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THE PERFECTION OF THE SAINTS

"For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14)."

Our text is an affirmation—it affirms the perfection of the saints. And every believer is a saint or sanctified person. We are sanctified just like we are justified—by faith. And we are sanctified at the same time we are justified. Acts 26:18. Justification has to do with our position before God: we are brought to Him and into His favor; sanctification has to do with our position before the world: we are separated from it and are not in its favor. The blood of Christ brings us to God and separates us from the world.

The saints have been made perfect. If you are a saint you can rejoice in a present perfection. And this perfection is in God's sight.

We are made perfect by Him. He hath perfected us. We did not make ourselves perfect; we were made perfect. According to grammar, it is past tense and passive voice. And our joy may increase as we see this perfection is forever.

Things that are seen—material blessings—are temporal. Here today and gone tomorrow; however much we may struggle to hold on to them. Men live in constant fear of losing things—politician—merchant—laborer. Bryan: "Those who live for money spend the first half of their lives getting all they can from everybody else and the last half trying to keep everybody else from getting what they have got away from them, and they find no pleasure in either half." When Rockefeller was asked how much money it takes to satisfy a man, he replied, "Just a little more."

But the blessings we have in Christ are forever. The liberty we have in Him is in no danger of a dictator. The inheritance we have in Him is forever safe from moth and rust and thief. The mansion he has gone to prepare will never need repair, nor shall we ever have to move out. We who have to rent can rejoice there.

We shall study this text under four headings: (1) Meaning of perfection; (2) Means of perfection; (3) Duration of perfection; (4) Subjects of perfection.

I. The meaning of perfection. The word "perfect" has two distinct meanings. It is used of a mature or full-grown Christian. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you" (Phil. 3:15). The Christian who is perfect, that is, who is advanced in the truth—the Christian who knows his Bible will never think that he has reached perfection of character in this life. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8).

The other use of the word "perfect" relates to our position or standing before the law of God; the perfection of justification in which there is no condemnation. This is the use of the word in our text. It is a judicial and objective perfection; not a subjective and experiential perfection. It is the perfection pronounced by the court and not the perfection announced by the Father. It speaks of release from the debt of sin, not

the praise of the believer's conduct. It is the perfection of justification not the perfection of glorification. The believer is perfectly justified, but not perfectly glorified.

The perfection of our text is not the perfection of character or disposition. The saint has a nature in him that is sinful, and this nature leads him to do wrong, so that he is in continual need of confessing and forsaking his sins. The fleshly nature in us is not annihilated nor improved. "For I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me: but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Rom. 7:18); "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3).

The perfection is the perfection of position. The believer is in Christ and the law sees the obedience of Christ rather than the disobedience of the believer. He has Christ's righteousness, therefore, the law can find no fault with him. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." (Rom. 8:33).

II. The means of perfection. We are made perfect by an offering—by an offering made for us—on our behalf, and not by something done in us. We will be made perfect by a work done in us, for he that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ. But this is a present perfection.

Under the ceremonial law the blood of bulls and goats could not actually take away sin and, therefore, could not make the one who offered them perfect before God. They could neither satisfy the law of God nor the conscience of the worshipper. That is why those sacrifices were repeated. The guilt of sin kept bobbing up until an offering was made that could take away guilt by satisfying the demands of the law. This offering that makes us perfect was made by Christ. Our perfect standing before God is on the ground of Calvary.

III. The duration of this perfection. The believer is perfect forever. Our position before the law of God never changes. This is because our standing is on the ground of Christ's perfect offering—He offered Himself without spot to God.

I like to think of the law as a discharged weapon with nothing but empty shells, because on the cross every bullet was fired by the hand of justice into the precious body of Christ. He suffered on Calvary till Justice cried "Enough."

"Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall, Christ hath redeemed us once for all."

IV. The subjects of perfection. They are the sanctified. The Greek has the participle form with the definite article and literal rendering is, "Them

that are being sanctified." It is the same phraseology as in Acts 2:47; "Praising God, and having favour with all people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

The thought of the text is that Christ by one offering on the cross made perfect the ones who are being sanctified. The obedience that made them perfect was made for all at the cross; but the sanctifying work has been going on progressively ever since. So many sanctified today and so many tomorrow and on and on, until the last one for whom Christ died has been saved.

Sanctification is a big subject in itself and we cannot enter fully into it here and now. The primary meaning of the word is "to set apart." Each person of the Trinity is said to sanctify: Father, Son and Spirit. But each of them sanctifies in a distinct sense and their work of sanctification must not be confused.

(1) Sanctification by the Father. "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied" (Jude 1). This took place in eternity past when He set apart a people for Himself and gave them to His Son in covenant engagement. This was sanctification in purpose.

(2) Sanctification by the Son. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Heb. 10:10). This is sanctification by purchase. Christ set us apart for Himself in His death.

(3) Sanctification by the Spirit. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (II Thess. 2:13). If you are trusting Jesus of Nazareth as Saviour and Lord, you may be assured that you have been sanctified by the Spirit. And if you are sanctified by the Spirit you may be assured that Christ made you perfect by His offering on Calvary.

"Jesus I will trust thee, trust thee with my soul; Guilty, lost, and helpless, Thou canst make me whole. There is none in heaven or on earth like Thee: Thou hast died for sinners—therefore, Lord for me.

"Jesus, I can trust Thee, trust Thy written word, Since Thy voice of mercy I have often heard, When Thy Spirit teacheth, to my taste how sweet—Only may I hearken, sitting at Thy feet.

"Jesus, I do trust Thee, Trust Thee without doubt: Whosoever cometh, Thou wilt not cast out, For Faithful is Thy promise, precious is Thy blood."

By: C. D. Cole

PEACE SYMBOL: ARE YOU SURE?

This is the symbol worn by many of today's young people and is known by them as the "Peace Symbol.*"

We wonder how many of them, or you for that matter, know the real meaning of this symbol?

The "Peace Symbol" is not something that is the product of today's restless youth. It was well-known back in the middle ages and was known either as the "Crow's Foot" or the "Witch's Foot." Now are you ready for the real shock? THIS WAS THE SIGN OF THOSE WHO WERE OPPOSED TO CHRISTIANITY! It was (and is) the Anti-Christ symbol. Look at it closely. What do you see? It is a broken cross turned upside down. Now do you see that it is a subtle sign of those who are opposed to Christianity?

It is used today as a central part of the national symbolism of Communist Russia. It appears the Communists are winning their battle for the minds of our youth. They are making

special efforts to capture the attention of today's youth in America. Many young people are familiar with the Peace Symbol and wear it as jewelry and even paint it on their cars.

There are those in the garment industry who have the broken cross embroidered on their jackets and many other garments. It is manufactured as a metal trinket and worn on a chain and many young people wear it as a "fad" gadget, not realizing they are supporting the emblem of the Anti-Christ, the broken cross.

Be sure of this: every person who knowingly or thoughtlessly wears this emblem is bringing joy to the hearts of those dedicated to the destruction of everything we hold dear. The Communists are gleeful when they see this symbol worn by Americans. It is the mark of Atheism.

—Selected, via The Puritan Messenger

