; and that we are "cut out of the olive tree [Adamic root] which is wild by nature."*

But why multiply texts? Observation must necessarily teach everybody that children are possessed with a perverse nature long before the knowledge of right and wrong is developed. Justified Christians almost uniformly confess this same inward trouble. The remaining question is, can we get rid of it in this life? To decide this, we have but to ascertain whether it is original, or the result of the fall. That it formed no part of the likeness of God in the soul is very certain. It is therefore the "works of the devil," and just what Christ "came to destroy."* It shakes, flashes out and roils up when pierced by the sword of the Lord, and must, therefore, be removed from the soul.

But the words of Paul apply to the church, as well as to the individual. It is designed to assay and remove the dross of the whole body of Christ. Before the great holiness reform had shed its benign influence upon the Christian world, and to some extent raised the church out of the narrow rut of churchism into a deeper and broader loyalty to God and unselfish love for humanity, the idea of getting saved from "your church" would have been regarded as blasphemy. But, thanks to the Lord! a purer light and higher standard of truth now compel the trumpeters of God all along the line of holiness to insist on salvation from all "our churches." But it may be asked, "What is it that we must be saved from in 'our churches'?" Surely there must be some way to discriminate between that which is pernicious and that which is of God. Now, I know of no corner from which to run off this line but the one that Paul points out: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid,"* and, "This word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made."* God has founded one body--one church, fold, or kingdom. In it He has placed every element that is essential to its work, its prosperity, and its perpetuity. His wisdom has adapted it to all ages of time and conditions of men. Its faith was delivered to the saints once for all. Its principles and precepts are the last testament, the final and immutable will of the eternal God. This divine organization is invested with such absolute symmetry and perfection that to attempt the slightest modification of its divine unity or polity is wicked presumption in the sight of its divine Founder, and incurs the curses and forfeits all the blessings of God's Holy Book. Now, since the work of entire sanctification is designed to elevate the church to her normal and perfect condition in the sight of God, it must shake out and purge away every existing element that was not originally implanted by the hand of the Lord. This test, I think, is one in which all true Christians agree. Indeed, if we were to untie from this moorage we should

soon be driven to sea without compass or chart we should virtually open the door for every tradition of Rome and invention of error.

Starting, then, from this corner-stone of divine truth, established at Jerusalem nearly nineteen hundred years ago, and with the Bible as our compass and field notes, let us run off a line.

1. Between the true and false spirits in the church--let us "try the spirits whether they are of God."* "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."* But the party spirit, so prevalent in the churches, is not of Christ, hence must be removed, purged out of the heart. A zeal that springs from anything but pure, unmixed love for God and humanity, a spirit that would even promote holiness, or the conversion of sinners, partly to build up "our church," is badly mixed, is soon shaken and cannot survive the Refiner's fire. It is only when the "eye is single" that the "whole body is full of light"*--wholly sanctified.

A spirit which, out of deference to its own creed, willfully disobeys the divine word, is not of God, and cannot coexist with a pure heart. All these secondary motives, these mixed and unclean spirits, "shake" at the voice of the "mighty God," and are "removed" in the thorough work of entire sanctification.

2. The next thing I am compelled in the fear of God to speak of, as included in the catalog of the devil's shaky works, the foul grime and chaff of error, is the evil of sectarianism. This is the most destructive bane that God has ever suffered the devil to sow in His kingdom. It is the very mildew of hell, that spreads its blasting curse over nearly all the precious fruit of the Lord's vineyard. Here the words of Paul are an all-sweeping besom (Isaiah 14:23).

Oft the enlightened Christian's conscience inquires whether it is right for the church to be divided thus into a plurality of sects or denominations, with their respective human creeds and party names. In the light of truth we are compelled to answer, No. And for the simple reason that these parties are not of divine origin. Christ is the source of all true union among His disciples, and all divisions between them and the world; while the devil is the instigation of divisions in the church, and of all union between it and the world.

I quote the following from an editorial in the Christian Harvester.

"God has a church on earth. It is one and indivisible. It is made up of all and singular who are born of the Spirit.

"Individual (local) churches, or congregations, are as Scriptural as they are necessary.

"There is not one word in the Bible favorable to denominations or sects. The only sect among Christians that is spoken of in terms--the Nicolaitan--is severely condemned. There are indications of sectish belief, against which John is supposed to labor in the first chapter of his Gospel, and Paul withstood in the Judaizing tendencies, even in a brother apostle. Denominations are directly or indirectly the result of sin remaining in the great body of professors. Thorough and widespread holiness would soon destroy denominations.

"But the evangelical denominations of today contain the mass of true Christians, with a multitude of mere professors. Because of differences sects cannot yet be abolished; and an effort at abolition would result in a new one. Therefore sects are a present necessity, until holiness more generally prevails.

"The possessor of perfect love of necessity overleaps denominations in spirit, and so regards all the sanctified as perfectly his brethren."

We are personally acquainted with the editor of the Harvester, and believe him a holy man of God. We admire the frankness with which he acknowledges that "there is not one word in the Bible favorable to denominations or sects," and that "denominations are directly or indirectly the result of sin remaining in the great body of professors."

Such must be the honest verdict of every intelligent, God-fearing man. It is no pleasant thing, we know, to look upon and admit this monster evil, this fell destroyer of the purity, love, and power of the Lord's Zion. Says William Starr, "My heart has groaned as, pen in hand, I have looked at this subject, arranged my thoughts to present them to you." But for the love of truth I am constrained to differ with the position that sects are a present necessity. They originated from sin in the church; and shall we admit that the fruit of sin is a necessity under any circumstances? "Shall we do evil that good may come? God forbid." Where the cause--sin in the church--is removed by full salvation, should not its effects also disappear? But it is thought that "because of differences sects cannot yet be abolished." We might say, with equal propriety, because of sects differences cannot be removed. They coexist and mutually support each other. These divergent views, and party shibboleths, may have had their root in carnality, but they are stereotyped and perpetuated by sectarian parties and their man-made creeds. Therefore we have no more right to palliate the sin of sects because of differences, than to excuse the latter because of the former. One of the great evils of sectarian divisions is, they prevent the return of the church to the "faith once delivered to the saints"* and shall we let the baneful tree stand until it ceases to bear its legitimate fruit?

Again, it is thought that "sects are a necessity until holiness more generally prevails." "Thorough and widespread holiness would soon destroy denominations." Sects and holiness are antagonistic to each other. This truth is clearly implied in the above remarks. The fire of true holiness burns up all the fences that Satan has placed between the saints. And shall we defeat this its real mission, by not lifting up the sword of the Lord against sects, and attempt to abolish the evil, until holiness prevails more extensively? That is the same as saying that we should make no attack on unholiness until holiness gains a certain degree of ascendancy. Yea, it provides that we should give place to the devil in the church to destroy holiness, until the church becomes more holy. These are no trifling words. It is a solemn fact that adherence in different denominations is the devil's wedge, whereby the unity of the Spirit, so perfectly procured in the grace of perfect love, is again destroyed. Party names, party creeds, and party spirits almost of necessity go together; and the natural return of this spirit, because of membership in a fragmentary church, takes more souls off of God's altar than do everything else together.

Let sects alone until holiness prevails! What a device of the enemy! How can we expect to bring forth permanent fruits into holiness, if we allow the plowshare of God's truth to slip over this fallow ground of sin? Sects are the devil's "high places" in the land, the groves of his own planting, and gods that he has set up to corrupt Israel, and "provoke God." How many of the kings Jehovah complains of because they did not, like Josiah, "purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves"*! Beware that we partake not of their sins. Of Azariah it is said that "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord... save that the high places were not removed.... And the Lord smote the king [Azariah] so that he was a leper unto the day of his death."*

Says W. H. Starr (a conscientious Presbyterian minister) after quoting 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 in his Discourses on Sectarianism:

It would seem as if no man could read these words of the great apostle without vividly seeing that party divisions among the people of Christ were, in his view, a most astounding evil. "Is Christ divided,"* he

says, that ye who are all His, and who have been baptized "by one Spirit"* should be sundered one from the other by party names?

And he adjures them in the most solemn manner, he beseeches them by an appeal the most sacred that words could utter, even by the name of Christ, as it were for His sake, and for His bleeding cause, to forsake these pernicious ways, and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind.

Hear what this author thinks of promoting holiness over these "high places," or sect walls.

The divisions of the Christian church, as they now exist, are a prominent cause of the low state of piety among believers; the greatest single obstacle which now exists to the spread and triumph of our religion in the world.

The moment you separate the church of Christ into distinct divisions, you set up the idol of party. Success or adversity will no longer affect the mind simply as they touch the cause of Christ, but they will be felt, also, as affecting "our side," or "our church." It is not Christ and His cause to which their whole thoughts and desires are now turned; the idol of party has now been set up, and it claims, and receives, part of their regard. The man, I think, is almost more than human that can wholly avoid this influence, at least after he has been long identified with any branch of the church. It is an influence which is all the time at work. The idol has been set up to divide the heart from the blessed Savior and His holy service; and its influence is as ceaseless as the existence of the cause. And this party feeling is, as we have seen, the essence of all sin, so that sinful desire is blended continually in the heart with its love to Christ, and pollutes the worship which it offers Him.

This is an honest and faithful description of this monster evil. The party feeling is very sin. Yea, says this God-fearing man,

It casts a millstone round the neck of those who are struggling upwards to the image of their Redeemer. It mingles poison with the streams of salvation that flow to the soul through the church, and casts a blight upon its budding fruit.

Again:

Sectarianism is the greatest foe to the exhibition of love which God has ever suffered Satan to beget. It hinders brotherly love among Christians, and regard for the souls of men. It is vain for brethren in Christ to talk about the duty of loving one another, and to try to feel love for one another, while they refuse to act as love dictates [by separating into parties]. Their actions will control their hearts, as men's acts always do in the end. The fences which they set up between them in fact will become fences in feeling. And that is now even so, every Christian knows.... The divisions of Christ's people beget and stimulate continually that opposite spirit of rivalry and contention, which is the spirit of the world.... Yes, I charge all this mischief, the existence of which you all know, upon the sectarian divisions of the people of Christ; and let him deny it who can. It is in fact their legitimate fruit.

The division of the church into parties not only destroys the power and holiness thereof, but is the greatest impediment to the conversion of the world to God. Again we will hear Brother Starr, and the blessed Redeemer Himself:

Would that the church of Christ might pause long enough from its sectarian strife to hear the voice of its Redeemer and Lord pleading with God in prayer on that sorrowful night ere the traitor came--"Holy Father,

keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.... Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."* The prayers of Christ were not offered for a light matter, least of all that memorable petition which the pen of inspiration has recorded for the church in all ages to wonder and weep over, the prayer of its dying Lord. The desirableness of that visible union of His people for which Christ prayed as the means of impressing His truth on the world, and the evils of those divisions against which the apostle so earnestly exhorts, need to be better understood by the church.... May God grant you a disposition to look the evil fairly in the face.

Oh, the thousands of souls that are being lost to all eternity through the selfish, wicked, and carnal spirit of our churchism! God is dishonored, yea, robbed of the purchase of His Son's death, and infidelity stalks abroad--the result of a divided house.

It is said that "the possessor of perfect love of necessity overleaps denominations in spirit." Does not this love prove that they are in the way of the Spirit of Christ? And shall we compel the Lord to drag His children together over these cursed walls, only to have walls rise up again, and grieve away the Holy Spirit?

If it be true that "thorough holiness destroys denominations," then it follows that where they yet exist this genuine degree of holiness has not been attained by the people. But I have not quoted correctly: it is "thorough and widespread holiness." Ah! here is the sticking point--a condition put in by the enemy of souls. It implies the following: "Though entire sanctification removes all sectarianism out of my heart, I will still adhere to my sect until people generally abandon their schismatic parties and creeds." The devil is perfectly easy over these principles. Now, if this evil is to be done away by popular sentiment, then it is not through holiness; but if by the latter it does not depend upon any foreign influence. The condition of the church in one state does not rob the Word and Spirit of God of their virtue in another. The power of holiness to destroy denominations in one community does not depend in the least upon another. Judah can burn down his groves and destroy his idols, whether Samaria and Ephraim do it or not. Therefore, we repeat, where the professed followers of Christ are divided into a plurality of sects, they have not yet become thoroughly sanctified to God.

Can it be said of professors of holiness that they have "one heart" and "one mind," while some have a mind to be Presbyterian, others Baptists, others United Brethren, and others have a mind to adhere to the several different sects of Methodism? Have they "one heart, and one way"* when they rise from the solemn altar in the holiness meeting and go, each one in his own way, to the synagogue of his own sect?

Now, I must confess that I cannot see the necessity of this, unless it be to please the devil, break the unity of the Spirit and grieve away the heavenly Dove, bring to naught the divided house of the Lord, and destroy the work of holiness as fast as it can be built up; to this end alone it is necessary.

But let us come still closer home. I would lay the responsibility of this enormous evil just where God places it and all other sin. We shall not be judged by sects, States, nor even by neighborhoods and towns, but "every one of us shall give account of himself to God."*

A revival of holiness in a community is the result of personal consecration and faith; and its relapse will be in proportion to the number of individuals that remove the sacrifice from the sanctifying altar. There is no such thing as thorough holiness, except as wrought by the Sanctifier in individual hearts; and if, as has

been said, and as I verily believe, thorough and widespread holiness destroys denominations--burns up sectarian distinctions--it must do it in your heart as an individual. And if this work is done, the fruits must exhibit the fact; you will be saved by "the precious blood of Christ" from all "vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers."*--such as "Your church," "Our church"; "Our preacher opened the doors of the church"; "What branch of the church do you belong to?"; "You ought to join some branch"--"and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine"*--that grew out of a "[perversion] of the right ways of the Lord"* and the "gospel of Christ."* If the bitter root of sectism is entirely destroyed out of your heart, you will ignore all sectional lines and party fences, the dreadful curse of which Brother Starr has so honestly pointed out. If you are a true, intelligent Bible Christian, a holy, God-fearing man, you must cast off every human yoke, withdraw fellowship from and renounce every schismatic and humanly constituted party in the professed body of Christ. Instead of belonging to some branch you will simply belong to Christ and be a branch yourself in Him, the true vine. Instead of remaining identified with any sect, i.e., cut-off party, "directly or indirectly the result of sin," you will claim membership in and fellowship with the "one and indivisible church that God has on earth, and that is made up of all and singular who are born of the Spirit." On this broad and divinely established platform, and here only, can you stand clear of the sin of sectarianism and the blood of immortal souls that perish through its pernicious influence. Are you strictly loyal to God while you persist in adhering to a sect, notwithstanding He says "there should be no schism [sects] in the body"*?

I am not advocating the no-church theory that we hear of in the West, but the one, holy church of the Bible, not bound together by rigid articles of faith, but perfectly united in love under the primitive glory of the Sanctifier, "[continuing] stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship,"* and taking captive the world for Jesus.

But it is thought that we should not fight against sects nor attempt to abolish the evil at present, lest we thereby form another sect. This is virtually saying we should go on sinning, "lest a worse thing come unto [us]"*!

An attempt to rally Israel under any of the many party names and creeds might indeed result in a new sect. But this is not what we contend for. Nay, but let us rather burn to ashes these high places of Israel's corruption and, returning to Jerusalem, let us build "upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."* Let us abandon the nonsense of ecclesiastical succession; cease to inflate our pride and vanity by parading the good and long-since departed, who innocently wore our party badges--the piety of our fathers will not atone for the worldliness of the church at present. Let us also quit flourishing our church creeds as though their excellency were an essential supplement to the wisdom of inspiration. Let us, we pray you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the sake of our holy and divine religion and a world that is lost in sin--oh, let us put away these childish things, and return to Jerusalem, not to form a new sect, but as the "servants of the God of heaven and earth, let us build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel [Jesus Christ] builded and set up."*

Many say we need more union of hearts, but think a visible organic union unnecessary; but remember that it was a visible union that Jesus prayed for, such as the world could see and be thereby convinced and saved. We quote once more from W. H. Starr.

They will say to me: Cannot we have union of feeling without external union [that is, with external disunion]? I answer No, you cannot, except in rare instances, and in an imperfect degree. It is vain to be

beating off the leaves of the tree while you continually nourish its roots. And sectarianism is the "root of bitterness,"* whose acrid and legitimate fruit of divided hearts, and jealousy, and strife, doth continually grieve away the Spirit of our God and Savior, and leave our churches in a comparative poverty of grace and growth that methinks must make the very heavens groan with sorrow as they look down upon our dying world. Up, up! my brother, my sister in Christ, inquire of the Lord concerning this thing! Why slumber ye here while Satan has entered the fold of Christ, a wolf in sheep's clothing, and is rending the flock? Oh, cry to God that He will direct you and all the children of His grace, till the church of His holy Son shall be purified and saved. Alas! it is now "a house divided against itself."* Oh, pray that the Lord would unite and build it up in the truth; and that He would show you your duty in the matter. The wants of the world require a holy and united Church.

From what has been said, and the uniform teaching of the Bible, the following facts are very evident:

The division of the church into sects is one of Satan's most effectual, if not the very greatest, means of destroying human souls.

Its enormous sin must be answered for by individual adherents to, and supporters of, sects.

The only remedy for this dreadful plague is thorough sanctification, and this is wrought only by a personal, individual contact with the blood of Christ through faith.

The union required by the Word of God is both a spiritual and visible union.

The divisions of the church are caused by elements that are foreign to it as a divinely constituted body, by deposits of the enemy, which exist in the hearts and practices of individual members, involving their responsibility and requiring their personal purgation.

These facts make your duty plain. What you and I want, dear reader, is "thorough and widespread holiness" in our individual souls to destroy denominationalism there. Holiness, ever so thorough and widespread, around you, will not cleanse your heart; neither can the sin of division in the hearts and lives of others attach to you, unless you drink in their spirit and also become a partisan. You need not waste time in planning general union movements, or praying the Lord to restore the unity of His church, until you go down under the blood and have every bone of contention and cause of division purged out of your own heart; then you may do something to influence others to do the same.

You are praying and longing for the happy time when God's children shall all be one, but are you willing that the "once more" shaking shall have its designed effect in your own case? Do you, indeed, suffer the Holy Ghost fire to consume out of your own life, heart, religion, and conversation, all the shaky chaff and stubble the devil has made to divide the children of God? Do you, indeed, withdraw from and ignore all churches, so called, but the one Christ "purchased with his own blood"* and founded nearly nineteen hundred years ago, and to which the "Lord added"* you by regeneration? Do you discard every church title but that "which the mouth of the Lord hath named,"* even the name of the Father, in which Christ and the apostles kept the church (John 17:6,11-12; Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Timothy 3:15)? Do you honor the divine head of the church by rejecting every creed but the one that "is given by inspiration of God"*; every door that is opened and shut by men; and every spirit but the Sanctifier; and every motive but the love of God and humanity? If you, by the grace of God, die to all these prime causes of sectism and their concomitant sins, then, and not until then, will the Lord have thoroughly purged so much of his threshing floor (Matthew 3:12; Luke 3:17) as you will have to answer for in the day of judgment. Where this is not

accomplished, the grace of God is frustrated; holiness is not permitted to reach the Bible standard of thoroughness, nor spread its healing virtue to every part of the soul.

It may look foolish to many thus to blow the trumpet of the Lord around the high and massy walls of sectarian glory and selfishness, but the power of God with the faith and shouts of the "holy people" will surely bring them down. Though the heaps of sectarian chaff have reached the magnitude of mountains, God has some wheat scattered through them, and He will have it separated for His garner. Therefore He says to Jacob, "Fear not... thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and thou shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them."*

The pure elements of God's church possess a wonderful inherent attraction and cohesion; but the devil neutralizes the divine cement by mixing in his chaffy and miry trash, thereby effecting divisions; therefore, the Lord restores union by the "removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made"* by the enemy, thus removing discord and schism. Glory to God! Little Jacob has barely commenced threshing and separating. Soon we shall see clouds of chaff driven by the "rushing mighty wind"* from heaven.

Says Brother I. Reed, in his paper, The Highway:

The great holiness movement is shaking harder than ever. It is to be a real moral earthquake yet. We have nothing to fear in that direction. We have allied ourselves to the Power that does the shaking, and feel a kind of holy joy at the falling walls, reeling Babels and ecclesiastical fortifications that cannot stand the grand holiness shock. In anticipation we enjoy the grand smash-up of things semi-religious--this half and half, linsey-woolsey type of "Good God, Dear Mammon," kind of fashionable moral froth, too often called "religion"--that is coming some of these days. It is coming. We hear the tread of the mighty army.

Amen. Let the conflict come. God will have a pure church. He will shake the chaffy works of the devil out of His kingdom, though all hell be moved in rage; though Gog and Magog surround the camp of the saints on the breadth of the whole earth.

Dear reader, I am aware that I have here written things that will be unwelcome to many, truths that will assail and stir up many prejudices; but in doing so I have determined to cast from me the fear of man, and clear my conscience in the sight of God.

It is, indeed, my honest conviction that the great holiness reform cannot go forward with the sweeping power and permanent triumph that God designs it should until the gospel be so preached and consecration become so thorough that the blood of Christ may reach and wash away every vestige of denominational distinction, and "perfect in one"*--yea, one "in deed and in truth"*--all the sanctified.

I am aware that this will elicit storms of persecution, but in the name of the Lord it must come. God will be glorified in the escape of his holy children from all human enclosures into the "one" and identical "fold of Jesus Christ." Oh! let us be honest before God in this matter.

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