

To Converts

by Phoebe Palmer

Phoebe Palmer's sermon highlights the privilege and possibility for young converts to attain holiness shortly after their conversion through faith and devotion to God.

Scripture: Leviticus 20:7, 2 Corinthians 7:1, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, Hebrews 12:14, 1 Peter 1:15

Topics: "Entire Sanctification", "Christian Holiness"

Description

Phoebe Palmer preaches about the privilege of young converts to be holy, sharing testimonies of individuals who experienced entire sanctification shortly after their conversion. She emphasizes the importance of aiming for entire consecration and being wholly sanctified as a high calling of the Christian life. Palmer highlights the rapid advancement in holiness that can be achieved through faith and complete devotion to God, as seen in the lives of those who were sanctified within days or hours of their conversion. She draws from the examples of Mr. Wesley and others to encourage young believers to seek and experience the cleansing power of God in their lives.

Transcript

It Is The Privilege Of Young Converts To Be Holy

M____ had entered the classroom as an humble seeker after Salvation. During the last prayer her Leader felt that virtue had gone out of Jesus to the healing of some precious soul, and on rising said, "If any one has been specially blessed, let it be declared to the praise of God." A short pause ensued, when M____ came forward, and, in tremulous accents, said, "The Lord has blessed me." Her faith had laid hold on Christ; and so overwhelming had been the communications of His love, that she was not able to respond at the moment the call was made.

The witness of her adoption into the family of Christ was "indubitably clear," and for hours she was filled with unutterable joy. During the period of her awakening, she had been accustomed to hear of holiness as the high calling of the Christian; and before her conversion it was at times suggested, "Aim at entire consecration." She even then thought that the Bible presented it as her privilege to be wholly sanctified; and scarcely had the Saviour said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer," before the duty of the most entire devotedness to God was again presented, and but a few hours had passed away before she became an earnest inquirer after full salvation.

The terms of the covenant, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord; and touch not the unclean thing," were recognized, and understandingly complied with. God baptized her with the Holy Ghost and with fire. In both body and soul she realized its refining influences, and a conscious and entire absorption into the service of her Redeemer succeeded. For about a year she not only held fast whereunto she had attained, but made rapid advancement in the way of holiness, and thus, by the living epistle of a holy life, gave most satisfactory assurance of the all-sufficiency of grace to empower even the babe in Christ to bring forth the fruits of holiness.

Afterward, by looking to some older in years and in profession than herself, who were resting short of holiness, she began to indulge in reasoning. The adversary suggested, "Here are those who have been so much longer in the way, who do not profess this state of grace: how assuming then for one so young in years and in religious experience to make such a profession!"

She was thus induced to withhold the light which God had enkindled in her heart, and, to the degree she ceased to let it shine, it greatly became diminished, until it was at last extinguished.

Several months of deep regret succeeded, in which she was left to deplore the advantage she had permitted the enemy to gain. But on returning to the same point of entire devotedness, she again found the Saviour ready to meet her more than halfway, and found that both His faithfulness and justice were pledged, not only to forgive, but to cleanse from all unrighteousness; and for many days she has been a witness for Jesus of His power to save to the uttermost.

Several other instances of entire sanctification, occurring a few hours or days after conversion, might be related. In some of these the fruits of holiness have been exhibited to an extraordinary degree. Mr. Wesley speaks of several in his day, some of whom were young in years, as also in grace, who attained to a state of holiness shortly after conversion. Of S. H., who resided at Macclesfield, he says, "I have seldom known so devoted a soul. She was sanctified within nine days after she was convinced of sin. She was then twelve years old, and I believe was never afterwards heard to speak an improper word, or known to do an improper thing. Her look struck an awe into all that saw her. She is now in Abraham's bosom" (Wesley's Works). "Four of those children who seemed to be saved from sin, were of one family; and all of them walked holy and unblamable. And many instances of the same kind I have found in every part of the country." "Many children chiefly girls, were indisputably justified. Some of them were likewise sanctified, and were patterns of all holiness." Mr. Wesley also relates a portion of the experience of G. P., as he received it from her lips. It concludes thus:

"In a short time all my trouble was gone, and I did believe all my sins were blotted out; but in the evening I was thoroughly convinced of the want of a deeper change. I felt the remains of sin in my heart, which I longed to have taken away. I longed to be saved from all sin, to be cleansed from all unrighteousness; and at the time Mr. Rankin was preaching, this desire increased exceedingly. Afterwards he met the Society. During his last prayer I was quite overwhelmed with the power of God. I felt an inexpressible change in the very depths of my heart; and from that hour I have felt no anger, no pride, no wrong temper of any kind; nothing contrary to the pure love of God, which I feel continually. I desire nothing but Christ; and I have Christ always reigning in my heart. I want nothing: He is my sufficient portion in time and in eternity." Mr. Wesley adds, "Such an instance I never knew before; of such an instance I never read: a person convinced of sin, converted to God, and renewed in love within twelve hours! Yet it is by no means incredible, seeing one day is with God as a thousand years" (Wesley's Works, 12mo, vol. iv., p.224).

Mr. Wesley continues, in another portion of his Works, "I spoke to these, forty in number, one by one. Some of them said they received that blessing ten days, some seven, some four, some three days after they had found peace with God, and two of them the next day." "What marvel," Mr. Wesley again exclaims, "since one day is with God as a thousand years?" He also speaks of one who was "reclaimed from a backslidden state, and cleansed from sin on the following day."

In passages far too numerous to mention, Mr. Wesley continues to enforce by precept, and illustrate by example, the duty and privilege of young converts to be holy. "It plainly follows," he says, "that the quantity of time is nothing with Him. Centuries, years, months, days, hours, and moments, are exactly the same. Consequently He can as well sanctify in a day after we are justified, as a hundred years. There is no difference at all, unless we suppose Him to be such as ourselves. Accordingly we see, in fact, that some of the most unquestionable witnesses of sanctifying grace were sanctified within a few days after they were converted."

How encouraging to the young converts are these examples, as given by the eminently pious and judicious founder of Methodism, corroborative as they are of scriptural testimony, and the observation and experience of Bible Christians of later days! And where is the young convert who reads these lines, who would not at once sacrifice all for the attainment of this grace? And if it be the privilege of the young convert to be holy, where is the teacher or the leader in Israel, to whose watch-care the flock of Christ has been intrusted, who would stop short of this grace? "A way shall be there, and it shall be called The way of holiness, and the redeemed of the Lord shall walk there."

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