WRITINGS OF ASA MAHAN

by Asa Mahan

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Asa Mahan, compiled for study and devotional reading.

87 Chapters

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Chapter 1

00.00. Mahan, Asa - Library

Mahan, Asa - Library Mahan, Asa - Divine Life and International Expositor of Scriptural Holiness Mahan, Asa - Out of Darkness Into Light Mahan, Asa - Scriptural Doctrine of Christian Perfection Mahan, Asa - The Baptism of Holy Ghost S. Brotherly Love S. Christian Perfection S. Principles of Church Discipline S. Taking Thought for the Morrow S. The Believer’s Confidence S. The Sufferings of Christ S. The True Believer

Chapter 2

01.00. Divine Life and International Expositor

DIVINE LIFE — AND —

INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITOR — OF —

SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS.

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Editors REV. ASA MAHAN, D.D., LL.D.

REV. A. LOWREY, D.D. To me to live is Christ.— Php 1:21.

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Chapter 3

01.01. The Legacy of Jesus

THE LEGACY OF JESUS.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you."—John 14:27.

INEFFABLY sweet are these words of our Lord. They are His farewell benediction. What is the significance of these utter- ances? First, What is peace? It is not primarily the absence of outward hostility, or a state of social friendship. Nor is it a mere exemption from internal conflict and commotion.

It is spiritual and Divine repose resulting from the presence of the Holy Ghost. This appears from the preceding verse. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all, things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Peace here is only another name for the comfort of the Holy Ghost and the refresh- ing remembrance of Jesus and His words which He will revive and expound. It is not temporary. It is left with us. It is not bought, but given. It is not given after the fashion of worldly bestowments. The world gives reluctantly—Christ freely. "Freely ye have received, freely give." "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." The world gives sparingly, and often with parsimony —Christ bountifully, and with overflowing abundance, "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." The world gives from interested and mercenary motives, expecting an equiva- lent—Christ from pure, disinterested love, expecting no compensative reward, and asking nothing in return but love and trust. Hence it is written, " For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9). This peace, which is the munificent legacy of Christ, and the permanent heritage of His disciples, is peculiar in two respects.

First. It is incomprehensible. It is so deep and Divine that Paul says, "It passeth all understanding."

Second. It possesses a keeping power. Accordingly, in the same connection, it is said, "The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." This peace is a safe full of gold, and burglar-proof. L.

01.02. Your Sorrow shall be turned into Joy

"YOUR SORROW SHALL BE TURNED INTO JOY."

(John 16:20) I'VE found a joy in sorrow, A secret balm for pain, A beautiful to-morrow, Of sunshine after rain;

I've found a branch of healing Near every bitter spring, A whispered promise stealing O'er every broken string.

I've found a glad hosanna For every woe and wail, A handful of sweet manna When grapes of Eshcol fail;

I've found a Rock of Ages When desert wells are dry, And after weary stages I've found an Elim nigh,— An Elim with its coolness, Its fountains and its shades; A blessing in its fulness, When buds of promise fade.

O'er tears of soft contrition I've seen a rainbow light, A glory and fruition, So near, yet out of sight. My Saviour, Thee possessing, I have the joy, the balm, The healing and the blessing, The sunshine and the psalm; The promise for the fearful, The Elim for the faint, The rainbow for the tearful, The glory for the saint.

"Life in love is the noblest life: let that be our conviction; we will abide in this love: let that be our resolve; then God will abide with us: that will be our blessing." —Ranke.

"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest; until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." Isaiah 62:1.

Chapter 5

01.03. The Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST AS SET FORTH IN THE SCRIPTURES. BY REV. ASA MAHAN D.D. LL.D. A SHORT time previous to the Conference at Brighton, the great theologian in Berlin—the individual who is, in reality, Primate of the Lutheran Church in Germany—made a statement to this effect "For centuries past the thought of the Church has been mainly occupied with the mission of the Father and Son. Hereafter religious thought will, in a special sense, be occupied with the mission of the Holy Spirit." Prominent facts in all parts of Christendom clearly indicate the truth of the above statement. THE THREE DISTINCT AND OPPOSITE THEORIES UPON THE SUBJECT.

Since the subject has been brought prominently before the public mind, three distinct and opposite theories pertaining to "the Promise of the Spirit" have been set forth, and each now has its zealous advocates in the Church. The time has arrived, we believe, when the True Doctrine of the Spirit may be set forth with such distinctness that it will be received by all true believers who shall understand it. The three theories under consideration are the following:—

1. The Promise of the Spirit became, at the Pentecost, for the whole Church in all future time, an accomplished fact, just as the work of atonement was "finished" when Christ gave up the ghost upon the cross, that the promised baptism of the Holy Ghost is always given in Regeneration; that "all believers in common now have the whole Holy Ghost," that it is no more proper for them to pray for the Spirit than it is to pray that Christ may atone for our sins; and that when we believe that the Spirit is in us, His influence becomes effective for our illumination and sanctification, just as when we believe in Christ, His atonement becomes effective for the pardon of our sins.

2. The second theory is this: All believers do, in fact, at Regeneration, receive the promised "Baptism of the Holy Ghost," and all are under the power of this Baptism. All are not, however, at that, time, nor are all now, "filled with the Spirit;" and this filling-up, by an increase of what all have in a measure, is what we are required to seek. According to this theory, the "Promise of the Spirit," or "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost," is not, with any believer, an object of faith or prayer. The filling to fulness of what is already in us is all that is to be now sought or expected.

3. According to the third theory, the true doctrine, as we fully believe, the promised Baptism of the Holy Ghost, is seldom or never given at the moment of Regeneration, but is a special enduement of power to be sought and received by faith, "AFTER we have believed." The experience of all who receive this Baptism, is, we believe, thus written out by the pen of Inspiration: "In Whom (Christ) ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom, also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise." To all believers who have not yet received this Baptism, the Words of Christ are just as applicable as they were to the disciples then: "If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father for you, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." The revealed order of Divine procedure is this: Regeneration; then obedience; and, lastly, "the sealing and earnest of the Spirit" received by faith. God gives the Spirit, we read (Acts 5:32), "to those who obey Him," and those who obey

(Galatians 3:14) "receive the promise of the Spirit by faith."

EVIDENCE BY WHICH THE FIRST TWO THEORIES ARE SUPPOSED TO BE VERIFIED. The arguments by which the first two of the above theories are professedly proven are the same in fact and form. We read, it is said with truth, that all believers have the Spirit,—"that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His"—that "their bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost which is in them"—that "by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body" —and "have been all made to drink into one Spirit," &c. This, it is affirmed, could not be true, if all believers in common do not, at conversion, receive the promised Baptism of the Holy Ghost." The evidence against such a conclusion based upon the revealed fact, that none of the converts in Samaria, nor in the house of Cornelius, did "receive the Promise of the Spirit" at the time of their conversion, but subsequent to that event, is thus disposed of. It was necessary that the first converts in Samaria, and among the Gentiles, should receive the Spirit as the disciples did at the Pentecost, in order to evince the fact that the gift of the Spirit is the common inheritance of all believers of all nations and in all time. That truth being thus evinced, no special Baptism of the Holy Ghost, except in conversion, has since been given, or is to be expected. Those who employ such an argument forget that quite twenty years subsequent to these events, Paul found certain disciples at Ephesus who had not then "received the Holy Ghost," and that the question which he put to those disciples, absolutely implies that, in his inspired judgment, the fact of Regeneration does not imply that the subject has yet received "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost." If he had held and taught, that all believers, in common, do at Regeneration receive this Baptism, would he have put the question to acknowledged converts, believers in Jesus: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost, since ye believed?" The same question, together with the facts recorded (Acts 19:1-7), absolutely implies that when Paul, as in the passages above cited, spoke of all believers as having the Spirit, and of their bodies as "temples of the Holy Ghost," he did not, by any means, intend to be understood as teaching, that all in common have received "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost." We affirm, all the passages under considera- tion implying it, that while the Spirit is in all believers, and their bodies are His temples, very few of them may yet have received the Pentecostal "Baptism of the Holy Ghost." These statements we will now proceed to verify and elucidate.

TRUE DOCTRINE VERIFIED AND ELUCIDATED.

We adduce as the basis of our verification and elucidation of the True Doctrine of "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost," the following passage of Scripture (Ephesians 2:22): "In whom (Christ) ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Reference in this, and the verses preceding, is had to the building of the ancient Temple and Tabernacle. To these we must recur, in order to under- stand the bearing of what is here revealed upon our subject. The owner of a house, while it is as much his at one time as another, sustains, we should bear in mind, quite different relations to it before and after he takes up his abode in it. All that is previously done is preparatory to this final occupancy. THE BUILDING OF THE ANCIENT TABERNACLE.

Let us now turn our thoughts to the Tabernacle built by Moses. This entire structure, we must bear in mind, was constituted of dedicated materials, materials, first Divinely designated, and then dedicated for a specific purpose, the rearing-up of a building which was to become "a habitation of God through the Spirit," a place, as heaven is, of His special abode. Not only so, but the entire building was reared up under direct and specific Divine dictation and superintend- ence, the entire

pattern of it being, first of all, distinctly "shown in the Mount," and all the leading workmen being first designated by name, and then acting, in all they did, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. God, in the highest sense, was the builder as well as the proprietor of that structure. It was God's Tabernacle, reared up, we repeat, "for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Let us now recur to the scene recorded (Exodus 40:1-38). Under special and specific Divine direction the structure was set up, and all its furnishment put in perfect order, and all the prescribed offerings were made. When the Tabernacle was thus dedicated, and set apart for God, Moses and Aaron, and all the priests, retired, and stood without, leaving the divinely erected and dedicated structure in the hands of God, and alone with Him. " Then," we read, "a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, and Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." We must bear in mind here that this tent was as really and truly God's tabernacle, that it was as sacred in His sight, that it would have been as criminal to desecrate it, and that God was as really in it, and in it in a peculiar sense, before as after He took special and visible possession of it, by filling it with His glory. Before this event, He was present in the Tabernacle as giving inspired directions in regard to its structure and arrangements, and accepting the act of its dedication to Him. After that event He was in that tabernacle as a glorymanifested personal presence, to hear the prayers, and accept the offerings of His people, and to reveal to them His will and His truth. The two relations of God to His Tabernacle differed, not only in degree, but in kind, and it was God's dwelling-place in a new and different sense after from what it was before, that event.

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS APPLIED.

Let us now, in the light of these illustrative facts, turn our thoughts to the believer in Jesus. The words, "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building," apply directly to every true saint of God. As the entire Tabernacle, of which we have been speaking, was constituted of dedicated materials, as all was wrought, and constructed under direct Divine super- intendence, and as all was done as a means to one exclusive purpose, the rearing up "a habitation of God, through the Spirit," so with the work of God, in and upon every believer. First of all, "by the precious blood of Christ," he is "bought with a price" to become "a habitation of God through the Spirit." Their, in the work of Regeneration, conviction of sin, and "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," are all the direct and immediate result of the agency of the Spirit. From this moment, the Spirit is never absent from the heart of the believer, but is always "working within him to will and to do," carrying forward the process of sanctifica- tion, perfecting his obedience and love, and "building him up in the most holy faith." For what purpose is he thus builded? For the same purpose, we answer, for which the ancient Tabernacle was reared up—"for an habitation of God through the Spirit." As the fact that a house is builded to be the home-residence of its proprietor, and that it is his house, and that he is in it preparing it for the purpose designated, does not imply that he has yet entered it for home-occupancy, so the fact that "in Christ the believer is builded for an habitation of God through the Spirit," does not imply that God, as a glorry—manifested personal presence, has entered His habitation, and "made his abode in it." Now, what the entrance of the cloud into the ancient Tabernacle, and filling it with the Divine glory, after it was reared up, purified and dedicated as the habitation of God, was to that Tabernacle, such is "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost" to the believer, after, as "God's husbandry and God's building," he has been "builded in

Christ, for an habitation of God through the Spirit." THE PENTECOST. As a further illustration of this great theme, let us now recur to the scene of the Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4): "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." Here we have the Tabernacle set up, put in order, and dedicated, as "the habitation of God through the Spirit." The body of each individual was here consecrated as a "temple of the Holy Ghost," and all their members and all their faculties were set apart "as instruments of righteousness unto God." What then followed? As in the symbolical Tabernacle when it was set up and dedicated, "the cloud covered the tent, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle," so, in this case, "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." All their prior experiences had been under the direct agency and control of the Spirit, but had been preparatory to this great consummation. As "God’s husbandry and God’s building," they had "been in Christ builded for an habitation of God through the Spirit," and now, as a personally manifested presence, God entered all these divinely built and consecrated Temples, filled them with His glory, and made His abode in them. We must bear in mind that the visible signs which in three recorded cases, and in these only, attended the Baptism of the Spirit, were no part of the Baptism itself. When "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost," then, and not till then, did they receive "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost." This Baptism is "the Promise" which all believers are required to "receive by faith." The subject will be further elucidated on a future occasion.

Chapter 6

01.04. The Believer's Position

THE BELIEVER'S POSITION. BY THE REV. JAMES FLEMING, D.D. THE words which St. Paul employs to describe the position are—"in Christ." They are words, as every reader of DIVINE LIFE knows, which frequently occur in his epistles. He employs them when speaking of the life, and walk, and heritage of believers:—"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"— "thanks be unto God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ"—"whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" —"blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." The words must have had a Wonderful richness of meaning, and even fascination to the Apostle, to be repeated by him with such frequency and variety of application. He interweaves them with all his instructions, as if they were the very life and soul of the truths he expounds, and the duties he enforces.

How far the meaning he put upon them exhausted their significance, it is not possible to say; but so far as ordinary readers of Scripture are concerned, they imply what will never be comprehended, and cover depths which will for ever remain unexplored. The meaning they obviously bear, and with which religious teachers, are, as a rule, contented is, union with Christ. As thus understood, they express a subject to which the writers of the New Testament attach the highest importance, and on which conse- quently they frequently dwell. Nor, is this to be wondered at, as it covers the whole ground of salvation and Christian experience. Yes, only as you are one with Christ, are you His. The degree of your identification with Him is the measure of the grace you possess, and the security you enjoy. To be in Christ, then, is to be one with Him, as the member is with the body, and the branch with the vine. It is, in other words, to be in Him as the sphere of your life, and the element of your being. The converse of the truth is, that Christ is in us. The one is synonymous with the other. To be in Christ is the same as having Christ in us. Nor must the two ever be separated, as on their co-existence and mutual action depend advancement in holiness, and the possession of power for service.

Then think with whom this union associates you; it is with Him who is "fairer than all the sons of men;" who is "the Brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His Person;" "in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" with whom are all the resources of grace, and by whom "all power is wielded both in heaven and in earth." But what a position is this for man to fill! How exalted the standing! How Divine the relation!

Israel's place of old was on the breast and shoulders of Aaron; yours, beloved, is in the heart and strength of the Son of God. But you have not only His love and power, you have Himself, in undivided personality and ever-available sufficiency. To be in Christ is to have His acceptance. Guilt no more attaches to you there than it does to Him. Possessed of His "righteousness," you receive the very acceptance which is accorded to Him. And must not it be so? There is not one kind of acceptance for the Head and another for the Members. You are not only "accepted in the

Beloved," but as the Beloved. "As He is before God," so are we in this world. There is therefore no condemnation for us. Our past may be clouded, but our future is light in the Lord. But we have in Christ also the "Eternal Life," which is the outflow and gift of the Life-giving Spirit. No, you cannot be in Christ without partaking of His life. The branch receives of the life of the tree, and the member of that of the body, and all who are joined to the Lord are one spirit with Him. And then the life you have from Him is resurrection-life—a life over which death has no power, and on which no spot of defilement is seen. Yes, this, child of God, is your life in Christ, not your own made better, but Christ's infused into you. May Christ Himself be enthroned within you, as the Master of your being, and the Hope of Glory. When you came forth from the grave in which you had been buried with Him, you did so as a new creation. But do you believe this? Then do not be ever trying, as is the case with only too many, to improve what you possess. You cannot add to what is Divine. You may mend and patch up the old, but the new needs no improving. Then is there nothing which it behoves you to do? Are you to remain where you are, and be satisfied with what you have attained? You are not yet all you are capable of and intended to be. You are in Christ to grow, to go from strength to strength, to rise up to the stature of Christian perfection, and glorify God by much fruit-bearing. And for this—for walking before the Lord unto all-pleasing and fulfilling the purposes of life, you have in Christ the power that you need. He perfects His strength in the weakness of all who are one with Him. They are henceforth equipped for every service, and possessed of resources adequate to all emergencies.

"Electricians tell us," to quote from Mr. Aitken, "that our nervous system is so constituted that under the force of electricity we can perform prodigies of strength and endurance, which would be impossible under ordinary circumstances. We will suppose a book to weigh several pounds. I hold it out at arm's length, my arm being in a horizontal position. Ere many minutes have passed, the sense of fatigue becomes insupportable, and my arm must fall to my side. But turn on a current of electricity to the outstretched arm, and I am able to, sustain the weight indefinitely, without any such sense of fatigue. Where does my part in the matter lie? Not in struggling to force my arm to do what it is too weak to do, but in yielding my member to the power which can enable it to accomplish what is otherwise impossible. I have to see to it that no non-conductor shuts me off from the generating mechanism, and breaks the invisible stream of power; and that is just what I have to see to, above everything else, in my spiritual experience. Am I in full connexion with Omnipotence? Listen to the language of St. Paul: 'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.' How did Christ strengthen him? By endowing his nature with a new and adequate power; 'I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' "

Then we have here the secret and growth of holiness. Only in union with Christ can you become like Him. It is association that produces resemblance. As then you abide in Christ and walk with Him, you assume His image, become His representative, and dying to sin, live unto righteousness. Nor are these ends to be reached by any other way. Christ is our sanctification. Salvation is from beginning to end His work. He prepares for heaven as well as preserves from perdition. He is the supply for our every need, whilst in Him we occupy His standing, become the subjects of a Divine nature, and are, holy as God is holy. "All things are yours in Christ: for as many as receive Him, to them gives He power to become the Sons of God; even to them that believe on His name;" that "ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work."

Chapter 7

01.05. How to Grow from Faith to Faith, and from

HOW TO GROW FROM FAITH TO FAITH, AND FROM GLORY TO GLORY. BY REV. W. E. BOARDMAN.

"AS ye have received Christ Jesus our Lord, so walk ye in Him." The way to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ is to go on as we began. There is no stepping onward in any other way.

How did we receive our Lord Jesus Christ? We ventured on Him to save us, and gave up all thought of salvation in any other way.

How are we to make progress from faith to faith, and from glory to glory? By venturing on Christ for it, as we ventured on Him at first for salvation.

What followed the venture upon Christ for salvation? The revelation of Him by the Spirit to us, in the wonders of His self-sacrificing love for us in giving Himself to die that we might live. And with this knowledge of Christ came also such an in-letting into the grace of God our Heavenly Father as filled us with adoring wonder. More of the grace of God and of the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ came to us in a day—aye, in an hour—than could be gained by a whole eternity of self-effort in any, or all ways, conceivable to us. It was a grand first revelation to us of the True God and of His Son Jesus Christ, the first in-breathing of eternal life. Are our souls longing for more? Are we conscious of the need of a deeper in-letting into the grace of God and of fuller know- ledge of Christ? How is it to be received?

How but by venturing on Christ for all the fulness of God in our souls as we did in the first place for salvation?

What follows when this is done? The revelation of Christ to our souls as the Risen Saviour, in His Living Presence and Power with us now—in the beauties of holiness, to save us from sin, fill us with the Holy Spirit, and keep us in perfect peace, and multiply grace and peace unto us, according to the riches of God’s glory.

Those who have found themselves at a standstill after receiving Christ for salvation from death and hell, and have made little or no progress in the mastery of besetting sins and in the grace of God, by the most strenuous effort and vigilant watchfulness, have, by giving up all hope of progress in this way, and venturing upon Christ for salvation from sin, and for the fulness of the Spirit, come, in an hour; into such fulness of grace and knowledge of Jesus, that their amazement has been even greater than in that first hour of the revelation of Christ in His dying love to their souls. In a moment they have been shown their own mistake in the past about the way to grow in grace, in contrast with the true way, which is God’s way for us. And in that same moment there has burst upon them, or dawned upon them more gradually, the grace of God in its fulness, and the knowledge of Jesus in another, and to them new relation, which has made Him doubly precious to them, and brought their thoughts and affections, and will, into such sweet abiding captivity to Him

as they had not before thought possible this side of heaven.

One day there came into a little circle of earnest Christians who were gathered to wait together on the Lord in prayer and conversation, that they might renew their strength, or exchange it for the Lord’s strength, a veteran Christian man who had grown grey and risen high in his country’s service. The fact came out afterwards that he had been wonderfully taught of the Lord, apart from all distinctive human teaching or testimony on this subject. As one and another spoke of the new step of faith which the Lord had led them to take, and of the wonders of His grace and truth open to them, the fire burned in the heart of this good man, and as face to face in water, so his heart answered to theirs in experience, until at last, though a stranger to all in the circle, known by name to only one or two, he could not but speak. He asked a very simple question, "Is not this the way to grow in grace? " The new voice and the question arrested all. Some were a little startled. They would have been less startled, though much pained, if the question had been, "Is not this incompatible with growth in grace? "So often is it that this misconception of it is thrust by the enemy of all truth into the minds of those who hear about it. Yet in a moment one answered emphatically, "Yes, indeed, this is the way to grow in grace, the only true way." To this answer the whole circle gave spontaneously the most hearty assent.

Yes, the Apostle has put the way of Christian progress truly in two of his most remarkable sayings, "from faith to faith" and "from glory to glory."

There is a faith that ventures upon Christ, and really receives Him as a Saviour from eternal death. And there is a transfiguring power in the Gospel when it presents the Saviour in the glory of His dying love for the sinner, which changes, the believing sinner himself into the same image. And there is a deeper, fuller faith which ventures upon the same glorious Saviour for salvation from sin and for the fulness of the Spirit, and receives all it ventures for in Christ. And in Christ, as presented in the gospel as in a mirror in the glory of His presence and power, there is a transfiguring efficacy that changes the believer into the same glory of the resurrection-life, and fits him to live with Christ in all the walk, work, worship, and warfare of daily life, holy, harmless, and undefiled, amidst a crooked and perverse generation. The glory into which we are brought, and by which we are transfigured, is in Christ, not in us, and is ours in Him by having Him revealed in us. The process set forth by the Apostle is that of progress from faith to faith in Christ, not in ourselves; and so from one glory in Christ to another. It is not that of bringing us step by step onward by self-effort into a perfected self, but in a perfect self-renunciation and in the reception of a perfect Saviour.

Satan would eagerly catch us up in our escape from his dominion, and entangle us in the meshes of a good self or a perfect self, if he could, and make us think of the glory of a perfected self, instead of the glory of a perfect Saviour; and so divert our testimony for Christ and His glories from Him, and turn it to egotistic boasting of our own glories. Our glory is not our own, but Christ’s, and our glorying must all be, not in ourselves, but in Him. He is made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption," by being revealed in us from faith to faith, in His glories from glory to glory. He is all our glory; we have none of our own.

(To be concluded in our next.)

Chapter 8

01.06. The Dispensations

THE DISPENSATIONS.

—— BY REV. A. LOWREY, D.D.

"Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Hosea 6:3 THE gracious dispensations of God to men, like the antecedent plan of redemption, are progressive and ever brightening. Beginning with the twilight of vague, obscure revelation, it steadily advances like the morning light until it broadens into the splendours and perfections of Gospel day. Each successive revelation grows less typical and more didactic and intellectual—less national, and more personal—less ceremonial and outward, and more interior and directly, saving—less prophetic and remote, and more promissory and immediate—less earthly, material and sensuous, and more Divine, spiritual and life-giving. This gradual development of the Divine preparations, looking directly to the simplicities of the Gospel, and the holiness which it provides for and requires, finds its correspondences in nature everywhere. It is like the dawn of day coming out of the womb of midnight, and proceeding to a high noon. It is like the germ in seeds that begins to swell, and then send forth plants and trees that cover the earth with verdure and beauty. It is like the recondite process of human existences which begin with the mysterious quickening of the embryonic germ, and then developes into the conscious state, then into manhood and maturity, stopping not until it dominates the world and fills the earth with the brilliancy of its genius. So with the dispensations. They begin with the bud of incipient preparations founded upon the prior plans and purposes of mercy and grace in the Eternal Mind, but go on unfolding leaf and flower until the earth is made gay with the blush of their full bloom, and rich and sweet with the redolence of their inexhaustible fragrance. Generically considered, there are but two dispensations—a dispensation of law, and a dispensation of grace. But under these general heads there are several subdivisions called covenants, promises, revela- tions, visions and prophecies. These have been periodically bestowed to amplify and spiritualise religion. The beginning of legal dispensation was the requirement delivered to our first parents that they should not "eat" of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Genesis 2:17. This was adapted to responsible beings in a state of rectitude. In that case nothing but obedience was necessary to secure the continuance of the Divine favour, and obedience then came easily within the possibilities of natural ability. It therefore involved no promise of grace. The next and most prominent dispensation of law was the Ten Commandments, or Decalogue. This was given after the disability of the fall had smitten the race, but in itself contained no provision for, or proffer of help. And yet compliance must have necessitated a certain pre-appropriation of the merits of the promised Saviour. In this way the law began early to be a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, in whom help and healing would be abundant. The spirit and principles of the decalogue were afterwards expanded into the Levitical code and diffused through the preceptive parts of the prophesies, and finally transferred with increasing stringency and exactitude to the Gospel. The Gospel, therefore, is no less a code of laws than a covenant of mercy. It no less provides for high morality and perfect holiness, than it

requires such excellence. That teaching is most faulty which represents the attainment of holiness as optional, or as a state simply to be aimed at—a mere privilege which it is well to embrace. It is more. It is a duty, it is heaven's all-comprising requirement. It has all the binding force and penal sanction of law. "Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Hebrews 12:14. And this legal aspect of the Divine dispensation has steadily pointed, like the needle to the pole, to personal purity. Down through the ages the exactions have multiplied and become more explicit, rigorous and comprehensive. It is now the indispensable condition of full acceptance, the necessary enduement to give to service the highest efficiency, and the quality and image without which no man can ever enjoy the beatific vision of God. All who enter heaven must first "wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb." Revelation 7:14. This gracious dispensation of God received its first enunciation in the obscure promise, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Genesis 3:15. Here the conflict between holiness and sin was first waged. It was a declaration of war on the part of God and in the name of Jesus. It was also a prediction and assurance that the seed of the woman should triumph. Thus six thousand years ago the antagonism of sin and holiness was established. From that day to this the artillery of truth and righteous- ness bas gleamed and pealed along the whole line of the ages against sin. Nor is this a war of mere subjugation—it is a war of extermination. Nor can there be any perfect peace until this enemy is swept from the soul by the Divine bosom of destruction. As the Lord commanded the barbarous tribes of Canaan to be entirely destroyed that there might be peace and uncorrupted worship in the land among His chosen people, so God originally decreed, not the abatement, but the destruction of the works of Satan. This purpose he indicated by aiming the blow at the serpent's head, or the seat of sinful life.

Again, the dispensation of grace was announced more distinctly and full to Abraham: "And in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." Genesis 22:18. This covenant of mercy was enlarged, defined, and diversified in the repeated promises of a Saviour in the Jewish ceremonial, and in the more spiritual definite promises of the prophets.

Finally, it opened up like a rose bursting into full bloom in the glory of the Gospel dispensation. And as the successive instalments of truth were made known, the spiritual element became more and more prominent and pervasive, and the design of focalizing all the fires and forces of religion on the heart, and making it the chief object of purification and culture, became manifest. But when the great orb of Christianity rose, a conversion took place, which caused nearly all the material and outward in worship to slough off. Types and symbols, ceremonials and circumcision, animal sacrifices and bloody baptisms, feasts and offerings, priests and prophets, tinsel and show, all disappear. It is a sublimation that excludes all the grossness and crudity of former dispensations. The whole of religion was resolved into pure truth, simple faith, perfect love, and spiritual worship.

01.07. The Glorious Person of our Lord,

THE GLORIOUS PERSON OF OUR LORD, AND THE DOCTRINES WHICH GATHER ROUND HIM.

—— BY REV. CLEMENT CLEMANCE, B.A., D.D.

CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTORY.

WE have selected this subject for a series of papers because, while to us and our readers it presents, "without controversy," the great mystery of godliness, it is precisely that around which the controversies of the day are thickly gathering. We venture to offer, for the earnest consideration of our readers, that which we verily believe to be the teaching of The Book concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom and by whom alone the "Divine Life" has become possible for man. We wish, moreover, to say that, while we are satisfied that our views of the glory of Christ coincide with the unchanged faith of the Church through all the Christian ages, yet, for forms of expression and for the entire setting of the theme, the writer alone is responsible.

Archbishop Whately somewhere makes the remark, that if any one has a clear conception of the Person of Christ, that conception is an erroneous one; by which, we suppose, he meant, that whoever held fast to the Bible-teaching concerning the deity of Christ, and who also believed in His humanity, would, if pressed to explain the mode of the union of the two natures in one person, be utterly unable to give a reply. This seems just about the actual fact. The two sides of Christ's person are, if each be taken by itself, perfectly apprehensible, if not comprehensible; but the junction of the two is beyond our power to explain. At the same time it does not by any means follow that it is unimportant whether our thoughts of Christ are Scriptural or no. Good John Owen laments "Of all the evils which I have seen in the days of my pilgrimage, there is none so grievous as the public contempt of the principal mysteries of the Gospel amongst them that are called Christians." This would indeed be matter for lamenta- tion; but perhaps the danger of our day lies not so much in the direction of open contempt as of secret indifference. Judging from the tenor of much of our literature, doctrine is of little moment provided we aim at "universal benevolence." As if, provided we dealt our gifts to man with a liberal hand, it should concern us little whether we fulfilled the right worship towards the Father and the Son—thus making benevolence to the creature of more moment than right reverence to God! But it should be remembered, that indifference in forming a right conception of what Christ is, is unrighteousness towards God. To worship Christ if he be not God, is superstition. To refuse him worship if he be God, is dishonour to One who is deserving of all honour. To pay the Supreme One subordin- ate honour, is to be guilty of mockery; to pay a subordinate one supreme honour, is to be an idolater. We cannot afford to be indifferent on such a matter as the person of Christ, nor may we be nebulous or misty as to what on this topic the Lord hath spoken. Wherever there is proper reverence for God and for His word, there will be intense desire to have right views of Jesus. That devoted man, Harrington Evans, was, at one period of his life, in deep anxiety lest he should be doing Christ a wrong by supposing Him to be God merely through the in-dwelling of the Father. Reverent and devout as he was, it is

not to be wondered at that he came in time to a clearer and fuller light. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him," and ever will be. The materials from which we may draw our conclusions as to what Christ is, are found mainly in the words of Christ and His apostles; the Old Testament, however, giving to these conclusions no small amount of confirmation and strength. It needs but a very cursory glance at the four gospels, in order to perceive that Jesus Christ said many things which compelled the suspicion that He who could say such things was no common man. As to God—He says He "came from Him." He speaks of the "glory which He had with Him before the world was." He speaks of Himself as "the Son of Man who is in Heaven," as "in God," as knowing God," as "the way to God." He says, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;" "my Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" "I and my Father are one;" "my Father is greater than I." And when Peter confessed "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God," Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is inHeaven." Christ must be something more than man, if it needed a special Divine revelation to teach man what He was. As to man—Christ speaks of Himself as man's life, light, food, healing, and rest. As to the honour He claimed, He says that "all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." And as to His personal presence, He says, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!"

Still, however great the amazement such passages cause us as we place ourselves in view of Christ's humanity, and however strongly they impel us to say, "He must have been more than man," yea, however clearly and directly they point us to His divinity, yet, so far as Christ's words go, it is for the most part by necessary inference rather than from direct statement that we reach the conclusion that He was God. On the whole, there was a certain reserve as to what He was—enough revealed to lead some to say, "We beheld His glory," and enough concealed to leave many in doubt as to "what manner of man" He was. Before we have finished our theme, we shall show how this may be accounted for; meanwhile, let us observe that there was one principle on which Christ taught, which points out, at least, the direction in which the reason of this concealment may be found. This is indicated in the words, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth." Here, then, we have the express declaration first, that there were many things which Christ could not then teach, or of which He could give only the germs; secondly, that the Holy Spirit would teach these things when He was gone; thirdly, that the Holy Spirit would teach these things to the apostles, that they might be teachers of Christ, having had the double advantage of being with Christ from the beginning and of receiving the teaching of the Holy Ghost, who should testify of Christ, and in testifying of Him should glorify Him.

It will be in perfect consistency with all this should we find—First, that the revelations of the Holy Ghost supplemented the teaching of the Lord Jesus, and threw new light on what He was and did. Secondly, that the apostles were the organs of the Holy Ghost in their expositions of Christ's person and work. Thirdly, that the teachings of the apostles respecting Christ were in advance of anything which Christ said about Himself during His lifetime, because at that time the apostles could not bear this fuller development of truth; nor could it be unfolded till the facts on which it rested were accomplished.

Now, if we turn for a moment to the writings of the apostles, especially to the Epistles of Paul and John, we find—First, that the apostles shared this revelation (1 Corinthians 2:1; Galatians 1:15-16). Second, that they expounded this revelation (1 Corinthians 2:15-16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Ephesians 1:8). Third, that they saw the results of their teaching, since it became a practical power in believers (2 Corinthians 3:2-3). Nor was the teaching of the apostle John less clear than that of St. Paul. We may find it convenient to illustrate and confirm the teachings of one apostle by those of the other. There is one passage in the introduction to the Gospel of St. John; there are also several passages in the Epistles which set forth the dignity and glory of Christ more fully than any words in the way of direct statement which are recorded as coming from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself. These passages are— John 1:1-14; there is another in Php 2:6-8. We propose to make this last-named passage the basis on which we set forth the glory of our Lord.

01.08. The Reckoning of Faith

THE RECKONING OF FAITH.

—— BY THE REV. THORNLEY SMITH. IN that remarkable chapter, Romans 6:1-23, St. Paul speaks of the death and resurrection of our Lord as symbolical of the believer's death unto sin, and of his rising again into newness of life. He is baptised into Christ's death, he is raised into living fellowship with God. Turn to the passage and read Romans 6:1-10, and you will see how decidedly opposed the Apostle is to the notion that the Christian may live in sin, and how inconsistent he deems it with the profession of Christianity. "Christ died," he says, "unto sin once," and, therefore, must the believers die to it once for all. Christ "liveth unto God," and, therefore, must the believer live a life in God, for God, and to God, day by day. For what follows? "Likewise," or in like manner, "reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11).

What is this reckoning? It is not the reckoning of the arithmetician. There are men who demand demonstrative proof of the truth of Christianity, and refuse to believe in it unless it can be made as clear to them as that two and two make four. The demand is simply absurd, as every unprejudiced and thoughtful mind must see. It is a perilous thing to reject Divine revelation on any such grounds, for it may reader the mind incapable of believing, and is indicative of a want of true sincerity. Mathematical evidence of moral truth and of Christian experience is impossible, and those who are resolved to wait for it will have to wait, until, perhaps, they are shut up in judicial unbelief.

It is not the reckoning of the logician. The logician adopts a process of reason- ing on many subjects which he thinks will bring him to right conclusions, as possibly it may. But the reckoning of St. Paul moves in a higher sphere. No one can ever reason himself out of sin into holiness. He may set the evil of sin before him on the one hand, and the beauty of holiness before him on the other; and he may try to compel himself to shun the one and to aspire after the other, but he will fail, and fail signally, however correct his reasoning may be. Examining the evidences of Christianity, weighing carefully the facts of its history, and candidly considering the objections brought against it, will, no doubt, lead us into an intellectual assent to its Divine origin, but we may reason on the mysteries it unfolds till doomsday ere we become experimentally acquainted with its saving truths.

There is a higher and a better reckoning than this, even the reckoning of faith, and it is of that St. Paul here speaks. Do you ask how does faith reckon? or with what? The answer is, it takes the promises of God, and says these promises are true, and I will act upon them; and, however rich, and full, and wondrous they are, it staggers not at the grand conclusions they involve. It looks first at the requirements of the Gospel, and it finds that they amount to nothing less than the full surrender of the life to Christ. It looks next at the promises of the Gospel, and finds that they amount to nothing less than a complete deliverance from the guilt, the power, and the pollution of sin. And there it rests. It realises, practically, the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and it sees in them provision made for the entire conquest of the Christian over his depraved and sinful

nature. Nor need the process be a long and tedious one. It may be entered upon at once, and completed now. Some there are who go on reckoning, but never come to an end of their reckoning. They read the passage before us, "reckon that you will die to sin and live unto God some day or other before the death of the body," but they think, perhaps, that it would be presumption to reckon upon it now. Yet St. Paul says, reckon now,— reckon at once,—reckon without delay,— and he implies that the moment we so reckon the work is done. But what are we to reckon? On two things—that we are dead indeed unto sin,—that we are alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ. There were, it would seem, Christian professors in Rome who reckoned otherwise; and said, if we continue in sin, grace will the more abound. But what says the Apostle? Does he give countenance to such a thought? By no means. It would, he says, be a contradiction of our profession, for "how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" No longer, therefore, must it reign in your mortal bodies, no longer must it have dominion over you, no longer must your members be its servants and slaves. Reckon yourselves, by faith, dead unto sin,—not dying merely, but dead, for, though the Apostle says elsewhere that they who are Christ's "have crucified the affections and lusts," and though crucifixion was often a lingering death, yet it was death in the end, and the sooner death took place the less were the suffering and the pain. But how can I reckon myself dead unto sin when I do not feel that I am? Ah! it is just here, beloved reader, that you must venture by faith. Only believe, and you shall know. But believe what? Something to be true which is not true? No; but that Christ died to put away sin, and to gain, for you, the conquest over it; died, that you might die with Him and have your sins buried in His grave. This you are to believe, and in this you are to trust. And can you hesitate? Is He not able to do for you, and to accomplish in you, all that He has promised? But the reckoning goes further. We are not to die only, but to live. The resurrection-life of Christ is to be realized in us, and henceforth we are to live indeed—to live unto God, and thus to answer life's great end. Were we to die only, our salvation would be but in part completed. And He is the element in which it lives. The words are literally, not "through," but "in our Lord Jesus Christ," implying that He becomes the life of our life, and that we live this resurrection-life in Him just as we live our natural life in the balmy air of heaven. "There is," said Dr. Tholuck, "a whole system of divinity in that little word in Christ," and there is, we may add, a whole system in it of experimental and practical religion. The resurrection-life is not something realized once for all, then to become an independent life; but it is a life of which Christ is the centre and the source today, to-morrow, and for evermore. Is it asked how can such a life be lived? We have nothing, Christian reader, to do with the how, and the sooner we give up trying to solve that question, and to leave it to the Holy Spirit, the sooner shall we find that, as in our conversion, so in our sanctification, He will accomplish His own work, and will seal upon us this grace also. A life of unwavering trust in Christ for purity and holiness will be a pure and holy life; and that life will expand yet more and more, until, when the moment of dissolution comes, it rises into the life of eternal blessedness.

01.09. Baby Christians

BABY CHRISTIANS.

—— BY H. E. FRAURE, D.D. WILL you come and see our little one?" Thus accosted, yesterday, I was brought by a sorrowing father to a cradle where his youngest daughter was laid. That daughter had reached the age of 25 years, the younger of twin sisters, the elder of whom was a strong and healthy maid in the full bloom of womanhood. The younger, who laid dead before me, of stunted growth, had passed her quarter-of-a-century on her mother's lap, in the cradle, perambulator, or babychair. A poor, helpless little thing, she could neither walk, nor talk to any about her. Yet, though the parents are not in affluent circumstances, never had a child been more fondly tended. Never had a complaint escaped the mother's lips, on account of all her trouble and anxious care of her helpless offspring.

How many a time, in visiting or passing that home, had I thought of the striking likeness of so many Christians, in their stunted growth, to that poor weakling. More than a quarter-of-a-century has passed in the lives of many since they experienced the new birth. Yet, the era of babyhood remains. Paul (Hebrews 5:12-13) thus speaks of certain believers in his day: "When for the time (which has transpired since your conversion) ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe." In the church in Corinth also, while he found some who were "spiritual" and "came behind in no gifts," "faithful men, who were able to teach others also;" he " found not a few" "who were yet carnal," mere "babes in Christ." Continuance in this state, he repre- sents (Hebrews 6:1-8), not only as criminal, but as infinitely perilous to the soul's immortal interests. This poor toll-keeper's daughter was in no respect responsible for her backwardness; but can any Christian, who still finds his daily experience depicted in the seventh of Romans, honestly say before, God that it is not his own fault that he has not got beyond this stunted babyhood? Every page in the blessed Word of God tells us that God has placed at our disposal every needful grace whereby we may "grow up to the perfect man," "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," that "we be no more children." Paul certainly charged it to the account of the Corinthian believers, that he could only "feed them with milk and not with meat," that they were carnal (under the power of the flesh), that among them were envying, and strife, and factions, and calling themselves after Christ's servants, instead of acknowledging Him only as Lord and Master. Hence it was distinctly their own fault that they were not full grown, but mere "babes in Christ." The Spirit of God was at their disposal, but by their carnality they were grieving Him all the time; had they made the same use of the Spirit as our Blessed Lord, they also, as He did, would have "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

How aptly, on the other hand, does that elder sister, blooming in health and full-developed womanhood, strong to do, to endure, and to receive and digest "the strong meat of the word," represent that other class of believers, who, when "babes in Christ" "desired the sincere milk of the

word," and did "grow thereby," and thus "out of weakness were made strong," and are now "able to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ." It is an infinite shame that in the presence of the super-abounding provisions of grace there should be in any of our churches any stunted believer, "any sickly and feeble ones," that "he that is feeble among us is not as David,'' an all-conquering prince of God, while "the house of David," the leaders of the Sacramental Host, are not "as God, as the Angel of the Lord before Him."

How aptly, I remark, finally, do the patience and enduring love of those parents towards that sickly, and ever feeble child represent the eternally enduring patience and exhaustless love of Christ towards those multitudinous stunted believers who abound in our churches, believers who never grow, and who for so many long years remain unspiritual, carnal, "babes in Christ." Why does He not come upon them in their carnality, worldliness, and sin, and cast them out of His Church as He cast out "those who bought and sold" in "His Father's House?" Because "His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts." If you, reader, are among the number who have long thus "grieved " your Saviour and God, permit me to admonish you, that "it is now high time to awake out of sleep." "Reprobate silver men MAY call you, because the Lord hath forsaken you."

Doesburgh, Netherlands, 16th April, 1878.

01.10. Testimony

TESTIMONY.

——

DURING the progress of a very blessed meeting held by Dr. Lowrey in one of the Wesleyan Churches in Bradford; one of the ministers sweetly entered into the joy of full salvation. He embodied his experience in verse, and handed the lines to Mrs. Lowrey the next morning. They so beauti- fully express the author's feelings, and are so indicative of what others feel, that we do not hesitate to publish them, under the conviction that they will speak to the hearts of many:—

01.11. Then and Now

THEN AND NOW.

—— BY THE REV. HENRY BURTON, B.A.

I followed Christ, but with divided heart, With one hand only did I grasp the Cross;

I served Him not with all my powers, but part, And knew not that my gain was all a loss.

I toiled among the furrows of the field, I cast the seed with ever-patient care; But when the harvest gave a scanty yield, I found, too late, that I had lacked in prayer.

I stood beside the altar day by day, And offered, as I thought, the sacrifice. The whole, the perfect offering was it? Nay, It was a blemished gift, "part of the price."

Self was in all my plans, in all my deeds, And through my life the "I" was written bold;

'Twas not in Christ I trusted, but in creeds;

I grasped the dross and flung away the gold.

Duty was only duty, harsh and stern, (Though love can bend a cross into a crown,) But ah! love's fires had scarce begun to burn, My strength soon wasted and my hands hung down. And thus I lived, a joyless, shadowed life, Because I turned from Him, my only Light;

Instead of trophies won I had the strife, Life was a dimness, neither day nor night. But when I turned and gave up all to Him, My powers, my talents, and my stubborn will, There broke upon my soul an angel's hymn, As the sun rose beyond Penuel's hill. The sky was steeped in heaven's eternal dawn, And in its light the very clouds were gold; The shadows melted in the rising morn, Disclosing joys and blessings manifold. The cross, from which my weakness shrank before, Now seemed transformed into a waving palm; The rod, that made me smart in days of yore, Now blossomed into fragrance and to balm! No longer was it self, the "I," that wrought The proud weak self was crucified and slain;

Jesus was all in all, and I was nought, But losing self, I found eternal gain.

It was no longer duty bade me go Or here, or there, to do my Lord's behest; The fires of love burned with so warm a glow, I found in suffering joy; in service rest.

Now all is peace; for when the tempter tries To fill my soul with sad, unquiet fears, My faith looks upward to the watching skies; The tempter vanishes; for Jesus hears!

Heaven touches earth as onwards now I go, Hasting to reach the city of the blest;

What waits me over there I do not know; But here, with Jesus, it is joy and rest!

01.12. The Sowers

THE SOWERS.

——

"All seed is in the sower’s hands."—Rossetti.

Ten thousand sowers through the land Passed heedless on their way;

Ten thousand seeds in either hand. Of every sort had they.

They cast seed here, they cast seed there, They cast seed everywhere. The land a forest straightway grew, With plants of every kind; And kindly fruits and poisonous too, In that wood could you find: And trees grew here, and trees there, And trees grew everywhere.

Anon, as many a year went by, Those sowers came once more, And wandered ’neath the leaf-hid sky, And wondered at the store; For fruit hung here, and fruit hung there, And fruit hung everywhere.

Then plucked they many a berry bright, None could their right deny; And some ate to their lifelong delight, And some ate but to die;

While some plucked here, and some plucked there, And some plucked everywhere. Nor knew they in that tangled wood The trees that were their own;

Yet as they plucked as each one should, Each plucked what he had sown. So do men here, so do men there, So do men everywhere. Selected

Chapter 15

01.13. Questions Answered

QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

—— BY DR. LOWREY. THE following questions, published in the "King's Highway," have been sent to me with a kind request that I should respond to them. As the interrogations are put forth in no captious spirit, but evidently with a view to solicit a solution of some difficulties, I cheerfully, and in the same spirit, append a brief answer to the first question.

Question 1.—"What is the truth as to the advancement of the soul in holiness from the point of regeneration (John 3:3-8; Romans 8:5-9; 2 Corinthians 5:17), to the time when by faith it enters upon the realization of full redemption? And in what respect does this growth continue after perfect holiness is obtained?"

Answer.—The serious "truth" in many cases, if not in most, is that there is no advancement at all. Nor is this the worst aspect of their condition. They recede and decline. Instead of growth, we find decay. The Church to-day is filled to suffocation with stunted believers. Twenty years after their conversion, it may be fifty, they are found with a sort of fossilized Christian habit and perfunctory worship; with no clear evidence of acceptance with God, no unction from the Holy One, no glowing love or sweet emotions in the heart, and no spiritual fruitfulness in the life. If, it may be said, they have religion, and it would be uncharitable to deny it, yet is their religion like the candied honey, that has lost all its limpid life, and honeycomb sweetness. We admit that a regenerate man may advance in religious knowledge, spiritual enlightenment, confirmation of correct habits, deeper convictions of truth and right, higher conceptions of Christian privilege and obligation. And so may the unregenerate man. And as light, correct habits, and external conformity to God's law, and forms of Divine worship, are no inseparable part of the new birth, so the advancement in the regenerate, which we here admit takes place, is no progress; necessarily, in actual subjective sanctification. If it were so, that would be a progress by works, which even a sinner might make.

It is well known, and universally conceded, that a sinner remains a sinner, though steeped in scriptural light, and baptised with the dew of general gospel grace, until he believes for conversion. It is equally true that a regenerate man, whatever be his enlargement of view, or progress in culture and education, or delight in frequent blessing, or victory over sin by way of restraint and repression, does not advance one hair's breadth in essential subjective sanctification, only as he definitely believes for it. Salvation in all its stages is by faith and by faith alone. And this makes sanctification not only instantaneous, but creates a necessity that we should receive it as a gracious gift, bestowed in opposition to a product worked out, or resulting from development and growth. It must be recollected that sanctification, in the sense of heart purity, is the eradication of moral evil from the elements and attributes of the soul itself. It is not a substitutional holiness, like that of a pure man, representing a foul and degraded constituency, but a personal and inwrought purification, effected by the Holy Ghost, through the truth, and by faith, in the merits and promises of Christ. It is not Christ's holiness imputed to us, and covering us, while all or a part of our depravity remains within, necessarily untouched. Nor is it Christ's sanctity put within our minds, in

the sense that precious goods are deposited in a commission house, which simply holds the goods, but is not cleansed or changed by them. But it is such a renovation and cleansing of our moral being as gives to it a purity corresponding with the purity of God. Such excellence Divine power alone can produce. We can no more evolve it by discipline and culture and good works, than the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots. We might as well undertake to grow briers and thorns and Canada thistles out of our fields, by sowing wheat among them, as to attempt to grow sinful appetites, and lusts, and tastes and tendencies out of the soul, by cultivating counter graces. But while it is true that sanctification proper is obtained by faith alone, and is therefore instantaneous, and not gradual, yet it must be remembered that there are preliminary steps which contribute to its attainment, by way of preparing us to exercise the kind and measure of faith necessary to its realization. These preliminaries are in- struction, prayer, and the study of the subject. No man can exercise faith for a blessing which has never occupied his thoughts, and for which he has no aspiration.

Hence the duties and services which are indispensable to the preservation of a clear and rich regeneration, are at the same time conducive to entire sanctification. They bring us to the point where we see the privilege and feel the need of full redemption. This preliminary work may require time and be attended with degrees of progress. In this sense the experience may be said to be gradual. This, however, is not gradual sanctification but gradual preparation.

I have now given a sufficient, and, I trust, satisfactory answer to the first part of the first question—to wit, "What is the truth as to the advancement of the soul in holiness from the point of regeneration?" Our answer may be re-stated in these two propositions:—

1st. There is no advancement in holiness after regeneration in the sense of being saved from the remains of inbred sin, except by faith, and faith excited by the Holy Spirit, and brought into use through craving hunger for righteousness and a recognised obligation to be holy.

2nd. All the faith and duties necessary to maintain and cultivate an undimmed state of regeneration are subsidiary and conducive to a condition of entire sanctification. The second part of the question which I have undertaken to answer reads as follows: "In what respects does this growth continue after perfect holiness is obtained? "This query must be disposed of in a few words for want of space.

Answer.—Holiness does not put a finality to anything within us, except to the existence and practice of sin. Sin has stunted our being and thwarted our development. Healthy growth, therefore, requires its destruction. It is the office of holiness to counteract this morbid and rickety state of things by effecting the extirpation of moral evil. It puts health and thrift into us, and therefore is the beginning and not the end or enemy of growth. The wheat grows best when the tares are plucked up. Starting with gospel holiness the soul will approximate the absolute and infinite holiness of God for ever. There is no limit to the improvability of our nature and the expansion of our capacities to know and enjoy God. We must therefore rise, thrive, unfold, and increase with the increase of God throughout the ages. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," see Him on and on for ever, and seeing Him, and beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. United to Christ now we have everlasting life, and under the eternal transfiguring ministry of the Holy Ghost, we have set before us endless gradations of glory and holy culture. As the ages

roll on, we shall be dropping the less perfect and putting on the new and more exact and more beautiful similitudes of the Divine image. Reader, let me engage you to begin now "to put off the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and put on the new man, which after God is renewed in righteousness and true holiness."

Chapter 16

01.14. Error Corrected, Faith and Its Effects

ERROR CORRECTED.

—— A FRIEND, in whose judgment we have much confidence, suggested to us the expediency of having in our columns a series of articles under the above general title, or articles intended to correct certain errors which may impede or hinder believers in their Christian progress. In accordance with that suggestion, we introduce the following as the first of such series:

FAITH AND ITS EFFECTS.

"Thou," we read, "wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." Two objects of thought here present themselves to our special consideration, namely, Faith on the one hand, and a Peace-keeping Power on the other. This Power does not reside in our faith, but in God. In faith resides the element of trust; in God, and in Him exclusively resides the Keeping Power. The peace which we receive when we trust, does not issue from our faith, but wholly from God. We trust God to keep us, and he does keep us in accordance with our faith. But for Divine keeping, little or no peace would come to us through our faith. In the Scriptures we are told that "the just live by faith," that we are "justified by faith," that we are "sanctified by faith," and that "the prayer of faith saves the sick," and that "all things are possible to him that believeth." In view of such representations, many individuals seem to regard and speak of faith as if in it resides the power to accomplish all these results. Here is a great error. If faith is the source and cause of our joy, spiritual health, and growth in the Christian life, that, source and cause would be in us, and not in Christ. By faith, we simply open our hearts, and present ourselves as empty vessels for Him to fill. As we trust, " inquire of Him to do these things for us," living waters flow out, not from our faith, but from Him, and fill those vessels.

"In my early experience," said a minister to us recently, "I thought much of what the Scriptures reveal of the power of faith, until it seemed to me, that there was a kind of omnipotence in faith itself. At length his question came with great force to my mind: 'Suppose that Christ did not exist at all, and yet I have the same apprehensions of Him, and the same faith in Him, that I now have. In that case, would my experience be what it is?' This thought opened my eyes to the great error into which I had fallen." Bear this in mind, reader, that it is not faith, but "Christ, who is our life," and that He gives life, when, and only when we "receive Him;" believe in Him, and trust in Him. If Christ were not trustworthy, little of life or joy would come to us through our faith. Yet, and because He is trustworthy, our peace, and joy, and spiritual health, and life, will be according to our faith. Moses believed in the glory of God, and knew it to be real. He could know what that glory really is, and it could become real to his apprehension, but upon one condition—an answer to the prayer: "I beseech Thee, SHOW me Thy glory," and a fulfilment of the promise, "I will cause all my goodness to pass before Thee." Our believing, on the testimony of God's word, that God is in us, does not and cannot make His presence real to our minds. When, on the other hand, the Spirit in response to our faith, "takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us," and Christ through the Spirit, "manifests Himself unto us," then, and only then, is Christ, as a personal presence, real

to our minds and hearts. Let us never put our faith in the place of the Spirit.

01.15. False Humility

Humility.

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"Humility is so frail, so delicate a thing, it is gone if it but looks upon itself; and she who ventures to esteem it here proves by that single thought she has it not." So said Mrs. Fry many years since, and we find the same cited among choice utterances in a paper of high standing in the United States. Such, too, is a very, common sentiment, not only in regard to this but all other forms of genuine Christian virtue. Such virtue, it is thought, exists for all eyes but the possessor, and is of such "a delicate thing" that he cannot look upon it without losing it. We regret to differ totally from such high authorities on so vital a subject. But how, we ask, if this is the true view, must we regard the following inspired utterance of the Psalmist: "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child." "Our rejoicing," says Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, "is this: testimony of our conscience (consciousness) that, in simplic- ity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." We are not only required in the Scriptures to possess Christian virtue in its genuineness, but to know that we possess it. "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." Bear this in mind, reader, that if your supposed Christian virtue is of such a character that you cannot look at it without losing it, or being puffed up with pride, the fact is thereby evinced that such virtue is a counterfeit, and not a genuine coin of heaven. Genuine Christian virtue is so consciously the gift of God that, in its conscious possession, the subject never glorifies himself, but "magnifies the grace of God in himself."

01.16. First Camp Meeting in India

Inetelligence.

—— The Proposed Camp Meeting at Lanowlee, India. For some years past not a few earnest believers in India have been impressed with the conviction that the most pressing need of Christianity in this land is a full realization of the New Testament measure of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. While there is a general doctrinal agreement in reference to the Holy Spirit, while all admit that His aid is absolutely necessary in all efforts to bring sinners to Christ, and that His aid is assured to us up to the fullest measure required in each case, it is a mournful fact that comparatively few avail themselves fully of His ever-proffered assistance, and it thus happens that in this dispensation of the Holy Ghost, that one gift which is most fully assured to believers, is the one which most Christians are conscious of receiving in very imperfect measure. If it be true, as very many Christians believe, that the spiritual power of Pentecost may re-appear in our day, that in fact, we live in the Pentecostal age, and have within our reach the same "power from on high" which the first disciples received, it becomes a most serious duty for all earnest believers to know by personal experience what the Pentecostal measure of the Spirit is. We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, and to have His abiding presence with us, and we should not rest satisfied a single hour till we know what God would have us understand by these expressions. Especially is this important to believers in a country like India. We are confronted by an empire of disbelievers, and need the power of the Holy Ghost as much as the first disciples did when they went forth to bring the Roman Empire to Christ. If India is ever converted, it must be accomplished through the agency of a Pentecostal Church, and that Church or that band of believers which first realizes the Pentecostal outpouring and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, will have done the most signal service for Christianity in India which has yet been accomplished.

Impressed by these convictions, a number of Christian friends have resolved to hold a Camp Meeting during the Easter holidays for the special purpose of waiting upon God for the realization of this great blessing. They purpose to search the Word for indications of God’s will in the matter, and to wait upon Him in expectant prayer for the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost. The meeting will be held in a grove at Lanowlee, forty miles from Poona, on the G. I. P. Railway. Tents will be provided for those who come, and the services will be held in the shade of the trees, after the manner of the American Camp Meetings. The elevation of Lanowlee is such that the weather is comparatively cool, and tent life not only endurable but actually pleasant. The meeting will begin on the 11th of April, and continue one week. Christian friends of all denomina- tions are cordially invited to be present. The above was handed us by Miss Drake, who stopped for a day or two in the city, on her way, for the recovery of her health, to the United States. Just as her voice failed her, and she was commending her case to God, she received a letter from a lady of wealth in Boston, U.S., offering to bear all her expenses in the voyage, &c., to America, and back to India. "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." The above is the first Camp meeting ever held in India. The object for which it was called together, with intelligence of a similar character from China and Africa, and other parts of the world, clearly indicate that the hour for "the

brightness of the Divine rising upon Zion" has come, and all "the kindred of the earth" are about to experience the benign results. The meeting above refer- red to has, of course, been held, and we expect to receive, and present to our readers, from a minister who was to be present during the services, a full account of the same.

01.17. China

China. A letter just received by a friend of ours, T. D. Marshall, Esq., from Dr. Berdut, of Ningpo, China, contains the following very interesting and important intelli- gence:

"From Pekin and Tien-tsin we are receiving the most cheering accounts: One bunched and eleven persons were baptized near Pekin only a few weeks ago, with the report that there were 1,500 more inquirers. At Lao-ting (near Tientsin) we have just received news of a Pentecostal blessing, 300 being received into the Church. This is the some place where, ten years ago, they had a remarkable work of God. Very remarkable about it all is the fact that the foreign Missionaries had very little to do with the work directly, and that God blessed the Native agency. A lesson for us all, no doubt." A Religious Movement.

Chapter 20

01.18. A Religious Movement

A Religious Movement. A remarkable religious movement is reported among the natives of India east of Tinnevelly, some 16,000 having sent in their names to Bishop Caldwell and placed themselves under instruction for baptism. Village after village, the bishop states, is laying aside its heathen- ism, and seeking admission into the fold of Christ. The causes assigned for this remarkable movement are the four evangelistic tours of the bishop last year, and gratitude for English help during the late famine. The bishop has made an application to the Propagation Society for ten additional clergymen and seventy catechists, and a special appeal has been made for the purpose.—Homeward Mail.

01.19. A Conference in Amsterdam

Conference in Amsterdam.

It is a very pleasing and cheering fact that believers in the doctrine of the Higher Life have become so numerous and strong in Holland, that they are able, without help from abroad, to hold large and successful conferences on the subject in the leading cities and towns in that kingdom. Such Conferences, as our readers have learned, have recently been held in Hamburg and Utrecht. Another, as Dr. Fraure informs us, has been called to meet in Amsterdam, "on the 11th of June next, to continue ten days." Special prayers are earnestly requested by those calling the Conference for its success. This request all our readers, and all who love the cause and hear of the Conference, will certainly heed.

01.20. Dr. Palmer

Dr. Palmer.

We have just received an interesting letter from Dr. W. C. Palmer. Dr. and Mrs. Palmer are names familiar and respected in England, especially in those religious circles where aspirations for personal holiness exist. Fourteen years ago they visited this ancestral land, and laboured effectively in various localities during the space of four years. The traces of their teaching and the fruits of their service are still manifest. In Cardiff Methodism is strong. A leading member told us that they traced the beginning of their great prosperity to the visit of Dr. and Mrs. Palmer. In another city where this denomination is numerous and influential, we were informed by the most prominent member of the church there, that he was converted through the agency of these devoted servants of God. He also stated that a clergyman, now officiating in that city and whose house of worship we were then passing, was also converted, side by side, with him the same memorable night. A clergyman, it may be necessary to state for the understanding of the American reader, according to English parlance, is a minister of the Church of England. In still another city we were informed by a minister, who was present and participated in the meeting conducted by Dr. and Mrs. Palmer, that seventy souls were converted in a single evening. It will be remembered by some that a remarkable revival influence swept over Ireland and England at the period here referred to. When the seventy souls were saved the minister stated to us that Dr. Palmer, rejoicingly and full of wonder, said, "such a scene has never occurred since the Pentecost" It is worthy of note that a meeting for the advancement of the experience of holiness has been held every Tuesday afternoon, in Dr. and Mrs. Palmer’s home, for more than forty years continuously. During all these years this lambent flame of holy light has been burning and shining right in the centre of the great city of New York. Provision is made for a large congregation by throwing three spacious and communicating rooms together, where such men as Dr. Bangs, Prof. Upham, Dr. Olin, Dr. Mahan, Mr. Boardman, and Bishop Hamline, and many others have drank in holy inspirations. In the letter before us a reference is made to the presence of Dr. Mahan in one of these meetings, many years ago, which we venture to copy.

"Your mention of dear Dr. Mahan touched a chord of love that vibrated through our being. We fully believe that if the blessed Master was on earth, and called to give testimony, He would say of Him as of another of His friends, "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile." There has been no vacillations in his character or profession. Like that old and tried friend that God thought so much of that He had him enrolled for all coming time in that Book that is to endure for ever,—"I KNOW ow ABRAHAM," that is, I can trust him, and know that he will be true under all circumstances.

"Or if Paul had been writing a letter of introduction for Bro. Mahan he would say of him as he did of Timothy, "I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state, for all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ’s." If Paul had written such a letter of recommendation, I should have been thankful for the privilege of endorsing it. I do not know if Dr. Mahan will remember dining with us when Bishop Hamline was one of the company. After he left, the Bishop

observed it would not be necessary for Bro. Mahan to say that he enjoyed the blessing of perfect love, for it shines out of his countenance.

"These meetings are still overflowing.

"A LOWREY ."

"Steadfast in the Faith."

During the great revival in Boston, U.S., under the labours of Messrs. Moody and Sankey, a year ago the past winter, upwards of 300 drunkards were hopefully converted. On occasion of their late visit to that city, nearly one year having transpired, it was found that all those: 300 converts, about ten excepted, were "Shining as lights in the world." One fact is undeniable, that the gospel, and that only, "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

Chapter 23

01.21. An Extraordinary Meeting

An Extraordinary Meeting. BY DR. LOWREY. A few years ago three or four brethren in Bolton, Lancashire, England, became much interested in the subject of holiness. They united together by the force of spiritual affinities, to hold weekly meetings, for the diffusion of this blessed experience. Accordingly they engaged competent speakers to present and discuss different aspects of this great theme. These services became so interesting and productive, that some one conceiv- ed the idea of supplementing the weekly feast with an all-day conference, and Good Friday was happily chosen for the occasion. This day in England is observed as a national holiday, partly religious and partly recreative. It was a hallowed thought, therefore, to consecrate this period to the advancement of spiritual life. The following is part of the programme of the last anniversary, which occurred April 19, 1878.

We say a part of the programme, for the meetings were too numerous to be noticed in detail. There were no less than ten meetings on Friday, two on Saturday, and four on the following Sabbath. All were largely attended, deeply interesting and fruitful of saving results. On Friday and Saturday, of course, the attendance was most numerous. On Friday, the Anniversary proper, many came from Manchester and other contiguous towns, and some from distant places. The day opened with a devotional meeting at 7.30 a. m., conducted by the Rev. W. Gluyas Pascoe, of Liverpool; at 10.30, a sermon by Rev. A. Lowrey, D.D., subject—"Holiness and how to obtain it;" 1.30, a meeting for prayer, conducted by Alderman Sinclair, of Manchester; 2.30, address by Rev. W. G. Pascoe, subject—"Counsels and encouragements;" 3.30, address by Dr. Lowrey," Enduement of Power;" 4 to 5, meeting for testimony; 5, tea, in the school room; 5 30, meetings in vestry for questions and devotional exercises, conducted by Dr. and Mrs. Lowrey; 6.30, Meeting for short addresses, prayer, and praise. On Saturday evening, and all day Sabbath, simi- lar services were held, in addition to two sermons preached by Rev. Dr. Lowrey, directly on the subject of entire sanctification as attainable by faith. The afternoon meeting, which was largely attended by the Sabbath School scholars and teachers, was addressed by Dr. and Mrs. Lowrey.

All the services were crowned by the felt presence of the Saviour. Many claimed to have trusted Him for full salvation. The anniversary day was the best Good Friday we ever witnessed. It was indeed good—superlatively good. We are not much in favour of holy days, but if we could have a holiness anniversary on each one, we might be reconciled to the revival of the whole superstitious calendar. If even the commemoration of reputed saints could be made to quicken the Church into a new and holy life, it would go far to extenuate the unauthorized celebration of their cherished memories. In days to come our thoughts will fondly recur to the friends and scenes of the Bolton Anniversary. But it must be recollected that we speak of this meeting, not because it was better than many others we have enjoyed during the past year in the United Kingdom, but because it was unique in character. Our hearts will never cease to bound with joy and swell with gratitude, when we think of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle, York, Bradford, Scarborough, Wolverhampton, Cardff, Liverpool, Red Hill, Barnet, Taunton, and London. These places are all made Elims to us. They will ever evolve pleasing remembrances, and excite prayer and hope that the horizon of

spiritual light, real and holy influence, will continue to expand until the world is blessed with the effulgence of perfect day.

02.00. Out of Darkness into Light

Out of Darkness Into Light; or, The Hidden Life made Manifest through Facts of Observation and Experience: Facts Elucidated by the Word of God. by Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D.

Author of "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost," "The Promise of the Spirit," "Christian Perfection," etc.

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1877.

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OUT OF DARKNESS INTO LIGHT.

PREFACE.

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BELIEVERS in Jesus, as we read in the Scriptures, are "all children of the light, and Children of the day," and are privileged to "walk in the light, as God is the light," God Himself being "their everlasting light, and their God their glory." Thus "walking in the light," they "have fellowship one with another;" and more than this, "with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." Abiding in this light and in this fellowship, their "joy is full," "out of weakness they are made strong," in all Conditions of existence they find perfect content, and are "more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us," and "having all sufficiency for all things, are abundantly furnished for every good work." If all this is not true of any believer, it is because he is living below his revealed privileges, and is thus living because he does not "know the things which are freely given us of God." It contradicts every true idea of Christian character, to suppose that a true believer in Christ will "walk in darkness," knowing that he may "walk in the light;" will remain weak, knowing that he may be girded with "everlasting strength;" and will continue "carnal, sold under sin," knowing that he may enjoy "the glorious liberty of the sons of God." The specific and exclusive object of the following treatise is to make known to all who would know and understand their privileges as "the sons of God" and "believers in Jesus," the forms of divine knowledge above referred to. To the prayerful examination of all who are "walking in the light," or are inquiring after the light, the work is commended, with the fervent desire and prayer of the author, that "their joy may be full."

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INTRODUCTION.

I AM this day seventy-five years of age. Fifty-eight of these years have been professedly spent in the service of Christ. During this period, I have had varied forms of inward experience, and have observed important facts pertaining to the religious life -- experiences and facts, a presentation of some of which may be a matter of interest and profit to all believers, to those especially who are now inquiring after, or are walking in, "the glorious liberty of the sons of God." Especially will this be the case when such experiences and facts shall be placed in the clear light of those teachings of inspiration which bear upon such subjects. The period has arrived in the history of the Church, when, in a sense not common in preceding ages, God, by His Spirit, is "revealing His Son in believers," and causing Him to "be formed within them," and to be "in them the hope of glory." Christ, through the Spirit, is "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, and expounding unto us in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" and is "opening our understanding, that we may understand the Scriptures." This He is doing not merely in reference "to what is written in Moses,

and the Prophets, and the Psalms, Concerning Himself" but more especially amid the higher revelations of the New Testament concerning "the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in us, the hope of glory." Everywhere the question is being raised, namely, what are our revealed privileges and immunities as believers in Jesus, and as inheritors, through Him, of "the promise of the Spirit?" When these inquiries shall have been fully answered, "the light of the Church will have come, and the glory of the Lord will have risen upon her," and "the Gentiles will come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising." Having sojourned for about eighteen years in the dim twilight of that semi-faith which pertains to Christ almost exclusively in the sphere of our justification; and having, during all these years, "inquired and searched diligently," but vainly, for the revealed and promised "liberty of the SONS of God;" and having, during about forty years, dwelt and walked in the cloudless sunlight of "assurance of faith" in the same "Jesus, who is of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," and who "baptizes with the Holy Ghost," I have thought that a short account of some of the struggles and defeats experienced in the former state, and of "the spoils won in battle" in the latter, might be profitably "dedicated to maintain the house of God." The fixed habit of my life having been naturally a self-reflective one, has, in a special manner, I judge, qualified me in a good measure for the work before me. As a teacher of mental science, I have constantly habituated myself to a careful analysis of my own mental states, for the purpose of a clear understanding of the faculties, susceptibilities, and laws of my own intellectual, sensitive, moral, and spiritual nature, and that for the purpose of knowing universal mind as it is. I have also been in the equally fixed habit of contemplating my own religious states, emotions, sentiments, purposes, and acts, all my inward and outward experiences, in the clear light of the corresponding truths of the Word of God, and this for the purpose of knowing myself as God knows me. I hear much said in condemnation of the habit of scrutinising our feelings and religious states -- utterances which I by no means approve. If we look within, and nowhere else, we shall, of course, gain very little self or divine knowledge. When we look without to Christ, however, the distinctness of our vision of His grace and glory is by no means obscured, but rather brightened, by a distinct consciousness of the results of the vision in our internal experiences. We trust in Christ for the fulfilment of some specific promise in our inner life. The conscious experience of the fulfilment of that promise in that inner life becomes to us a new revelation of His trustworthiness, tends to confirm our faith and love, and qualifies us to testify of His faithfulness before the Church and the world. In the absence of this consciousness the chief benefits of our faith would be lost to us. When, on the other hand, we suppose ourselves to be in the exercise of faith, and the promised result does not arise, we should conclude that a re-adjustment of our relations to Christ should occur. "We believe, and therefore speak." We must be conscious of the believing, on the one hand, and of the speaking, on the other; that is, of the fact of faith and its corresponding results, or we can give no such testimony as this. The same holds true in all departments of the Christian life. Self-reflective circumspection is one of the immutable conditions of a genuine Christian life and experience. We must "ponder the paths of our feet," or "our ways will not be established," and "commit our ways unto the Lord," or "He will not direct our steps."

How absolute is the command of the Sacred Word that we shall "examine ourselves whether we be in the faith," "prove our own selves," "prove every man his own work," and "be ready always," "with meekness and fear," "to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us." In knowing Christ as He is, and ourselves as in Him, and in knowing Him and

ourselves as He is and we are, we are in the only proper conditions for being and becoming all that is required of us. The plan of Christ is that we shall not only "know that we have eternal life," and that "that life is in the Son," but that we shall be as distinctly conscious of the nature and source of that life. In short, that we shall "know whom we have believed," what we have believed, and what is the consequence of our faith. Without further preliminaries, I now proceed to the accomplishment of the work proposed.

LONDON, Nov. 9, 1874.

02.A01. The Office and Work of the Spirit

PART I.

OUT OF THE PRIMAL LIGHT INTO DARKNESS.

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CHAPTER I. THE OFFICE AND WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN CONVICTION OF SIN.

THERE are few subjects about which Christians need to be more fully informed, and about which, as it appears to us, they are less instructed, than about the office and work of the Holy Spirit. There are two distinct revealed relations which He sustains to our race -- one to the world, "convincing men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," and thereby leading them to Christ; and a promised indwelling personal presence in believers "after they have believed," and, as such, a presence "leading them into all truth," "pertaining to life and godliness." According to the express teachings of inspiration, we know, and can know, divine truth in none of its forms but through a divine insight imparted to us through the Spirit. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him;" and the revealed mission of the Spirit is to "take of the things of Christ and show them unto us," and to "show us plainly of the Father." So distinctly and fully did the apostles recognise their absolute dependence upon the Spirit for right and full apprehensions of divine truth in all its forms, that they teach us that "no man," with any proper apprehensions of the divine import of the words he employs, "can even say that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Holy Ghost."

Individuals are in danger of so preaching Christ, that the hearer, in seeking the knowledge of Him, and a union with Him, is in peril of forgetting his dependence upon the Spirit for the knowledge and union sought after, and of so preaching the Spirit as to induce a forgetfulness of the fact, that the mission of the Spirit is, not to "speak of Himself;" but to "reveal Christ in us," and to "lead us into all truth," and that we are to seek "the baptism of the Holy Ghost," and His continued presence and illumination, as a means to an end, namely, that we may "behold with open face the glory of the Lord," "comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God," "be led into all truth," and "abide in the Son and in the Father." If we seek to know Christ, without recognising our dependence upon the Spirit for that knowledge, or for the abiding presence of the Spirit in our hearts, without seeking such presence as a means of knowing Christ, we shall, in either case alike, fail of our object. If, on the other hand, we seek to "know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent," and seek this as a means of attaining to "the eternal life" which results from that knowledge, and seek "the Promise of the Spirit" as a means of obtaining this knowledge and "the life eternal" thence resulting, we shall not fail of the divine end which we seek. The Church of Christ is the school of God; the things to be learned there are "the things of God;" and the only Being or Teacher in that school who knows these things, and can

impart to us a real knowledge of them, "is the Spirit of God." When we seek a knowledge of these things in filial dependence on our great Teacher, "the Spirit of God," we "shall know the things which are freely given us of God," and "which He hath purposed for them that love Him." The characteristics of the knowledge which we receive of the truth, through the teachings of the Spirit, require a passing notice in this connection. Our apprehensions of divine truth assume two forms -- that of belief, characterised by greater or lesser degrees of conscious certainty; and that of absolute knowledge, which, like our demonstrative convictions, utterly exclude all doubt. The latter is the form of knowledge always obtained through the illuminations of the Spirit. Under His illuminations we not only believe in, but "know God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent;" we "know that we have eternal life;" we "know the things which are freely given us of God;" and "behold with open face the glory of the Lord." In His convicting illuminations, the truth of God becomes "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart;" that is, the sinner has a direct, intuitive, and absolute knowledge of his own heart, his own moral self and moral life, as God sees it. In such convictive process two distinct revelations of truth are simultaneously made to the mind -- God in His moral purity and excellence, and in His sovereign claims upon our supreme obedience and regard, on the one hand, and the heart and moral life as related to God’s purity, excellency, and absolute authority, on the other. As God and the heart are thus set over against each other before the mind, it is made to know, and that absolutely, the utter godlessness, sinfulness, and infinite criminality of its unregenerate life. The sinner absolutely and intuitively recognises himself as having been, as an offspring of God, in God’s world, and as having been under infinite obligations to have sought the knowledge of Him, and to have rendered supreme obedience to His will, and yet to have been literally and utterly "Without God in the world," and to have entertained no respect for His will or character. It is under such convictions that men are brought to the exercise of "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ."

02.A02. Character of the Convicting Illuminations

CHAPTER II.

CHARACTER OF THE CONVICTING ILLUMINATIONS OF THE SPIRIT, AS ILLUSTRATED IN MY OWN EXPERIENCE. The Wanderer Lost through Misdirection.

I WILL now elucidate the above statements by a reference to facts of my own experience. When, at the age of seventeen years, and while engaged in teaching school, I was led, during the progress of a revival of religion which occurred in the place where I then was, to think with deep seriousness upon "the things which concerned my peace," I was made distinctly conscious that the final question of my soul's eternity was then and there to be determined. Hence the intensity of interest with which I contemplated the result of that divine visitation. Having from childhood been educated amid "the straitest sect" of the Calvinistic faith, regeneration, the beginning and source of the religious life, was regarded by me, and rightly so, if I had been correctly taught, as a change of the moral and spiritual nature of the soul -- a change in which the creature is wholly passive, and which is the exclusive result of a sovereign act of God; and the question whether that change was to be wrought in me, depended not at all upon what I should or could do, but upon a decree immutably fixed in the Divine mind from eternity. My whole being was consequently centered upon the inquiry, not what I should, but what God would do in the matter of the change referred to? I begin to pray, and did so, not knowing whether I was acting for my good or ill, but under the distinct impression, having ever been so taught, that with God "even my prayers were an abomination." No one urged upon me "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ;" but all held before me the sovereign election of God, and His exclusive agency in regeneration. In one of the meetings, we were absolutely assured, in so many words, that if we had not been from eternity elected to eternal life, our salvation was impossible. This, as the speaker afterwards informed me, he said especially on my account. I conversed much with Christians and ministers, and that not to learn what "I should do to be saved," having been absolutely taught that I could do nothing whatever effective in the matter, but to know from their experience whether God was, or was not, likely to produce in me the regenerating change under consideration; and whether, if I was to be saved, the period of that change was near or remote. Thus inquiring, and thus waiting, the agony of suspense which I endured deepened at length into the rayless midnight of blank despair. During the many days and nights in which I wandered on in this "blackness of darkness," I came to understand fully the meaning of those words of inspiration, "In the evening thou shalt say, would God it were morning; and in the morning, would God it were evening." Each hour, between the setting and the rising of the sun, seemed an eternity; and I would say to myself, "I would give the universe, did I possess it, if I could see the sun once more." As soon as I saw his face, I would exclaim, "I would give the universe if I could see him set in darkness again." The fountain of life was dried up within me, and I often said to myself, "Were all the world mine, I would freely part with it for the privilege of shedding a single tear." At length all my sensibilities seemed to fail, and I descended into a state of almost emotionless despondency. While in this state, I went home and spent an evening with my mother. I told her that I had but one

desire, and that was to be a Christian. I was absolutely assured, however, that I was not one of the elect; that God, consequently, would never regenerate me; and that she must expect to see her only son thereafter, not as he had been, but as a reckless reprobate in the world. To me no other destiny seemed possible. She insisted that the change had already occurred in my inner life. But so I viewed my own condition and prospects. The Great Revelation, and consequent Passage from Death unto Life

I had continued in this state but a short time, when a new revelation -- I know not what else to call it -- was made to my mind -- an open vision of the character, glory, and love of God on the one hand, and of my own entire moral or spiritual life on the other. In this manifestation I apprehended, with absolute distinctness, God as having ever loved me with a more than parental love, and as having ever been ready to receive me, pardon me, love me, and care for me, as a child, had I confessed my sin to Him, implored His pardoning mercy, and sought His favour. In the light of the face of God as turned towards me, I saw with equal distinctness that my whole heart and entire moral life had been in total alienation and estrangement from Him. I had never sought to know Him, or asked for His favour and care; had never recognised His parental love and kindness; had never entertained the least respect for His will, sought to please Him in anything, or done the right or avoided the wrong, because He required it. In other words, my entire moral life had been an utterly godless one. Every moral act of my entire existence, whether such act had been, without reference to the motive or intent which prompted it, in the form and direction of the right or the wrong, "evil, and only evil continually." Not an act of my life had been performed from that sacred respect for the will of God and the law of duty -- the respect which renders, or can render, any act morally virtuous. In other words still, I saw with perfect distinctness that the moral depravity of my entire moral life had been total and absolute. At the same time I perceived, with equal distinctness and absoluteness, the infinite criminality and ill-desert of such a life, and its utter forfeiture of the Divine favour to eternity; that, in consequence of a life of such utter voluntary alienation and estrangement from such a Being -- a Being of such ineffable love, glory, purity, and perfection, and Him, too, my Creator, my Redeemer, my Preserver, and infinite and boundless Benefactor-- that for such alienation and estrangement from such a Being, I had utterly forfeited all claims to His mercy and favour, both now and for an eternity to come. On this subject I had no more doubt than I had of my own existence. Under these convictions my mind turned with shame from the face of God, and, with utter reprobation upon my own moral self and life. "I abhorred myself and repented as in dust and ashes." At that time, not knowing what my God would do with me, I said distinctly and definitely, that if God should "cast me off for ever," I would stand before the universe and affirm the sentence to be just. The thought of continuing in such alienation and estrangement from such a Being became also more to be reprobated and fearful in my regard than perdition itself. In this state of mind, when alone with God, "I bowed the knee" before Him, and confessed that I had no right to ask or expect any favour at His hands, and that my whole eternity hung upon His mere grace and mercy. One favour I would venture to ask, that I might be kept from ever returning to that state of alienation from Him in which my life had been spent, and that I might have grace to appreciate His love, excellence, and glory; to love and venerate Him, and have a sacred respect for His will. If He would grant me this, I would accept of anything in time and eternity that He might appoint me. This was the exact substance and form of that prayer. I had no sooner pronounced these words, than I was consciously encircled in "the everlasting arms." I was so overshadowed with a sense of the manifested love of a forgiving God and Saviour, that my whole mental being

seemed to be dissolved, and pervaded with an ineffable quietude and assurance. I arose from my knees without a doubt that I was an adopted member of the family of God. With "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," pervading every department of my mental nature, I could look upward, and, without a cloud between my soul and the face of God, could and did say, "My Father and my God." Such was my entrance into the inner life. Let us now consider Certain important Lessons taught by the Facts above Presented. The Nature of Sin. -- If we would understand sin as God regards it, we should contemplate it just as the Spirit presents it to the mind when He induces conviction of sin. Sin, as the Spirit of God convicts us of it, is always apprehended as exclusively a personal matter, a state of the inner man, a form of voluntary moral activity, on account of which the soul has justly forfeited the eternal favour, and as justly incurred the endless displeasure of God. As revealed to the mind by the Spirit, and the conscience enlightened by the Spirit, sin and infinite ill-desert, a hopeless forfeiture of the favour of God, are inseparably united. God is apprehended as having, on account of His relations to us as our Maker, Redeemer, Preserver, and infinite Benefactor, and, also on account of His infinite natural and moral perfections, infinite claims upon our love, veneration, and obedience. The soul is also revealed to itself as having been, in all its moral activities, in voluntary alienation and estrangement from all the claims of God and of His moral law upon it. The soul is revealed to itself as having come into this state, and continued in it, not from necessity, but choice. In my own case, for example, I was convicted of no sin of my ancestry, near or remote, and of no form or degree of demerit for anything which did attach to me personally, and to no one else but myself. Nor was I convicted of ill-desert for anything in or about myself but alienation and estrangement from God, His character, His will, and the law of duty -- alienation and estrangement in which I was consciously voluntary. The same holds in all other cases. Under the convicting power of the Spirit, every man is convicted of personal criminality, and nothing else; of "knowing God and not glorifying Him as God;" of knowing Him as our Maker, Preserver, Redeemer, and infinite Benefactor, and yet withholding gratitude from Him, of knowing His will, and refusing obedience to it. Every individual, also, when convicted by the Spirit of sin, or of voluntary estrangement from God, from His will, and the law of duty, apprehends, with absolute distinctness, that that estrangement has been total, and has been equally so in respect to all forms of moral activity, whether externally right or wrong. When the Spirit renders the truth "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," every man, whatever the visibilities of his life may have been, and however amiable certain of his natural temperaments may have been, perceives with perfect absoluteness that no moral act of his unregenerate life was prompted by that motive and intent which render such act morally virtuous, or such that the conscience or God can regard, or ought to regard, as an act of obedience to the Divine will and the law of duty. Regeneration is not an advance from a low state of moral goodness to one that is higher, but an entrance into a state entirely new. The words of inspiration, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away, and behold, all things have become new," are just as true of any one man as of any other; and this passage from the old state to the new is just as immutably necessary to eternal life in the case of any one unregenerate man as it is in that of any other. Any other view of sin, or of the natural state of man, is in open contradiction to all that Christ, Moses, the prophets, apostles, and the Eternal Spirit, teach us of "what is in man."

Reasons of the Objections of Individuals to the Evangelical Faith.

We now perceive the reason of the objections which individuals entertain to the principle and doctrines of the evangelical faith. All such objections take their origin and form from a want of a true apprehension of sin, and of the actual condition of man as sinner. When any individual, whatever his previous views may have been, apprehends sin as it is, sin as God and the conscience divinely enlightened view it, when any man perceives his own moral life as it stands related to the will of God and the law of duty, all his objections to the doctrines of the Trinity, atonement, salvation on the condition of "repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," and eternal judgment," disappear at once. When man knows himself as he is, he becomes absolutely conscious that that faith, with all its revelations, must be true, or he is hopelessly lost. A very highly-educated and intelligent unbeliever, for example, once listened to a discourse which we delivered on the subject of regeneration. In that discourse, the actual character of the natural man was set forth, and the necessity of the change, represented by the term regeneration was verified. The truth, as presented, he afterwards stated, "commended itself to his conscience." On his way from the house of God, these thoughts passed through his mind: "What a fool I have been! If I had this religion, what injury could it do me? It might, on the other hand, be to me an eternal benefit." With these thoughts pressing upon his mind, he on the next Sabbath listened to a discourse from the text, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." In that discourse the nature of the moral law, and man’s relations as a sinner to that law, were as clearly elucidated as we were able to do it. As the man listened to these expositions, he said to himself, This, as I absolutely know, is the moral law, and these are my conscious relations to that law. If, now, there is no redemption for me in Christ, I am without hope for eternity." Thus, through "the knowledge of sin," he was led directly to Christ, and few men ever evinced a purer faith in Christ than did this man in his subsequent life. Hence it is that the Spirit first convinces of sin, as the means of inducing faith in Christ as a saviour from sin. Such, also, is the fixed tendency and aim of all true preaching of "the everlasting gospel." A ministry whose fundamental aim, and the fixed tendency of whose ministrations are not to convince men of their sin, and hopeless ruin in sin, and thus to lead them to Christ, is "a plant which our heavenly Father has not planted." The Witness of the Spirit.

We may now understand also, in one of its essential forms, "the witness of the Spirit" to our sonship with God. Much is said upon this and kindred subjects in the New Testament. When, as shown above, I, for example, was brought into a certain state of utter self-abandonment and dependence upon the mercy and grace of God in Christ, I was made absolutely conscious that God had pardoned and accepted me. I was as absolutely -- I could not tell how -- assured of this, as I was that I existed at all. This, as I understand it, is one of the forms in which "the Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God." The Spirit, and He only, knows when we are accepted, and He only can make us absolutely conscious of the fact. When, in connection with implicit faith and consecration on our part, He manifests God to us as our Father and portion, then "the Spirit bears witness with our spirit," our conscious trust and consecration "that we are the sons of God." When He imparts to us "full assurance of faith," "full assurance of hope," and "full assurance of understanding," we have the witness of the Spirit that we are being "taught of God," and are, consequently, "His sons and daughters."

02.A03. A Great Temptation, A Final Victory

CHAPTER III. A GREAT TEMPTATION, A FINAL VICTORY, AND ANOINTING. FOR some months after I had found peace and assurance of acceptance, my spiritual state was rather of a negative than positive character. I had become dead to the desire of wealth, and all my plans of ambition -- plans which I had, with the intensest interest, cherished from childhood up -- were wholly relinquished. Even the idea of acquiring a liberal education -- the cherished thought of my young life ever since the subject had been suggested to my mind -- was wholly dropped out of my regard. One thought only possessed my whole being -- that of "walking with God," and this in the retired circle of private life. Had I been educated in the Catholic faith, my controlling religious tendencies, had nothing occurred to give them a higher directions, would have unquestionably drawn me in the direction of monastic retirement. I had not continued long in this state before the aspirations of my old nature began to revive, and to draw me with greater and greater strength in the backward direction towards the worldly life. This influence reached its highest power in the early spring; and on the day of the town and state elections, when all my young associates were assembled, under my eye, and in the immediate presence of my father’s dwelling -- assembled for those amusements in which I had formerly so intensely delighted, it seemed that the concentrated powers of "the world, the flesh, and the devil," and that in their accumulated strength, were brought to bear upon my young and susceptible mind, to induce me to join that company, and, in doing so, to make a final choice of the worldly, instead of the religious life. As soon as I had completed the task assigned me, I turned for the forest, and, in the heart of the same, spent the day with God. There, in deep "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," I became "crucified to the world, and the world to me." From that good hour I have never felt the least temptation to return to the worldly life. In that "house of God and gate of heaven," also, my Christian life passed over from the negative to a positive state. I became distinctly conscious that I was called of God to be in the world as Christ was in the world, to do all I could to bring the world back to God. I then and there felt myself girded for the purposes of that calling with a strength not my own. I left that forest with the distinct consciousness that I was a dedicated servant of Christ, and was endued with a divine power for that service -- a power of which I had never heard before, and knew not by what name to call. That dedication has remained. Becoming early conscious that I was called to the ministry, I set about the needful intellectual preparation. During the progress of my liberal education, I was often told by individuals who best understood my natural adaptations, that I ought to enter the army, or become a statesman. Having received the full persuasion that I could better serve Christ as a preacher of the everlasting gospel than in any other sphere, I never felt the least drawings in any other direction. Whatever others might prefer, with me the idea of "saving a soul from death," and putting that soul in possession of the treasures of eternity, has rendered as "dross" and "loss" the wealth and the honours of this world. Nor was my action for doing service for Christ delayed. I immediately set about persuading my associates. One of them was soon converted, and afterwards became, and continued till his death, a central light in the leading church in the city of Buffalo. Many of the others were so influenced, that, not long afterwards, they became members of the Church of God. The next winter, in my eighteenth year, I was called to

teach school in a very ungodly neighborhood, where there was not within more than three miles of my schoolhouse a single individual who could take part with me, singing excepted, in any religious meeting. I soon organised two meetings for each week, none speaking or praying in those meetings but myself, until I was joined by young converts. As the result of those meetings, a church, consisting of from thirty to fifty members, a large majority of whom were from these converts, was immediately after organised in that place -- a church which remains until this day. Such has been "my manner of life from my youth." All other forms of wisdom have even appeared "foolishness" to me, as compared with that higher wisdom which "winneth souls." Some profitable lessons may be learned from the facts now before us. Among these I notice the following: --- Common Defect in Christian Character.

We notice, in the first place, what may be regarded as the most common defect in Christian character in those cases where we must suppose that there has been a real entrance into the religious life. In most cases, perhaps, the spiritual life process never advances beyond the passive state above described. There has been, in the experience of such individuals, real conviction of sin, genuine "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," and conscious assurance of pardon and peace with God. Here, however, the process of renewal stops. There is, on the other hand, no dedication for positive and active service as servants of Christ, and no "anointing," or "endowment of power from on high" for such service. Religion, in all such cases, is passive rather than active, negative rather than positive, and purely receptive rather than aggressive. Individuals present themselves to Christ to be saved, and not, in addition to this, as "living sacrifices, holy" (dedicated for active service), and, for this reason, especially "acceptable unto God." They, judging from their lives, regard themselves as "called with an holy calling," for the mere attainment of personal salvation, and not to "hold out the word of life," to "shine as lights in the world," and to do efficient service in the great work of "perfecting the saints," and "saving souls from death." "The Spirit of the Lord God" is not upon them as He was upon Christ, and God has not anointed them as He did Christ, to "preach the gospel to the poor," to "heal the broken-hearted," to "preach deliverance to the captives. the recovery of sight to the blind," to "set at liberty them that are bruised," to "preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God." Yet every believer is as really called to a positive and supremely dedicated mission in the work of "seeking and saving that which was lost," as was Christ. How can we otherwise be among those who are "the light of the world," and "the salt of the earth?" In this passive, negative state, if we remain therein, we are, according to the express teachings of the Bible, in one of the most perilous conditions to the Christian life possible, a condition from which there is a perpetual peril of out "falling away" into a state from which "it is impossible that we should be renewed again unto repentance." As the only condition of escaping such peril, the apostle exhorts believers to "leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ," -- the immature and passive state in which the mind is occupied almost exclusively with the matter of our personal salvation, the state in which we are perpetually, in consequence of relapses into sin, "laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God," -- and to "go on unto perfection," that mature, supremely dedicated, sanctified, and divinely-anointed state, in which Christ is "glorified in us," because we "abound unto every good work." Had I, for example, continued in the passive and unanointed state to which I have referred, there would, with perfect certainty, have been a resurrection of the power of worldly propensities, and of prior worldly loves and aspirations, which would have insured open apostasy, or a gradual dying out of the religious

life, until, with perhaps a name to live, I should have been "dead while I lived." Two young men of most eminent talents once, as members of the same class, entered one of our American colleges, each having the ministry in view. One of them, during the progress of his education, in a state of supreme dedication to Christ, sought a divine anointing for his work. As a consequence, he became one of the most eminent and useful ministers of the gospel known in the United States, "died in the Lord," and in heaven his name is as "ointment poured forth." The other, when he made a public profession of his faith, presented to the Church a written statement of his early experience. All wondered at the account given, and not a doubt rested upon any mind of the genuineness of his conversion. He continued, however, in the passivity of his first faith. As a consequence, there was a resurrection of his early ambitions, and, under the temptation, he turned aside, and entered the legal profession. He became a world-renowned statesman, but died a confirmed drunkard. Reader, are you in Christ as "a branch that beareth not fruit?" If you continue so, as Christ is true, you will be "cut off," and reserved for "the burning."

What we should always do when under Temptation.

We notice, in the next place, what we should always do when, under temptation, we fall into sin, or when we find ourselves under temptation to sin. In the first case, most Christians simply confess the wrong, and seek pardon for the same. This they should do, but by no means stop here. They should reflect upon the cause of their fall, and seek to have that cause removed. Their recovery in such cases will always be permanent. The celebrated preacher and theologian of America, Dr Hopkins, for example, was afflicted with a very ungovernable temper. He had a brother-in-law, a member of the legal profession, who was an infidel. This man was accustomed to say to his family, "Dr Hopkins is, at heart, no better man than I am, and I will prove it to you one day." One evening, Dr Hopkins called upon his brother-in-law to adjust some business matters in which they were mutually concerned. The infidel, knowing well the weak point in the Doctor’s character, set up most unrighteous claims, and that for the specific purpose of exciting his anger. The attempt was a success. Dr Hopkins left the house in a rage, closing the door behind him with much violence. "There!" said the infidel to his family; "you see now the truth of what I told you, that Dr. Hopkins is, at heart, no better man than I am; and now I have got my foot upon his neck, and I will keep it there." That, reader, is the infidel heart the world over. Dr. Hopkins, however, went immediately to his closet, and spent the entire night there in prayer to God. As the morning dawned, an ineffable peace, quietness, and assurance, pervaded his whole being. Hastening to his brother-in-law’s residence, he confessed, with tears, to him and his family, the sin which he had committed in their presence, not saying one word about the graceless provocation which had occasioned the sin. As the man of God retired, the infidel said within himself, "There is a spirit which I do not possess, and that spirit is undeniably divine." Thus convicted, he became a Christian, and a preacher of the gospel which he had once despised. Thirty years subsequent to this occurrence, Dr Hopkins stated, that since that memorable night, no temptation or provocation that he had received had ever once stirred a motion of that evil temper within him. Let all believers imitate this sacred example, and carry, not only their sins, but their propensities which tempt them to sin, to "a throne of grace," and "the very God of peace will sanctify them wholly," -- so subdue and sanctify those propensities, that they will not only cease to tempt us to sin, but will prompt to the opposite virtues. An evil propensity sanctified, as it will be, when presented for that purpose, at "a throne of grace," -- becomes, ever after, a permanent incentive to all that is well-pleasing in the sight of God. How

important that all believers should understand this great fact !

Other Christians equally err when subject to temptation to sin. Under the pressure of the temptation, they suffer a thoughtless curiosity to draw them towards the scene which awakens desire, where they look upon the face of sin, instead of promptly turning away from the temptation, and getting as near to God as possible. In the circumstances in which I was at the time of the great temptation above referred to, many would have determined to visit the scene where the temptation lay, with the purpose of going there and looking on as a mere spectator. Under the influence to which they would thus subject themselves, they would be induced to "deny the faith," or their faith would be so weakened as to render a fall almost certain under future temptations. By taking the steps I did, I gained a permanent victory over the propensities through which I was thus strongly tempted. This should always be the case when tempted: we should always turn from the temptation towards the face of God. We shall then not only be kept for the moment, but shall always become endued with a new power from on high for a certain triumph under future "trials of faith."

Light upon the Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. The facts above presented also throw some light upon that central doctrine of the Bible -- the baptism of the Holy Ghost. When I went out of that forest, for example, I went out not only in the consciousness that I was "not of the world," that I was emancipated from its entanglements, and that I was, for life and an eternity to come, a consecrated servant of Christ, but that, for my mission and work, I was endued with a power not my own. Of the nature of that power, as I have said, I was utterly ignorant; of its presence I was absolutely conscious. From that hour I began literally to "read my Bible with new eyes." The leisure moments of the following summer were spent in the study of that "dearest of books, that excels every other," in communion with God, and in labours to bring my young associates to Christ. In the meetings where I taught school the next winter, I always prayed three times. We commenced the meetings with singing. Then followed a prayer, and the reading of a chapter from the Bible, followed by a very few remarks from me. We would then sing again, and I would pray a second time. The reading, the remarks, and singing followed as before, and the exercises would be closed with another prayer, followed by singing. As soon as I began to pray, I became conscious of an enlargement, and freedom, and power of utterance at which I wondered with unutterable wonder. The same was true of the audience. Strong men and women were awestruck, and yielded to the convicting influence which pervaded the assemblies. The giant fighter of all that region -- a region where men were accustomed to knock each other down with terrible violence -- attended those meetings. Even he was overpowered, and became a babe in Christ. Afterwards, I received similar enlargement in speaking for Christ. In the last place where I taught school, a revival of religion commenced in that school, a revival which spread all over the whole society around. During this period I held three meetings each week, the schoolhouse being always filled to its utmost capacity. In these meetings, I uniformly spoke for a period of at least from one-half to three-quarters of an hour. Myself and all the people felt that the power of utterance of which I was possessed was not my own, but a God-imparted gift. I overheard, for example, a company of young men speaking upon the subject. The oldest and most intelligent among them remarked that "of one thing he was certain, that the power under which that teacher speaks is not his own, but is divine." Of the same fact I was myself equally assured.

We have here, as I understand the subject, the beginnings of those divine baptisms, and endowments of power from on high, promised to all believers in the Bible. With singleness of purpose and object to be "not of the world, as Christ was not of the world," to be "sent into the world as He was sent into the world," and to be sanctified for our life, mission, and work, as He "sanctified Himself"' for His, we seek unto God, in the name of Christ, for mercy and grace to be and to do all that He wills, and to finish the work which Christ has appointed us, as He finished the work which "the Father gave Him to do." While in this state of total separateness from the "world, with its affections and lusts," and of supreme consecration to Christ, a divine influence and power comes over us, by which we become consciously "crucified unto the world, and the world to us," and we begin to live as "Christ lives in us," an influence and power by which "the eyes of our understanding are enlightened," so that "we, beholding with open face the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory unto glory," and consciously "having all-sufficiency for all things, we abound unto every good work." Here we receive "the promise of the Spirit," "the baptism of the Holy Ghost," the promised "endowment of power from on high." Without this "anointing" the entire body of believers are a "feeble folk;" with it, none are "sickly or feeble" in all that flock. "He," on the other hand, "that is feeble among us is as David," "more than a conqueror through Him that hath loved us," while "the house of David" (the leaders of the flock) "are as God, as the angel of the Lord before Him." Here, also, we have a vision of the approaching future of the "Zion of our God." The time is near when all Zion’s "children will be taught of the Lord, and great will be the peace of her children," all God’s "servants and handmaidens will prophecy,’’ because they shall all be "baptized with the Holy Ghost," and "a little one shall become a thousand, and a feeble one a strong city."

02.A04. Assurance of Hope.

CHAPTER IV.

ASSURANCE OF HOPE. THE view which the Holy Spirit gave me, at the first, of the godless worldly life which I had led, has remained to this day, but was, from time to time, during subsequent years, renewed with most impressive distinctness. About one year after my conversion, for example, while sitting in a family circle where I was boarding at the time, a vision of that godless life was most impressively presented to my mind. To the circle around me I remarked that I was horrified and affrighted in view of the life which I had led. Yet I had not been an immoral youth. On account of my well-known attainments and moral reputation, I had, the year before, been selected to teach the school in one of the most Christian, moral, and intelligent districts in all the region round. It was that total alienation and estrangement from God, and that total want of respect for His will and the law of duty, which made that life appear so fearful to me. Such revelations of my former moral self and life induced me to make it a subject of most earnest prayer, that I might never return to that godless state, on the one hand, and, on the other, might have grace to "keep myself in the love of God," during my future sojourn on earth. At length, I attained to a full assurance that I was, not only then an accepted servant of Christ, but should have grace to continue such even unto the end. In this assurance, I have done service for Christ up to the present. Not a shadow of doubt rests upon my mind that I am His for eternity, and in such utterance, as it seems to me, all believers should "walk with God." We should recognise ourselves, and receive, through the Spirit, an inward assurance that our union and fellowship with Christ is, not only for the future of life, but for an eternity to come; that we are united to him by "a covenant of salt," an "everlasting covenant." This, as I judge, is what the Scriptures call "assurance of hope." Two common errors here present themselves -- errors which require special consideration.

Wrong Advice to those Seeking the Higher Life. In listening to advice often given to those who are seeking the rest of faith, I hear things said which I cannot approve. Such persons are told to seek for grace to be holy at the present moment, to learn to "love moment by moment," with no concern about their future obedience. Now the Scriptures, as I read them, teach us expressly and most abundantly to entertain deep concern, not only about present but future sanctification, and teach us to exercise present faith for the latter as well as for the former. Paul, for example, entrusted his immortal interests to Christ for future as well as for present keeping. "I know whom I have believed, that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." The promises have a specific reference, not merely to present, but to future keeping, and pledge to our present faith preserving as well as instant grace. We are expressly authorised to trust "the very God of peace," not only for the present, to "sanctify us wholly," but to "preserve us blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." We are exhorted to "take unto ourselves the whole armour of God," not only for safety against present perils, hut that we may be "able to stand in the evil day" which may come. It should be our constant aim, not only to be "made perfect in love" for the passing moment, but to be "rooted and grounded in love."

All our separations from sin, and dedications and consecrations to Christ, should be for the eternal future as well as for the present, and our faith in divine keeping should have an equal reference to both. He only attains to the full "rest of faith"who has the assurance, as all may have, that he is in Christ, not only for the passing moment, but will have "grace to" abide in Him. As a means of such an abiding, I, for one, seek to have "the body of sin destroyed," on the one hand, and on the other to be so sanctified in "my body, and soul, and spirit," that I shall have "a divine nature" which shall always effectively draw me into "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." "Let us, as many as would be perfect, be thus minded."

Influence of such Assurance

I often hear it said, also, that if we had an assurance of future keeping and final salvation, we should become careless about present obedience. When I hear such suggestions, two thoughts commonly present themselves to my mind -- that the individuals who present such suggestions are in a very selfish state, on the one hand, and have utterly false apprehensions of the nature of "assurance of hope" on the other. The object of Christian faith and hope, with them, seems to be mere security of final salvation. The object real Christians desire and hope is present and future "walking with God," -- and "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." The central element of Christian hope in respect to heaven is that we shall then be "like Christ," -- because "we shall see Him as He is. "Every man that hath this hope in Him (Christ) purifieth himself, even as He is pure." -- Nothing else but a supreme desire and aim for present purity can result from such a hope. The individual whose assurance of final salvation induces present carelessness in respect to fellowship with Christ, and present indifference in respect to moral purity, ought to know that at the last his "hope will be as the giving up of the ghost." Supreme selfishness, and not the love of God and holiness, is at the basis of all his religious aspirations and hopes. Such persons also are in equal error in regard to the nature of this "assurance of hope."

There are no such elements as these in it -- that we can "live after the flesh and not die;" -- that we "shall be made partakers of Christ," -- but upon the condition that we "hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast even unto the end;" that we shall be "kept from falling" without faith, watchfulness, and prayer on our part; and that, in dependence upon divine aid and grace, we are to "keep the faith," "finish our course," -- and "work out our own salvation." How can an individual, impressed with the necessity of fulfilling all these conditions or failing of eternal life, have "assurance of hope" -- in regard to that life? The individual who possesses this assurance, I reply, looks to Christ, and seeks by faith and prayer not only to be "rooted and grounded in love," and to be "confirmed, settled, and strengthened" in His obedience, but to be equally confirmed in the spirit of watchfulness against all occasions of falling, and all the evil incitements in his own nature and the world around him. Because he is consciously confirmed and endued with power in all these respects, and has full faith in future grace "for every time of need," he cannot but "serve God without fear," and in "full assurance of hope." The absolute assurance with which I, for example -- and my case is but the common one in all such instances -- have served Christ these many years has never induced me to entertain for a moment the presumption that I could take a step in the direction of disobedience without peril to my immortal interests, or that I could fail to "keep my body under and bring it into subjection," -- without "being myself a cast-away." In the early years of my Christian life, I "fled youthful lusts" as I would flee from the approaching wave of devouring lava. On account of the known influences which pervade such scenes, I have never, since "I

named the name of Christ," attended a theatre, a circus, or racecourse and have never allowed an idle curiosity to induce me to draw near and look upon the face of sin, any more than I would to gaze upon the face of the Second Death. Within the circle of conscious safety I have found all the amusements and social gratifications which my very strong and buoyant social nature has demanded. Yet I "serve God without fear," and in "full assurance of hope."

When, a few years since, in full possession of my faculties, I lay for about two weeks so near eternity that it was apprehended that each breath might be my last, I had no disposition then to "cast away my confidence," and had no more doubt of my salvation than I should have were I in heaven. I have no more disposition to forsake Christ now, or to doubt of His eternal love and favour, than I had then. Yet I know well that I must "fight the good fight," "finish my course," and "keep the faith," or not receive "the crown of righteousness." The same is true of all who have Christian "assurance of hope."

02.A05. The Gift Of Grace

CHAPTER V. THE GIFT OF GRACE.

"Unto me," says the apostle Paul, "who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." The view which the Spirit of God gave me at the first of my actual condition and deserts as a sinner, on the one hand, and of what the grace of God had done for and conferred upon me as "a believer in Jesus," on the other, has ever held my mind in continuously growing sympathy with the above sentiment of the apostle, and has constantly, in my apprehensions, rendered more and more wide and deep, and seemingly impassable, the gulf between the state in which I deserve to be and what, by the infinitude of divine grace, I am permitted to be and to become. The language in which I was, during the early years of my Christian life, accustomed to express my ideas upon the subject was the following: -- "What a privilege it is to be a Christian! to be the follower, and bear the name, of such a Being as Jesus Christ!"

What gave me most power with Christians and sinners was the manner in which I was accustomed to utter such words. The distance between personal desert and the privileges of grace conferred has ever appeared infinite, and is constantly becoming more and more impressive. When we think of Christ as having "loved us and given Himself for us," when Gethsemane and Calvary are present in thought, we cease to wonder that "by the cross" Paul was "crucified unto the world, and the world to him," and that suffering for Christ’s sake was regarded by him as a gift of "infinite grace to vileness given." With what ineffable sweetness do the words come to the heart, "Unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake!" With what unutterable wonder do we contemplate the fact, that God not only invites us to such service, but that what we "do in the name of Christ" is, in His regard, "of great price," and that He holds in reserve infinite rewards for the same! That wonder reaches its consummation, when we contemplate the fact that we are "called with an holy calling" to do service, not as mere servants or friends, but as "the sons and daughters of the Lord, the Almighty." "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that WE should be called the sons of God." I could not regard myself as a Christian at all did I regard in any other light my place as a member of the sanctified family, and as a labourer in the sphere to which Christ has assigned me, and if I did not "bear the cross" with this sentiment, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." Many who bear the name of Christ seem to regard Christian service, not as an ineffable privilege, a gift of grace, but as a heavy yoke and wearisome burden, which are to be endured as little and as unfrequently as possible. Such individuals may well question the genuineness of their faith. Are they not "enemies of the cross of Christ?" The true believer finds rest under the burden and yoke of Christ, and "quietness and assurance for ever" under the pressure of the cross.

02.A06. The True And Proper Food

CHAPTER VI. THE TRUE AND PROPER FOOD FOR THE LAMBS OF THE FLOCK. No prophet, apostle, or teacher of truth ever received a more important commission than that committed by our Saviour to Peter, in the words, "Feed my lambs." All believers, whether young or old, at the time of their conversion, enter the fold of Christ as lambs of the flock, and all need, as the immutable condition of their privileged future growth and development as "believer in Jesus," the same, in all essential particulars, kind of care, nourishment, instruction, and admonition. All at this primal, critical, and determining period of their new life, must, as "new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word,"-- and must be furnished with, and taught to feed upon, the same, that "they may grow thereby," -- or they will, with perfect certainty, without a reconversion to their primal childhood state, become feeble and sickly weaklings during their future Christian life, if they do not become "dead while they live." No teacher of truth, whether in the ministry or out of it, -- and all in the school of Christ, and that before they have been long in that school, "ought to be teachers," -- no teacher of truth, we say, ever put to himself a question of higher importance than this, namely, What is the food proper for these lambs of the flock? or, What is this "sincere milk of the Word," which these "new-born babes" should "desire" and be taught to feed upon? In other words still, What are those primal truths and principles of "our most holy faith," into which the young convert must be fully instructed, and with which he must be deeply impressed, as the revealed condition of his "growing into Christ in all things," and thereby attaining to a perfected manhood in Him, "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ?"

Let us see if we cannot find an answer to these momentous questions. As a means to this end, let us first consider the actual condition of the young convert, when, as a lamb of the flock a "new-born babe," -- he is committed to the care of the ministry and membership of the churches, his heaven-appointed teachers; we shall then best know his needs, and the kind of instruction and influence demanded in his new condition.

Actual State of the Young Convert As an illustration and example of the actual spiritual state of all genuine converts, at the beginning of their new life, permit me to refer to my own case, at the time when I became conscious that God, for Christ’s sake, had forgiven my sins. Two characteristics, as we have seen, peculiarised that state, and separated it from all forms and developments of the worldly life, to wit -- a deep abhorrence and reprobation of my former moral self and life, together with a supreme desire and choice to be free from sin in all its forms, and a corresponding appreciation of moral purity, with a supreme desire and choice to be, in all respects, conformed to the will of God and the law of duty.

Aside from these two positive elements -- the desire to be free from sin, on the one hand, and the intense "hungering and thirsting after righteousness," on the other -- my state was almost exclusively, as I have stated, a negative one. I had almost no conception whatever of the nature and character of "the new life," or of the means and conditions of "the holy living" to which I had been called. The foundation for the new life, as is the case with all true converts, was well laid; but

of the means and conditions of perpetuating and perfecting that life, and of the new direction which my activities were to take, I was indeed "a babe in Christ," -- and had "need of milk, and not of meat," had need to be taught "the first principles of the oracles of God." When I went out of that forest a consciously dedicated and anointed servant of Christ, I was in equal ignorance of the nature of the service to which I was called, and of the conditions on which I could be furnished and girded with strength for that service. I knew Christ well in the sphere of justification, or the pardon of sin, but knew nothing of Him in that of our sanctification, and had never heard of Him, or thought of Him, as "the Son of God who baptizes with the Holy Ghost." Of the idea of "the life of faith," and of the life revealed in the words, "I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one," I was as ignorant as an unborn babe. Had any one come to me in my prayerful study of the Bible, and put the question, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" my proper answer would have been, "How can I, except some man shall guide me?" Such, at their best estate, is the condition of all young converts, when first entrusted by our Saviour to the ministry and the churches, and that with the solemn admonition to those who "should be teachers," "Feed my lambs." The Peculiar Forms of Instruction and Influence to which the Young Convert should be subject. A ready answer may now be given to the question, By what forms of instruction and influence may these primal and supreme necessities of the convert be met? One great demand of his being, the pardon of his sins, has been fully met. When he becomes conscious of sin, he knows well just what to do, and where to go. "The throne of grace" is before him, and there stands his "Advocate with the Father." He draws near, and receives conscious freedom from "all condemnation." What he now needs to be taught most fully is, his relations to Christ in the whole matter of sanctification, as well as of justification; that we are just as "complete in Him" in the one relation as in the other; that His power to "save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him" is equally absolute in all relations, and circumstances, and particulars in which salvation is needed by us, and that we are just as absolutely authorised to trust Him to "sanctify us wholly," as to justify us fully, and to "keep us in perfect peace," and possess us with "fulness of joy," as to free us from all condemnation.

Especially does the convert need to be most fully instructed in regard to the privileges and immunities which he has in Christ as "the Mediator of the New Covenant." Permit me here to cite a single inspired statement of the provisions of this covenant. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from ALL your filthiness and from ALL your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." "Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel (believers), to do it for them."

Now the convert needs not only to be instructed into the full meaning of this covenant, as expressed in the Old and in the New Testament, but to be assured that it is both his privilege and duty to look to God through Christ to have all this rendered real in his experience, and that when he shall "count him faithful that hath promised," God will "do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," and so purify and sanctify us, that "when our iniquity shall be sought for, there shall be none," and when our sins are inquired after, "they shall not be found." Of equal importance is it that the convert shall be as fully instructed in regard to the nature and extent of God’s "exceeding great and precious promises," how they put us in possession, when embraced

by faith, of "all things pertaining to life and godliness," that "by THESE," and not by our own resolutions and vain endeavours; "we may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust;" and that when, by faith, we plead these promises at "a throne of grace," God will keep us from "falling," -- "sanctify us wholly," "preserve our whole spirit and soul and body blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," and that God will "make all grace abound toward us, that we, always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." This also the convert should be taught, that "all the promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus," and that, as "a son of God," and "joint-heir with Christ," he has an absolute title to them all, and that in all their fulness. In a very special manner should the convert be most fully taught, in respect to his relations to Christ, as "the Son of God who baptizes with the Holy Ghost," what are to be his privileges and immunities when "the promise of the Spirit" is fulfilled in his experience; how open will then be his visions of "the glory of the Lord," and of "the love of Christ;" how changed he will become "into the same image from glory to glory," and be "filled with all the fulness of God;" and finally, how impossible it will be for him, unless he shall be "endued with power from on high," to become what he is divinely privileged to become, or to "fight the good fight," "finish his course," "keep the faith," and finish the work which Christ has given him to do.

Let us contemplate, in this connection, a single passage of Scripture. "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" What the convert needs to be taught is, that it is his absolute duty and privilege to become possessed of all that is here promised; that the immutable condition of his obtaining this infinite good is, that "the Holy Ghost shall come upon him, as He did upon the apostles at the beginning," and that his first and most imperious duty and necessity is, that he shall wait upon Christ for "the promise of the Spirit," as they did. Of what infinite importance it is that he should not be permitted to rest until he has "received the Holy Ghost." Not less important than all the above is it that the convert should be early instructed and admonished of the necessity laid upon him that he shall "hold the beginning of his confidence steadfast, even unto the end" of his heaven-appointed mission and work as a servant of Christ, and of the infinite and eternal consequences which are pending upon his fidelity as a member of the family of God, as "a believer in Jesus," and as called of God to "shine as a light in the world." As he enters the Church, and takes the vows of God upon him, he should be most fully admonished that, as a branch of the sacred vine, he is expected to "abide in Christ," and glorify the Father by "bearing much fruit;" and that, if he shall fail to do this, he will be rejected as "reprobate silver," and, as a withered branch cut off from the vine, be reserved for the burning.

I refer to but one other need of the individual under consideration, and a most imperious necessity this is. I refer to the testimony of old and experienced believers, who will testify to him, from the conscious facts of their inner lives, to the truth of all that has been above stated. He should be assured, as the result of their observation and experience, that every believer is "complete in Christ," that we "can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us," that He does "baptize with the Holy Ghost," that He is "able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him," that in "tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword," "we are more than conquerors through Him that hath loved, us," and that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth,

nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Under such testimony, and in the presence of such revealed provisions of grace, privileges, "enduements of power from on high," and such "exceeding great and precious promises," how readily would our converts "enter into the rest of faith," gird "on the whole armour of God," and take rank among the disciplined soldiers of the cross!

It is well known that at the battle of Waterloo a considerable portion of the army of the Duke of Wellington, as far as his home-troops were concerned, consisted of new recruits-- volunteers, who had never seen war before. In all the home-regiments, such recruits were intermingled with old veterans of former campaigns. On the evening prior to the great battle, every such veteran, it is said, set about preparing his new associate for the coming conflict, assuring him that they had only to obey orders, and, under their great commander, victory was sure; that he had never lost a battle -- that his wisdom was fully adequate to every exigency that could occur; that he had fully calculated upon the resources at his command, and knew how to use them, so as to render success and the glory of their country a certainty.

I became acquainted, several years since, with one of those volunteers, then a venerable man, and a leading member of a church in the State of Ohio. At the time of the battle under consideration, he was but eighteen years of age; and at Quatre-Bras had slept, on the night after the bloody scene there, on the field, amid the dying and dead of both armies. At Waterloo his regiment occupied the center of the English line, and suffered more than almost any other on that day, he being one of four of a company of upwards of sixty that answered at the roll-call at the close of the day. "At one time, to open a passage for their cavalry into the hollow square where I stood," he remarked, "the front in which I was being eight deep, the French led up two cannon, and placing them hub to hub, fired two rounds before we could silence those guns. At each fire, every man on each side of the line where I stood fell, the gaps being instantly filled up, our line happening to be in the center of the range of those guns." "Did you not run?" I exclaimed. "We never thought of it," was the reply. "The only thought which possessed our minds was to 'do our duty,' and 'stand in the evil day.'"

Such are new recruits under the influence of the example and testimony and admonition of old veterans. Such should be the old soldiers to the young and new volunteers in "the army of the living God "and "the great Captain of our salvation." When this shall be the case, as ere long it will be, then indeed will "the weapons of our warfare be mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." As long as these new volunteers, and old soldiers, too, are taught, however, that they certainly will sin, they will, by their continuous lapses and backslidings, do little more than spend their religious lives in laying over and over again, "the foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith toward God." The Kind of Instruction given, or "the First Principles of the Oracles of God," as taught to Young Converts by our Saviour and His Apostles.

It may be important for us to stop right here for a few moments, and contemplate the kind of spiritual nourishment with which Christ's lambs were fed, "the sincere milk of the Word," administered to "the new-born babes" in the Church by our Saviour Himself and by His inspired apostles. Clear light on all such inquiries is furnished us in the New Testament. The Sermon on the Mount is our Saviour's first discourse to the collected multitude of His early converts. Here, of course, we should expect to find the true and proper food for His lambs. Such, in fact, are the

peculiar characteristics of this divine discourse. In Matthew 5:3-12, we have, for example, a specific statement of the essential elements and characteristics of the new life into which these new converts had just been introduced, and of the entire cluster of the divine virtues of which they had, by divine grace, become possessed; and these virtues specified in the very order in which they are always actually developed in Christian experience. And what "exceeding great and precious promises" are hung out to the faith of all who possess these virtues! The first step into the new life is into that poverty of spirit in which the soul, conscious of its infinite ill-desert, and of its hopeless self-induced ruin in sin, renounces all self-dependence and all finite trusts, and "commends its spirit," and all its mortal and immortal hopes, to the mercy and grace of God.

Blessed are such, says our Saviour; they shall be put in possession of "the everlasting kingdom," to attain which, they put their trust in Me. The next step is into that state in which the mind "sorrows for sin," and "sorrows after the Lord." Blessed are such, exclaims our Redeemer; God "hath anointed Me to bind up the broken-hearted," and these mourners shall have "everlasting consolations and good hope through grace." The next form of virtue which the new life takes on is meekness, the necessary product of "poverty of spirit and godly sorrow," -- meekness, "the ornament of the meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price." Blessed, says our Saviour, are the possessors of this true and beauteous grace; their wealth shall be infinite, "no good thing shall be withheld from them." -- When the mind has passed through the process of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," and has taken on "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit" before God, it then becomes possessed of one supreme desire, the state represented by the words, "hungering and thirsting after righteousness," the desire and choice to be perfectly free from all sin, and to be correspondingly pure in the sight of God.

What does the Saviour absolutely promise to such, to all who trust in Him, as "the Mediator of the New Covenant," -- to have the provisions and promises of that covenant fulfilled in their experience? This, we answer, and nothing less than this, that they shall obtain what they desire--

"THEY SHALL BE FILLED." Our Saviour now tells us what the convert is to expect as, in the possession of these divine virtues, he advances onward in the direction of the new life upon which he has entered. He will himself abound in deeds of mercy, and will "receive wages, and gather fruit unto life eternal." In the possession of the pure heart which Christ shall give him, he shall "see God," and "his fellowship shall be with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." As a world-peacemaker, always seeking to make peace between men and God, and to bind the race together in the bonds of universal brotherhood, he will be known and designated as one of the sons of God. As a world-peacemaker, and in the practice of righteousness, "bonds and afflictions," or persecutions await him. Enduring these, however, great joys here, and immortal fruitions hereafter, are in reserve for him. When will those who have received from Christ the commission, "Feed my lambs," furnish them with such pure and unadulterated food as this?

Let us advance a little further into this primal discourse of Him who "spake as never man spake." In Matthew 5:13-16, our Saviour sets before these young disciples the relations which, as possessed and in the exercise of these virtues, on the one hand, or as having lost the same, on the other, they sustain to the world. In the former state, they are "the salt of the earth," and "the light of the world;" in the latter, they are the most hurtful in their influence, and themselves in the most hopeless and perilous condition possible. Let us attentively read the passage: -- "Ye are the

salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Christ would have the convert impressed with the deep and omnipresent conviction that he is called, by "a divine and holy calling," to occupy an influential place among that "sacramental host," upon whose fidelity the destiny of the world is suspended. At what pains, also, were the inspired apostles to impress the same truth upon all believers, young and old. "God," they assure us, "who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts," not merely that we might be saved ourselves, but "to give" -- to the world around us -- "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;" "Among whom ye shine as lights in the world;" "Holding forth the word of life."

Equally explicit and impressive were our Saviour’s instructions to those young converts in regard to their relations to sin. They were to understand, that whenever their heart should condemn them of aught that was wrong, God would accept of no service at their hands until that wrong was adjusted, and that they must hasten that adjustment at the peril of their immortal interests. "Agree with thine adversary quickly" -- lest the case be handed over to "God, the Judge of all." Under the same peril, also, was the convert to separate himself totally from all things which he could not retain or use without sin. That your whole body should not be cast into hell. "Brethren," says the apostle, "if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." "Brethren," says another apostle, "if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

Every convert, if we would copy after our Great Teacher, and those who were taught and inspired by Him, should be deeply impressed with the fact that his first, and every other, step in the direction of sin, is a step in the direction of death, a step from which he must be converted, or "die in his sins." "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." God forbid that I should ever teach the convert, or any other believer, that he can cease to "shine as a light in the world," can cease to glorify God by not "bringing forth much fruit,"and continue in a justified state. In this divine discussion also, the convert is taught that his subjection to the will of Christ is to be absolute and undivided; that no other form of service will be accepted; that he is to have but one care, and that to please Him who has "called him to glory and virtue;" -- that the obedience expected of him is to be in full accordance with that rendered in heaven; that, as a son of God, his virtues are to be a copy of those of his Father above, and that he is to be "perfect, as his Father in heaven is perfect."

All these things the Saviour impressed upon those young disciples, upon the lambs of the flock before Him, without a single intimation that He did not expect them to obey strictly all that He had taught them. On the other hand, He closed that discourse with the solemn asseveration that the eternity of His hearers, and of all who should hear what they had heard, was pending upon their doing, or not doing, His words. He did not teach them that they were not liable to sin, that they never would sin, or that if they should sin they would be hopelessly lost. He did not teach them, however, that they would sin, or were expected to sin. He did teach them, on the other hand that

they could not sin without thereby imperiling their immortal interests, and that nothing but immediate repentance, in case they did sin, could rescue them from the perils of the second death.

Every utterance of our Saviour, on the other hand, tended immutably and most emphatically to impress those young disciples with the deep conviction that the full and absolute obedience required of them they were expected to render, and nothing whatever is said to indicate a limitation to the obedience which was expected. How careful was our Saviour to impress all converts, and all believers too, with the truth of their absolute completeness and all-sufficiency in Him, and to fix their faith upon Him, as "He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." "All things are possible to Him that believeth." "He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." "I am the Resurrection and the Life." "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." "How much more shall your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." "I will pray the Father for you, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." In all the above instructions, our Saviour has clearly taught us, "who ought to be teachers," how, and upon what, to "feed His lambs." In regard to the manner in which inspired apostles, in obedience to the precept of our Saviour, "Feed my lambs," taught young believers, we have a specific example in the two epistles to the Thessalonians, the first epistles ever written. Paul, as we are informed, during his first journey through Macedonia, spent "three Sabbaths" at Thessalonica, and there, on account of the uprising of the Jews, was, with Silas, "sent by night unto Berea." During the short period spent in the former city, many were converted and organised into a church. While at Athens, or immediately after his arrival at Corinth, the apostle wrote the first, and quite soon after, the second of the epistles under consideration. Here, consequently, we have a specific example of the kind of instruction, of "the sincere milk of the Word" which Christ would have furnished for "new-born babes," -- all of those to whom these epistles were addressed being such. These epistles not only present us with examples of the proper food to be administered to "the lambs of the flock," but as clearly reveal the kind of instruction which the apostle had given these young converts while among them. Let us, for a moment, contemplate some of the prominent features of these epistles. In the first place, the apostle sets out before these converts himself and associates, as men of God, believers in Jesus, who, by faith in Him, had been "sanctified wholly," and had in God’s sight, and before their converts, led holy, just, and blameless lives. "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe." How did such examples and such testimony tend to "confirm, settle, and strengthen" the faith of these converts in Christ, as "able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him!"

Having thus set before these converts himself and associates, as thus "dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ," the apostle then sets before these same converts their privileges "as believers in Jesus," -- with the form and degree of sanctification to which they were called through faith in Christ. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."

Every Greek scholar is aware that the original word rendered wholly is one of the strongest words known in the Greek, or any other language -- a word made up of two others, one of which means all, and the other perfection. The passage might be literally rendered thus-"The very God of peace sanctify you in all respects to perfection." In this passage, therefore, these converts were

absolutely assured that they were called of God to a state, and to a future life, in which they would be wholly sanctified and blameless in all their moral activities, and that God would thus sanctify and preserve them, they trusting Him to do it for them.

Nothing whatever is said in either of these epistles to limit the blameless purity to which the apostles and his associates had attained, and to which these converts were authorised to expect to attain. Similar testimony did the apostle everywhere give to his own sanctification, and to the blamelessness of his life before God and men. "I am crucified with Christ;" "by whom I am crucified to the world, and the world unto me;" "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content;" "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me;" "whom I serve with a pure conscience;" "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence both toward God and toward men;" "Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ;" "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you." While "the promises" lift their divine forms before us, how important to young believers that they should have before them also such living exemplifications of the great truth that "all the promises are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God the Father."

We positively learn from these epistles also, that, in their earliest experience, these converts had been carefully taught, and had received and realised in themselves the promise of the Spirit. Having reminded them that "the gospel came not unto them in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," and that they had "received the Word in much affliction, and joy in the Holy Ghost," he gives them two admonitions, which evince what they had been taught and had personally experienced on the subject under consideration. The admonitions are these: "Quench not the Spirit -- Despise not prophesying." Those only, according to the express teachings of the New Testament, who have been "baptized with the Holy Ghost" do prophesy. This central doctrine of Christ, then, Paul and his associates had carefully taught these converts, and they had received it, and were then in the full possession and exercise of "the spiritual gifts" which attended this baptism. The example of Paul in this case was carefully and specifically followed by all the apostles relatively to all who "believed in Christ through their words." Their first concern everywhere was, that all their converts should be early "baptized with the Holy Ghost." So prominent and all-impressive, also, were the teachings of Paul by word and by his "first epistle, in respect to the eternal judgment," that these converts were led to expect its immediate occurrence. To remove this impression was the special object of the second epistle. All the other apostles were in full accord with him in their teachings on this subject. The results in experience of their new life -- results which these converts were taught to expect -- we learn from such admonitions as the following: -- "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ concerning you." This is the specific kind of spiritual food with which Christ would have all His under-shepherds ""feed His lambs." No wonder that, of converts thus taught, Paul, a few months after they had been in Christ, could give such testimony as the following: -- "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost; so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything." Converts thus instructed never fail to "shine as lights in the world." In Hebrews 6:1-5, the apostle gives a specific statement of those "first principles of the doctrine of Christ" into which all believers were then fully

instructed at the commencement of their new life, primal truths which all true converts did receive. These truths are represented by the words "repentance from dead works," and "faith toward God," "the doctrine of baptisms and laying-on of hands," of "resurrection of the dead," and "of eternal judgment." All who received these truths by faith were "enlightened," "tasted of the heavenly gift," "were made partakers of the Holy Ghost," and "tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come," the "enduements of power" which peculiarised the new dispensation. The baptisms here referred to have, of course, a special reference to "the baptism of the Holy Ghost," of which that by water is the symbol. It is not by the latter, but by the former, that the believer is "baptized into Christ," is "buried with Him by baptism into death," becomes "dead unto the world, and the world to him," "dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." "The laying-on of hands," in the apostolic and primitive Church, had, not as now, a reference to dedication to the ministerial and other special offices, but had an almost, if not quite exclusive reference to the "baptism of the Holy Ghost." Hence it was that upon all converts and believers who had not "received the Holy Ghost since they believed," hands were laid, and that for the specific purpose that the subject, in connection with the ordinance, might "receive the Holy Ghost." At the laying-on of the hands of Ananias, Paul was not ordained to the ministry, but "received sight," and "was filled with the Holy Ghost." The gift that was in Timothy, and which he was admonished to "stir up," was not mere authority to preach the gospel -- a strange gift that to be "stirred up," -- but "enduement of power from on high," which that young disciple had received in connection with the "laying-on of Paul’s hands," and those "of the Presbytery." Hands were then laid upon individuals who were to enter upon new duties, as was the case with the seven deacons, and with Paul and Barnabas when about to be sent on their new mission; and were laid, not to confer mere authority, but that the subjects might receive "enduements of power" for their special duties. With the apostles, no believer was prepared for making the requisite advancement in "the new life," for "growth in grace," and for "shining as a light in the world," until, after the exercise of "repentance from dead works, and faith toward God," he had been "enlightened," had "tasted the heavenly gift," had been made a "partaker of the Holy Ghost," had consequently "tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come," and had been fully instructed in the doctrine of "the resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment."

These were "the first principles of the oracles of God," the primal truths, "the sincere milk of the Word," into which, first of all, the new converts were fully instructed by the men of God, whom Christ inspired and commissioned to "feed His lambs." An army thus instructed and disciplined at the beginning, of course "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens," and brought the world upon its knees before God. In such a host, young volunteers will "endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ," even as delicate females and young children never became "faint or weary," but endured the tortures of the rack, of fire, and the cross, with all the patience, power, and assurance of the oldest disciples. When will the Church, with her pastors and teachers in the lead, "inquire after the old paths," in which apostles, and martyrs, and primitive believers "walked in the light of God?"

02.A07. The Faith Of The Convert As Eclipsed

CHAPTER VII. THE FAITH OF THE CONVERT AS ECLIPSED, AND RENDERED WEAK AND INOPERATIVE, BY THE EXAMPLE AND TESTIMONY OF OLD DISCIPLES, AND BY FALSE TEACHING AND FALSE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE Influence of False Teaching and Example

Every one who will carefully reflect upon the spirit of self-abandonment, of humiliation, meekness, and "hungering and thirsting after righteousness," which the Spirit of God always induces in the mind of every genuine convert, will perceive that such "a babe in Christ" will readily receive, and embrace by faith, "the first principles of the oracles of God," "the sincere milk of the Word," when the same is properly ministered, and that nothing can tend so effectively to weaken and render inoperative his faith as to imbue him with the assurance that the freedom from sin and the righteousness which he so supremely aspires after, he is never to attain in this life.

Set before him the dogma, and that as a revealed truth of God, that, at the best estate to which he will ever attain by faith in Christ, he will find himself "carnal, sold under sin," and find it the fixed law of his moral activity that, when he shall "will to do good, evil will be present with him," and that "the good which he shall will to do, he will not do," and "the evil which he shall will not to do, he will do;" and where is the rational hope that he will ever become "rooted and grounded in love," "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might," and "grow up in Him" -- unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," -- or even fail to lose the ardour and freshness of his first love?

Suppose that the old veterans at Waterloo, instead of teaching the young volunteers lessons of absolute obedience, and inspiring them with the assurance of victory under their great commander, had assured these new recruits, and that as from the Duke himself that no soldier, since the first organisation of the English army, hath been able fully to obey the orders he receives, "but daily doth break them in thought, word, and deed," and that, in special crises, their fidelity always fails; that the obedience which each soldier purposes to render, he does not render, and the disobedience which he purposes to avoid, he perpetrates -- what kind of a battle would that under consideration have been? What would armies become, were they organised, disciplined, and made to act under the omnipresent influence of such a sentiment? Can the influence of the omnipresence of the same identical sentiment be less disastrous in "the army of the living God,"under "the great Captain of our salvation?"

What if children in all families and schools were required to commit to memory such a catechism as this: No child, since the Fall, bath been able perfectly to obey the commands of its parents or teachers, but "daily doth break them in thought, word, and deed?" What if these children were rendered everywhere familiar with the idea that their parents, and all the men and women whom such children hold in the deepest veneration, were in the daily habit, when they were children, of perpetrating such disobedience? What would our children and scholars become under such teachings? What but lawless and shameless violators of their sacred obligations? Can the influence of the same sentiment be less disastrous in the family and school of God? Are all the

laws and principles of mind reversed when we attempt to act religiously? Must there not be something fatally wrong in the teachings which our converts and members of churches very commonly receive in regard to the expected omnipresence of sin in the hearts and lives of believers?

Must there not be some fundamental misapprehension in regard to the meaning of those texts of scripture which are supposed to teach the universal and continued sinfulness of believers in this life? Did any preacher ever witness a revival of religion, or an advance in holiness in the Church, through the preaching of the dogma that all believers, at their best estate, "find a law that, when they would do good, evil is present with them," and find themselves "carnal, sold under sin?" Can any one designate any good which has ever resulted from the use which has been made of the texts under consideration? Has our Saviour undertaken to educate the divine family, and discipline "the army of the living God," upon principles which would, with infallible certainty, induce lawlessness and disorder in every other department of human activity? At one time, when I was a child, for example, my parents sent me several times to a neighbor to bring home some sugar which he owed them. The box in which the sugar was placed was, in my regard, a sacred thing. I did not even look into it. The last time I went on such errand, however, the children of that neighbor gathered round me, as I was about to leave, and addressed me in these identical words -- I remember them well:-"Asa, you will eat some of that sugar before you get home." I denied the imputation. Yet I did that very thing, and the putting the thought into my mind was the only cause of my so doing. Suppose, now, that my parents, before sending me on such an errand, had given me a solemn command not to touch the sugar, and made me promise not to do it, and had then informed me that no child "since the Fall" had been able to carry such a box without appropriating a portion of its contents; that they, and Washington, and Paul, and the mother of Jesus, had always committed such acts under similar circumstances, and that I must "grow in grace" by taking less and less on each successive errand. We know well that such instruction would render all children graceless thieves. Can similar sentiments relatively to sin have an influence less disastrous upon the obedience of the children of God? When will "masters in Israel" and members of our churches consider that the immutable laws of mind render it impossible for us, when we hold it as a revealed truth of God that we shall sin "in thought, word, and deed," and shall not fully obey the divine will, even to intend not to sin at all, or to render perfect obedience? How often do we hear it said that the individual who aims at the moon will shoot higher than he who gives his weapon a lower level. But does any man, can any man, point his weapon at the moon seriously intending to hit that object? So, no man can sincerely intend to accomplish any result while he seriously believes that his best endeavours will never enable him to reach that result. If God requires us to hold it as a revealed truth that we shall at no time fully meet His will, He requires us to hold a truth, the belief of which renders it impossible for us even to intend the obedience which He requires. The sentiment under consideration, also, and the construction given to those passages which are supposed to teach that sentiment, gives, in the judgment of those who hold it, a kind of divine sanction to the sins consciously committed. That Christ is distinctly revealed in the Scriptures as able to save us in this life, from all sin and render our obedience "perfect and entire, wanting nothing," and to induce in us all the faith requisite to our sanctification in this divine form, all admit. If He requires us to believe that He will not thus sanctify us, or induce in us the faith requisite to this end, it must be because he prefers that we should be partially under sin, rather than wholly saved from it. There is no escaping this conclusion. Why should we desire, or seek, or

strive to be more perfect in our obedience than Christ really chooses that we should be?

Such is the practical sentiment which really lies in the heart of the mass of professing Christians who are consciously "carnal, sold under sin." They never, with "godly sorrow" repent of those sins, or confess them as if they were consciously criminal on their account. One of the facts which horrified me when a young convert, fearing sin more than I did perdition, was the shocking indifference with which old professors spoke of and confessed their sins. When I would expostulate with them upon the subject, they would reply, not by confessing their infinite criminality, but by reminding me that even Paul had a "thorn in the flesh," was not perfect, but "carnal, sold under sin;" and that God would soon "teach me the plague of my own heart," by letting me slide back from my "first love" into the state in which they then were. This is the exact influence and necessary result of this hateful sentiment in the churches. Regarding their carnalities, worldly mindedness, heart-backslidings, and shortcomings as the inevitable conditions of their religious life and experience, they come to be possessed of a gloomy content with their state, being quite satisfied if they are still conscious of "an aching void" left by "the joys they knew when first they saw the Lord." When the young convert, in the simplicity of his new faith, in the ardour of his first love, and with his insatiable "hungerings and thirstings after righteousness," enters upon "the highway of holiness," what does he find? Do old professors rise up around him to tell him of the glorious victories which he is called to win "by the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony," of his "completeness in Christ," of the all-sufficiency of His grace, of His power to "save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him," and in every condition of existence, and against all assaults from "the world, the flesh, and the devil," to render them "more than conquerors through Him that hath loved them?" Do those who have accepted from Christ the sacred command and commission, "Feed my lambs," tell him of the "enduements of power," the divine enlightenments, the transforming and open visions of the divine glory, of the divine fellowships, the indwellings, onenesses "in Christ and the Father," and of the "all sufficiencies for all things," and of "the exceeding great and precious promises" in reserve for him? On the other hand, he does find the mass of believers all around him, believers old and young, a sickly and "feeble folk," all crying to Him -- "Look how we grovel here below, Fond of these trifling toys; Our souls can neither fly nor go To reach eternal joys." The worst of all is, that even his appointed teachers impress him with the conviction that this is as high a spiritual state as he can really expect in the fold of Christ; that none are saved from sinning here; that all, on the other hand, are, at their best estate, "carnal, sold under sin," and will continue to repeat the despairing cry, O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" until the bonds of the flesh shall be broken by death. What can be expected of our "new-born babe" under such nourishing as this? What, but that his new-born joys shall die out within him, and he be left a stranger to all the fulnesses of joy, triumphs of faith, and divine fellowships, represented in the Scriptures as the common privilege of all believers in Jesus. This I can say as the result of all my observations, of more than fifty years' continuance, that there is no relation of cause and effect more fixed than that between the sentiment under consideration, and the absence of that form of experience represented by the following promise of our Saviour: "He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." He that enters the service of Christ fully expecting to "sin daily in thought, word, and deed," will, as surely as lead thrown upon the surface of water will sink to the bottom, become a backslider. No convert, I am quite sure, can hardly strive more earnestly than I did to retain his first footing; yet the evil came, and it seemed to

me a necessity of my faith. To me it now appears a near approach to treason for an individual to enter the divine service with any expectation or calculation other than implicit and absolute obedience to "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," to every indication of the will of "the great Captain of our salvation."

Texts of Scripture supposed to Teach the Omnipresence of Sin in the Hearts and Lives of Believers

Let us now, for a few moments, turn our thoughts to those passages of Scripture which are supposed to teach the omnipresence of sin, and disloyalty to our God and King, in the hearts and lives of all believers in Jesus. Of the Old Testament, I call to mind but two or three passages which are cited to prove this doctrine. In his prayer at the dedication of the temple, Solomon (1 Kings 8:46) makes this statement, "If they sin against Thee (for there is no man that sinneth not)." The utmost that can be made of this passage is, a confession of what all admit to be true, to wit, the universal sinfulness of the race. The words employed limit the meaning of the speaker to this one idea. To suppose that he was thinking at all of what the saints of God and believers in Jesus had attained to in ages past, and would attain to in ages to come, is one of the most preposterous constructions of the words employed of which we can form a conception. The real meaning of the passage, however, as fully shown by Dr Clarke, may be thus expressed: "If they sin against thee (for there is no man who may not sin);" that is, if they shall do what all men living are liable to do. This is the exact meaning of the original Hebrew, and renders the passage a very impressive one. In Job 9:20, we find the following confession: "if I justify myself, mine own mouth will condemn me: if I say I am perfect, it also shall prove me perverse." Suppose that all this was true of Job at the time he made this confession. He speaks here of himself alone, and of no other human being. The fact that he was then morally imperfect no more proves that no believer will, to the end of time, be "redeemed from all iniquity," and rendered wholly pure, than the confession of David to the sins of adultery and murder proves that all Christians are guilty of these identical sins. Job, however, is speaking not at all of his moral state at that moment, but of his whole past life. "He could not enter into judgment with God," he tells us, "because he had sinned." To attempt self-justification would insure his condemnation, by adding to his criminality and perverseness. For an individual to confess, in view of his whole past life, that he is a sinner and not perfect, and to confess that he is now in sin, are two confessions totally distinct from one another. It is to imperfection, and that exclusively and specifically, in the former, and not in the latter sense, that Job confesses in this passage; and in this sense, all believers will have occasion, to eternity, to affirm themselves sinners and imperfect. In Psalms 119:16, the sacred writer thus speaks: "I have seen the end of all perfection; but Thy commandment is exceeding broad." The term "but" is put, in the translation, in italics, to indicate that it is not in the original. Here it is said that the Psalmist affirms that he has seen that all believers will, from the beginning to the end of time, be, and continue to be, morally imperfect. A wilder, and more unauthorised exposition, I venture to affirm, can hardly be given of any passage. The term "end" here undeniably means, not the limit or termination, but the consummation. The sacred writer is contemplating the exceeding broadness, or unlimited application, of God’s commandments, and affirms that he here perceives the consummation of all perfection. The absolute perfection of the divine law, and nothing else, is affirmed in this passage. No reference whatever is had to the relations of any being to that law. In turning to the New Testament, we first notice the inference deduced from 2 Peter 3:18, "But grow in grace, and in the

knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Growth in grace implies, it is said, an advance from one degree of sinfulness to another less sinful. The command "Grow in grace," therefore, implies the present sinfulness of all believers. According to this construction, we have undeniably an absolute command from God, not to break off all sin at once, but to do this gradually. We should, therefore, sin against. God, by disobedience to a command requiring us to "grow in grace," or give up sin gradually, if we should now wholly cease sinning. This construction also convicts our Saviour Himself of positive sinfulness. In Luke 2:52, it is positively affirmed that Christ did "increase" or grow in grace, -- the original word, there rendered "favour," being the same as that rendered "grace" in the passage under consideration. The command "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," will be binding, and equally so as now, upon believers to eternity. As their capacities shall increase and expand, they will eternally advance in holiness and knowledge. We are required to grow "in wisdom and in favour (grace) with God and man," just as, and in no other sense than, the youthful Jesus did thus grow. In Php 3:12, Paul, it is said, affirms his own moral imperfection: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." Why do not individuals, before they put such a construction upon these words, consider carefully what the apostle says in Php 3:15-17? Let us read these verses. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." It is undeniable that the apostle uses the term "perfect" in two senses in this chapter -- senses in one of which he affirms himself not to be, and in the other to be perfect, and, in the latter sense, unqualifiedly requires us to copy his example.

Now Greeks, to whom the apostle was writing, were in no danger of misunderstanding him in the two distinct and separate senses in which he employs the term in this passage. With them, those who were victors on the racecourse, and were crowned as such, were called perfect, the perfected ones, or those who had attained to perfection in glory. Those who were running for the prize, and put forth their utmost energies to gain it, were perfect, not in glory, but as far as present duty was concerned. Paul represented himself as running a race, "not as uncertainly," but with "assurance of hope," -- a race, not for a "corruptible," but for an "incorruptible crown." Until he had "finished his course," he could not have, or had not "attained," the crown, and was not perfect -- that is, perfected in glory. This he was "following after." As a runner for the crown, however, he was doing all he possibly could, and was in this sense perfect, that is, in the matter of present duty. "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Here we have a specific description of a perfect runner, and as such, that is, as far as present duty is concerned, Paul does claim perfection, and requires us, and that unqualifiedly, to copy his example. Paul then does here present himself, not as perfected in glory, but as an example of a morally perfect man. It is very remarkable that the dogma of the continued sinfulness of all believers in this life is, by learned theologians, based upon arguments the validity of which, in the same form in which they are put, implies equally the sinfulness of our Saviour, "who knew no sin." If the command," Grow in grace," implies present sinfulness, actual growth in grace, which is, as we have seen, absolutely affirmed of Christ, implies His prior sinfulness. If the mere declaration of Paul, "Not as though I were already perfect," implies his then sinfulness, what must we think of the

testimony of our Saviour in regard to Himself; to wit, "I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected?" -- the identical word and form of the word in the original which Paul applies to himself when he says, "Not as though I were already perfect." Both Christ and Paul looked forward to a perfected state to which neither had then attained, and this fact no more implies present sinfulness in one case than in the other. But what must we think of 1 John 1:8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us?" What must we think of the Biblical knowledge of those who assume, without careful inquiry, that we are here taught that, if we say that we are not, at this moment, sinning against God, we are self-deceived, and are not Christians? If we put this construction upon the passage -- and we must, in order to deduce from it the doctrine of the omnipresent sinfulness of all believers in this life -- we must affirm that such men as Wesley, Finney, Athanasius, Chrysostom, and all the leading fathers and members of the primitive Church, were never born of God. The apostle, in this connection, is speaking of two classes of persons, -- one "who confessed their sins," and the other who denied that they had sins to confess -- that is, affirmed that they "had not sinned," the true and proper meaning of the words, "we have no sin." When the Saviour said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," who does not perceive at once that the meaning is, let him do this who is not conscious of ever having sinned? This epistle, as we are informed, 1 John 2:26, was expressly written to guard believers against certain seductive errors then being propagated in the Church. "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." Of these seducers there were then two prominent classes -- Judaising teachers, who denied their need of salvation by faith, on the assumption that they were not sinners at all, or had never sinned, and false apostles, who "turned the grace of God into lasciviousness," affirming that, as "salvation is by faith, and not by works," believers can live as they list. This first error the apostle meets by affirming that "if we say that we have no sin" to be forgiven and cleansed from -- that is, affirm that "we have not sinned," the form in which the idea represented by the words "if we say we have no sin" is expressed in the last verse of this chapter -- "we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," on the one hand, and "make God a liar, and His word is not in us," on the other. Nothing can be more evident than is the fact that by the words, "if we say we have no sin," and "if we say we have not sinned," the apostle means the same thing, and in neither form of representing the same idea has he any reference whatever to the dogma of the omnipresence of sin in "believers in Jesus." What a mass of palpable contradictions this dogma imputes to the apostle in this epistle! Look at one or two examples. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." Whosoever saith that he abides in Him, and "has no sin" -- that is, that he does not sin"deceiveth himself; and the truth is not in him." "Herein is our love made perfect." If we say that our love is made perfect, thus fulfilling the law, we are self-deceived, and not Christians at all. A construction which thus "turns the Word of God into foolishness," is evidently "a plant which out heavenly Father has not planted." The second form of error above referred to, the apostle meets by such utterances as the following: -- "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

One additional passage demands our special attention -- I refer, of course, to Romans 7:5-25. Permit me to state right here two well-known facts bearing very fundamentally upon the exposition we should give to this passage: that up to the time of Augustine in the fifth century, the entire primitive Church, who received the Epistle to the Romans directly from the apostle, understood him to refer in that passage to a legal, in contrast with a Christian experience; and that from that

time to the present this passage has been so understood and expounded by the most influential commentators on the Bible throughout Christendom. The bearing of the passage in favour of the doctrine under consideration, if it can be made to favour that doctrine at all, is of the most doubtful character possible, and can never be properly used by the advocates of this doctrine as one of their valid proof-texts.

Such a doctrine ought to be based upon none but passages whose meaning is most plain and decisive. If we will turn to Romans 9:30-32 of this epistle, and carefully read these verses, we shall find the key that will clearly open the real meaning of the passage under consideration, together with the entire reasoning of the apostle in the chapter which follows. Let us read the verses to which I have referred: -- "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness; hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone."

Turning to Romans 7:5-25, we find there the record of an attempt to "attain to the law of righteousness," and a total failure to attain the end sought, an endeavour "by the works of the law," and that without Christ and without faith in Him. A more clear and specific exposition of the method in accordance with which the Jew sought righteousness cannot be given, nor a clearer statement of his failure to attain the end he sought. The individual whose struggles are described in this passage, instead of attaining to righteousness in any form, fails in every endeavour, does not the good he purposes to do, and does the evil which he resolves not to do; "finds a law that, when he would do good, evil is present with him," while "the law in his members wars against the law of his mind (his conscience), and brings him into captivity unto the law of sin which is in his members;" renders him "carnal, sold under sin," and compels him to bear about "a body of death," from which he vainly endeavours to free himself. The only reference to Christ that there is in this passage is the thankful one, that through Him there is deliverance from the bondage previously described. If to endeavour to attain unto righteousness, and utterly fail in every purpose and endeavour, and thus to endeavour without Christ and without faith in Him, is Christian experience, then the passage under consideration describes such experience. If, on the other hand, we do, through faith in Christ, "attain to righteousness," are "made free from the law of sin and death," become "more than conqueror through Him that hath loved us," and "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," then the passage under consideration, what it specifically does do, describes the experience of the Jew, a legal in opposition to a Christian experience. When we turn to Romans 8:1-39, we here find Christ, and faith in Him, and consequently find freedom from all condemnation -- freedom from the law of sin and death, "the righteousness of the law fulfilled," "the spirit of adoption" abiding in the heart, hopes full of immortality, and "the world, the flesh, and the devil" overcome "by the blood of the Lamb and the word of His testimony." He reads the Epistle to the Romans to his own terrible loss who stumbles upon Romans 7:5-25, the single phrase, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" excepted, as descriptive of "the life by the faith of the Son of God." The language employed by the apostle in this passage renders it demonstrably evident, also, that he is here speaking of himself not as a believer walking by faith, but of his former experience as a Jew "seeking righteousness by deeds of law." "When we were in the flesh," in our carnal, unrenewed state, he says, "the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto

death." He then goes on to show that while the law is blameless, "holy, just, and good," all his endeavours to "attain to righteousness" through it were perfectly abortive. Up to Romans 7:14, he uses the past tense in speaking of his own experience, and refers specifically to his fleshly and legal experience. From Romans 7:14, he continues his former representation of his unregenerate and legal experience, but changes the tense in which he speaks of himself. "We know," he says, "that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin." Having used the present tense in speaking of the law, he was required, by a law of the Greek language which scholars well understand, to use the same tense also in describing his own experience, though his past and legal one. Lest he should be misunderstood, however, he defines and specifies, in Romans 7:18, the state to which he does refer. "I know," he says, "that in me, that is, in my flesh" (in my unrenewed state), "there dwelleth no good thing." If any shall imagine that the apostle is here speaking of his life of faith, and revealing its abortiveness, Paul surely is not responsible for the error, he having taken such special pains to guard against it.

Some individuals do not know how to reconcile certain expressions of Paul in this passage with the idea that he is here speaking of himself as an impenitent sinner, and not as a Christian. He speaks of himself, for example, as "delighting in the law of God after the inward man," as doing, when he sins, "what he hates, and not what he would," and that it is not "he that does it, but sin that dwelleth in him." And he concludes the chapter by saying, that "with the mind he served the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." This, it is thought by some, can be true only of Christians.

Turning now to Ezekiel 33:31-32, we have a revelation of the Jewish mind in exact accordance with the above representations of the apostle: -"And they come unto Thee as the people cometh, and they sit before Thee as my people, and they hear Thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, Thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear Thy words, but they do them not." To the same effect are the words of God through the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 58:1-2) -- "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice, they take delight in approaching to God."

What makes sin so "exceeding sinful" is the fact that, when men do the evil, they, from the necessary laws of their "inner man," their moral nature, disapprove, reprobate, and even hate what they do. Whatever men may do, their consciences are on the side of God and duty, and often impel them to purpose to do the good and avoid the evil. Hence the old maxim that "the path to hell is paved with good resolutions." If men would obey their consciences, and yield to the impulsions of their moral nature, they would obey the law of God; yet, through enslavement to their carnal nature, they do "obey the law of sin." This is just what the apostle means when he says, "With the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin."

It is also a remarkable fact that much of what the apostle says in this passage is an almost verbatim copy of the utterances of heathen authors upon the same subject. "He that sins," says one of them, "does not what he would; but what he would not, that he does." Another affirmed of

himself that he knew the wrong, and yet did it, and approved of the right, and yet did the wrong. Xenophon tells of one individual who, when reproved by Cyrus for a gross wrong, replied thus (we give an exact copy of the sentiment expressed, but not of the words employed) -- "Surely," said the accused, "I must have two natures. For it cannot be the same nature which approves and delights in what is right and just, and yet does the wrong. When the good nature prevails, we do the right; and when the bad, we do the wrong."

If Romans 7:5-25 is a representation of Christian experience as realised in the case of Paul, that is, of such experience in its highest forms, then is the gospel as utterly powerless in the matter of sanctification as is the law, and Christian experience at its best estate is void of Christ and of faith in Him; is utterly powerless against the carnal propensities, and is no better than that of the Jew on the one hand, and of the heathen and all evil-doers on the other; while all the statements in the eighth chapter are false and absurd. What must we think, for example, of the affirmation that one who is presented as "carnal, sold under sin," and as, in every conflict with evil principles, suffering an inglorious defeat; is in "tribulation," "distress," "persecution," "famine," "nakedness," "peril," and "sword;" that such an one is even in all these things more than a conqueror, through Him that hath loved us?" So in all representations.

If; on the other hand, we understand, with the entire primitive Church and the ablest commentators in the world, that Paul, in this portion of Romans vii. describes, and intends to describe, a legal, in contrast with Christian experience, and in the eighth chapter to set in contrast before us "the glorious liberty of the sons of God," through "the blood of the Lamb and the word of His testimony," -- then Paul is throughout self-consistent and divinely instructive in his teachings.

There is one passage (Galatians 5:17), which has been thoroughly misunderstood and misapplied in respect to the subject under consideration. The passage reads thus: -- "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." This passage has been understood to teach, that the flesh, our sinful lusts, on the one hand, and the Spirit of God on the other, are in constant conflict with each other in the heart and mind of every believer. Under such circumstances, "he cannot do what he would;" that is, fully obey, or "walk in the Spirit," but must alternate in his activity between the two. In other words, the Spirit of God, in conflict with the flesh, has not power to hold our propensities in subjection, and set us free to do the will of God. In other words still, while the Spirit, as we are taught elsewhere, is "stronger than he that is in the world," Satan, He has not full power against the flesh. Is this what the apostle meant to teach here? "God forbid." The direct opposite is the undeniable meaning of the inspired writer. In the verse preceding he says, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." The reason why this must be the case is given in Galatians 5:17, that under consideration; and the reason specifically assigned is this: the flesh and Spirit are opposites, "two masters," each the absolute antagonist to the other, and when you are under the control of one, that of the other is excluded. Hence, if you "walk in the Spirit," "ye cannot do the things that ye would," if under the control of the flesh. When will believers cease misreading their Bibles, and so misreading them as to insure their continuance under the dominion of the flesh?

It has been supposed by some, that in the petition, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," our Saviour intended to teach the universal and continued sinfulness of believers in this

life. From the fact that our Saviour has taught all believers to put up the petition, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," why do not these same individuals infer that the time will come when the divine will will be thus done on earth? The words employed authorise the latter inference quite as absolutely as they do the former. Besides, we have in the Bible inspired prayers for the forgiveness of sins committed many years prior to the putting up of the petitions referred to. The Psalmist, for example, when advanced in years, prayed that God would not "remember the sins of his youth, nor his transgressions." Advancing as we are "to the judgment-seat of Christ," and subject to perpetual wrong from others, we shall, whether now under sin or not, ever have occasion to pray that we may be forgiven at that day, as we do "forgive men their trespasses." The whole design of our Saviour in teaching us to hold in perpetual remembrance the sins of our past lives, and to pray that, as we forgive, we may be forgiven, is made void by the inference under consideration. The fact, on the other hand, that He has specifically revealed Himself as having made full provision for our entire sanctification, and is able to "save us unto the uttermost;" that, on condition that we "inquire of Him to do this for us," God has absolutely and specifically promised thus to sanctify us; that "this is the will of God, even our sanctification;" that, as "the Mediator of the new covenant," Christ is revealed as ready to do this for us; that He has commanded us to "be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect," and has, finally, required all believers, in all their prayers, to pray that God's "will may be done in earth as it is in heaven;" all these great and all-impressive revelations of God do impart to us the assurance that this, the united and inspired prayer of all the saints, will be consummated in the experience of the Church in this world. The Influence of the Construction which has been put upon the Passages above considered. For centuries, the mass of believers have fully tested the influence upon their faith and inner life, and upon their views of the most important revelations of scripture, of the construction which has been put upon the few passages above considered. In experience, this construction has, undeniably, rendered backsliding, "the leaving of the first love," the almost immutable law of the inner and outer life of believers -- a law which has, in fact, rendered their path, not "as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day," but as the evening twilight, which deepens on into greater and greater darkness, "until an almost fixed state is reached -- a state in which "neither sun nor stars appear" -- a state in which there is more of care than of peace -- more of doubt than of assurance of hope -- more of an "aching void within" than singing for joy of heart -- more of groaning than of inward shouting -- more of weakness than of strength -- and more of defeats than of victories "through the blood of the Lamb and the word of His testimony." Such facts, everywhere visible, and all occurring under specific teachings in respect to the religious life, ought surely to induce "the masters in Israel" to inquire seriously whether there have not been serious misapprehensions in regard to the real teachings of the Word of God in respect to "the high way of holiness." The construction under consideration has also been "a veil upon the hearts" of believers and their teachers whenever they have read the provisions and promises of grace, as revealed in the Scriptures, for "the glorious liberty of the sons of God" in this life. If, for example, we accept of Romans 7:5-25 as a revealed presentation of the religious life at its best estate, as we must do if we accept it as teaching the characteristics of that life, we must limit, by what is revealed in this passage, all that is said in the eighth chapter and elsewhere about the provisions and promises of grace for our present sanctification and joy in God. When Paul, for example, tells us that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death," and "in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us," we must

not understand him to designate any freedom or form of victory incompatible with what is implied in the words "I am carnal, sold under sin," and "I find a law that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." When Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," we must not understand him to mean that he finds any strengthening grace in Christ through which he will not be compelled to say, "The good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do." When we read, for example, that "Christ is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him," and that God is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," we must not expect that anything will be done for us to relieve us from "captivity unto the law of sin which is in our members." When we read, "He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," we must understand that nothing is promised here to relieve us from the cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" When we pray, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," we must bear in mind that nothing more is to be expected from the prayer of all the saints than this, that in our most perfect obedience we shall be constrained to say, "That which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that do I."

Permit me here to request of the reader a careful reading of the following words of our Saviour, and then an equally careful comparison of the same with the passage from Romans vii. now under consideration. "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. And the glory which Thou hast given me I have given them, that they also may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me."

All this undeniably relates to believers in this life. Is nothing here prayed for? and are we here authorised to expect nothing more nor better than is disclosed in this portion of Romans 7:1-25? I rejoice to know that the hearts of believers are being "turned unto the Lord," that "they may know the things which are freely given us of God," and that, as a consequence, the veil which the construction has put upon the passages above considered is being "taken from their hearts."

02.A08. Trial Of Faith And Triumph Of Principle

CHAPTER VIII.

TRIAL OF FAITH AND TRIUMPH OF PRINCIPLE. At the time of my conversion, sectarianism in its most embittered forms ruled in all the churches. Most of the denominations also were divided into schools and parties, each of which held the doctrines of the others in the intensest reprobation; schools and parties giving rise in several instances to new and hostile sects. Under such circumstances, the conviction took an early and a distinct form in my mind, that in all these sects and schools and parties there was much of truth, with more or less of intermingled error; and that, if I should make it my simple inquiry, "What is truth?" and be guided in my inquiries, not by prevailing opinion around me, but by an exclusive and prayerful reference "to the law and to the testimony," I should probably be at home nowhere but with my own conscience and my God, and should in important respects -- all differences, however trivial in themselves, being then deemed important -- be esteemed, even by my own sect and, school and party, as unsound in the faith.

Hence it was that, before I had been a believer for a single year, the question was distinctly submitted to my deliberate moral election -- to wit, By what law should my future inquiries after truth and duty be directed? Shall I take unquestioning rank as a member of some sect, school or party? Or shall I be the honest and earnest scholar of truth itself; with my intellect, my conscience, my God, and His Spirit, law, and testimony as my authoritative leaders and guides? Such questioning I was not long in deciding; and fixing permanently my life principles, I determined that, as I had opportunity, I would, with all care and candour, examine all the principles and doctrines of all churches, sects, schools, and parties, and as fully as possible weigh all the real evidences for and against their truth, and then, holding my mind in an even balance, let the weight of evidence, and nothing else, determine my convictions and course of conduct, accepting whatever consequences agreements and disagreements with popular sentiments might bring upon me. To this principle I have, since that good hour, sacredly and deliberately aimed to conform in the formation of all my opinions, beliefs, doctrines, and principles, in every sphere of thought and activity in common. This utter renunciation of the fear of man, and this deliberate election of the fear of God as my immutable motive in determining all questions of truth and duty, was not made without much inward pain and self-crucifixion. I did not know Christ then as I do now, and was not "in Him, and He in me," then as now. As a consequence, it was not then, as it is now, "a small thing to be judged of man’s judgment." Yet, painful as it was, the election was made, and has ever remained as the fixed law of faith and conduct. As the result of inquiries conducted in the strictest adherence to such principles, I have never for a moment stood outside the circle of the evangelical faith, but have ever maintained a fixed position in the center of that circle. The doctrines of the divine origin and authority of "that dearest of books, that excels every other" -- of the Triune God -- of the mystery of the incarnation, "God manifest in the flesh" -- of the universal sinfulness of man -- of atonement through the death of Christ -- of the necessity of regeneration through the Spirit as the immutable condition of our "seeing the kingdom of God" -- of "repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God" -- of "the resurrection of the dead" -- and of "eternal judgment" -- all

these and kindred doctrines I hold as of infinite importance in themselves, and as verified revelations from God, and hold them with the distinct consciousness that I must thus regard them, or cease to "walk in the light," and be determined in all my convictions by valid evidence. On other questions of vital interest relatively to the revealed privileges and immunities and "high callings" in this life of "believers in Jesus," my sacred convictions -- convictions induced by the most careful and devout study of the Word of God -- my most sacred convictions, I say, have constrained me to take open issue with the popular faith of the class of believers with whom I was ecclesiastically connected, and of the great majority of evangelical denominations, and hence have often found myself as a stranger among my own people. As I advance near the setting sun of life, however, I have the unspeakable satisfaction to know that these very doctrines, the holding of which was imputed to me as heresy of the most dangerous character, are becoming vital centers about which, in all these denominations, Christian thought is now revolving.

Having for nearly sixty years been a disciple of truth under the principles above stated, it will not be deemed out of place if I should offer a few considerations to commend these principles to the implicit regard of all who would "walk in the light of God." The spirit of manly, Christian independence demanded by these principles does not permit us, it should be borne in mind, to regard or treat with contempt, but with deep respect, the doctrines of the churches, or the opinions and sentiments of those who differ from us. This spirit does require us, on the other hand, to examine, with all candour and care, all such doctrines, opinions, and sentiments, to compare them with searching scrutiny with the Scriptures of truth, the law, and the testimony, and to accept or reject them as we find them to accord, or not to accord, with these all-authoritative and unerring standards. This spirit is also at an equal remove from that latitudinarianism, miscalled liberality, which regards with indifference all questions pertaining to truth and error, and blindly fellowships each alike. This spirit, on the other hand, not only "loves righteousness and hates iniquity," but, with equal fervency, loves truth and hates error, carefully discriminates between the right and the wrong, the true and the false, and has fellowship, only with truth and goodness, and always, in questions of truth and duty, searches and decides in the fear of God alone. Why should this be the fixed law of thought and action with us?

This, I remark, in the first place, is the identical spirit, and these are the identical principles, specifically and absolutely imposed in the Scriptures upon every "believer in Jesus," as of absolute authority in all his inquiries after truth and duty. In the Bible we have set before us "one Lawgiver," "the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him;" one Lord, who is Himself "the way, and the truth, and the life," and who is the exclusive source "of all rule and all authority." All believers, as Christ absolutely informs us, are "sons of God," -- sons sustaining to each other the relations of "brethren." "All ye are brethren." "They," He further says, "that are appointed to rule over the Gentiles exercise authority over them;" "but it shall not be so among you." Religious teachers, and all who do, in certain relations, bear rule in the churches, are absolutely prohibited from "exercising lordship over God’s heritage." Paul, while, as an inspired teacher of truth, he did claim for what God communicated through him absolute authority, was careful to inform believers that, as an individual, he had no "dominion over their faith."

While listening to teachers, each hearer is required to judge for himself of the truth or error of what he hears. "Let the other judge." Each believer is further required to "prove all things"-- that is, to

discriminate for himself between what is true and what is false, between what is right and what is wrong, and to "hold fast that which is good." When Christ required His followers to "beware of false prophets" or teachers, and gave the test, "their fruits," by which the true ones are to be distinguished from the false, He makes each hearer an independent judge of what he hears. There is no principle which is more distinctly revealed and absolutely imposed in the Scriptures than this. Let me add here, that no individual will more readily and cordially submit to the brotherhood, and to his religious teachers, in all things not pertaining to the conscience, than will the believer who is most absolute in his subjection to the spirit and principles under consideration. Within the holy of holies of the conscience, he knows but one Lawgiver and one Lord, and but one rule of faith and conduct, the Spirit and Word of the living God. Outside of this sphere, he will most cordially "make himself all things to all men." In exercising this absolute and exclusive respect for the Word and will of God in all questions of truth and duty, we become absolutely entitled to the promise, "they shall all be taught of the Lord," and shall consequently be infallibly taught "in all things pertaining to life and godliness" -- that is, in regard to all things requisite to our highest moral purity, peace, and blessedness, and fruitfulness in every good word and work" here, and to assure for our selves "an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." "He that followeth me," says our Saviour, "shall not work in darkness, but shall have the light of life." We do not, as He expressly teaches us, become followers of Christ and believe in Him, as He specifically requires, until we have "forsaken all" for Him; and He, by a deliberate act of moral election on our part, becomes, to the exclusion of human authority, "our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." When He thus becomes the supreme Lord of our intellect, conscience, and will, then He becomes responsible to give us the Holy Spirit, through whom, in all that pertains to "life and godliness," we shall "walk in the light, as God is in the light." Outside of this sphere, and in respect to all questions not requisite to our highest moral purity, peace, and usefulness, and final salvation, we shall, with all others, be liable to err in judgment. In "the highway of holiness," on the other hand, "God will be our everlasting light," and "our feet shall not stumble." When human teaching and authority, whatever its form or source may be, becomes our light, a veil passes between our hearts and "the light of God," and no promise comes to us that we shall be "taught of God." Our convictions of truth, when the knowledge of it is sought by searching the Scriptures in the fear of God alone, will have infinitely greater influence in moulding the heart and character than when the same truth is received on human authority, whatever the form of such authority may be. To hold the truth itself as a part of the creed of our sect, or party, or school, and to hold the same truth as that which God hath taught us, and as coming to the heart and conscience from Him, impart to that truth entirely diverse influences over the mind. He that has sought the truth for himself; and has gone to God’s treasury to find what he seeks, has an assurance that he is "walking in the light of God," -- an assurance otherwise impossible. In presenting that truth to others, he will always speak with the firm assurance of an original witness, consciously testifying "what he has seen and heard." That, on the other hand, even if it chance to be true, which, without original inquiry, we have accepted as a mere tenet of our sect, school, or party, we can never have any such assurance about, can by no possibility act as a vitalising power in our own hearts, or inspire us with courage and assurance when we present it to others.

What gave Paul, for example, such utterance and power as a minister of the everlasting gospel was the absolute consciousness that the gospel which he preached was not after man, that he "neither received it of man, neither was he taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." So,

when our dwelling-place is not the undigested teachings of our sect, school, or purity, but the Word of God, when we walk up and down amid the great revelations of that Book, and all our convictions take conscious form from a direct and divinely-illumined vision of those revelations, then "will our righteousness go forth as brightness, and our salvation as a lamp that shineth" We shall not "despise prophesyings," or religious teachings; but we shall "prove all things," and thus discern and "hold fast that which is good." The mere disciple of the sect, school, or party, not only does not receive truth in any form as from God, but never embraces it in its unadulterated form. The truth which he happens to find is always weakened or neutralised in its influence by the interminglings of error. When all believers in common, I remark finally, shall inquire for truth, and determine all questions of doctrine and duty in the fear of God alone, and shall avail themselves of all human helps, but regard the same as human and nothing more, then, and only then, will that unity of spirit, and of views of truth, duty, and order obtain which God desires to see, and the honor of our divine religion among men demands. All having a common source of truth and standard of judgment, and all directed in their thinking and judging by a common divine illumination, and all, with singleness of purpose and object, seeking to know God’s truth and will as God apprehends, and would have us apprehend them, and all entertaining a sacred respect for the right of private judgment in every member of the sanctified family, discord in the household of faith would be impossible; while in all essentials there would be absolute unity, and in all non-essentials there would be universal charity. This is the unity which Christ prayed for in the behalf of all who believe in Him, and God desires no higher unity than this.

I will here give two examples of the influence of the spirit and principles under consideration: When I became a student in college, I found that my room-mate and myself, though members of the same denomination, and fully agreeing in the essentials of the evangelical faith, held antagonistic views on questions of doctrine then deemed of almost fundamental importance. In our room, angry debates often occurred between him and friends of mine who agreed with me in doctrine. In such disputes I took no part whatever. When we were alone, however, I would freely question him about his views, and draw from him a clear statement of his reasons for holding the same. If I differed from him, I would fully state to him the points of disagreement, with my reasons for my own views, and my objections to his, asking him, at the same time, to furnish me fully with his objections to the views which I had advanced. With such statements our discussions always terminated. We had been together but a few weeks when my associate thus addressed me"Room-mate, I will confess this to you, that you always treat my views and arguments with perfect candour." In my own secret thoughts, I thus replied, "Before we graduate, a perfect unity of judgment will obtain between us on all the questions about which we now so widely differ." The result was as I anticipated. I cannot designate a single doctrine about which our views were opposed when we took leave of each other. When a student in theology, leading members of the institution, who belonged to the opposite schools into which the now United Presbyterian Church was for a time divided into two distinct denominations, organised a society for the purpose of a comparison of views upon the identical principles above indicated. Our object was to know one another, for the united purpose of finding the truth. The result was the same, unity of "mind and judgment" among all the members of that society, and that, without exception, the same unity as obtained between my room-mate and myself. "I would to God" that all teachers and pupils of God’s truth would "go and do likewise."

02.A09. Light And Principles Retained Through

CHAPTER IX.

LIGHT AND PRINCIPLES RETAINED THROUGH THE ENTIRE CHRISTIAN LIFE. AS I am about to speak of a seeming decline of the vitality of the inner life, it may be expedient, for the purpose of being fully understood, to notice briefly certain essential views of truth and principles of action which have remained permanent. The distinct apprehension which I at first received of the total alienation and estrangement of the unregenerate heart from God, His will, and the law of duty -- of the infinite ill-desert of sin -- of the absolute necessity of the new birth to an admission to the kingdom of God -- of the doctrine of atonement through Christ -- of "repentance from dead works, and faith toward God" -- of "eternal judgment" -- and of the necessity of a holy life as the condition of final admission to the kingdom of light, never became dim, or lost their impressiveness over my mind. Hence, before and after my entrance upon the ministry, I retained power to impress the truth of God effectively upon the human heart, as thousands of converts, who afterwards evinced the genuineness of their conversion by their Christian lives, bear witness. Nor am I conscious of ever having swerved from the strictest adherence to the principles above elucidated in all my inquiries after truth and duty. Nor have I ever allowed any considerations of personal popularity or pecuniary loss or gain to have the remotest influence in determining my open avowals of what I honestly regarded as true or false, right or wrong. In all my ministrations, I have been conscious of but one motive, namely, by what form of ministrations and course of life can I bring the greatest number of men to Christ, and do most for the edification of the Church? Nor for a single day or hour of my Christian life have I allowed myself in the commission of any known sin or in the neglect of any known duty; and when conscious of wrong to God, man, or a child, I have made it the fixed law of my life to make immediate confession and reparation. So far "I have fought a good fight, and have kept the faith." Nor do I record these facts as claiming special credit on their account. They belong to what I regard as constituting mere essentials of common Christian character. Without these I could not, in my own regard, be an honest or a Christian man. I state these facts that I may not be misapprehended in what follows. This fact I may also state here: in my own Christian life, I have never been what I regard as a backslider, that is, one who has been in voluntary estrangement from God and the law of duty. From the beginning I have sought the light, and uniformly walked in it, as far as vouchsafed to me.

02.A10. A Growing Dimness Of The Inner Light

CHAPTER X. A GROWING DIMNESS OF THE INNER LIGHT, AND A CONSEQUENT FEEBLE AND SICKLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE INNER LIFE.

YET, as years passed on, the inner light in which I had walked began gradually to grow dim, and continued to become more and more so, until at length my dwelling-place was in the darkened twilight of the Sun of Righteousness. Under such circumstances, the inner life took on a comparatively sickly hue, and an unhealthy growth and development. One of the marked characteristics of the state to which I descended was the gradual decay and dying out of the inward peace and joy in God which the first love had induced and so long perpetuated. In this state, the gospel of Christ stood out before the mind as a divinely-originated and perfected system of eternal truth, a system absolutely adapted to approve itself to the intellect, and demand the supreme subjection of the will, and yet comparatively void of power to move and mould the affections, stir and break up and purify the great deep of emotion, and thus to vitalise and perfect the inner man and the outer life. To accomplish any such results as these, the gospel must attain to an equal and full control over all the susceptibilities, faculties, and activities of our nature, and never does, and it never can, have this all-renovating and all-vitalising power but after we have received "the promise of the Spirit," and Christ is formed within us, and dwells in us, "the hope of glory." If, on the other hand, after the light and joys of the first love have developed our susceptibilities, and created in us a relish and desire for such forms of blessedness, that light and those joys shall pass away, or become less divine than they once were, they will leave "an aching void" behind, a painful sense of emptiness and want, which will render us more unhappy than we were before "we tasted the heavenly gift." In the depth of mind, there will be a perpetual cry, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him" and yet God will seem to be not near, but afar off, so that we cannot behold Him, or "approach near, even unto His seat." The Word of God will be to us "a sealed book." We may read it diligently, with all the helps which we can obtain, and we shall yet find little there to vitalise the inward deadness, or show us the face of God. "We fear the Lord, and yet walk in darkness and have no light." All this was especially true in my own case. My early joys had been very deep, and, to all around me, surprisingly long continued. As a consequence, few could have felt their loss as I did. In this state, common disappointments and bereavements have an afflictive and painful power to which unconverted persons are comparative strangers. It is this fact which has given rise to the satanic lie that the path to heaven is a thorny one, while that to hell is strewn with flowers. This idea would be true, however, were the Christian life to be passed in the state under consideration. Such was my experience during the period of this eclipse of the face of God. Losses, perplexities, disappointments, and bereavements, had a power to induce mental pain and suffering of which I had no conception before. To all eternity, it seems to me, I can never forget the pure agony which I experienced when God took from us, in succession, two infant children, each that "thing of beauty," of about four months of age, one our first-born son, and the other our little daughter. The first died on Sunday morning, and I felt constrained to preach to my people that forenoon. Those two countenances, as I looked upon them for the last time, have ever

since remained before my mind with the same distinctness as if the vision had occurred but one hour ago. Of what occurred on the way to and from those burying-places, I have never been able to recall a single instance. I have only a faint recollection of seeing two little coffins let down gently into "the lap of God." Such was the effect of afflictive providences upon my sensitive nature, then so highly developed, but so barren of spiritual peace and joy of heart. So intense was the pain induced by events of the character under consideration, that I often thought with myself that there "was no sorrow like unto my sorrow," and with that sorrow no divine consolations seemed to be intermingled. Such I believe to be the case with all Christians where, with the fervour of their first love, their early religious joys have passed away. They may love the world, but can never again enjoy it as they once did, and in the world, and away from God, they will suffer from worldly tribulations as none others can suffer.

Another peculiarity of the state under consideration is a renewed vitalisation of the evil propensities and their action, with an intensity unknown in the prior worldly life. As afflictive providences now pain us more than formerly, so cares, perplexities, disappointments, and provocations disturb our peace, ruffle our passions, and irritate our tempers, more than before religious content, peace, and joy had place on our minds. Hence it is that one of the most patience-taxing and disagreeable individuals in the family, in the social circle, and in all the relations of life, is the Christian who has experienced deep religious joy and peace, and has lost "the blessedness he once spoke of." In no circumstances do "roots of bitterness," when they do "spring up," bear such lasting and bitter fruit as when they spring up in churches in which there has, in former years, been the most abundant Christian love, unity, and joy in God.

Hence it is that there are no prejudices so strong, no strifes so relentless, and no controversies so embittered, as the so-called religious, and no hate so deep as the odium theoloicum, the theological hate. It is a truth of inspiration, a truth verified also by universal observation and experience, that when we have once had a consciousness of "the gladness and deep joy" of the religious life, and have lost that blessedness, we descend to lengths, and breadths, and depths of unhappiness never before experienced. "The last state of that man is worse than the first" becomes true of us, in exact proportion to our loss of the spirit or joys of the new life.

02.A11. Intense Struggles, Conflicts, Fightings

CHAPTER XI.

INTENSE STRUGGLES, CONFLICTS, FIGHTINGS, AND INGLORIOUS DEFEATS.

IF the reader can form the conception of an individual whose fixed and abiding aim and purpose is "so to exercise himself as to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man," and has not lost this purpose -- an individual, however, who has had very deep and abiding joy in God, and does not now know "the joy of the Lord," as "his strength;" if the reader can conceive of such an individual, in the state above described, entering into a resolute conflict with the newly-vitalised and ever-active evil propensities and tempers within him, and that with an inflexible determination to subdue and hold them all in subjection, he will form some conception of the conflicts and defeats which I experienced during six or eight years of my Christian life. With me, then as now, covetousness, evil intent, however secret, and evil desire inwardly entertained and cherished, carefulness about the future, discontent with our lot, evil-speaking, yielding to the promptings of envy or anger, "and such like," are sin.

Yet how to avoid the sin I found not. Evil incentives were all around me, and evil propensities answering to the same, and always kindled into a flame the moment they were touched with the spark of temptation, were within; and temptation always came suddenly, and took the will captive before reflection was possible. How often did I say to myself; "If I could only have time for reflection, when beset with unexpected temptation, I could be the victor in the conflict." Before reflection could come to my relief, however, the evil was done, and I was in captivity. I then read my experience in the seventh chapter of Romans, and a bitter experience it was.

Under such circumstances, two courses, supposing a more excellent way than either is not open to us -- two courses remain for the believer. He may give the conflict over as a hopeless endeavour, and, in a kind of gloomy content, let his evil passions and temper have dominion over him. Or he may, notwithstanding the odds against him, maintain the conflict, and, by repentance and faith in Christ, recover from his lapses when they do occur. The latter course I adopted, and maintained unerringly. The former many seem to adopt, and do it at the infinite peril of their immortal interests. No individual can allow sin to lie upon his conscience unrepented of and unforgiven without throwing himself into the arms of the second death.

Since then, I have learned "the more excellent way" referred to. Christ, when this way has been learned, takes away our sins by destroying and taking away the power of those evil principles and propensities within us -- principles and propensities which induce us to sin -- and putting within us His own "love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity," and thus rendering holiness as natural to us in our new, as sin was in our old life. I tried, to my deep and abiding sorrow, the common and old way for years, before I inquired and searched diligently "for the new and living way," "by which I now draw nigh unto God," and "full grace to help in time of need." The Causes which led to such Results When any important event occurs, we naturally inquire for the reason or cause of such

occurrence. If we should form our judgment of the duration of the primal joy of the new life from a consideration of the new relations into which the mind is then introduced, its relations to God, and to its own mortal and immortal interests, and also from the positive representations of Scripture upon the subject, we should conclude that this joy will not only steadily increase, but will be eternally enduring. In the pardon of sin, and in our adoption as the sons of God, the good received, and the grace and love manifested in the same, is each infinite. In being "turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God," no change in character and relations like this can occur in the experience of rational minds. Surely the blessedness resulting from such experiences might be expected to be eternally enduring. That it should be thus enduring, accords with the express revelations of the Bible. "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." "He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall how rivers of living water." "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." "In whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." "Thy people shall all be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy people." "For the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended." "Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." "We joy in tribulation also." "In all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that hath loved us." Such is the revealed blessedness -- blessedness in this life -- of those who walk in "the highway of holiness." We often hear it said that religion does not consist in feeling, whether joyful or sad. This is true. Yet "the fruit of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," &c. An experience in which we are not "kept in perfect peace," in which "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, does not keep our hearts and minds by Christ Jesus," in which we do not "rejoice evermore," and "our joy is not full," is not normal but abnormal Christian experience. Nor will any believer ever become "rooted and grounded in love" unless "the joy of the Lord is his strength." We cannot "know and believe the love that God hath unto us," and our love not "be made perfect;" and we cannot be "made perfect in love," and "all fear not be cast out," and our "joy not become full," because "our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." The time, I venture without fear to predict, is not distant when, with the Christians of that generation, the great mystery in the history of the Church will be the fact that, for long periods, believers in Jesus sighed, and cried, and searched after "the blessedness they knew when first they saw the Lord," "the soul-refreshing views of Jesus and His Word" which they then enjoyed. and talked and sang to one another about the "aching void" which that blessedness and those views had left in their hearts. No believer who will be advised by me will rest, or "give God any rest," until Christ is in him as the Father is in Christ, and he has "Christ’s joy fulfilled" in his heart. But how does this joy in God pass away? Most commonly, I answer, through sin for which the "heart condemns" the subject, and the sin is left upon the conscience unrepented of and unforgiven. In my own case, this was not the cause after which we are seeking. There has never been a period in my Christian life when I did not cherish a sacred respect for every form of the known will of God, or when "my heart condemned me" and I did not seek prompt forgiveness; yet there were years in which I "feared the Lord and trembled at His word," and still "walked in darkness and had no light." How did I lose that primal

blessedness? In the first place, I answer, I expected to lose it. That I should lose it was a fixed article of the creed in which I had been taught from the beginning. In the heart of every believer whom I knew, and of whom I had heard or read, that blessedness had faded out. In my experience this joy passed away so gradually and imperceptibly that very little alarm was excited. As the light faded, I read my experience and in-yard life very distinctly in the seventh chapter of Romans, which, as I honestly supposed, reveals that experience and in the best form to be expected this side heaven or the hour of death. The wretchedness that I experienced, and the abortive efforts I made to recover my former standing and overcome my evil tendencies and besetments, revealed to me, as I supposed, the fact that I was then in the identical moral and spiritual state in which Paul was when he wrote this and his other epistles. Thus, by my own faith and views of the express teaching of inspiration, was I frozen in, and that in "a land of darkness as darkness itself; where the light is as darkness." Nor had I, at that time, any views of Christ, of the provisions of His grace, or of the power of the Spirit -- views which had the remotest efficacy to relieve my difficulties, or reveal the path which would have conducted me out of that "darkness into God’s marvellous light." I knew Christ almost exclusively in the single sphere of our justification. Hardly "by the hearing of the ear" had I any knowledge of Him as our sanctification. Of "the promise of the Spirit" I was in total darkness. I consequently had no idea of what is meant by all that is revealed of Christ as a manifested, personal presence, "formed within us, the hope of glory," and, with the Father, "making His abode with us." All the promises and revealed provisions of grace were limited and eclipsed by what was supposed to be revealed of Christian experience and privileges in the chapter referred to, and other falsely interpreted passages.

Yes, reader, I was in that dim twilight of a semi-faith, because, while I was studying diligently -- and this is not wrong -- what was called the great doctrines, my imperious need, as I afterward found, was "some one to teach me what are the first principles of the oracles of God." Had some one thus taught me, how long would I have remained in that dark and dreary waste? No longer than I did remain after the highway of holiness was opened upon my vision. If you, reader, are now dwelling in these low grounds, heed the voice which comes to us from God out of heaven, calling upon the sacramental host to go forward, and ascend those "delectable mountains" whose cloudless summits are ever warmed and illumined by the life-giving beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

02.A12. Light Breaking In

CHAPTER XII.

LIGHT BREAKING IN. IN the moral and spiritual state above indicated, I entered, about the eighth year of my Christian life, upon my studies as a student in theology at Andover, Massachusetts. Our Biblical Professor was the celebrated Biblical scholar, Rev. Moses Stuart. In the progress of our Biblical studies, we came at length to Romans 7:1-25. Our learned Professor, to the surprise of not a few of his pupils, laid out all his learning and talents in rendering it demonstrably evident that the specific object of the apostle in Romans 7:1-25 is to elucidate a legal in distinction from a proper Christian experience. The express object of the entire epistle, as he showed us, is to elucidate and verify the doctrine of salvation in its entireness, salvation by faith, as opposed to the Jewish error of salvation by deeds of law and patriarchal descent. In Romans 1:1-32, Romans 2:1-29, Romans 3:1-31, Romans 4:1-25, Romans 5:1-21, the Christian doctrine of justification by faith is most fully stated, elucidated, and verified, in opposition to the Jewish error of justification by deeds of law. In the next three chapters, a precisely similar course of demonstrative reasoning is pursued relatively to the fundamental doctrine of sanctification by faith, as opposed to the Jewish error upon the same subject. In the portion of Romans 7:1-25 devoted to the subject, the apostle details, in fact and form, his own abortive legal experience as a Jew, and in the eighth chapter details, in contrast with his former legal self and life, his Christian experience as a believer in Jesus. The contrast is most instructive and impressive. In the former state he was always under condemnation, bringing forth fruits unto death; in the latter, he was free from all condemnation, because he was justified freely by divine grace, and "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." In the former state, in every purpose of obedience, and in every conflict with his evil propensities, "the law in his members," he suffered a sad and inglorious defeat, and was a stranger to victory in all its forms; in the latter state, in every condition of existence, and in every conflict with the powers of sin, he was "more than a conqueror through Him that hath loved us." In the former state, he found "a law that, when he would do good, evil was present with him;" in the latter, "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus made him free from the law of sin and death." In the former state, "he was carnal, sold under sin;" in the latter, he was the Lord’s freeman, "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." To explain the experience detailed in Romans 7:1-25 as Christian experience, is to annihilate, as our Professor showed us, all distinction between sanctification by faith and "by deeds of law," between the experience of the Jew and that of the Christian, and to affirm faith in Christ to be just as inoperative in the matter of sanctification as is the law. The views which our Professor presented, accord, as he rendered undeniably evident, with those received by the entire primitive Church directly from the apostle himself, and with the expositions of a vast majority of the most distinguished commentators of all ages. We were finally shown, by numerous quotations from heathen authors, that the experience portrayed in this seventh chapter is identical with that of men living in sin, as portrayed by such writers, and that their language, in most important respects, perfectly corresponds with his upon the same subject. All our ideas of the Christian life, as we

were shown, are marred when we identify the legal experience described in Romans 7:1-25 with the Christian experience described in the next chapter, and in other parts of the Bible. The argument of our Professor was most manifestly unanswerable, and with the conviction induced, rays of light began to pierce "the horror of great darkness" in which my mind was involved. The supposed revealed necessity, that the believer shall remain "carnal, sold under sin," and carry about with him in his "captivity under the law of sin" and death "the body of this death," was taken away, and I was set free to inquire, and soon began most eagerly to inquire, in other portions of the Word of God "for the things which are freely given us of God." The manner in which these inquiries were pursued, together with the results, will be disclosed hereafter.

02.A13. The Legal And The Christian Spirit

CHAPTER XIII. THE LEGAL AND THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT. AS much is being said in the churches about a legal righteousness and righteousness by faith, or the legal and Christian spirit and method of righteousness, it may be important for us to stop right here for a moment, and see if we cannot obtain clear and distinct apprehensions of these two distinct and opposite spirits and methods of righteousness. At the time when Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, the Jew stood out before the world as the advocate and representative of the doctrine of justification by deeds of law and of legal righteousness, while the Christian stood forth as the advocate and representative of the opposite doctrine, that of justification and sanctification both by faith. The object of the apostle in this epistle (I repeat what I have stated in substance before) is to elucidate these two distinct and opposite methods of righteousness as advocated and represented by these two classes of individuals. In doing this, the apostle gives the Jew full credit for all that could be claimed in his behalf. "Israel," or the Jews, had "a zeal for God," "followed after the law of righteousness," "rested in the law," "made his boast of God," "knew His will," approved the things that are more excellent," and "had the form of knowledge and of the truth." Yet, in seeking righteousness "by deeds of law," the Jew failed in the end he sought both in the matter of justification, on the one hand, and sanctification on the other -- utterly failed in both particulars. This he did for two reasons. The fact that he, in common with all the race, had sinned, and come short of the "glory of God," -- a fact which rendered it absolutely impossible that any human being shall be justified "by the deeds of the law." The Jew also, notwithstanding his "approval of the law," and "delight in it after the inner man," and frequently renewed efforts and purposes of obedience, utterly failed to render the obedience purposed and required, because the evil propensities in man are stronger than the conscience and the will. The Christian, on the other hand, in seeking righteousness by faith, does "attain to righteousness" in both particulars, because that in Christ provisions absolutely adequate and efficacious do exist for the full justification and sanctification of all who believe in Him. To understand clearly the nature of the legal spirit, as it is in itself and as represented by the Jew in his "following after righteousness," we have only to recur to the efforts which Paul represents his countrymen as putting forth in the direction of obedience to "the law of righteousness." Representing himself as a Jew, and as he once was, the apostle thus speaks: -- "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do! "That which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." In examining all the above statements, we find, on the one hand, the presence of a clear apprehension, inward approval of, and even inward delight in, what the law requires. We find also purposes and efforts to render this obedience; but, in every single purpose and endeavour, a total failure "to do that which is good," -- the good to do which there is a readiness to will.

We find, on the other hand, the total absence of all recognition of the fact of self-impotence and dependence upon divine aid, or any aid whatever beyond self, to do the good -- the total absence, consequently, of faith in Christ for "grace to help" human impotency. In other words, every purpose

is formed and every effort put forth in the exclusive spirit of self-sufficiency and self-dependence. This is the legal spirit in its nature, essence, and form. The language of this spirit is, "The man that doeth these things shall live by them" "I will do them, and live thereby." The language of faith, on the other hand is, "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God," and in Christ we do "have all-sufficiency for all things," and may consequently "abound to every good work." The legal spirit boasts of its strength, is full of good purposes, but is utterly powerless to "do that which is good." The spirit of faith, on the other hand, recognises and confesses to total self-impotence, and yet is ever girded with all-sufficient strength, because "its hope and trust is not in self, but in the living God."

I may illustrate these two opposites by a reference to my own case. In the matter of justification, my self-renunciation and dependence upon the grace of God in Christ were absolute. Here, consequently, I had "assurance of hope." In that of sanctification, on the other hand, whenever I failed in my purposes of obedience, after confession and the consciousness of forgiveness, I would say to myself "I know of but one thing to do, and that is, to renew my purpose of obedience and start anew." I record the very words I was accustomed to repeat to myself under the circumstances referred to. As a consequence, my renewed purposes were as abortive as my former ones had been, and I read my experience in Romans 7:1-25.

Whenever, and to what extent, and in what form soever, reader, you may purpose obedience, resolve to start anew in the divine life, and do this expecting thus to obey because you have purposed to do so, you will read you future experience just where I read mine, and will never find "deliverance from the body of this death." The reason is, that all such purposes and efforts are not of faith, but purely legal.

If on the other hand, "with purpose of heart you shall cleave unto the Lord," and while you do so you shall, with a distinct recognition of your total moral impotency for anything good or right, recognise in Christ an infinite fulness for all your necessities, and shall put full trust in Him, as your all-sufficient "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," then will "your righteousness go forth as brightness, and your salvation as a lamp that shineth," and your stability in love and obedience be "as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth for ever." The reason is, that "the life which you now live in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved you, and gave Himself for you." Such is the distinction between the legal and Christian spirit and method of righteousness.

02.A14. Conscious Deficiencies Of Christian

CHAPTER XIV.

CONSCIOUS DEFICIENCIES OF CHRISTIAN AND MINISTERIAL QUALIFICATION. WHEN the Spirit of God is about to open upon the mind some new and fundamentally important aspect of divine truth, or to impart some new, and fresh, and vitalising aspect of what we really knew before, and this as a means of lifting us to new and far higher forms of "the hidden life" than we were formerly possessed of, He commonly, first of all, renders us distinctly conscious of some, specific inward spiritual want -- a want which what we now know of the gospel is not adapted to meet -- a want, however, to meet which fully and perfectly the new manifestation is absolutely adapted.

We are thus led to inquire and search diligently after this manifestation which God has prepared for us, and which the Spirit, through these "unutterable groanings," is preparing us to receive; and when we have been induced to "search for God" in these new and living manifestations, and to "search for Him with all our hearts, and with all our souls," we "find Him," and find Him as "our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning are ended." The brightest of all "the signs of promise," in regard to the near future of Zion, is the fact that the conviction is everywhere obtaining among evangelical Christians that they are living far below their revealed privileges -- that everywhere they are being pressed with a common, and conscious, and specific want and desire for something higher and better than they have hitherto enjoyed -- and that with the conviction that there are in Christ provisions fully adequate to meet these necessities.

These wants will never be met by looking back to "the blessedness we knew when first we saw the Lord," or to "the soul-refreshing view of Jesus and His Word" which was once enjoyed. As far as the mount of justification is concerned, the joys of pardoned sin, and the "soul-refreshing view of Jesus and His Word" there enjoyed, God is saying to His people, "Ye have compassed this mountain long enough." Inquire now for "the rest that remains for the people of God," for "the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healings in His wings," for "the promise of the Spirit," for the open-faced "beholdings of the glory of the Lord," for the divine fellowships, and for the coming of Christ and the Father to "make their abode with you," so that you may know in experience what your Redeemer meant when He said, "I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as Thou lovest me." Nothing but these eternal verities will meet and satisfy the great want that is now pressing upon believers. In my own case, "the aching void" which the passing away of my primal religious joys had left in my heart, together with the conscious fact that nothing in my then views of the gospel seemed to have power to bring back that blessedness, and with constant failures of my best resolutions, rendered me continuously conscious of the fact that I had somewhere missed my way, and needed some one to teach me the secret of the inner life, as that life is portrayed in the Scriptures. However clear and distinct my views of the system of Christian doctrine one fact I knew, and was distinctly conscious of, that my inner life did but very partially accord with that which Christ has promised to believers. My thirst was not quenched, nor were the waters which

Christ had given me "within me as a well of water springing up into everlasting life;" nor was "my joy full;" nor did I have an experience of what our Saviour meant when He said, "He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Hence the continued inward cry, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!" and where is the key that will unlock the mystery of my inner life, and show me "the living water?"

I had not been over six or seven years in the ministry before far more than as many hundred converts were added to my own and other churches around me, and that through my direct instrumentality. As soon as these converts multiplied before me, the command came distinctly home to my mind, "Feed my lambs." I looked over the churches to which I ministered, and perceived that the membership of the same were, almost without exception, in a sickly and feeble spiritual state, none of them having "princely power with God and with men," none of them "kept in perfect peace," or "rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory." In the visible presence of such facts, another precept came home with similar distinctness to my mind, "Feed my sheep." The two precepts under consideration, as I clearly understood them, required that those young converts and feeble believers should be so instructed that "they might grow up into Christ in all things," "attain to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," be "thoroughly furnished into every good work," "rejoice ever more," and be "filled with all the fulness of God." This was the unmistakable pattern of the New Testament saint, as distinctly drawn by the pen of inspiration. I was myself consciously not such a saint, and was darkly ignorant of "the way, the truth, and the life" by which I could attain to a personal realisation of the revealed divine ideal before me.

How could I lead "the flock of God" in a way unknown to myself? He that would, as required, feed the flock, must in his own experience, as I clearly saw, lead the flock. What he has himself "seen and heard," that he must "testify" to believers. What is expressly required of the religious teacher -- and all believers should, in their diverse spheres and measure, be teachers -- what is required of the religious teacher, I say, is that he shall, in his inner and outward life, be a living exemplification of the life-imparting power of the truth which he teaches -- "an epistle of Christ," "known and read of all men" as such. This deep consciousness, thus induced, of most essential personal and ministerial deficiency, developed in the depths of my inner being a sense of a specific and overshadowing want, together with an irrepressible desire to discover the divine secret or manifestation by which that want would be fully met, I will relate a single fact as illustrative of the mental state to which I refer. At the close of a protracted meeting of about one week’s continuance -- I was President of Oberlin College then -- upwards of two hundred and fifty individuals separated themselves from the congregation, and seated themselves in front of the preacher’s stand as converts and inquirers, all but a few of them being of the former class. As I looked over that mass, I said to myself, "If any one was present who could direct me into ’the new and living way’ after which I am inquiring, I should take my place among these converts and inquirers." Such was the sentiment that was omnipresent in my mind during the years of my Christian and ministerial life of which I am now speaking.

02.A15. Protracted Inquiries After The Mystery

CHAPTER XV.

PROTRACTED INQUIRIES AFTER THE MYSTERY OF THE HIDDEN LIVE.

UNDER the influence of this sentiment, I entered upon the most careful inquiries after "the hidden mystery" of the divine life. In my researches into the Scriptures, "a veil" was upon my heart -- the veil of false doctrines and false interpretations of the Word of God in regard to the condition and privileges of believers in this life -- a veil which must be "rent from top to bottom" before "the way into the holiest of all can be made manifest" to the inquirer after "the things which. are freely given us of God." This veil for years, notwithstanding my careful and prayerful study of the Scriptures, darkened my apprehensions of what now appears as the plainest teachings and "first principles of the oracles of God." How plainly marked are these "first principles," "the sincere milk of the Word," in partaking of which the convert cannot but grow up into the stature of a perfected manhood in Christ Jesus! "So foolish was I and ignorant," that years of painful research passed before I "looked into the perfect law of liberty." My Biblical researches, however, were not in vain. I early became absolutely convinced that there are most distinctly revealed, whatever my views about the sinfulness of all believers in this life, "better things" than the ministry and churches around had attained to -- "better things," towards which their poor experiences had hardly approached. Instead of there being among us "no sickly nor feeble ones," almost all in common appeared to be smitten with a kind of spiritual paralysis. The "feeble among us were not as David," always conquerors; nor was "the house of David," the leaders of the sacramental host, "as God, as the angel of the Lord before Him," nor was holiness unto the Lord "upon "the bells of our horses." We were not "filled with all the fulness of God." nor was "He doing for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." If the promises do not authorise us to expect all that they seem to pledge to our faith, they certainly do require us to ask and receive more than we do obtain. Such were the conclusions forced upon my mind by the careful study of the revealed provisions and promises of grace. With special interest did I study the recorded experiences and attainments of the apostles and their associates. There all was in palpable contrast with what was passing in the interior of my own mind, and what I saw around me. They "mounted up on wings as eagles," while "our souls could neither fly nor go to reach eternal joys." They ran without weariness, while we fainted in walking. They were "careful for nothing," while we were "careful and troubled about many things." They had "learned in whatever state they were therewith to be content," while we were "weary, tossed with tempest, and not comforted." They "rejoiced evermore," and that "with joy unspeakable and full of glory," while we talked, and sang, and prayed, and inquired after "the blessedness we knew when first we saw the Lord." They were possessed of "full assurance of hope," "full assurance of faith," and "full assurance of understanding," and of God "as their everlasting light;" while we were perturbed with doubts and fears, and "walked in darkness, and had no light." In view of such palpable facts and revelations, I was accustomed to say to myself: -- I know that myself and believers around me have diverged somewhere from "the highway of holiness," and are walking in a dim twilight, when we should be "walking in the light of God," with no clouds between us and the

Sun of Righteousness. I know that there is a secret about "the life of God in the soul of man," a secret not yet revealed to me, but which would be manifested, if "I should wait for the vision, while it tarried."

I made, also, the most careful inquiries of the most spiritual believers, ministers and others, that I met with, about this one subject. As soon as I met my old friend, Professor Finney, whom I had not seen for years, I made the most earnest and diligent inquiries of him. I found all, however, in the same darkness on this vital question that I was.

I finally took up the memoirs of the holiest persons I heard of -- memoirs of such individuals as David Brainard, Edward Payson, and others, and read them for one exclusive purpose -- the discovery of the one secret under consideration. I arose from the perusal of such books with bitter disappointment. These men of God had the same difficulties in their experiences that I had, the same struggles and defeats, the same ignorance of God as their "everlasting light," the same absence of "the rest of faith," and the same ignorance of the remedy to the evils which pressed upon them, and of the divine secret after which I was inquiring. This consolation remained to alleviate the disappointment referred to: -- If these men, with myself, and all with whom I conversed, have failed to discover this "hidden mystery," Paul, and Peter, and John did know it, and what God revealed to them He will make known to me, if I faint not in my inquiries and in prayer. "Faint, yet pursuing," was my continued maxim. "Yes," I would exclaim, "in due time I shall reap, if I faint not." But for the reason that what follows next in order is requisite to a full understanding of these facts of my own interior life -- facts tending to throw light upon the conditions of attaining to a full fruition of "the liberty of the sons of God," -- I should omit the remainder of the present chapter, there being the appearance of a desire for self-glorification, seeking which all should regard as a grievous sin against God. What I am to state, however, are merely certain facts of plain Christian fidelity -- facts occurring in circumstances which then "tried men’s souls." The fidelity manifested by myself was common with thousands of ministers who stood by God’s truth, and vindicated the rights of His poor, in that "evil day."

Immediately after I became pastor of one of the Presbyterian churches in Cincinnati, Ohio, the Anti-Slavery agitation began to move the whole American mind. Such was the all-pervading influence of the Southern States at the time, however, that a vast majority of even our Northern population, including that of the ministry and membership of our churches, took open ground against the agitation; the opposition, also, taking on the most embittered form conceivable, an open determination being everywhere avowed to put down the disturbance even by mob violence. These were the days in which Pro-Slavery Mobs occurred in such cities as Boston and New York, and the martyr Lovejoy was murdered in cold blood in the State of Illinois.

Immediately after my removal to Cincinnati, I was elected a trustee and member of the Prudential Board of the trustees of Lane Seminary, a theological institution on the hills that overlooked the city. In the upbuilding of that institution, and in securing for it the services of the celebrated Rev. Lyman Beecher, D.D., as its president and professor of theology, I took a very active part, having drafted the letter afterwards published in the Doctor’s Memoirs, the letter addressed by the trustees of the Seminary to his church in Boston, to persuade them to consent, for the sake of higher interests, to part with their beloved pastor. The coming of such a man, with an able corps of associates, drew, almost at once, to the institution a large number of students from all parts of the

country. Of these young men, Dr. Beecher, on a visit to the Eastern States, stated publicly that he had never in his life known so large a body of young men among whom there was such an amount of talent and piety. On coming to the institution, a very large portion of the students connected themselves with my church, and attended upon my ministry, very few of them joining any other church in the city. Such facts brought me visibly into very direct and influential relations with the Seminary. The second year of Dr. Beecher's administration, by consent of the Faculty, the students held a discussion of a week's continuance on the then all-agitating subject of slavery. The result of that discussion was, that, with very few exceptions, those students became avowed abolitionists, and organised themselves into a society for the promotion of their sentiments. Among the young men who joined this society were a number from the Southern States, two of them sons of a distinguished Presbyterian minister in the State of Alabama. All such individuals, as they were well aware, were, by the position they had assumed, self-banished from their native States and their homes, it being certain that their lives would have been taken had they ventured even to visit their parents. The facts above stated, as they were noised abroad through the papers, startled the nation, and threw the city into the most violent agitation. By men of the highest standing, the levelling of the institution to the ground was openly spoken of, while my visible connection with the students centered public reprobation upon myself. To indicate somewhat the extent and violence of that reprobation, I would give the following statement. As our two little daughters, one five and the other three years of age, were upon the side-walks, they were stoned, and obliged to flee for their lives -- were stoned, I say, by the children in the streets, because their father was an abolitionist. For months, when we lay down at night, we did so apprehending that our dwelling might be mobbed before morning. Under such circumstances, the Faculty of the Seminary called the students together, and entreated them to quiet the public agitation by disbanding their anti-slavery organisation, and refraining from all public discussions of the subject. The young men were told that their principles were right, and their spirit worthy of all commendation. It was unwise for them, however, to take public grounds so far in advance of public sentiment. "I have ever," said one of the most influential members of the Faculty, "made this a fixed principle of my life, never to become the open advocate of any cause until public sentiment has become sufficiently advanced to sustain me in the position I have taken; and I urge you, young gentlemen, to act upon the same principle in the case before you." The students did not accept such counsels as wise and prudent, however, and did not dissolve their society.

Before the mob of the city was organised, the, spring and summer vacation, of three months' continuance occurred, and the Faculty, all but one, went to the East, and the students dispersed; myself, on a four weeks' vacation, visiting my friends in western New York. During this interval, I had a full opportunity to judge of my situation, and calculate my future. But a few weeks before, the terrible Pro-Slavery Mobs had occurred in the city of New York, and everywhere public sentiment burned with the intensest indignation against the abolitionists. I said to myself distinctly: "If I identify myself with truth and right and God's poor and oppressed ones, as I must do, or violate my conscience and the will of my Divine Sovereign, I shall lose my place as pastor in Cincinnati. In that case, no important church in the country will be open to me. I shall, consequently, be necessitated to spend my life as pastor of some obscure church in the country." Such were the facts as they then presented themselves to my mind. I did not hesitate, but determined to accept the consequences of "serving God with a pure conscience." I claim to have done nothing more than, as I have said, a common Christian duty, and what thousands of my associates in the

ministry would have done in my circumstances, and, in substance, did in theirs. With such apprehensions distinctly before my mind, I returned to my people in the city, where many had said that I would never dare to show my face again -- I, in my absence, refusing to preach as a candidate in one of the most important churches in the portion of the country I visited, and that for the reason that I was sure that no man with my sentiments could then be settled over any such church. I had been at home but a few hours, when I received a notice to attend a meeting of the Prudential Committee of the Seminary. At this meeting a code of laws for the Seminary was submitted, a code dissolving the Anti-Slavery Society among the students, prohibiting public, and even private, discussions of slavery on their part. The clause prohibiting private conversation upon the subject was omitted from the code as finally passed by the trustees. A clause more arbitrary than this was inserted -- a clause giving the Prudential Committee absolute power to turn any student out of the Seminary when they should think it necessary so to do -- a clause which was inserted for the openly avowed purpose of preventing the return of certain of the most prominent and able advocates of the anti-slavery cause. It was this clause which opened the eyes of the public to the monstrous character of the whole code, and secured an extensive sympathy with the students. When the vote on the code was about to be put, I, for the purpose of gaining time, remarked that we had no power to pass any laws whatever, this power being exclusively lodged with the trustees. This was assented to, and the committee adjourned, with the avowed determination that a meeting of the trustees should be called as soon as allowable.

I at once sent a letter to Dr. Beecher, informing him of what was being done, and urging him to return at once with his associates, and prevent the impending evils, as I was sure that the Seminary would be dismantled should any such code as was being proposed be adopted. None of the Faculty returned, however -- Dr. Beecher even stopping in the interior of the State of Ohio until after the trustees had acted. When the Board met, I was, against my choice, compelled to take a stand more publicly and openly than I had ever done before. I must acquiesce in, or protest against, a code of laws which my conscience and judgment reprobated as opposed to the inalienable rights of human nature, to public morals, and the interests of humanity -- a code which prohibited candidates for the Christian ministry from all concerted discussion and action in respect to fundamental questions concerning the rights of prostrate and downtrodden human nature. At the meeting of the Board, the statement was openly made that, at the anniversaries at the East, a consultation had been held by the leading presidents and officers of colleges and theological seminaries East and West, and it had been unanimously agreed among them, that in them all laws like those then before that Board should be passed, and that they were waiting our action. As I heard that announcement, this thought passed through my own mind: "The first institution that shall pass such laws must be crushed; that will deter the others." When my course relatively to these laws become known, my separation from the fellowship of the ministry and membership of all the churches, my own excepted, and from the common civilities of the people of the city, became, as I expected it would, complete. Outside this one circle, there was in the city none so poor as to show me common respect. At this time, our Methodist brethren held a camp-meeting some twenty-five to thirty miles from the city, and that upon ground where they had, prior to this, held similar meetings for many years in succession. At this meeting the ministry found themselves utterly powerless to move at all the vast congregation before them. After consultation they sent for me, they being aware of the power which God had before given me on such occasions. As I took my stand, on my arrival, in the presence of the vast crowd before me, a consciousness of divine

power came over me of which I had never had an experience before. During the progress of the discourse the hearts of the crowd were moved by the power of the truth and of the Spirit, "as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind." At the close of the discourse, sinners of all classes, and in astonishing numbers crowded to the places of inquiry. The whole following night was spent by ministers, without sleep at all, in directing inquirers to Christ, and a revival of religion occurred which is spoken of by people in the city and all that region to this day. When I witnessed these results, this sentiment forced itself upon my mind: "He always wins who sides with God," and always wins such victories as his heart most desires. During one of the intervals of worship, I retired into the forest for personal meditation and prayer. While there, with a sense of painful loneliness and isolation which it is impossible to describe, I lifted my eyes and heart above, and said in words to my Father in heaven, that "I was willing, if need be, to be alone and to be despised in the world; but there was one thing that I did desire, and would venture to ask: that I might be conscious that my heart was pure in His sight, that I might see God, and live and walk in the manifested light of His countenance. If God would grant me this one infinite good," I added, "I would accept of any burdens or afflictions that He might lay upon me." That was the distinctly uttered vow which I took with me from that forest. I have passed through heated furnaces and deep waters since that time, but have never taken back or regretted that vow. The brightness of the final "rising of the Sun of Righteousness" did not come at that moment. The era was very near, however, when "God did become my everlasting light, and the days of my mourning were ended." When the students returned to the Seminary, they met in the chapel, and sent a committee to the Faculty, requesting that the new code of laws might be read and expounded to them. When this was done, and the privilege of discussing among themselves the character of the laws was positively denied them, absolute submission or a departure from the institution being demanded, one of the young men rose and said, "We may have, at least, this privilege, to say openly, as a body, whether we will or will not submit to these laws. I therefore request every student who will, with me, refuse such submission, and request of the Faculty a dismission from the institution, to rise to his feet." All but about one dozen arose, and having received their dismission, left. A wealthy citizen, a brother-in-law of the late Chief-Justice Chase, promptly furnished the seceders comfortable accommodation a few miles out of the city, and the great philanthropist, Arthur Tappan of New York city, sent five thousand dollars in money to aid them in prosecuting their studies in their new location. In a few weeks these young men were quietly pursuing their studies, while the Faculty of Lane Seminary were alone, presiding over a dismantled institution. No other college or seminary followed the example of that one in passing laws to suppress among students the discussion of the great moral and religious questions of the age. The January following, 1835, I received an appointment to the presidency of Oberlin College, and during the progress of that year, I found myself at the head of an institution with about five hundred students in attendance, with the students who had left Lane Seminary and others pursuing their theological studies under Professor Finney as their professor of theology, and Professor Morgan, who had been dismissed from Lane Seminary on account of his anti-slavery principles, as their professor of Biblical literature. Oberlin College is the first institution of the class that opened its doors wide for the education of humanity, without distinction of race, colour, or sex. "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

I have this to record about my church in Cincinnati: Most of its members, upwards of two hundred in number, were converts under my ministry, their number being but sixteen when I became their

pastor. During the period to which I have referred, those older members and young disciples stood around their pastor like a Spartan phalanx, and were about to add two hundred dollars to my salary when I was called from them. Some time after I left, they called as their pastor one of the most open and fearless abolitionists in the United States, and stood by him, as they had done by me, until he, Dr. Blanchard, was called to the presidency of an important college in the State of Illinois. I never doubted the revelation of God, that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life than now is, as well as of that which is to come."

02.B01. The Light Dawning

PART II OUT OF DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

CHAPTER I. THE LIGHT DAWNING. THE baptism of power for the conversion of sinners which I received at the camp-meeting referred to was retained when, in the early spring of 1835, I assumed my duties as President of Oberlin College. At the institution, in connection with the labors of Professor Finney, and in five protracted meetings held by myself, more than one thousand souls were hopefully converted prior to the middle of March of the next year. With very few exceptions, these converts evinced by their subsequent lives the genuineness of their conversion. Yet the conscious deficiencies above described remained, and pressed upon me with a weight never before experienced. Aside from my new relations to the churches, I had under my immediate care hundreds, and in successive years was likely to have thousands, of youth who would, after passing under the instruction of myself and associates, go out into the world to teach what we had taught them, and to represent Christ as we had represented Him in our instruction and example to them. "Has not God," I asked myself with the most deep and solemn interest, "in reserve for ’those that love Him,’ ’some better things’ than I, through my experience and present knowledge, am able to make known to these young disciples and to the churches round me? It must be so," I replied; "and if it be possible I will, by the grace of God, be both in experience and knowledge abundantly furnished for the good work before me.'" In accordance with this purpose, I made careful inquiry of Brother Finney and our associates. I found their minds, like mine, to be in darkness, just where, and about what, I was seeking light. In my researches after the mystery of the hidden life, I was, consequently, thrown back upon the Word of God and prayer for divine enlightenment.

During the second summer of our residence at Oberlin, a meeting in a large tent, furnished us by friends in New York for such services, was held in the vicinity of Mansfield, Ohio -- a meeting attended by great congregations of unregenerate persons and of Christians. While many of the impenitent were hopefully converted, the preaching and exhortations had a wonderful effect upon professors of religion, not a few of whom gave up wholly their old hopes, and started anew for the kingdom of God. Among the individuals of this latter class was one minister of the gospel, who arose in the congregation and presented himself as a subject of special prayer, saying to us that, after the most careful self-examination, he had come to the deliberate conclusion that up to that time he had never been a converted man. In giving his reasons for that conclusion, which he did very clearly, "the thoughts of many hearts were revealed," and a large number of professing Christians saw themselves, in the light of the statements made, "weighed in the balances, and found wanting." Oh, that the same searching process might go through all our churches throughout the world! How many who are now resting upon their lees would be saved from that final catastrophe in which their "hopes shall be as the giving up of the ghost!" The facts above stated rendered that meeting remarkable in the churches in all that region of country. Upon myself, the effect was to quicken and intensify the inquiry which I had been pursuing for years. What shall be done, I inquired, for these young converts and these believers, all of whom have started anew, and not a few have, for the first time, really "tasted that the Lord is gracious?" Shall all these be

started upon that old track where backsliding is a certainty? Or shall they be set forward upon that "new and living way," where "their feet shall not stumble?" While pressed with such questions as these, I took up a little volume, that providentially lay by me, a volume entitled, "Clarke on the Promises," and read, on the title-page, this passage "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." No words can describe the effect which the reading of that passage had upon my mind. I seemed at once to be fanned by "the wings of that morning" whose everlasting light was about to dawn upon my waiting spirit. I looked at the passage, and deeply pondered every clause and leading word of it.

2 Peter 1:4 Explained and Elucidated.

Let us tarry for a few moments under the shadow of the great revelation before us, while I shall endevour to set before the reader the views of truth and the way of life opened upon my mind as I continued to reflect upon this wonderful utterance: "Whereby," that is, as the verses preceding show, "through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." In this knowledge, "divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that bath called us to glory and virtue." We think of the holy and godly life required of us in the Scriptures. Everything requisite to the full realisation of that life in our experience is conferred upon us as a gift of grace, through the revelation of God in Christ. In knowing Christ, and the Father in and through Christ, we have all the knowledge, and all the forms and sources of influence and power, requisite to our being, becoming, and doing all that is required of us, and to assure for ourselves all the good that "God hath prepared for them that love Him." In addition to all this, there are given to us specific promises, "promises exceeding great and precious." "What are divine promises?" I asked. In every such promise, as I at once perceived, God designates some specific blessing requisite to our purity, peace, fulness of joy, or highest usefulness as His servants; and absolutely pledges every attribute of His nature to grant us that blessing, whenever by faith He is "inquired of by us to do it for us." We trusting God to do for us what is pledged in the promise, He must do it for us, or be false to His own word and to His own divine nature. "What then is the creature to do?" I asked again. First of all, the answer was, he is to acquaint himself with the promise, that is, with what it really means, and then go directly to the throne of grace and ask the Father, in the name of Christ, to do for us just what He has pledged to our faith in the promise. When we thus ask, we must "ask in faith, nothing wavering," "counting Him faithful that hath promised," not "staggering at the promise through unbelief," and that on account of its vastness or littleness, and never "limiting the Holy One of Israel." Doubting His promise, we in our hearts "make God a liar." Limiting His promise, that is, expecting to obtain less than what is specified in God’s plighted word, we call in question both His power and His grace. Neglecting the promise, we "judge ourselves unworthy of eternal life," and part with our birthright as the sons of God. But these promises are not only specific, but "exceeding great and precious." The view which I then received of their exceeding greatness and preciousness -- that view being of necessity at the time a very limited one -- has continued to grow and expand before my mind from that time to the present, and, no doubt, will continue thus to grow arid expand to eternity. What strikes the mind as very peculiar about these promises is, not merely their greatness and preciousness, but their absolute completeness. In them, every want, demand, and necessity of our mortal and immortal natures is distinctly specified, and to each want a pledge is given to our faith of the specific good

which is fully adapted to meet that want in the best possible manner. Negatively, they pledge to our faith a total emancipation from all that would be to us a real evil, and positively all that would be to us a real good, and that the best possible. "No evil shall befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil." This is the negative side of the promises. Positively they pledge to the same faith all the possession of which would be to us a real good, and that in its best possible form. "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." Such are the promises on their positive side, and they descend to particulars, and specify the evil and the good in all their specific forms, and absolutely pledge to our faith absolute freedom from the one and the full possession of the other. Standing in the presence of the promises, as they shine out in the bright firmament of divine revelation, we can say with absolute assurance, "All things are ours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Nothing but unbelief in us can prevent our total protection, not against all seeming, but against all real evil, on the one hand; and our actual possession, not of all apparent, but real good, on the other; and this not only for life, but for an eternity to come. While the promises present to our faith that which will fully meet each specific want as we apprehend it, they are so worded as to indicate, in every case, that "there is more to follow," and that we are authorised to expect "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." The apostle now specifies two fundamental purposes for which "the promises were given, and towards which they all in common, tend, -- "that by these," that is, by believing in and trusting God's fidelity in all His promises, and by faith seeking and expecting their fulfilment in our experience, "we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." The words, "the divine nature," imply, as all will admit, not only the holiness and blessedness of the divine mind, but also that divine disposition or nature in God which induces His holiness and blessedness. For us to become possessed of this "divine nature" implies not only present holiness and blessedness such as God possesses, but a divine disposition in us, a new and divine nature, which induces and prompts us to holiness, just as God's nature prompts Him to the same. In our old or unrenewed state, we not only sinned, but had a nature or dispositions which prompted us to sin. In Christ, we not only obey the divine will, but receive from Him, as the Mediator of the new covenant, a new or "divine nature," which prompts us to purity and obedience, just as our old dispositions prompted us to sin.

When, by faith, we have "obtained the promises," it becomes just as natural in us to obey as it once was to rebel, just as natural and easy to be lovingly quiet and forgiving as it was to be angry and revengeful when injured or provoked, -- to bless, as it was to imprecate retribution when reviled, -- to return good, as it was to return evil for evil received; -- to be "content with such things as we have," as it was to "be careful and troubled about many things;" in short, to bring forth "the fruits of the Spirit "-- "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," as it once was to do "the works of the flesh." In illustration of what I now mean, I will state a single example. As an aged coloured woman, of the city of New York, was returning one evening to her home from the place where she had been selling apples during the day, and was carrying on her arm a basket containing the few which she had failed to sell, she was met by a

drunken sailor, who thought that a fitting occasion was presented for him to show his temper. He accordingly kicked the basket from her arm, and thereby scattered the apples about the street. He then placed himself bolt-upright before her, and heaped upon her every vile epithet he could think of. Looking the offender in the face with the mildest compassion, the injured woman thus addressed him, and that with a manner of the gentlest meekness: "Young man, I hope God forgives you as freely as I do." The poor creature was startled and confounded, and returning the apples to the basket, he returned it to her arm, and having humbly confessed his wrong, took from his pocket what money he had, and gave that to her.

What I desire to have noticed here is the fact that, in consequence of the new and divine nature which God had given that woman, it was as easy and natural for her to feel, and speak, and act, as she did, as it had been, in her old life, to become furiously angry under far less provocation. That woman had no occasion under that provocation to hold back and resist an evil temper; she did as she did in accordance with promptings of her new nature. So it is universally. When the promises are embraced by faith, "God sends the Spirit of His Son into our hearts," -- a spirit which induces in us the same "love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity" as dwelt in Him, and renders it just as natural for us to be "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," as it was for Him -- just as natural to do the will and the work of our Father, and to "drink the cup which He giveth us," as it was for Christ. Were this not the case, "the Spirit," or disposition, of His Son would not be sent into our hearts. To "escape the corruption which is in the world through lust," implies that we are not only saved from the actual sins that are in the world, but that the evil propensities and tempers, "the law in our members," which induces sin, are taken from us, and are supplanted by new and divine tendencies which naturally induce the opposite virtues. Nothing less than or diverse from the above exposition can be the meaning of the passage under consideration. To insure all this, as I shall show more fully hereafter, is a main and specific purpose of all the promises. They assure to us, when understood, and embraced by faith, not only deliverance from sinning, but "the death of the old man," or the crucifixion of all those tempers and dispositions which induce sin; and not only actual obedience to the divine will, but "a divine nature," which prompts and constrains obedience in all its forms. It is as much the nature of "the new man," or the promptings of his new and divine tendencies, to be pure in heart and life, as it was that of "the old man" to "obey the law of sin."

02.B02. The Light Come, Or The Brightness

CHAPTER II. THE LIGHT COME, OR THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE DIVINE RISING.

REFLECTING with unspeakable interest and delight upon "the promises," without having then fully apprehended their meaning or obtained them in their fulness, I returned to Oberlin. At a special meeting of the Faculty, it was agreed to hold special religious services on the evenings of the week, as long as the measure should be found expedient. The reason for this determination was the fact that so many of the students and young people in the community were impenitent, and the piety of the membership of the church was so manifestly low. Brother Finney agreed to conduct the meetings for inquiry, this being, in addition to his ordinary duties, about all that he was able to do. The responsibility of doing the preaching was thrown upon me. From the commencement of the meetings, the word of truth had a wonderfully searching power upon all classes. The impenitent, asking what they should do to be saved, and professing Christians pressing the question directly upon us whether there was any "deliverance from the body of this death" under which they were groaning, crowded the inquiry-room. The first Sabbath after the meetings commenced, I delivered a discourse on the text, "Israel is an empty vine: he bringeth forth fruit unto himself." In the discourse I pressed upon professing Christians the fact, that the reason why they were "bringing forth fruit unto themselves," and not unto God -- in other words, that the reason, and only reason, of the low state of piety among us -- was that individuals were not "aiming to do any better than they were doing," and that here was the ground of "the Lord’s controversy" with them. Brother Finney, perceiving the searching and convicting power of the truth, arose at the close of the discourse, and remarked, that if there were any self-deceived professors present, they would escape the pressure of the truth upon their consciences by falling back upon their good desires. "If we are not living as we should, we desire thus to live," they will say. He then showed that in mere desires, that did not induce the serious aim or intent to do what God requires -- that is, did not issue in real obedience -- there is no religion at all. "If there are any professors of religion present," he added, "who now see that their hopes are not well founded, let them signify it by rising." To our amazement, quite one-third of the professors present arose, and asked us to tell them "what they should do to be saved." The other portion of the church, with almost one voice, and that from all parts of the assembly, implored us to tell them how they might cease to live at their present "dying rate," and attain to the revealed "liberty of the sons of God."

Myself and associates were now in circumstances in which we had never been before. We had encouraged the people to make inquiries in respect to all the spiritual difficulties and perplexities which pressed upon them. Yet here were questions of fundamental interest put to us, questions which we had never resolved in our own minds, and revealed forms of experience inquired after of which we had no personal knowledge, and about the conditions of attaining which we were as ignorant as the inquirers themselves. The effect upon my mind was the deep impression that the time had come when I must know the secret after which I had been so long inquiring. "With strong crying and tears," I carried the subject to "the throne of grace," and entreated the Father of mercies, for Christ’s sake, to lead me out of darkness into the light after which I was seeking. On

the afternoon of the next day, I arose from my knees in my study in my own house, and went into the room above, a room occupied by one of my associates in the Faculty, and thus addressed him: -- "I desire to tell you what I am now seeking after, and have been seeking after these years which are past. I desire to know the secret of the piety of Paul, and by that knowledge understand how to make myself the spiritual attainments that he did. His relations to Christ were essentially different from mine. When I attempt to act for Christ, I often find my affections and all the sensibilities of my nature almost cold and dead, and I am necessitated to gird myself up, and force myself forward by dint of my own resolution. The case was utterly different with Paul. At all times, and under all circumstances, as he informs us, 'the love of Christ constrained him,' and was 'in his heart as a burning fire shut up in his bones,' always impelling him onward, rendering him 'weary with forbearing' to speak or act for Him 'that loved him, and gave Himself for him.' "What is the reason," I asked, "why my love is 'so faint,' and 'so cold,' and so unimpulsive, while that of Paul was such an undying and all-constraining flame?" While thus speaking upon the subject, I suddenly rose from my seat with the joyful exclamation, "I have found it!" and without uttering another word, I returned to my study, and falling again upon my knees, returned most fervent thanksgiving to God, that He had at last clearly revealed to me the divine secret after which I had been so long inquiring. The reader may be interested and profited by being informed of the vision of divine truth, the vision which then opened upon my mind. As a means of attaining this end, I will cite Ephesians 3:14-19 : "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." While conversing with my associate, I began to realise, in experience, what the apostle here prays that all believers may receive and enjoy. In the depth of my inner being, I felt an instantaneous enlargement, expansion, and invigoration of my receptive capacities. There then opened upon my mind a direct apprehension, an open vision, as it were, of the infinite and ineffable love and glory of Christ, a love and glory which filled and occupied the entire compass of my being, and warmed, and quickened, and vitalised all the powers and activities of my mental nature. The rock of the heart was struck with the rod of love divine, and from the cleft thus made there issued forth "rivers of living water," which have ever since been "springing into everlasting life." As I arose from my knees in my study, I sat still in my chair, to "behold the glory of the Lord," to "comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," while "the fulness of God" seemed to enter in, and possess and occupy my whole inner being. There I sat, wondering with unutterable wonder that this vision of glory-infinite had never opened upon my mind before. "This," I exclaimed, "is 'life-eternal;' this is 'the brightness of the divine rising;' this is 'the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healings in His wings;' here is 'the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness;' and here is the 'enduement of power' by which 'he that is feeble among us shall be as David, while the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before Him.'"

These were the thoughts which passed before my mind as I sat there in the center of that "everlasting light" which had risen upon my waiting spirit. I recognised myself at once, and that without a shadow of doubt, "as complete in Christ," and as able as Paul was to "do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." The secret of the piety of Paul was now unveiled, and I

could, as he had been, be "crucified with Christ," be "crucified to the world, and the world to me," and have "Christ live in me" as He did in him. I understood why "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made him," and might make me, "free from the law of sin and death," and why we are called upon to "reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The presence of "the love of Christ," His love unveiled to our apprehension by "the Spirit of the Lord," resolves at once all the mysteries of "life and godliness."

02.B03. Speaking To The People When

CHAPTER III.

SPEAKING TO THE PEOPLE WHEN STANDING IN THE LIGHT.

While I was employed in such meditations, the Professor came down from the upper room, and asked me what subject I intended to preach to the people about the following evening. "I shall preach to them from this text, I replied, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.'" "Are you," he asked with surprise, "intending to preach on that text?" "I am," I replied. "I know that I have found at last 'the mystery of the hidden life,' and 'the days of my mourning are ended.'" The Professor has often remarked since that he could never understand the effect produced upon my mind while we were conversing upon that passage in his room. Nor can any one understand it, unless he himself shall receive the apprehension then and there imparted to my mind by the Spirit of God. It was no new exposition of the passage that I then received. I had often, and that most critically, examined it before -- had as often reflected upon the diverse relations which Paul and myself sustained to Christ as evinced in the passage, and had obtained all the meaning of it which I now attach to it, or can be derived from it by mere human interpretation. Nor was it any new doctrine that I then received.

What I did receive, on the other hand, was a direct, immediate, and open vision of the glory and love of Christ, that love "which passeth knowledge," -- an inward beholding imparted to the mind by the Spirit of God, a beholding utterly impossible but upon one condition, that "the Spirit shall take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us." Here we have a full understanding of the meaning of the apostle when he said, "No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." We can, of course, without any special aid of the Spirit, pronounce the words. We can, also, prove doctrinally the incarnation, the divinity, atonement, and lordship of Christ. No man, on the other hand, can pronounce the words referred to, with any proper apprehension of the eternal verity which these words represent, but upon the exclusive condition that "the Holy Ghost" shall open upon his mind a vision or apprehension of the verity itself. Moses, for example, knew enough of the divine character -- and so do all -- to understand that there was a glory about it which he needed to apprehend, and that he must apprehend this, or he could not, as he desired, "know God, and understand His way, and find grace in His sight."

He was also aware that such apprehensions are possible to creatures, but upon the condition that God Himself shall "show them His glory," and "cause all His goodness to pass before them." Hence the prayer, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory." I may, as a student of the Bible, obtain a very full exegetical knowledge of its contents, and as a theologian, I may receive a full knowledge of the system of doctrines revealed in the Scriptures, and such forms of knowledge are important, and should not be undervalued. If I would know Christ, and God in Christ, with all kindred truths, as they are in themselves, however, here my dependence is absolute upon the direct and immediate illumination and teaching of the Holy Spirit. Knowledge, in the first form, however clear and extensive, is comparatively "a dead letter," and has very little transforming or vitalising power.

In the second form, truth, in all its manifestations, has an all-transforming, quickening, and vitalising power. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This is the divine illumination promised to all believers, and which they should all seek as the immutable condition of "their knowing God, and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent," and of their receiving that "eternal life" which comes to the soul through that knowledge. Christ, with the Father in Him, is walking up and down amid the great revelations of His Word, as He did "amid the golden candlesticks," and the Spirit is waiting to show us "the glory of the Lord." When will the prayer of faith became universal -- "I beseech thee, show me the glory of the Lord?" As far as the meeting in the evening was concerned, the Spirit of God seemed to have prepared all hearts to receive the new message which God had given me to deliver to the people. After giving forth my text, I remarked to the audience that I had an important confession to make in their hearing. Up to that time I had not been, in the highest sense of the term, a preacher of the gospel. What I had preached had been, as far as it went, the truth of God, and that truth had been so preached as to be instrumental in the conversion of many souls. I had also been sincere in my ministry, and had fully acted up to the light I had. Yet, while my preaching had been efficacious for the end referred to -- the conversion of sinners -- it had lacked essentially those characteristics requisite to "feed Christ's sheep" and "Christ's lambs;" in other words, to furnish those instructions adapted to "build up believers in the most holy faith," and so to instruct them that they would "grow up in Christ all things," and thus "attain to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." The reason and ground of this deficiency I would now endeavour to make known to the audience. When a sinner had inquired of me what he should do to be saved, I had known perfectly what needed to be done in his case. He needed to be instructed in regard to his sins, his ill-desert on account of sin, and his hopeless ruin in sin. He needed then to be directed to Christ as his only hope and refuge. Having given up his sins, and given himself wholly to Christ to be His servent forever, he must intrust his mortal and immortal interest to the mercy and grace of God in Christ. Under such instruction, the sinner, by "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," obtains pardon, "power to become one of the sons of God," and "peace and joy in believing." But when a believer had come to me and confessed that he was not living as God requires, and asked me how he should escape "the bondage of corruption," and attain to "the liberty of the sons of God," I had instructed him to confess his sins, put them away, renew his purpose of obedience, and go forth with a fixed resolution to do the entire will of God. Now, here was a fundamental mistake. We are not only to be justified by the faith of Christ, "but to sanctified also by the faith that is in Him." "Christ is of God made unto us," not only "wisdom and righteousness," that is, justification, but "sanctification and redemption" also.

If you desire a victory over your tempers, your appetites, and all your propensities, take them to Christ, just as you take your sins to Him, and He will give you the victory over the former, just as He gives you pardon fro the latter. He is just as able and ready to save you from the power as he is to deliver you from the condemnation of sin. Here is the only cause of your many shortcomings. In the matter of justification, you have trusted Christ, and He has done for you according to your faith. In the matter of sanctification, you have, instead of trusting Christ to "sanctify and cleanse you with the washing of water by the Word," resolved and re-resolved, and, as a consequence, have remained "carnal, sold under sin." So it will be, until you shall cease wholly from man and from yourself, and trust Christ universally. When He shall become the fixed and changeless center

about which all your affections, and purposes, and hopes, and confidence, shall revolve, then shall "your righteousness go forth as brightness, and your salvation as a lamp that shineth," and in your love and obedience you shall be "as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but which abideth for ever." The command in the Bible is not Be strong in yourself, or in good resolution, but "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." Trusting in Christ, you will "always have all-sufficiency in all things, and be abundantly furnished unto every good work." It is not he that resolves, but "he that abideth in Christ, and Christ in him, that bringeth forth much fruit." It is because that "in my ignorance" I talked so much of human ability to do all that is required of us, and in reality trusted in my own resolutions, instead of putting "my hope and trust in the living God" in the matter of holy-living, that I am permitted to speak to you tonight of "the unsearchable riches of Christ," instead of being cast aside as a vessel unfit for its master's use. From this time onward let this be our changeless sentiment -- "Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

I then directed the attention of the attention of the audience to the principle involved in the words, "The love of Christ constraineth us." The strongest and most enduring principle, I remarked, in rational natures is that of sympathy. The action of such natures is strongest, steadiest, and most tireless, when they are brought into the full sympathy with the thoughts, emotions, and purposes of some controlling mind, whom all in common regard with the deepest love and veneration. It is said that during the American Revolution there was a crisis when but one single fact kept our army from disbanding and going home -- sympathy with the fixed determination, calm assurance, and deathless patriotism of Washington, their venerated chief. The same principle obtains universally. The design of God is, "in the dispensation of the fulness of times," to "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him" -- that is, to induce an absolute unity of thought, feeling, sentiment, and fellowship among all holy beings in the universe. This is to be accomplished by bringing all into one common sympathy with "the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," and that love is to harmonise, vitalise, and constrain all in common to eternity. When you shall come to a comprehension of "the breadth, and length, and depth and height," and shall "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," your whole being will be drawn into sympathy and fellowship with that love; and, to the extent of your capacities, your love will be as full, as pervading, as enduring, and as constraining as is the love ans sympathy which controls, and vitalizes all your activities.

Here we have the secret of the piety of Paul. He knew the love of Christ -- saw duty, in all its forms, in the light of that love -- sympathised with that love, and was constrained by it in all his "work and labors of love." He was, consequently, crucified with Christ," and "Christ lived in him," and "the life which he lived in the flesh" was, as he said, "by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Living, dwelling, and acting in the everlasting light, and under the all-constraining influence of that love, it could not but have been to him, at all times and under all circumstances, as "a burning fire shut up in his bones;" and his life could not have been less laborious, less self-denying, less contented, less joyful, less victorious, less "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," and less fruitful, than it was. "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Oh, "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ," who has come to us in our darkness, and made manifest unto us this "new and living way"! All that Paul ever experienced in his inner life every one of us may become fully possessed of;

because we can know the love of Christ as he knew it.

I then directed the attention of the audience to two distinct and separate points of light in which duty, in all its forms, and in reference to all its objects, may be contemplated. We will consider in illustration, I remarked, the soul, for whose salvation we are called upon to labor. We think of the soul itself; its nature, powers, susceptibilities, its ruin in sin, and its eternal future. Here is an object the contemplation of which ought to move all the activities of our nature. There is another point of view, however, in which this same object may be contemplated. Christ knows the soul, its sins, and the perils and infinitude of its interests, as we cannot know them. "The redemption of the soul," what value does He place upon it? What has He done to redeem it? What is the strength of His desire for its salvation? How much does He love it? In illustration of the principle under consideration, I now referred to two examples. You attend a funeral service, I remarked. Before you lies the lifeless body of a husband and father. You think of that family as having experienced a great loss. Yet you do not weep. At length the widow and orphans gather around that body. Why do you weep now? Because you see the same object from another standpoint from which you contemplated it before. You now perceive how dear and how valuable the departed was to the heart of that widow and those orphan children.

Years ago, I further stated, the son of an Irish soldier, who had passed through his term of service, and was waiting in London for his papers, was tried and condemned in court for theft. During the trial the father was seen walking to and fro in the most demure and saddened silence. When the sentence was pronounced, he turned to the judge in the most convulsive agony, and exclaimed, "I have carried him many a mile upon my back, your honor." The court-room instantly became "a Bochim." All suffused with tears, the judge requested the father to tell him about his son. He then informed him that the mother of the child died when it was an infant; that he had nursed the child as its mother would have done; that when he entered the army, he had taken the little one with him, and in all his marches had carried his boy upon his back. While waiting in London to receive his wages and his papers, the lad had been enticed by wicked boys, and had engaged with them in theft. "And now," exclaimed the father, "I must go home without him." "No, no!" exclaimed the judge and all present. There was no difficulty now in getting signatures to a petition, and advocates for the pardon of the lad. Why did not the spectacle of the child tried and condemned of itself thus move that audience? Why this sudden outburst of feeling? Why this movement for the restoration of the child to the arms of the father? Because the case was now contemplated in the light of a father’s love, and in sympathy with that love. To the same principle our Saviour refers in the melting parable of the Prodigal Son.

So, when we shall come to contemplate the soul with all its interests, and duty in all its forms, not only as they are in themselves, but in the light in which Christ views them, of the value which He places upon them, in the light of His "love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity;" of His love to us, to the souls for whom He died, to all rational natures, and to "His Father and our Father, and to His God and our God," -- then we shall no more have occasion to talk and sing about "these cold hearts of ours," about our inability to "fly or go to reach eternal joys," or about "the blessedness we knew when first we saw the Lord." "God will become our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning shall be ended." We shall "mount up on wing as eagles. We shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint." "He that is feeble among us shall be as David, while the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before Him." "We shall be in the world as He was

in the world." We, abiding in His love, "the works that He did we shall do also, and greater works than these shall we do," because "He has gone to the Father," and shall "endue us with power from on high" for the work to which He has called us. The love of Christ being infinite and unchangeable, when we shall know it, and be brought into sympathy with it, we shall be under an influence by which "our love shall be made perfect," and as enduring and constraining as is the love in the everlasting light of which we live and act.

One more topic, I remarked, needed to be elucidated before closing the discourse. Is it possible for us, it may be asked, to "know the love of Christ"? and if so, how shall we attain to this knowledge? We can attain to this knowledge, I replied, because the Holy Spirit is in the world, and is promised to all believers who seek "the baptism of the Holy Ghost," for the revealed purpose of enabling us to "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." "The Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God ;" and when we shall be "filled with the Holy Ghost," as all may be, this "liberty" will be vouchsafed to us -- namely, "We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Yes; when the Holy Spirit shall come, and He is promised, I repeat, to all who seek Him, we shall fully understand in experience what Paul meant when, under the inspiration of the Spirit, he put up the following prayer : -- "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Let us, then, take our harps down from the willows, never again to tune them to notes of sadness, but that we may "return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon our hearts," that we "may obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing flee away."

Such is the exact substance of the first full gospel sermon that I ever preached in my life. It may be considered somewhat remarkable that the doctrine of Christ as our "wisdom. righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," and "the promise of the Spirit," as the great central truths of the gospel, should have been presented to my mind at one and the same time. But so it was. The truths presented in the discourse made manifest to those believers who, with myself, had come to a state of such intense hungering and thirsting after righteousness, "the fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem," that is, to all believers, "for sin and for uncleanness." Many descended at once into that fountain, and "washed their garments and made them white" there, finding, at the same time, "the Lord as their everlasting light," and the love of Christ as the same all-vitalizing, all-abiding, and all-constraining power in their hearts as it had been in the heart of Paul. From that time onward nothing was known in our preaching but "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." Professor Finney especially most heartily indorsed the views presented in the discourse as soon as he was informed of them.

02.B04. The Renewing Of The Holy Ghost

CHAPTER IV. THE RENEWING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

WITHOUT further statements at the present time of the influence and results of the views under consideration upon others, I will continue the account of my own inner life. The apostle speaks of two distinct stages of Christian experience and moral and spiritual renovation. "According to His mercy hath He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Ghost." Prior to regeneration the Spirit convinces the soul of "sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." So, prior to the period when "Christ manifests Himself" to the believer, and "He and the Father come to him, and make their abode with him," there is commonly a process of heart-searching, in which all our "secret faults," as well as "presumptuous sins," if we have been guilty of the latter, all our evil propensities, tendencies, and habits, with "the depths of Satan" within us, are fully disclosed to the mind. So it was with myself. A few days after I had received the light of life, as above stated, my thoughts were suddenly turned inward, and my whole inner life and character were made manifest to my mind. My enslavement to my temper and appetites, my pride of character, egotism, self-will, secret ambition, restlessness under disappointments and afflictive providences, and the pain endured in "bearing the cross after Jesus," these, and things like these, were so presented, that I became a loathing to myself; and, but for the prior revelation of the infinitude of Christ’s love and grace, together with His absolute power to "save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him," the midnight of blank despair would have settled over my mind. As it was, I read in a moment the purpose of the Spirit in the process which was going on. "Christ was manifested to take away my sins," and the preliminary steps to that end were being wisely and lovingly taken.

I accordingly, with all earnestness, repeated the prayer of the Psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts." "Let the light now shine through all the chambers of imagery within me." Then "sprinkle clean water upon me, and make me clean from all my filthiness, and from all my idols do Thou cleanse me;" and after that, "lead me in the way that is everlasting." It was according to my faith. After the process of searching and self-revelation was completed, the waters of life seemed to flow through every department of my nature, rolling down as the river of life into the Dead Sea of the propensities, and everywhere with the same healing and vitalising efficacy. How often did I exclaim at that time, "There is healing now, and immortal health following the healing"! Truly, Christ is "the way, and the truth, and the life," and "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus does make free from the law of sin and death."

Let no one, who would know the full power and blessedness of the hidden life, fear or avoid, but rather desire and seek, the searching process under consideration; nor take alarm when the Spirit, instead of showing you at once "the glory of the Lord," and introducing you into the rest of faith, rather shows you your sins, your inward defilements, and sinful tendencies and habits. Seek, on the other hand, to know yourself as God knows you, and this as a means of your being "purified and made white." If we did not know our sins, we should not value the grace and love by which we are saved from our sins. When we have once put our case into the hands of the Great Physician,

let us never for a moment distrust His wisdom, power, or fidelity, or become restive, though the healing process may, for the moment, seem severe. Only believe, and we shall "See the glory of the Lord."

02.B05. Free In Christ

CHAPTER V.

FREE IN CHRIST. AS the cleansing process above described went on, I soon became conscious of a power in Christ -- a power which I had vainly struggled to acquire during my prior Christian life -- the power of absolute control over all the propensities. In illustration, I will speak of my temper. Those who have known me most intimately for more than thirty years past, but did not know me before, have often said to me, "You don't seem to have any temper. Nothing whatever appears to provoke your anger. We could be quiet under provocation as you are, provided we had such a temper as you have." The truth upon the subject is, that originally I had one of the worst tempers I ever knew. When reflecting upon the subject when ten or eleven years of age, I said to myself, when alone in my father's pasture, "This temper will ruin me." When I became a Christian, I set about, with all the power of determination possible to me, to subdue and control that temper. All my resolutions, however, under sudden provocations, proved themselves a deceptive trust. When I came, however, to know Christ as my Deliverer, and when "the Son made me free," the first fact of which I became conscious was an absolute control over all the promptings of anger. Not long after, even these promptings disappeared entirely. In my former Christian life, under unexpected provocation, anger would arise, and I would "speak unadvisedly with my lips" before reflection would come to my aid, and then I would set about repairing the injury I had done. Often, as I have said formerly, would I say to myself, "Oh, that I could have time to reflect before speaking!" In my new life, reflection, as I became joyfully conscious, always came in directly between myself and the provocation, and gave me a perfect mastery over it. At length the feeling of anger disappeared, and it became just as natural and easy to be quiet and patient, as it had formerly been to be angry, under provocation. The same held true of my appetites. I had ever been, in the judgment of all who knew me, a very strictly temperate man; yet I was internally conscious that, in forms and particulars unknown to anybody but myself, my appetites did control me, and that my most fixed purposes were powerless to free me from their dominion. Faith in Christ, however, did set me free, and I attained to the state to which Paul refers when, in speaking of divers kinds of food, he says, "I will not be brought under the power of any." I now gratify my appetites as my better judgment dictates, and they do not, even internally, rebel against the dominion to which they are subject.

Finding how absolutely free divine grace had rendered me, relatively to my most despotic propensities, I resolved that, by the same grace, I would be the Lord's freeman in every particular -- in other words, that I would have, "by the faith of Christ," and through His power abiding upon and strengthening me, absolute dominion over all my propensities in all their activities. I was well aware that, in regard to things lawful as well as unlawful in themselves, there might be forms and degrees of bondage from which "a believer in Jesus" should be perfectly free. Hence, whenever and wherever I felt an internal and restless cry after any specific gratification, whatever it might be -- a cry saying, "I must have this, and I must have that "-- I separated myself totally from such objects, until, through prayer and the "power of Christ resting upon me," that cry was subdued, and I felt myself perfectly free to enjoy or to be denied that gratification as providence and the best

wisdom given should indicate. I thus found myself standing in "the light of God" and "in the power of His might" above my propensities, one and all of them alike, and rejoicing in God in an absolute "rule over my own spirit." Thus "our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin" (our evil propensities, principles, tendencies, and habits) "might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." To all who would enter into "the rest of faith" and continue therein, I present the above facts and suggestions as of infinite moment. Not a few who do enter into, and for a time abide in this rest, fail to continue therein, and thus give occasion to opponents to "speak evil of this way." The reason is, that the propensities, by not being "brought under," and thus "held in subjection," the "old man" not being "crucified with Christ," and "the body of sin not being destroyed" by His sanctifying "power working mightily" in "the inner man," "sin revives" through the renewed activity of "the law in the members." Thus losing their rest, they "cast away their confidence" and return to their old bondage. The rest of the soul in Christ will not be likely at all to continue unless, "through the faith that is in him," all forms of bondage to the propensities are completely broken, and they in all their promptings and activities are brought into complete subjection. For the reason that this liberty is not attained and perfected, Christ may "save us now," but not permanently.

I hear instructions given to believers seeking this "rest of faith," instructions which I cannot approve. They are told that Christ will not take away their evil propensities, and prevent their acting within the mind, but will enable believers to resist and hold in subjection such promptings. The apostle, on the other hand, tells us that, for the purpose that henceforth we should not serve sin, "the old man is crucified with Christ," and "the body of sin is destroyed." In express view of this fact, he requires us to "reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." As long as our lusts are left to "war in our members," there may be expected to be "wars and fightings" in the churches, and lapses and backslidings in all their membership. Christ "takes away our sins" by taking away the evil dispositions within us that prompt us to sin, and in the place of these dispositions giving us "a divine nature," which will prompt us to "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance." The reader will call to mind here the case of Dr Hopkins, as stated in a former part of this work. In his case, during a period of more than thirty years, and no doubt to the end of life, he had not only held in subjection, but had experienced not a single prompting of the evil temper which, during his previous life, had had despotic control over him. The reader will also call to mind my own personal testimony on the subject. Similar testimony meets us everywhere. Here, as a fact, is an evil propensity not only held in subjection, but all its evil promptings utterly taken away. If Christ does this -- and all admit that He does -- in respect to one propensity, why should He not do the same in regard to all? As the Mediator of the new covenant, does He not stand pledged, when "He is inquired of by us to do it for us," to do for us all that is contained in the following "exceeding great and precious promises"? "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Such is the express meaning of the new covenant, as expressed in all the Scriptures. I shall have occasion to recur to this subject in subsequent parts of this work. May the reader not fail to understand, and fully to attain, "the glorious liberty of the sons of God"!

02.B06. Jesus Manifested To The Believer

CHAPTER VI.

JESUS MANIFESTED TO THE BELIEVERS.

BEFORE introducing the topic of the present discourse, I will request the reader to peruse attentively the following passage, John 14:18-23, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto Him (not Iscariot), Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." The work of the Spirit, from the time when He convinces the sinner of his sins, up to the period in which the "renewing of the Holy Ghost" is completed, is to prepare the way for the consummation referred to in the passage above cited -- the consummation in which Christ, with the Father, becomes to the mind a personally manifested and indwelling presence. The language by which this mysterious relation between a human soul and Christ, and God in Him, is expressed in the Scriptures, is quite various and peculiar. God, in referring to this relation between Himself and His people, says, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them." "Your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost," and "ye are builded for a temple of God through the Spirit." "And truly," says the apostle, "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." Again, we read of "the communion and fellowship of the Spirit." In the following most memorable passage, our Saviour prays that this union and fellowship may be consummated between Him and all believers : -- "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. And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me." The Scriptures also speak of our "dwelling in God, and God in us," and of "Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith." How, it may be asked, can Christ be in us, and we, at the same time, be in Him? An infidel once attempted to embarrass an unlettered but very intelligent coloured man, by putting to him this very question. The reply of the coloured man was amusing, but very impressive and pertinent. "Well, dat are," he replied, "don’t trouble me. You take dat are poker and put it in de fire. In a little while de fire will be in de poker, and de poker in de fire.’ If we are in Christ, we shall soon be "filled with all the fulness of God," and Christ, with every person of the sacred Trinity, will "make His abode in us." Christ is in us when, as a manifested personal presence, He directly and immediately controls all the powers, susceptibilities, and activities of our being, His manifested love completely moulding our character, drawing our whole hearts, and centering them in Him, and rendering us "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," as He was. We are in Christ when, having "cleansed us from all

unrighteousness," He takes us to His heart as the object of His fraternal love, becomes the direct guardian of all our interests, "shows us His glory," and brings us into direct intercommunion with His thoughts, feelings, and purposes of love towards us. The moment when, and the manner in which, Christ first "manifested Himself" to me, will, I doubt not, be held in remembrance to eternity. I had risen from my knees in my study, and had retired to our bedroom to rest for the night, my wife being already in bed. As I approached the side of the bed, the veil was lifted, and Christ, not as an object of physical, but exclusively mental and spiritual vision, was immediately before me. "With open face I beheld as in a glass His glory," or rather, beheld Christ Himself in His glory, with "the light of His countenance lifted upon me." Then I realised, as I had never done before, not only that He had "given Himself for me," but that "He loved me," and was present to me, to "show me the beauty of my Lord," and, as my eternal Friend and Portion, to abide in me for ever. I did not "fall at His feet as dead," the manifestation being too mildly loving for that. My breathing, however, stopped in an instant, and it was some time before I could recover it again. In deep agitation, my wife asked me what had happened? I replied, that my heart was too full to tell her then; I would endeavour to tell her some other time. All I could say was, that my joy was full.

"The brightness of that rising," reader, has never passed away, but is in the soul as an everlasting and evergrowing light. I know' now that the words of our Saviour are true : "and this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." I read my inner life now in the words of the promise of God through His inspired prophet: -- "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." All that the Scriptures record about Christ has a meaning and a life, and a melting and moulding power about it, never experienced before. It is no wonder to me that Paul affirmed, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

If the reading of the above facts and elucidations has not induced the reader, provided he has not yet attained, to say in his heart, "All this, and 'more to follow,' is for me, and, 'by the grace of God,' I will seek and walk in this 'everlasting light,'" then, so far as he is concerned, he has read and I have written in vain. "Christ has loved you, and given Himself for you," as He has for me, and is ready to dwell in your heart, as He does in mine. In the words of the aged apostle, I say to you, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy might be full."

02.B07. The Promise Of The Spirit

CHAPTER VII. THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT, OR THE DOCTRINE OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST

THERE is, and can be, no subject connected with "the redemption of the soul," no subject about which clearer and more definite information is required at the present time than on the doctrine of "the baptism of the Holy Ghost." In the experiences and elucidations above given, we have been prepared for a direct consideration of this great subject. It should be borne in mind that, in the whole work of human redemption, every Person of the sacred Trinity sustains to sinners and believers relations altogether special and peculiar -- relations wholly unlike those which said personalities sustain to other realms and orders of the rational universe. God is a Father to believers in a sense and in relations which pertain to no other beings in existence. No revelation such as the following, as far as we know, is applicable to any other world but this, namely, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." Equally special and peculiar are the revealed relations of the Holy Spirit to the race on the one hand, and to believers on the other. So peculiar and special are His revealed relations to believers under this, the new dispensation, that inspiration affirms absolutely that "the Holy Ghost was not given" until "after Jesus was glorified." On all these subjects human speculation is wholly out of place. Every ray of light which comes to us on said subjects descends to us directly and exclusively from God Himself through His inspired Word. To understand the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as revealed in the Scriptures, we need to inquire, first of all, into those revealed relations which each person of the Trinity sustains to each of the others, to the universe, and to mankind as sinners and believers. Of the doctrine itself, I would only say that, on the exclusive authority of revelation, I hold, in common with the teachings of the evangelical faith, that, in opposition to the plurality of heathenism, there is one God or Godhead, and, in opposition to the absolute unity of Mohammedanism and Unitarianism, the same Godhead is clearly revealed to us as a Tri-Unity, represented by the words Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The grounds of neither this unity on the one hand, nor Tri-personality on the other, are, in any sense or form, revealed in the Scriptures. The two doctrines, the unity on the one hand, and the plurality on the other, are revealed as facts of the divine nature, while the reason or ground of the facts are not revealed at all. We have a mystery, but no absurdity -- the seeming contradiction involved in the doctrine arising exclusively from the endeavour of theologians to be "wise above what is written," by their attempts to define the divine unity on the one hand, or tri-personality on the other. What we now have to do with is, the revealed relations of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I begin with those of The Father.

If we will carefully study "what is written" upon the subject, we shall find, that whatever is represented by such words as original, ultimate, and absolute authority, supremacy, and paternity, pertains exclusively to the Father. Each of the other personalities, in all they do, act in absolute subordination to the Father, and exercise no form or degree of authority or power but such as has been delegated to them by the Father. As the Creator of the universe, Christ exercised a delegated power, "the Father creating all things by Jesus Christ." As the present Sovereign of the

universe, Christ exercises authority delegated to Him by the Father. "All power in heaven and on earth," says our Saviour, "has been given unto me." "The government shall be laid upon His shoulders." The inauguration of Christ as Sovereign of the universe is thus represented by the prophet Daniel: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." "The Father," says our Saviour again, "judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son." As "God manifest in the flesh," our Saviour taught that He was in the world as a gift of the Father to our lost race, and as sent by the Father, and that He "came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent him," not to do His own work, but to "finish the work which the Father had given Him to do." The same absolute subordination to the Father obtains in respect to the Holy Spirit. Like the Son, the Spirit comes from the Father, and is sent and given to men by Him. Like the Son, also, the Spirit comes, "not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him." Like the Son, the Spirit "speaks not of Himself; but what He hears that He speaks." "He receives of Christ, and show them to believers," and "shows them plainly of the Father." In the work of redemption, the Spirit also acts in subordination to the will of Christ as well as of that of the Father. The Father, then, as representing the Godhead in its absolute and universal sovereignty, supremacy, and paternity, is not the exclusive, but, for the most part, the proper object of prayer. We approach Him through the Son. Let us now consider the revealed relations of The Son.

While the Father represents the Godhead in its absolute supremacy, sovereign authority, and universal paternity, the Son represents the same Godhead in what may be denominated its supreme executive executive power, authority, and majesty. The Son is the revealed authoritative executor of the Father’s will. The agency of the Father was not direct and immediate in creation. The Father, on the other hand, "created all things by Jesus Christ," "'by whom also He" (the Father) "made the worlds." Of the Son, as we read Hebrews 1:8-12, the Father thus speaks : -- "But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: They shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." The Father does not directly and immediately govern the universe, but has "laid the government upon the shoulders of the Son," who, as the Supreme executive of the universe, "upholds all things by the word of His power." By Him, also, "all things consist," that is, are sustained, controlled, and governed. As the supreme executive, also, Christ, as the Eternal Word, "was made flesh, and dwelt among us," "bore our sins," "brought in everlasting righteousness," now reigns as the sovereign Lord of all, and will, at the final consummation, sit as "Judge of quick and dead." A careful study of the Scriptures will also fully evince the great fact that all the audible and visible manifestations of the Godhead to men were made by Jesus Christ. "He it was that was with the Church in the wilderness," "the Rock" of defence and hope, "which followed the people, being Christ." He it was, consequently, that spake to Moses in the bush, led the people by a pillar of fire out of Egypt, gave the covenant and law from Sinai, and conducted the people through the

wilderness. All that we know or can know of God is through Christ, through His works, manifestations, and revelations. When we "see Him we see the Father." In Christ, and only through Him, do we "behold the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of His substance." We will now contemplate the revealed relation of The Holy Spirit.

While the Father represents the Godhead in its high functions as the original source of universal and absolute sovereignty, authority, and paternity, and the Son in those of supreme executive power, and dominion, the Holy Spirit represents the same Godhead in its functions as that invisible divine energy which everywhere acts potentially in nature, and immediately brings about those results which God wills. The first revelation which we have of the agency of the Spirit, we find in connection with the account of creation in the first chapter of Genesis.

We find that revelation in these words : -- "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Had we been present, and witnessed the events here referred to, all that would have been visible to us would have been the simple agitation of the watery elements. The cause of the movement would have been to us wholly invisible. We might, and should, were we infidels, have attributed all these results to the action of mere natural law. The same holds true of the results produced by the Spirit everywhere in the universe of matter and mind. The results are manifest; the cause is invisible; and the events appear as they would were they the results of the internal powers of nature itself. When the Spirit, for example, operates upon our minds, in very few instances can we distinguish the thoughts and states induced from those which result from the laws of natural association. Here infidelity comes in, and, in the name of "science, falsely so-called," denies the all-controlling agency of God in nature, attributing all events to natural law. Even theologians, let me add here, are too often accustomed to lead the Church away from God, and in the direction of false science.

Take the all-energising agency of the Spirit of God out of nature, and we are in a blind, cold, and Godless universe, and as really without God in the world as the heathen are. As a further illustration of the agency of the Spirit, as representing the Godhead in nature, let us, for a moment, contemplate His revealed agency in the miraculous events recorded in the Scriptures. In Matthew 12:28, Christ affirms that all His miracles were performed by the Spirit. "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." This is undeniably uttered as illustrative of the invisible divine agency by which all Christ’s miracles and all other miraculous events are produced. Christ, for example, said to the leper, "I will; be thou clean." The Spirit invisibly energised in the system of the individual diseased, and thus induced the cleansing required. Christ stood upon the deck of the vessel amid the night tempest on the Sea of Galilee, and said to the winds and waves, "Peace, be still!" The Spirit invisibly "moved upon the face of the waters," and energised in the atmosphere around, and thus instantly induced the subsidence of the waves and the stillness of the atmosphere which ensued. So in all other instances. But the Holy Spirit is not only the invisible divine energy which operates in visible nature around us, and induces those events which we behold, but He also operated with the same invisible divine efficiency upon the writers of the Sacred Word, and thus originated "That dearest of Books, that excels every other, The old Family Bible, that lays on the stand." The Bible is what it is, because "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and "the holy men" who wrote it "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The Holy Spirit is now in the world, and operating upon the minds of men as a convicting and regenerating agency, leading all who will be led to Christ. In the Church,

and among all who have received Christ as their "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," the Holy Spirit is present as "the promise of the Father; "-- a promised "enduement of power from on high," an indwelling light, by which "we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," and as an all-strengthening and all-vitalising power, by which we "may be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fulness of God," -- an indwelling and ever-working power, "according to which," or through which, God is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Such are the revealed relations and functions of the Holy Spirit -- relations and functions as distinct from one another as are the various offices which Christ fulfils distinct from one another. It would be no greater error for us, for example, to confound the office of Christ as "Mediator between God and man" with that of His other function as "Judge of quick and dead," than it would be to confound the office of the Spirit as "the promised enduement of power from on high" with either of His offices in conviction and conversion, or as the invisible divine energy everywhere working potentially in nature.

Essential Errors connected with the Doctrine of The Spirit.

There are three very essential errors connected with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit -- errors which require special consideration in this connection. The first that I notice has obtained control over the faith of the Churches in consequence of what has been rightly called "the senseless twaddle of infidelity about the absolute prevalence of law in nature." Under the influence of this error, the influence of the Spirit is supposed to have place only in the kingdom of grace, while the revealed fact that He is omnipresent in universal nature, operating everywhere as the invisible divine energy causing, controlling, and regulating the events which we behold, is practically denied. Hence the error, so deadening to the faith of believers, that prayer has efficacy in the former, and not in the latter kingdom. The Bible, let me say, is one of the most unmeaning and deceptive books that ever was written, if, in respect to revealed objects of prayer, prayer has not the same avail in one kingdom as in the other, and temporal are as distinctly specified as such objects as our spiritual blessings. But are not all events in the universe around us controlled by fixed and immutable laws? Yes, we answer. Yet these laws work out very different results indeed from what they would do but for the presence, and action, and controlling influence of finite spirit in nature. The reciprocal influence of spirit over matter, and of matter over spirit, is no violation of nature’s laws, but absolutely accord with those laws. Now, if there is omnipresent in nature an infinite and eternal Spirit invisibly controlling all events, then we should expect that the order of events would be as far different, at least, from what it would be but for His presence and agency, and in consequence of the presence and action of that Spirit, as that order is in consequence of the presence and action of the Spirit of man in nature. Any deduction the opposite of this is as absurd, and contrary to the dictates of true science, as it is to the revealed truth of God. It is, therefore, not only accordant with the express teachings of inspiration, but just as reasonable in itself, for me to expect to receive specific answers to prayer relatively to the temporalities of life -- answers through the occurrence of events which would not arise but for my prayers -- as it is for me to expect to receive answers to communications sent to friends on the other side of the Atlantic -- answers which I should not

receive but for the communications which I do send; and it is quite as necessary to our real comfort and well-being to know that God lives and acts in the kingdom of nature, as well as in that of grace, as a Hearer of prayer, as it is to know that our distant friends are alive and ready to answer our communications. Nor will God ever, as He has promised, "dwell in His people, and walk in them," until they recognise the presence and agency of the Eternal Spirit in the world of nature as well as of that of grace, and repose the same confidence in the divine promises relatively to temporal as to spiritual blessings.

Another important error connected with this subject is the too common one of confounding "the baptism of the Holy Ghost" with His special functions in conviction and conversion. In the latter relation He is never called "the Holy Spirit of promise," and is never, more especially, said to be given to "those who obey God," and not to have been given at all until after "Jesus was glorified." In this specific relation He has, in each dispensation alike, been in the world, "striving with men," and "grieved" and "vexed" with their sins, ever since the Fall. In this relation He acts upon the human mind, whether men are willing or unwilling to be "convinced of sin." In the former relation, on the other hand, the Holy Ghost, as promised in the new, was not given at all in the old dispensation: "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." In this relation He is given to those, and those only, who obey God, and after they have believed in Jesus. "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him." "In whom, after that ye believed," or having believed, "ye were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise." In this relation the Holy Ghost is a gift of grace, a gift promised to those who are already in a state of obedience, and given only to such, and given "after they have believed." In strict accordance with the above exposition are the express teachings of our Saviour upon this subject: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." The special and revealed function of the Spirit in conviction, conversion, and regeneration is to act as a convicting and converting power upon those who are in sin. In His special and revealed function as an "enduement of power from on high," the Spirit has to do with those only who "have believed," who "obey God," and are "keeping Christ’s commandments." To confound these two distinct and separate functions of the Spirit is one of the most dangerous errors into which the Church can fall. It has, for centuries past, kept the mass of believers under the darkness of the old dispensation, and shut them out from "all the fulness of God," promised to the faith of all "who obey Him." Pentecostal power will not return to the Churches until the promise of the pentecostal baptism shall be recognised as the common inheritance of all believers. The only additional error to which I refer is the common one of representing the Spirit, in the influence which He exerts upon the mind, as confined to the revealed truth of God. When He would convince of sin, He must, of course, place the facts of our moral states and lives in the clear light of the truth revealed in the Word of God. Hence it is that "the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God." So, when the Spirit would show us "the things of Christ," or impress upon our hearts any truth or promise of God, His illuminations and presentations must be confined to the circle of what is revealed in the Sacred Word. It by no means follows from hence that the influence of the Spirit is confined to the truth. It may be that He may act directly and immediately upon our sensibilities, and thus bring this department of our nature into a state to be affected by the truth such as would otherwise be impossible. For aught that we know, He may thus act upon our propensities, and induce total changes in their tendencies. In a similar manner, He may act upon our intellectual capacities, "strengthening us

with might in the inner man," and thus enable us to apprehend and comprehend what now lies beyond the reach of our capacities. By acting also upon and through the laws of association, He may suggest trains of thought which would not otherwise occur. The reader has, no doubt, heard of the young woman in Scotland who, on the Sabbath, and in the days of persecution, was on her way to a place of worship, and was met by a company of hostile cavalry, and required by its commander to make known her destination. At this crisis this promise presented itself to her mind, to wit, "It shall be given you at that hour what you ought to answer;" and she put up a silent prayer that the Spirit of God would put the right words into her mouth. In a moment these words suggested themselves, and she uttered them as suggested "I am going to my Father's house. My Elder Brother has died; His will is to be read to-day, and I have an interest in it." The commander bid her go on her way, expressing the hope that she would find a rich portion left to herself. Who will affirm that those words were not directly and immediately suggested to her mind by the Spirit of God? Yet the words suggested are not found in the Bible. Is not special wisdom for special exigencies specifically promised to those who "lack wisdom" and "ask God" for it? While it is the revealed office of the Spirit to "lead us into all truth "-- and He leads us into no form of divine truth but what is revealed -- we should greatly err by "limiting the Holy One," and cutting ourselves off from revealed privileges by limiting the influences of the Spirit to the mere use of revealed truth. Let us, on the other hand, carefully inquire after what the Spirit is able to do for us, and what He has promised to our faith, and leave all methods of doing to His own wisdom.

Baptism of the Holy Ghost when Received. As the agency of the Holy Spirit is always invisible, we become conscious of His presence and workings in ourselves, but through the results which He produces in us. The sinner, for example, becomes conscious of himself, as subject to the Spirit's influences, but through the convictions of sin, and the apprehensions of the way of life and salvation through Christ -- convictions and apprehensions which the Spirit induces in the mind. The same holds equally true of the presence and agency of the Spirit, represented by such words as "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence;" "Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high;" "Behold I send the promise of the Father upon you," and "the sealing and earnest of the Spirit in your hearts." We can know that we have received the promised baptism but by becoming conscious in experience of the revealed results which attend or follow that baptism. When, for example, we are conscious of "beholding with open face the glory of the Lord," of being "changed into the same image from glory to glory," of "being strengthened with might in the inner man," of "Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith," of our "becoming rooted and grounded in love," and "able to comprehend the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," that "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," and that "the Lord is our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning ended ;" we thus know that we have received "the promise of the Spirit," and have been "filled with the Holy Ghost." In waiting for the fulfilment of "the promise of the Spirit," we at length become conscious that "all things are made new," that we have new power over our "propensities, and over all evil principles within and around us, that our powers of apprehension and comprehension are enlarged, that we "know the things which are freely given us of God," that the truth of God is in our hearts "as a burning fire shut up in our bones," that our obedience is not forced by dint of our own wills, but sweetly "constrained by the love of Christ," that the spirit of prophecy has been given us, and that we are able, as we never were before, to "speak to edification, and exhortation, and comfort," and that "having all sufficiency for all things, we are ready for every good work." In

the consciousness of such experiences we know that "Christ has prayed the Father for us, and that He has sent us the Comforter, that He may abide with us for ever," and that Christ Himself has baptized us with the Holy Ghost." In seeking for this "enduement of power from on high," we must ever bear in mind the revealed conditions on which this crowning blessing of the new dispensation is promised. This condition is definitely specified by our Saviour. "If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father for you, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." "The promise of the Spirit" is fulfilled in the experience of those only who "obey God," "love Christ, and keep His commandments." In seeking for "the promise of the Spirit," we must do so in a state of supreme dedication to Christ, and of absolute subjection to His will.

Here I notice the fundamental mistake of those who suppose that "the baptism of the Holy Ghost" is always given in regeneration. In confirmation of such a conclusion, they cite such passages as these: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His," and "your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost." The inference of such persons is, that none but those who have been "baptized with the holy Ghost" have the "Spirit of Christ" at all, and that the bodies of none but such are "the temples of the Holy Ghost." The Spirit is, first of all, we should bear in mind, in the heart of the sinner as a convicting and converting power. When the sinner has become "a believer in Jesus," the Spirit continues in the heart of the convert to perfect him in the love and obedience which is the necessary condition of his being "baptized with the Holy Ghost." Prior to His crucifixion, Christ told his disciples that the Spirit whom the Father would send as the Comforter was even then in them : "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." From the beginning of the world, after the Fall, the Spirit had ever been in the hearts of all saints, and their bodies had been "temples of the Holy Ghost." Yet, as the great central promise of the new dispensation, "the Holy Ghost," I repeat, "had never been given until after Jesus was glorified." Those who accept of the work of the Spirit in regeneration and as realised in the common experience of the Church, as the promised "baptism of the Holy Ghost," shut out from themselves "the everlasting light" of the dispensation under which they are permitted to live.

How absurd it is, also, to call the common work of the Spirit among the mass of believers "the baptism of the Holy Ghost," "the promised enduement of power from on high," and "the sealing and earnest of the Spirit in our hearts"! Are these Christians "beholding with open face, as in a glass, the glory of God"? Are they being "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord"? Are they being "filled with all the fulness of God"? Are they "rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory," and "ready for every good word and work"? Is their "joy full "? Is "God their everlasting light," and are "the days of their mourning ended"? These are but examples of the revealed common experience of all who have been "baptized with the Holy Ghost." We should make ourselves ridiculous if we should set up any such pretensions in behalf of the class of believers above referred to.

Let all who are waiting for "the promise of the Spirit," watching for His coming "more than they who watch for the morning," bear this thought with them continually, that Christ is now present to their faith, to do for them all that their present state requires, and that the Spirit is also in them to perfect in them the love and obedience requisite to the reception of "the promise of the Father," that all that is needed is being done in the best possible manner, and that as soon as the way is prepared, they will be "filled with the Holy Ghost." "If the vision tarry, wait for it," and wait for it with the

assurance that you "shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." "In due time you will reap, if you faint not,"

02.B08. Results Of The Baptism Received

CHAPTER VIII.

RESULTS OF THE BAPTISM RECEIVED. THE reader may be interested and instructed by receiving some specific account of the effects of the baptism received among us. In regard to myself, I would say, that since that time the Bible in its entireness has been to me a new book. When I became conscious that I was "reading it with new eyes," I read it through and through for the specific purpose of renewing my apprehensions of all its life-imparting revelations. I had, up to that time, been a very careful and critical student of the Bible, making it my fixed habit, unless necessarily prevented, to study critically at least one chapter every day, and that with all the human helps at my command. Now no portions of the Sacred Word appeared more new to me than those which I had most carefully studied, and, in the critical sense, most fully understood. There was "spirit and life" in all I read. While I thus walked up and down amid those great revelations, "the exceeding great and precious promises" beamed down upon me as morning stars in a firmament of everlasting light and love. "I know now," I exclaimed, "that 'all things are mine ; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are mine, and I am Christ's, and Christ is God's.'" The promises render absolutely sure to every believer all this. It is, however, when, and only when, we have received "the anointing," that we do know, or can know, "the things which are freely given us of God," and consequently "that all things are ours."

I will allude here to some specific facts in my experience. I have already alluded to the absolute subjection of the temper, appetites, and other propensities which directly tempt to sin. I have found the promises equally efficacious in respect to tendencies, the action of which tend to weaken our activities or diminish our power, but which cannot be regarded as sinful. I was, for example, from the first, impeded in the discharge of certain functions of my sacred calling by a natural timidity, which rendered me hesitating and fearful in the circumstances referred to. I earnestly besought the Lord, provided I could serve Him more efficiently without it, to "take from me this thorn in the flesh." The next chapter in the Bible that came in my course of reading contained the divine message to Joshua: "Only be strong, and very courageous." The admonition thrilled through every department of my nature, till timidity and fear departed in a moment, and I felt myself girded with a divine courage and strength for "every good word and work." It is by thus trusting in and pleading the promises at a throne of grace that "he that is feeble among us becomes as David, and the house of David as God, as the angel of the Lord before him." From my earliest memory I had been oppressed with the most terrible fear of dying, and horrified at the idea of being buried. When alone by myself, I would frequently cry out with horror at the thought of being nailed up in a coffin, being let down into the narrow house, and covered up there. Hence the funeral and the burial were to me the most frightful places of which I could conceive. This sentiment oppressed me in all its strength after I became a Christian, and remained until I was "endued with power from on high." I then presented this infirmity at the throne of grace. Soon after this I had in my mind a distinct vision of an open sepulchre, with the body of Christ lying with infinite peacefulness there, angels of God

watching at the head and feet of that sacred body. Such a sweetly peaceful scene I had never conceived of before. From that moment I have not only been delivered from all fear and dread of death, the coffin, the grave, the tomb, and the sepulchre, but the thought that, at each setting sun, "I pitch my tent one day nearer" the burying-place, one day "nearer my eternal home than ever before," is one of the sweetest reflections that ever has place in my mind "I would not live always. No; welcome the tomb!

Since Jesus has lain there, I dread not its gloom." A few years since, in consequence of necessary but over-exhausting labours, I dropped suddenly and unexpectedly down, and for several weeks lay as near eternity -- so it seemed to all -- as it was possible for me to lie and return to life again. All expected that each moment might be my last, and once the report went out that I was dead. During all this period I had the most perfect possession of my intellectual faculties, and all the while I seemed to myself to be in the very precinct of heaven. Of a scene of such absolute peace, quietude, and assurance, I had never before had an apprehension. I could only repeat such words as these "Safe in the arms of Jesus, safe on His gentle breast, There, by His love overshadowed, sweetly my soul shall rest"

Like Paul, I then had, not a fear of dying, but "a desire to depart and be with Christ;" and yet, "what I should choose I wot not," not knowing whether God had more need of me for the present on earth or in heaven. I knew well that if "the time of my departure had come," I should not be left to pass alone over the dark river, but that Christ would come to me as I approached the hither bank, would conduct me over, and then "take me to Himself." "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." So, all fear being removed, "I am watching quietly every day; And the angel answers sweetly in my home, 'Only a few more shadows, and He will come'" My object in stating such facts is to suggest to believers in Jesus the infinite importance of the fixed habit of carrying to Christ, not only our sins and evil propensities, tendencies, and habits, which tempt to sin, but all natural weaknesses, infirmities, and timidities which disturb our peace, agitate our feelings, or weaken our efforts in the work of Christ., If we should obtain present rest in Christ, and should disregard the admonition to "cast all our cares upon the Lord," inward disturbances would at length break up that rest, and leave us again to "walk in darkness and have no light." When any occurrence induces inward agitation, we should not only resign the event to the divine will, but present the susceptibility through which the agitation is induced to Christ, asking that such a change may be produced in us, that such events shall never more have power to produce any such disturbance, and our request will be granted. A demand, for example, was once made upon me for the payment of a sum of money -- a demand which I could not meet without much embarrassment, a demand utterly fraudulent, as myself and the man setting up the claim absolutely knew. In the circumstances, however, I did not then know but that payment might be enforced. The event induced not a little internal agitation. As soon as I became conscious of the fact, and without moving from my seat, I presented this petition to "the throne of grace :" -- "Lord, a new susceptibility of my nature has been addressed now, a susceptibility of the existence of which I. was not aware before. I ask that this susceptibility shall be so sanctified that such occurrences shall never more have power to produce any inward agitation whatever." In a moment all agitation subsided, and such a change in that susceptibility was induced, that had I been compelled to meet that fraudulent demand, I should have "taken joyfully the spoiling of my goods." The answer to that prayer not only changed that susceptibility relatively to all sudden disturbing causes, but

sweetened all my conscious relations to the fulness of divine grace. I have new assurance now, that not only may our wills become absolutely at one with the will of Christ, but that every other department of our nature may be so changed and sanctified that all the activities of our being shall come, with our wills, into the sweetest harmony with the sweet will of God. Outward circumstances will then have no power to induce that internal agitation and care which shall disturb or interrupt the "peace of God" in our hearts. Bear this in mind, however, that you will thus be made new, not only in respect to the action of your will, but of all other departments of your nature, but upon the condition that "God shall be inquired of by you to do this for you." The Case of Professor Finney When my associate, then Professor Finney, became aware of the great truth that by being "baptized with the Holy Ghost" we can "be filled with all the fulness of God," he of course sought that baptism with all his heart and with all his soul, and very soon obtained what he sought. After all the services of the sanctuary were passed, "my cup running over" at the time, I called upon him in his study one Sabbath evening. "O my brother!" he exclaimed as I entered, "what visions and manifestations of the glory and love of Christ have opened upon my mind today! Into what ’a large place’ have I been brought! Oh, this ’large place’! I keep repeating these words. None others seem so adequately and appropriately to represent my state." After a few words had passed between us, we kneeled in prayer. As soon as he broke silence, he burst forth into rapturous thanksgiving for "the large place" into which the Spirit of God had led him. All his utterances circled round that one expression -- ’the large place’ into which he had been led. When the Spirit of God "takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us," we, "beholding with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord," and beginning to "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," one of the first impressions which the mind receives is "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of the vision of glory with which our souls are encircled. What an infinite and boundless range is opened for our immortal faculties to move and revel in, not only for the future of life, but for an eternity to come! What an infinite fulness for all our necessities is everywhere presented! How "complete" we are now conscious of being in Christ! In other words, into what "a large place" have we been brought!

I sometimes illustrate my apprehension of the distinction and contrast in the state of the believer before and after he has received "the anointing" by the following fact. An individual in Scotland was engaged in gathering samphire, a shrub which often grows on the sides of rocky precipices. Shakespeare says of one such man at the cliffs of Dover, "Half way down hangs one that gathers samphire." The man of whom I am speaking had descended, by a rope made fast at the top, about half way down a precipice of a perpendicular height of two or three hundred feet, and getting a standing there on a narrow rocky shelf, was employed in filling the basket at his side with one hand, while with the other he held fast to the rope. In a thoughtless moment the rope slipped from his hand, and went off entirely beyond his reach. He stood fastened to his narrow place in a state of almost total stupefaction, until, as the sun was about to set, he was roused by the cry of his wife and children on the heights above calling for their husband and father. One and only one hope remained. He must leap from the place where he stood, and seize the rope if possible. Succeeding in that single effort, he was saved; failing, he could but die. Committing his soul to God, and after balancing himself for a moment, he took the leap, grasped the rope, and ascended in safety to his agonised family. This fact I am accustomed to employ for three distinct purposes. I use it, in the first place, to illustrate the relation of the sinner seeking salvation -- his relation to "the hope set before him in the gospel," the hope upon which he is required to "lay hold." He must as completely

renounce all other hopes and dependences but Christ, and as absolutely commit his whole eternity to Christ, as was true of that man in respect to the single hope of life before him when he took that leap, and grasped that rope. 'So of the believer in every stage of his Christian life. For every advance he would make, he has but one "hope set before him," and that is Christ. Everywhere his self and creature renunciation must be absolute. So of his dedication to, and trust in, Christ, "for grace to help in time of need." The last and leading purpose for which I employ this fact is to illustrate the change from darkness to light, from servitude to freedom, and from confinement to an infinite enlargement of the range of our intellectual, moral, and spiritual faculties, when Jesus "baptizes us with the Holy Ghost." When that man found himself standing in safety on the heights above the cliff where he had been so narrowly confined, when he began in perfect freedom to walk abroad over the hills and through the valleys and plains before and around him, in what "a large place" did he find himself! What a boundless range for all his activities seemed opened before him! So with the believer when he emerges from the confined sphere of the ordinary Christian life into the full light and "liberty of the sons of God." Within what a narrow sphere did his moral and spiritual faculties move! how unvitalising were all the truths he then apprehended, and how obscure and limited were his visions of the glory and love of Christ! But when he emerges out of this narrow obscurity into "the light of God," how marvellous that light appears! What a limitless range is now opened for his thoughts, emotions, and all his moral and spiritual activities! What an infinite fulness is everywhere presented for every demand of his mortal and immortal nature! All his privileges and immunities seem to be enlarged to infinity. "All things are his, and he is Christ's, and Christ is God's." Such is "the large place," reader, into which God, "through the Eternal Spirit," is waiting to lead you, and into which He will lead you, provided you will believe His word, trust His grace, and "with all your heart, and with all your soul," "inquire of Him to do it for you."

Effect upon the Institution The influence upon the Institution was of no less a marked character. As the theme of all preaching was "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," and Christ as "our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," a religious influence became visibly the regulating principle not only in the college, but in the village around. We were strangers to the riotous disorders so common in other institutions, and no place where intoxicating drinks were sold existed among us. During the fifteen years in which I remained President of Oberlin College, no year passed without from one to three general revivals, some of the most powerful being in midsummer. I will add here, that during the period of from twenty to thirty years in which I presided as president over colleges, not a single year ever passed without a glorious and marked revival, and all wondered at the permanent spirituality of the converts. My solemn conviction is, that all our institutions and churches should be, and may be, as "watered gardens," ever fresh and green, and ever glorifying God by "bearing much fruit." To give more specific apprehensions of the results of which I am speaking, I would say that when my associate, Professor Finney, assumed his place as professor of theology in the Institution, he did so with the most earnest arid prayerful determination to raise up for the churches a class of holy and sanctified ministers. He consequently met his students weekly for special prayer and exhortation on this subject. In these meetings, all was done that could have been done, by admonition and agonising prayer on the part of the professor and students, to secure the results under consideration. As long as the old regime continued, however, every such meeting, without exception -- meetings held under the highest religious influences known in the churches with

which we were connected -- every such meeting, I say, was closed with singing such a hymn as the following:-- O for a closer walk with God, A calm and heavenly frame, A light to shine upon the road That leads me to the Lamb.

"Where is the blessedness I knew When first I saw the Lord? Where is the soul refreshing view Of Jesus and His Word?

"What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!

How sweet their memory still! But they have left an aching void The world can never fill."

_____ "Look how we grovel here below;

Fond of these trifling toys, Our souls can neither fly nor go To reach eternal joys. In vain we tune our formal songs; In vain we strive to rise;

Hosannas languish on our tongues, And our devotion dies."

"Are all our best efforts and most fervent intercessions," I asked myself with the most agonising interest, "to end thus? Must 'the redeemed of the Lord return and come to Zion' with such dirges as these?" I would never join in singing such hymns. There was one verse in one of these hymns, however, in the singing of which I could join most heartily:

Dear Lord! and shall we ever live At this poor dying rate? Our love so faint, so cold to Thee, And Thine to us so great."

"No," I exclaimed, in the secret of my own heart, "we are not doomed to such a dying life as this. 'There is light ahead,' and 'new songs will be put in our mouths' when that light shall come;'" and I knew that "the brightness of that rising was near." When it was known among us that "Christ had risen indeed," and "had manifested Himself" to not a few, what a change occurred in that prayer-meeting! Infirmities were confessed now "with faith to be healed;" bondage was confessed "with faith to enter into the glorious liberty of the sons of God;" testimonies were given of deliverances, of "joys unspeakable and full of glory," and of our fulness and completeness in Christ -- testimonies which must have kindled smiles upon the face of God. And when we bowed in prayer "Heaven came down our souls to greet, A glory crowned the mercy-seat" Our meetings now, as invariably as with those dirge songs before, were closed with such hymns as these:-- "Oh, could I speak the matchless worth, Oh, could I sound the glories forth That in my Saviour shine, I'd soar, and touch the heavenly strings, And vie with Gabriel while he sings In notes that are divine.

"I'd sing the characters He bears, And all the forms of love He wears, Exalted on His throne. In loftiest songs of sweetest praise, I would to everlasting days Make all His glories known."

_____ "Majestic sweetness sits enthroned Upon the Saviour's brow: His head with radiant glories crowned, His lips with grace o'erflow.

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* * * * * * "Since from His bounty I receive Such proofs of love divine, Had I a thousand hearts to give, Lord, they should all be Thine."

_____ "Must Jesus hear the cross alone, And all the world go free?

No! there’s a cross for every one, And there’s a cross for me.

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* * * * * * "The consecrated cross I’ll bear, Till death shall set me free, And then go home my crown to wear; For there’s a crown for me."

_____ "Salvation! O the joyful sound!

’Tis pleasure to our ears, A sovereign balm for every wound, A cordial for our fears."

"Well," I said to myself, "this will do. ’The set time to favour Zion has come.’ Let ’the light go forth as brightness, and the salvation as a lamp that shineth.’ Blessed be God! He has ’loosened our bonds,’ and as ’His sons and daughters, we are free.’"

I will give an example or two of the testimonies to the power of Christ as a Saviour from "the bondage of corruption," examples among the many of similar interest that I might give. The subject of the first was a young man from Scotland, who was studying as a candidate for the ministry, and in all his conduct was very circumspect and conscientious. Yet he was one of the most unhappy believers I ever knew. His inner life, as we found it, was literally a continued succession of groanings. A Christian lady once said in my presence, that up to a recent period "she had just religion enough to make her as miserable as she could be." This was strictly true of this young man. He almost wearied Professor Finney and myself in his perpetual details of his inward wretchedness, and in his inquiries after deliverance. At length the light, the marvellous light of God, dawned upon "the midnight of his soul." In giving an account in the prayer-meeting of his great deliverance, he remarked that he could not better illustrate his own case than by first stating a fact of his early life. When in Scotland, he and a number of his young associates went down to the ocean to fish. "The waters were so disturbed that we could do nothing there, and we determined to go to a lake that was located at a long distance up amid the hills above us. The way was long and wearisome under the burning sun that blazed down upon us. At length we came to a moor and searched there for water. What we found was so brackish that we could not drink it, and we were all in great anguish. At length I looked down, and saw a little stream issuing from a fountain that was bubbling up right at my feet. I stooped down and tasted of those waters, and found them perfectly pure, sweet, cool, and refreshing. I drank until my thirst was quenched. So did all my associates, and we went on our way rejoicing. You know, some of you," he continued, "the bondage, and gloom, and groanings of my religious life for years," -- he having been with several of those young men in an institution in the State of New York, then at Lane Seminary, and now at Oberlin. "When in this place I was told that there was liberty in Christ for all who would believe in Him, I grasped at the truth with the earnestness of almost blank despair. As I inquired and inquired, however, without finding ’the living waters,’ I began to think that they existed for others and not for me. I did not, however, ’restrain prayer’ or cease inquiry. All at once I saw, with unutterable wonder that I had not seen it before -- all at once, I say, I saw ’the fountain of the waters of life’ rise up just at my feet. As I stooped down and drank, my agonising thirst was for ever quenched. As I continued to drink, however, the volume of those waters increased more and more, until they swelled out into a vast river, upon the surface of which my spirit was born onward and onward, until I was carried out into an ocean of light and love, an ocean the shores of which I have never been able to discern, and the depths of which I have never been able to sound. Here I

have been ’comprehending the length, and breadth, and depth, and height,’ ’knowing the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,’ and being ’filled with all the fulness of God.’ When standing upon the topmost wave of that ocean, I made a vow to God that I would spend my life in making known to saints and sinners this ’great salvation."’ That vow he fully redeemed. To the end of his very useful life his light never grew dim, but brightened more and more, until he took his departure to shine as a fixed star in the firmament of heaven. His graduating address was one of memorable interest on "the baptism of the Holy Ghost."

Another of the theological students, after be had come into the light, came to Professor Finney and remarked to him, that he thought that the time had come when there ought to be something preached to the people on the subject of faith. Professor Finney was at a loss to understand what his pupil meant, that very subject having been the leading theme of all our teachings. In a prayer-meeting not long after this, the whole matter was explained by the young man himself. When he came into the light, his views of truth and his whole internal experience were so entirely new, and so unlike anything which he had experienced before, that he most sincerely supposed that no one among us had had any such experience as his, and that nothing had been preached upon the subject to the people. "Faith, when I came to exercise it," he remarked, "was so unlike my former apprehensions of it, that I really supposed that it had not been preached to us at all. For this reason I went to Professor Finney, and, with perfect sincerity, told him that I thought that the people should be told what faith is. I had no idea but that, as soon my new experience came to be known, Professor Finney, President Mahan, and all of you, would come to me to be taught the secret of this new and divine life. To my surprise and humiliation I found at length, as I compared my own experience with yours, that I had simply emerged into the light in which you had been walking for months," "The sealing and earnest of the Spirit" is to every believer, when the baptism comes upon him, "a new white stone, which no man knoweth but him that receiveth it."

General Influence upon the Churches, and in the Experience of Individuals. A few facts will distinctly reveal the attitude of all evangelical denominations in the United States -- the Methodist excepted -- in regard to this subject, when the views of Brother Finney and myself were made known. In a council of Congregational ministers and churches, held in the city of Boston, about thirty years since, to ordain and install a young minister over one of the churches in the city, this question was put to the candidate, namely, "If you should be installed as pastor over this church, would you allow either President Mahan or Professor Finney to preach in your pulpit?" The candidate replied in the affirmative. The council spent about half a day in discussing the question whether, in view of this one fact, no other objections to the candidate existing, the services should proceed any further.

Three years ago last summer, during the sessions of the General Conference for all the Congregational churches in the United States, the Conference meeting at Oberlin, Ohio, my old associate, Brother Finney, was requested by a unanimous vote of the Conference to deliver a special discourse before them on the baptism of the Holy Ghost. At a similar Conference held in New Haven, Connecticut, the past summer, the theme of a special discourse was "the baptism of the Holy Ghost," as received at the Pentecost, as the hope of the Church.

About thirty years since, the authorities of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, it being then the organ of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches of the United

States, dismissed from its service two able missionaries in Siam for no other reason than the fact that they had embraced these views. Now, individuals holding these views are as readily employed as any others by this same Board. Near the same period, the Presbytery of Poughkeepsie, by a special order from the Synod of New York, deposed from the ministry two of its members, Messrs Hill and Belden, for no other cause than the one fact that they had embraced the Oberlin error. While the subject was before the Synod, the Moderator of the Presbytery referred to testified that the two brethren on trial were universally regarded as the most useful and godly ministers in their body, and that if Christ should appear in any of their meetings and put the question, "Which of you shall betray me?" the last individual that any one would think of would be either of these brethren. Brother Belden, his associate having died in the faith years ago, has lived to see his name and influence "as ointment poured forth" in this Synod. Dr. Boardman recently stated to me, that when he published his work on "The Higher Life," he did so with the distinct apprehension that he should be deposed from the ministry for what he had done, he being a minister of the Presbyterian Church. An open door, however, is everywhere before him and his works and doctrines, even in that denomination. An indication of the state of Christian sentiment on this subject is quite manifest by means of the conferences like that at Oxford, which are being held in various parts of the United States, for the specific purpose of promoting personal holiness, conferences attended by ministers and members of all evangelical denominations in common. The following account of one of these conferences -- an account given in a recent number of the Pathway of Power -- will indicate the character and power of such meetings:--

"Among many instances of the special display of the power of God, was one at a recent meeting in Maine, near the borders of Canada, where a great company of Christians assembled for ten days, for purposes very similar to those of the late Oxford meeting. The railway companies reported forty thousand special tickets sold to perhaps twenty or thirty thousand individuals.

"At one of the meetings, the Rev. Dr Steele, whose papers in this periodical have excited so much interest, preached the afternoon sermon about two o'clock. The text was, 'For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.' He dwelt especially on the believer's privilege of being 'filled with all the fulness of God,' and with solemn joy told us of his own experience of the baptism of the Spirit, and of the marvellous possibilities of faith which had opened to his soul since he had realised in power that the Comforter had come: an experience beyond simple consecration and faith's victory over sin; the incoming of the Holy Spirit filling the entire capacities of his being. At the close of this remarkable discourse, the President of the Conference rose and said, 'Our brother, Dr Steele, has something which I have not received. I know that I am all the Lord's, but I want to be "filled with the Spirit." We have heard that God is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us;" I shall, therefore, now kneel here, and stay upon my knees till what God has done for my brother He also does for me. Let all who desire it do the same.' Above four hundred kneeled, while the thousands in the congregation bowed reverently before the Lord. Then commenced a season of entirely silent prayer; which continued for three hours. As the time

passed on, the place became, to the spiritual consciousness, awfully glorious. No words can describe the solemn overpowering sense of the presence of God. Any expression in prayer or singing seemed an intrusion, and persons who commenced instinctively stopped. God was Himself speaking to them in their inmost hearts. None dared break the solemn silence of soul before Him. They were now learning what the worship of the whole being to its Creator and God is. As they saw the holiness of God, they gained new views of their own sinfulness in themselves; and with this they saw with equal distinctness the full provision in Christ for all their need.

"At length the tea-bell sounded, and the immense spell bound surrounding crowd slowly and silently left the scene. Many of those who kneeled continued on in silent prayer. Throughout the vicinity, and at the tea-tables, no one seemed able to speak but in subdued tones. The time came for another meeting to be commenced, at another place, but it was found impossible to sing aloud. Nothing could be done but to dismiss the meeting, and join once more the circle of silent prayer. They approached the place softly, as to holy ground, and found a dense mass of people surrounding the spot where these ministers and others still kneeled in silent awful communion with God. Never can the sweet and solemn restfulness of that hour and spot be forgotten.

"When the time for the evening service approached, the President lifted up his hands and said solemnly to the crowd, 'Bow down before the Lord your Maker!' Saints and sinners knelt together. Not another word was said, or hymn sung, but when we gathered in the evening meeting in the immense tent, then we knew what God had done for His people in their waiting before Him. The President said that God had given to him all that he had asked for, and many testified that the words of the prayer for the Ephesians had been answered in their own souls. That evening the conversion of over a hundred persons took place as the result of this wonderful silent meeting before the Lord.

"'Oh, that salvation were come out of Zion!' is the cry of many a discouraged, down-hearted saint. Remember, dear child of God, that 'salvation' in Scripture is not limited to pardon. It means also deliverance from sin. When, in this more full sense, salvation is in Zion, 'when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of His people,' delivering them from their bondage to the world, and to partial unbelief, 'Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.'"

I would by no means be understood as intimating that all the changes of religious sentiment above indicated resulted directly from the great baptism at Oberlin. God had for years been preparing the way in all the churches for the reception of the views under consideration, and some outside the Methodist denomination had "entered into rest," before we did. None will question the fact that the movement at Oberlin was one of the main causes of this change.

Facts of Individual Experience.

Before dismissing the topic now under consideration, I will refer to a few facts of individual experience. Dr B., a physician of a very wide practice in one of our large cities, has for quite thirty years been walking in this light. When two Christian gentlemen who had for a long period known him very intimately were once together, one of them put to the other this question, "What do you think of Dr B.?" "When that man dies," was the reply, "he will find the gate of heaven wide open before him. He will go directly in through that gate into the city, and will be at home there." All believers should thus "shine as lights in the world." How is it with you, reader? A sister in Christ,

whom I knew very intimately for upwards of fifteen years prior to her death, was, when I first saw her, so far from Christ that she had merely, as she herself often said, "a name to live." She immediately sought and obtained "the sealing and earnest of the Spirit." From that time until she was called home, "her sun did not go down, neither did her moon withdraw itself." Her own family, and all who new her most intimately, testified that they never witnessed in her a single un-Christ-like act or utterance. In every circle in which she appeared her single aim was to lead sinners to Christ, or believers "out of darkness into the marvellous light of God," and she had "power with God and with man." At home she was, as a farmer's wife, a model housekeeper, and at home and in the community her influence was "as ointment poured forth." All who knew her will testify to the strictest accuracy of the above statements. At one time her husband employed as a help in his labours a very bigoted but profane Irish Catholic, who had been taught from infancy that out of the Catholic Church salvation is impossible. His attention was soon arrested, however, by the wondrous serenity and sweetness of that woman's spirit and conversation. At the table he would listen with the intensest interest to her conversation upon the love of Christ and the beauty of holiness. He would frequently tarry after meals to speak to the woman on the subject. As he had been listening for some time to her conversation one day, he exclaimed with deep earnestness, "Madame, you will get to heaven before you die." When the membership of the Church shall become such "shining lights" as that, then indeed "will the Gentiles come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising." And why, reader, should not you thus shine? As our writings spread abroad in all directions over the country, we often received letters from persons of whom we had never before heard -- letters giving an account of "the rest of faith" into which the writers had entered. In one of these letters a lady from one of the most Eastern States, after detailing the darkness in which she had walked for many years previous, and of the semi-faith which she had had in Christ, and of her prayers and searchings after "the light of life," thus spoke of the love and glory of Christ, which were at length manifested unto her : -- "It was all light," she said, "and its essence love." From that hour, as she went on to say, her vision of that light and of that love had never grown dim, and her "joy had been full." Years passed on, when I received a letter from the husband of that woman -- a letter giving an account of her subsequent life and death. From the time in which she entered into that light, her light had shined on with a mild, all-attractive, and ever-increasing lustre. In the family, in the church, and community around, all wondered at the deep and undisturbed serenity of her spirit, at the spotless purity of her conversation and example, and at her undying love to Christ and to all who bore His image, and for whom He died. Like her divine Master, she "went about doing good." All who witnessed her last sickness and death felt themselves as near heaven as it is possible for creatures in this world to be.

Another lady from another State gave an account, not only of her former Christian experience and of her entrance into "the everlasting light," but of her inner life for the five years which had transpired since the period last referred to. During these years "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, had kept her heart and mind by Christ Jesus," and that without interruption. "In no single instance," she remarked, "had she during these years closed her eyes to sleep at night without the absolute assurance that no cloud intervened between her spirit and the face of God." Years after this I received a letter from the husband of this woman also, giving an account of her subsequent life and final departure, an account of which that above given is a perfect transcript. When Brother Finney came to Oberlin, he brought with him, as their housekeeper, an individual who had been a member of his church in the city of New York. After she had been in his family

about a year, he remarked to me that they should be compelled to dismiss the woman, though she was the best help they had ever had. The reason was, that her terrible temper was a constant disturbance to the peace of the family, and was exerting a ruinous influence upon their children. The least temptation would kindle her temper into a blaze, and then it was as violent, and ungovernable, and implacable as a conflagration. During the great revival she became distinctly conscious of her moral and spiritual state, and, "with all her heart and soul," sought deliverance. After she received "the anointing," she continued for several years in the place she then occupied, until she was sent as a missionary teacher among the coloured fugitives in Canada. Such was her influence in her new sphere, that the superintendent of those schools spoke of her in a letter in these words : -- "She is a host." Wishing to learn the effect of faith in Christ in such an extreme case as that, I made inquiries of Brother Finney in respect to her spirit and deportment after her "enduement of power from on high." He assured me that, from the time of the change referred to until she left, there had not been the remotest manifestation of that old temper. Her entire spirit, on the other hand, had been ineffably sweet, and neither he, his wife, or any member of their family had noticed a word or act in her which was not in the strictest conformity to Christian character. I give the testimony of Brother Finney in his own words, as nearly as I can recall them, and in no respect exaggerate that testimony. Is not "Christ able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him"?

More than thirty years since, I spent a short period in protracted labours in the city of Lowell, Massachusetts, a great revival resulting from those meetings. The leading member of the Congregational church where I preached was a man of wealth, much intelligence, and of the most unblemished moral and religious reputation; so his pastor assured me. Yet, the religious experience of this individual had taken on a pensive, and often despairing hue. Before I left, he had a long conversation with me, detailing his inward desolation, and expressing the apprehension that he had committed "the unpardonable sin." On inquiry, I found that he was conscious of no form of sin which could be the rational ground of any such apprehension. I assured him that his desire and will to seek and find Jesus was an absolute proof that salvation from doubt and darkness into "the marvellous light of God" was with absolute certainty for him. He had but one thing to do, and that was to look away from all else to Christ, to seek Christ, until he should find himself standing in "the light of God." This my friend promised to do. After I had been in Boston two or three weeks, preaching Christ there, this friend called upon me, and told me that he had come from Lowell for no other purpose but to "tell me what the Lord had done for his soul." All gloom and doubt had departed, and his "cup was running over." I found that once despondent believer in the most perfect enjoyment of "the full assurance of faith," "the full assurance of hope," and "the full assurance of understanding." What, among other considerations, gives me the most absolute assurance that the gospel, as I hold and teach it, is Christ’s rock of truth, is the fact that, under its influence, those who are in the deepest darkness emerge into the most enduring and marvellous light, that those who are in the most desponding bondage attain to the most perfect liberty, and that those who are under the heaviest burdens and sorrows find the most enduring rest. The spiritual writings of the late Professor Upham, of Bodoin College, in the State of Maine, U. S., are "known and read of all men." The manner in which he became such a fruitful writer on such a theme was on this wise. When the peculiar views advocated at Oberlin were spread before the public, he took it for granted that they were wrong, and gave them no examination. Mrs Upham, however, was induced by a lady friend, then residing in the family of the former, to give

our writings a careful examination -- her husband, in the kindest manner possible, often expressing his utter incredulity in respect to the subject. Mrs. Upham at length became fully convinced, and sought and obtained "the sealing and earnest of the Spirit." The new life to which she had attained, and that in connection with the manifest divineness of the change wrought in her, soon arrested the attention of the husband, and induced him also to inquire, until he was brought fully to accept the views which the wife had embraced. It was the example of the wife, as an epistle of Christ, that rendered the husband "the man of God" and the spiritual writer which he afterwards became. When believers generally shall become such epistles, then will the prayer of our Saviour, in the following words, be fully answered : -- "I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou has sent me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved me." The divineness of these views is very strikingly manifest in their perfect adaptation to the conscious moral and spiritual necessities of all classes of believers in common, the most learned and the most ignorant. When I was at Oberlin, for example, there came to the place an elderly coloured woman from a state of servitude in the Southern States. Of course, she could neither read nor write; yet was at once at home with the gospel as we were teaching it; and such was the purity of her life, and the fulness of her knowledge of Christ, as her "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," that not a few even learned persons went to her for instruction in regard to the secret of the divine life which she was leading. A company of coloured people were once together for conversation and prayer about the higher life. The meeting became quite noisy. One young woman especially leaped, and shouted, and prayed at the top of her voice, and threw her body into almost convulsive contortions. At length an aged coloured saint came up, and laying her hand gently upon her young friend, said, "Honey, dis is not de way. Shoutin’ is not de way to obtain de blessin’ Why, honey, if you should ebber get de Lamb in your arms and de Dove in your heart, you would feel as if you were in de stable in Bedlehem, and de bressed Mudder had given you de sleepin’ Baby to hold." How divine must have been that inner life, and how deeply must a soul have been taught of the Spirit, that could give utterance to such wisdom as that! At the close of the late war in America, the Confederate States were, for a time, divided out into military districts., over each of which one of our Generals was located, that of Alabama being assigned to General Saxon. As himself and family one day were seated in the verandah of their residence, they saw an aged and infirm coloured woman walking slowly up the path before them. After ascending the steps she bowed to them, with the salutation, "How de ye?" On receiving their expressions in reply, she thus addressed them: "It ’pears dat I shan’t live but a little while, and I want to go to de meetins, it does me so much good. Yet it ’pears I habn’t any close suitable to go dare, dis ere dress being all the close I has," The dress referred to was a coarse cotton garment, which extended about half way down from her knees to her feet -- a garment furnished her when a slave. "Come in and take a seat," said Mrs Saxon, "and my daughters will prepare some dresses for you." "Oh, no," she replied, "it won’t do for me to go into dose fine rooms in dare."

While the dresses were being prepared, she said to them, with a sweet smile, "I knows you are Christians." "I sometimes hope I am," replied Mrs S., "but I have so many dark hours that I often doubt whether I am a Christian at all." "Oh, honey!" exclaimed the coloured visitant, "you habn’t gibben up de world. Dat is de difficulty. It cost me a great struggle to gib up de world." "What had she to give up?" thought Mrs S. in her own mind. Every individual, reader, has his or her world, and no one gives up that world without a struggle. "But, honey," continued the speaker, "don’t you

mind dem dark hours. You look right to Jesus, and keep fast hold ob Him, and He will take all dose dark hours from you, and dey will nebber come to you any more. Oh, how lobing Jesus is!" she went on to say. "De bressed Fader said to him: Jesus, my Son, you go down into dat dark and wicked world down dare, and if you find any poor sinners dat want to be sabed, you take from dem dar sins, and den bring dem up here and lay dem in my bosom." Here she began to reel to and fro, her apprehensions of the love of Christ lying with such weight upon her mind as almost to make her stagger. At length she exclaimed, "Won't you sing some of de sweet songs about Jesus?" "Just go into the parlour," replied Mrs S., "and one of our daughters will play upon the piano and sing for you." "Oh, no!" she exclaimed, "it won't do for me to go in dare. But I can hear de music and singing out here." As the music and the songs proceeded, however, she kept drawing nearer and nearer, until she at last looked into the room, and finally entered and kneeled near the instrument. The glow upon her countenance and her frequent ejaculations clearly indicated that her "joy was full." When the garments were ready and were delivered to her, "Tank you, tank you! Jesus bress you!" she exclaimed. When Mrs Saxon told her that, if ever she should again be in want, to call upon them, and they would do what they could for her, "Oh, no!" she replied, "dat will nebber do. I hab got so many tings now, dat I must nebber come again for anyting more. But, honey," she said, addressing Mrs S., "don't you mind dem dark hours. You look right to Jesus, and keep fast hold upon Him, and you will nebber more see dem dark hours." Thus she took her leave. After she had been gone a while, she was seen again coming slowly up the path and the steps of the verandah. Approaching Mrs Saxon, she said, with an ineffable sweetness of voice and manner, "Honey! don't you mind dem dark hours. You look right to Jesus, and keep fast hold ob Him, and you will nebber, nebber again see any of dem dark hours." So she finally passed from sight.

General Saxon, in his long account of the transaction -- an account published years ago in the independent of New York -- says that himself and family felt as if they had been visited by a messenger from heaven -- a messenger sent to impart to them higher wisdom in respect to the supreme concern of the divine life than they had ever received before.

I will allude to one other case, taken from the same class as the above. Quite thirty years since, I became acquainted in the city of New York with a coloured woman, whom I never heard designated by any other name than Aunt Dinah. She was then upwards of threescore and ten years of age. Up to her fortieth year she had lived a slave, and had received no religious instruction whatever. On attaining to her freedom she came to the city designated, and was, not long afterwards, converted. As soon as she heard of the views taught at Oberlin, she sought, with all her heart and with all her soul, for "the liberty of the children of God," and entered most fully into all the light and blessedness of the higher life. As her faith, or rather unbelief, did not limit the power, love, and grace of Christ through the Spirit, her whole character and life seemed to be moulded into the divine likeness. All wondered at the beautiful simplicity, symmetry, and completeness of her whole character and life, and at the wondrous wisdom of her conversation. She had very special power in leading believers into the rest of faith, and sinners to Christ. Whenever an impenitent person came under her influence her conversation and prayers were centred in one fixed purpose -- his conversion -- and very seldom did she fail of her object. Few persons in that city were the means of the conversion of so many individuals as she. Prior to her last sickness, one young man had been with her an object of special effort and prayer, and she

earnestly besought the Lord not to call her home until she could be assured of the salvation of that friend. When it was announced to her that he had been converted, she exclaimed, "I am ready now. Let the Master come when He will." What was peculiar about this woman was the fact, that her person was by no means comely, that her dress was always very plain, though neat, while her face was as black as midnight. What gave her free access to. all classes, the rich and the poor alike, was the wondrous sanctity of her character and wisdom of her discourse. Nobody repelled her.

While, for example, she was once on board a steamboat between New York and Albany, she found that the celebrated statesman, the Hon. De Wit Clinton was among the passengers. Approaching the man and addressing him, while many gathered round, she spoke to him in reverential earnestness in regard to his immortal interests, warning him of the dangers which encircled him in the midst of the pursuits of ambition, the maze of politics, and the floods of worldly cares, and closed with a solemn admonition that he should make the salvation of his soul the first and supreme object of his regard. Mr Clinton listened to her discourse with deepest attention and respect, thanked her for her concern for his eternal welfare, and for her wise admonitions. Such was the respect which her discourse commanded from all. After listening to my preaching, she uniformly met me near the pulpit-stairs, and taking me by the hand, she would say, "My son, 'be thou faithful unto death, and He shall give thee a crown of life.' I solemnly charge you never to cease, while you live, proclaiming this full redemption." There were few persons whose blessing and admonition I more deeply valued than hers. A minister of the gospel, who had been a member of the same church with her while a student of theology in the city, told me that, on returning to the city after years of absence, on meeting his old friend, he thus addressed her: "Well, Aunt Dinah, how are you getting along?" "' The lines,"' she replied, "'have fallen unto me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage.' I do not know what want is. When I feel that I need anything, I look right up to my Father in heaven, who always bends His ear quite down to where I am, and says,' Daughter, what is now thy petition? Tell me.' I always speak directly into His ear, and tell Him just what I need, and I always get what I ask." After her death, as her pastor was passing down Broadway to make arrangements for her funeral, he was met by one of the very wealthy merchants of the city. "I understand," remarked the merchant, "that Aunt Dinah is dead. Have you made arrangements for her funeral?" "I was on that business now," replied the pastor. "I will bear the entire expense of that funeral," replied the merchant. "A grave will be prepared for her in my own family burying-place in Greenwood Cemetery. She will be buried there by the side of a very dear brother of mine. That brother had been an officer in the English army. In this city he providentially became acquainted with Aunt Dinah, and, through her influence and prayers, became a Christian, and died in the Lord. I desire that she shall stand by his side and in the midst of my family in the morning of the resurrection." She thus "made her grave with the rich in her death." It was but seldom that so large a funeral was gathered to pay public respect to departed worth as was gathered at the burial of that woman. Reader, your Christian life ought to be as hallowed as was the one above described.

02.B09. Trials Of Faith, And Victories

CHAPTER IX.

TRIALS OF FAITH AND VICTORIES "BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB AND THE WORD OF HIS TESTIMONY." IN the Word of Truth we read, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is staid on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee." In the same Word we have the following admonition and promise : -- "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and mind through Christ Jesus." "These things," said our Saviour, "have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." In the midst of all earth's tribulations -- and none have more of them than believers -- "the redeemed of the Lord" are privileged to "return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." Everywhere, and under all circumstances, they are expected to "obtain joy and gladness," while "sorrow and sighing flee away," and "the days of their mourning are ended." In the experience of Paul, all the above declarations and promises were fully verified. Let us listen to his testimony: -- "Not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." "And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake for when I am weak, then am I strong." "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. It is the revealed privilege of the saints of God to "glory in tribulation." Paul not only had such an experience, but has also clearly revealed to us the secret by which we may attain to the same experience. "We also believe, and therefore speak." "I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Let us give our special attention to this subject for a few moments.

It is a fixed law of our nature that, when the mind is strongly exercised with some one engrossing subject, other and different objects have no power to reach and disturb the sensibilities and activities of our being. For several years prior to his death, for example, the celebrated President Dwight of Yale College suffered beyond measure from rheumatic and gout affections. As he sat, in excessive agony, before a fire one day, a live-coal fell upon his hand and burned into his flesh without his noticing the fact at all. The reason is obvious. All the sensibilities of his nature were so completely occupied by the causes of pain referred to, that the burning of his flesh even could not reach the sensitive department of his nature. This same principle holds true universally. Now, when "Christ dwells in the heart by faith," and is "formed within, the hope of glory," and "God dwells in us, and walks in us" as His conscious "sons and daughters," all our affections and activities come so completely under the divine control, and all our susceptibilities are so perfectly

filled with "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," that "things seen and temporal" have no power so to reach those susceptibilities as to disturb the fixed content of the mind, which has found its resting-place in the centre of the sweet will of God.

Tertullian and other of the early Christian fathers affirm that the minds of the martyrs, when subjected to the most terrible tortures which their tormentors could inflict, were so completely occupied with the manifested love and glory of Christ, that they did not seem to be affected at all by bodily suffering. When we are out of Christ, all our susceptibilities lie open and exposed to the assaults of worldly tribulations, cares, and perplexities, and we are, of necessity, "like the troubled sea when it cannot rest," and are "weary, tossed with tempests, and not comforted." When we "are in Christ," and "Christ in us," however, "the world, the flesh, and the devil" have no more power over us than they had over Him. His peace is our peace; His rest is our rest; His content is our content; and our "quietness and assurance" are as undisturbed as His was. He overcame the world, that is, destroyed its power to draw the mind into sin or to disturb its rest and peace, through the indwelling presence of the Father in His heart and mind. So we can "overcome the world" by having Christ dwell in us as the Father dwelt in Him. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." In the varied conditions and states of our earthly life, we cannot be content with the divine allotments, by resolving upon an acquiescence in the same, nor can we obey the command, "Be careful for nothing," by determining to "take no thought for the morrow;" nor have we any power of will to banish from our hearts the cares which may now pain and agitate us, or to prevent others coming in and disturbing our peace. If, on the other hand, we will, "by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make known our requests unto God," if we will open our hearts, and let Christ and the Father come to us, and "make their abode with us," and if we will wait for "the promise of the Spirit," that "we may know the things which are freely given us of God," then we shall be so "filled with all the fulness of God" that it will be impossible for us to be "careful and troubled" about anything. "The love of Christ," "open visions of His glory," "everlasting consolations and good hope through grace," "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," "joy in the Holy Ghost," and the repose of our wills in the sweet will of God, will then so completely control all our activities, and occupy all the susceptibilities of our nature, that worldly tribulations and cares will have no power over any department of our mental being, so as to interrupt our joys or disturb the rest into which our immortal spirits have entered. As darkness cannot abide the face of the sun, so "sorrow and sighing," discontent, and fear of what may happen, take their quick departure when "the Sun of Righteousness rises in our hearts with healing in His wings." "If Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of (or in respect to) sin;" that is, all our evil propensities and tendencies, and all internal causes which disturb our peace, lie dead in His presence, and void of power to draw us from our allegiance to Him, or to disquiet our spirits, or shut the peace of God out of our hearts; while "the Spirit is life, because of (or in respect to) righteousness;" that is, all our moral and spiritual activities are quickened into active obedience to the will of God and the law of righteousness.

So, also, when Christ is in you, reader, external tribulations will have no more power to approach your sensibilities and disturb the deep rest of your spirits in Him, than the hosts of the Syrians had to break through the fiery circle which surrounded the prophet of God. But if Christ be not in us, the world without, with its tribulations and "fiery trials," and the world within, with its warring lusts, carking cares, and bewildering perplexities, will make our sensitive nature their perpetual prey,

and "sin will reign in our mortal bodies."

Permit me here to allude to some experiences of a personal nature, experiences illustrative of the power of Christ to gird the mind with enduring strength, and to "keep the heart and mind in perfect peace" in the midst of the greatest external embarrassments and perplexities. After I had been between two and three years President of Oberlin College, I found myself at the head of an institution endowed with a fund amounting to quite eighty thousand dollars, a larger endowment than any other college in the Western States was then possessed of. I had co-operating with me a very able Faculty of instruction, while our pupils amounted to from five to eight hundred individuals. We had also what was then regarded as a very unusual subscription for the general purposes of the College, a subscription which was rapidly approaching one hundred thousand dollars. No other college west of New England, and very few there, had before it a more quiet or brighter future. I was in the very condition in which, above all others, I would have desired to be. Then each of us felt that he had good reason to say, "I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand. My root shall spread out by the waters, and the dew shall lie all night upon my branch. My glory shall be fresh in me, and my bow shall be renewed in my hand."

Just at this time a fearful conflagration occurred in the business centre of the city of New York, a conflagration which, in a single night and day, destroyed property amounting to about fifteen millions of dollars. Within that circle of fire lay the business places of the wealthy merchants who held almost every dollar of our endowment funds, and those funds sank with the fortunes of those men. This calamity was immediately followed by a national one, the sudden failure of almost all our banks west of the State of New York, and not a few east of that line; and this was attended with the bankruptcy of a large majority, it is believed, of the men of business throughout the nation, and the utter disarrangement of all our business relations. When we took an account of the pecuniary condition of the College, after the effects of these calamities had become manifest, we found our endowment wholly gone, and of the subscription for general purposes, that not twenty thousand dollars of it would ever be of use to us, while the College was encumbered with a debt amounting to upwards of fifty thousand dollars. No calamity could hardly have fallen more suddenly, and, to all human appearance, no ruin could have been more complete and remediless. "As a snare," the general bankruptcy had fallen upon the nation, and "in one hour" the ruin of the College was apparently consummated, and the life-hopes of no individual appeared to be so hopelessly wrecked as my own.

I shall now speak with perfect freedom of the mental, moral, and spiritual state in which I was preserved, by the "power of Christ resting upon me," in the midst of the circumstances referred to. This I do, leaving it to "Him whom I serve, and whose I am," to judge of motives. To the honour of His dear name, and as illustrative of the power of His sustaining grace, I would say, that the events under consideration never, unless my consciousness utterly misled me, had the power for a single moment to disquiet my spirit, to induce the least motion of internal discontent, to interrupt the onward flow of my peace and joy in God, to induce a moment’s despair of the future of the College, or the "batement of one jot of hope" in respect to its ultimate success. The calamity, as we and the public well knew, had come upon us by no mismanagement on our part. This fact rendered it plain that, in the judgment of God, it was not best that the funds referred to should go for the benefit of the Institution, and my whole being joyfully acquiesced in the divine will upon the subject. In my own mind, I distinctly and specifically reasoned thus -- If it is the will of God that the

Institution shall die, I have no wish or desire that it shall live. If; on the other hand, God wills that it shall live, and I felt sure that He did thus will, then He will furnish the means to repair these ruins, and perpetuate the life of the College; and this He will do, "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord," God's Spirit moving upon the hearts of those who have the means, and inducing them to give what is requisite to accomplish the divine purpose. With these sentiments in my mind, I commended the great interests before me to the divine care and keeping, and did so with the utmost peace, quietness, and assurance of hope. I cannot now understand how my peace could have been more undisturbed, my joy more full, or my hope more assured, than they were during all that dark period of my own life and of the life of the Institution. During all that period, I can truly say that there was in my inner life a full realisation of all that the following words of the prophet can mean : -- "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." The reader may be interested to know what were the dispensations of Providence towards us under the circumstances. As none of my associates were accustomed to agencies, action in this direction at first fell mainly upon me. Knowing that Professor Finney's health and circumstances would not permit him to continue with us unless his salary was promptly paid, and knowing that the large fortune of a mutual friend of his and my own had not suffered in the national calamities, I visited him, and, after full consultation, he agreed to pay regularly the salary under consideration. As far as myself was concerned, I concluded that, by labours in protracted meetings during our vacations among churches who would call for my services, I could secure a large portion of my own salary; and I determined to devote the income thus obtained to that end, and thus relieve the college from the burden of another salary. Thus two of the main pillars of the Institution were securely fixed. Just at this time the late Hon. Gerrit Smith sent us a draft of two thousand dollars on a sound Eastern bank, and, what was more, a deed of some twenty thousand acres of land in Western Virginia. This great gift, prompted by no agency on our part, though the land was not immediately saleable, reassured home and public confidence in the future of the Institution. At this juncture, also, a wealthy merchant, whose fortune had not suffered at all --William Dawes, Esq. -- a merchant living some fifty miles distant from us, visited us; and, after acquainting himself with the facts presented, determined, upon a self-moved agency, to raise some ready means to meet existing exigencies. He soon returned with a reliable subscription of quite two thousand dollars, himself having subscribed five hundred or a thousand dollars of the same. While with us on this second visit, "the Spirit of the Lord God came upon him," and he determined to return home, close up a very lucrative business, move his family to Oberlin, and devote all his energies to the interests of the College. This he did, labouring for us without a salary, and taking nothing but his necessary personal expenses while in our service. Through an agency to England, in company with the Rev. John Keep, he sent over to us from philanthropists here, in addition to all the expenses of the mission, upwards of thirty thousand dollars to help to pay off the debt referred to. Thus all our wants were met, and in a few years all that debt was paid, to the full satisfaction of all parties concerned; and the College was started anew on a line of gradually increasing prosperity which renders its future as cloudless as that of any of our institutions. In Mr Dawes, by a wonderful concurrence of circumstances, God gave us, as it seems, the only man in the world who could instrumentally have saved the College from destruction, and assured for it a permanent prosperity.

When I think of such facts, I can only exclaim, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" The reader will call to mind the statement formerly made of the excruciating pain which I had once experienced at the thought, and in view of the fact, of adopting sentiments and assuming positions which would render one the object of deep reprobation, and occasion his separation from the fellowship of those with whom he had in former years been in intimate association, and on terms of open good-will. Few individuals could have had a more sensitive nature in respect to such relations than I had; and the pain which I experienced under such circumstances was but little diminished by the inward assurance that I had parted company with my brethren because I had found truth which they rejected, and was separated from them because I was moving on the line of absolute duty. When passing through the crisis of the College, the crisis above described, in addition to the odium attached to me as representing the only Anti-Slavery College in the United States, and of a principle of liberal education -- a principle never before adopted in any other such institution since the world began -- that of the education of mind irrespective of race, colour, or sex, a principle then generally held in the deepest reprobation, -- in addition to all this, I stood before the public as a leading representative and uncompromising advocate of what was generally regarded in all Calvinistic denominations, with whom I had been exclusively associated from childhood up, as the most odious and subversive doctrine known in the churches. As a necessary consequence, my separation and isolation from old associations and fellowships were complete. The following fact will give the reader a distinct apprehension of the sentiment with which Brother Finney and myself were then regarded. When spending several months in the city of Boston, during one of our vacations, I received an invitation from an influential member of Park Street (Congregational) Church to dine with him in company with his pastor. When I came into the presence of that pastor, I was at once made distinctly conscious that my presence was an offence to him. So marked was the disrespect with which he treated me, and so painful, as I saw, was my presence to him, that, as soon as the formalities of the occasion would permit, I took leave. Between fifteen and twenty years after that, I met that pastor again. As we came into each other’s presence, he grasped my hand, saying, "Brother Mahan, I have desired for years to have an opportunity to make a confession to you. You remember the time when I dined with you at the house of Brother F. in Boston. On that occasion your presence was perfectly odious to me, and I felt deeply ashamed to sit, as an invited guest, at the same table with you. I now assure you that I have for years felt as deeply ashamed of my then self as I then did of you. Permit me to say to you, that you are now in my heart as a very highly-esteemed servant of Jesus Christ." The sentiment entertained by that individual on the occasion referred to perfectly represents the regard in which we were then held by the mass of the ministry and membership of the denominations designated. No persons could have been more deeply odious to the churches than we were at that time. But what was my experience under these circumstances? The exact opposite to what it ever had been before in similar relations. Walking, as I consciously did, in "the light of God," and in the path which Christ had made plain before me, and with His smile consciously resting upon the face of my soul, it was to me a very small matter truly to be "judged of man’s judgment." I then clearly understood what the Saviour meant when He said, "Your joy no man taketh from you." I was straitened in my brethren, but they were not straitened in me. I cannot recall a throb of pain, or a feeling of unkindness or bitterness, that had place in my mind during all these years. With Christ in our hearts, and in communion and fellowship with Him, we shall breathe the same Spirit towards

the Church and the world that He does. I was under the uninterrupted consciousness that, in the relations then existing, I was called upon, in my interior spirit and visible life, to represent the heart and life of Christ, and consequently that "anger, wrath, malice," must never have place in my heart, words, or acts; that when "reviled, I must bless," and when "persecuted, I must endure it." Nor did I find it difficult to "possess the soul in patience" then. I was conscious of no internal struggle with sentiments or emotions of bitterness. Christ was too near, and my joy in Him was too full, to allow a place in my heart for any such feelings.

One of the special objects which I have in view in recording the above facts is, to bring to light a very common and dangerous error. When individuals, members of "the household of faith," receive injuries and provocations, they too commonly regard themselves as delivered to allow any roots of bitterness whatever to spring up in their hearts, to trouble their spirits, and to defile their character. No, my brother; "you do not well to be angry" when wronged, injured, or provoked by your brethren or the men of the world. Your character, on the other hand, should then and there take on, not the spirit of anger or vengeance, but the divinest form of virtue known in the kingdom of grace -- "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price." "Let no man take thy crown." This you always do when you allow any man to anger you. The final conclusion which I deduce from the experiences above presented is this: We are "complete in Christ," "can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us," and in all circumstances of our earthly existence can be "more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us."

02.B10. Sustaining And Anticipatory Grace

Chapter 25 SUSTAINING AND ANTICIPATORY GRACE In reference to all temptations and "trials of faith" which await believers while journeying towards the heavenly country, this specific promise remains for us: "God is faithful (worthy to be trusted), who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." This promise should be omnipresent to our faith everywhere and under all circumstances, and with a firm and fixed trust for the grace here specifically promised, we should face every temptation which may fall upon us. There is one feature of this subject, however -- a form of grace which I do not recollect ever to have heard discourses upon, or known to have been written about -- a form of grace which I deem it of special importance that all should be fully instructed about. I refer to what may be called anticipatory grace -- a form of grace by which we are prepared beforehand for any great and special duties or trials which await us.

I will illustrate my meaning by an allusion to some special events in the experience of Paul. Aside from the visible and audible revelation of Christ to him at the time of his conversion, there are four recorded instances in which Christ revealed Himself to the apostle in a similar form, and in each instance for the specific purpose of preparing him beforehand for his great life-mission, for special and perilous duties, or for great trials and tribulations. The first of these special manifestations occurred when he was in Jerusalem, and was then in the full expectation of devoting his life to the salvation of his countrymen, and was intended to prepare him for a mission of which he had never thought of before, and which was unlike that to which any other individual had ever been called in the history of the race. Without such a manifestation, and the special revelation which accompanied it, Paul never would have become "the apostle of the Gentiles," and never could have been prepared for such a mission. Of this mission Paul gives the following account: "And it came to pass that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance: and saw Him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on Thee: and when the blood of Thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." This revelation was only preparatory for the special one which he subsequently received while at Antioch, and when "the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." With what absolute assurance did the first revelation prepare his mind to go forth in obedience to the second! The next revelation of the kind occurred during the early part of his ministry at Corinth. He had "fought with the beasts at Ephesus," had been "scourged, imprisoned, and put in the stocks at Philippi," had fled for his life from Thessalonica and Berea, had encountered the derision of the philosophers at Athens, and was then in such "peril from the lying in wait of the Jews "in Corinth, that he would unquestionably have left the city but for the following special vision of Christ which he then had : -- "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall

set on thee to hurt thee : for I have much people in this city." No wonder that, "for a whole year and six months" after he had received that vision, he continued to preach the gospel to that people, and that without fear. The special vision next vouchsafed was when he was in the castle in Jerusalem, and was then in the midst of the greatest possible perils, with years of gloomy imprisonment in prospect. Of this vision we have the following tenderly impressive account : -- "And the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." Little power, after that, had chains and prison walls to confine the boundless freedom of that soul. When in the midst of that fearful tempest in which "neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay upon them, and all hope that any of them should be saved was taken away," then Christ did not Himself appear, but sent His angel with a special message of cheer, hope, and assurance. Let us read the inspired account of this vision : -- "But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and lo! God bath given thee all them that sail with thee: Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." Thus, by such anticipatory revelations was the apostle prepared for the great exigencies, and trials, and tribulations of his eventful life.

Grace superabundant is provided for and promised to all believers for every "time of need," and special grace for all special necessities. This also we may all expect, that for new and overpowering trials we shall be prepared by anticipatory grace, which will render us more than conquerors when the evil day comes upon us. It does not appear that such grace is now vouchsafed in the specific form in which it was to Paul. Yet we may rest assured that "the Great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" will not only come to us and walk with us after we have been put into the furnace, but will anticipate our trials of fire by special and gracious preparations. In my own experience there have been periods not a few, periods in which for a long time all providential occurrences combined their influence as very severe trials of faith. During each of these I have been not only sustained by special and all-sufficient grace, but each of them was anticipated by special promises, on which the mind was made to repose, and by special divine influences -- promises and influences all tending to one specific result, to prepare the mind for the peculiar trials which were to follow. I will refer to a few facts of the character under consideration.

Prior to the occurrence of the calamitous events in the history of the College, the events above described, this passage was brought home with inexpressible sweetness and power to my heart: -- "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." The portions of the passage most deeply impressed upon my mind were the two following, the first especially : -- "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." Why these promises were brought home with such power upon my mind and heart I could not tell. They consciously girded me, however, "with everlasting

strength" for any providences which God might see fit to send. But when the sudden and crushing avalanche did descend upon us, I then understood fully why its descent had been so specifically provided for by anticipating grace. The calamities, and the new duties thence arising, found me standing immovably upon a rock of strength, where the former could bring no disquietude, and "endued with power from on high" for the latter. In connection with the quietness and assurance which those promises inspired, and while feeling myself as self-helpless as a feeble worm surrounded with a circle of fire, with what ineffable interest did I read such promises and admonitions as the following: -- "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." "Fear thou not: for I am with thee: be not dismayed for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." I knew well that the Spirit of God would not, with such undying interest and life-imparting power, bring home to my heart these and kindred promises, if He did not intend that I should rest upon them. Then, when the conscious object of the neglect and reprobation of my brethren and former associates, and when consciously regarded by the ministry and churches generally with whom I had been in full fellowship as "a troubler of Israel," how can I express the almost agonising joy with which I would read such passages as the following -- "I, even I, am He that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and the son of man, which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, aud laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor? The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail. But I am the Lord thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: the Lord of Hosts is His name. And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand."

How could calamities disturb my peace or awaken fear when they always found me thus encircled with such "exceeding great and precious promises.," God’s "horses of fire and chariots of fire"? Why should we fear the descent of an avalanche when it must bring down with it, and that "from God out of heaven," such "everlasting consolations and good hope through grace"? How and why should man’s neglect anger and disquiet us when it brings directly to our heart "the smile of the Lord" as "the feast of our souls"? Often, when made most deeply conscious of the intended neglect of brethren with whom I had once "taken sweet counsel, and gone to the house of God in company," have I turned aside and wept for overflowing joy of heart as the above passage would lift its divine form before my mind. I have long ceased to wonder at the words of Paul. Permit me to cite his words once more -- "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

While the events above referred to were passing, I was called, under circumstances of peculiar embarrassment, to spend our winter vacation of three months in Boston. The church which finally engaged my services had negotiated with Brother Finney to secure his. These negotiations were carried on to within a few days before I left home, he having finally declined to go. In the communications from the church, he was assured that expectation had become so fully centred in him that I, who was a perfect stranger to all but a very few individuals, would be able to do but a

very little in the city. Under such circumstances I went there, and, of course, found things as might have been anticipated. My first evening (week-day) lecture was attended by not more than forty individuals, and these seemed to have come together from a consciousness of duty rather than an expectation of spiritual profit. Weeks before I left home, and while all were expecting that Brother Finney would spend the winter in Boston, my mind became most intensely interested in the declaration of Christ, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened." I was led to reflect upon the manner of His ministry, and the principles in conformity to which He laid the foundations of His eternal kingdom. "He went about everywhere doing good," proclaiming the Word of Life, conferring upon all who would receive Him ''power to become the sons of God," banding them together as "a little flock," and yet as the sacramental host of God; and as soon as He was glorified, "enduing them with power from on high" for the great world-work to which He had called them. "This," I said, "is the leaven which Christ cast in amid the elements of the world of mind for the world's moral renovation." In view of that fact, my life-mission was made perfectly manifest to my mind. I was to do all I possibly could to induce every mind that I could draw under my influence to "receive, in the love of it, the truth" which Christ had made known to me, and to be "baptized with the Holy Ghost" for the exemplification and propagation of that full redemption in the world and among believers. These believers, "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," and everywhere, by precept and example, "holding forth the Word of Life," would act as Christ's leaven in the churches until the whole were leavened. Never for a moment, after that passage thus opened upon my mind, did a shadow of doubt cross my mind in respect to the nature of my divinely-designated mission and work, or in respect to the ultimate result. The truth presented thrilled through my whole intellectual, moral, and spiritual being, and endued me with immortal courage and strength for the work before me. When I arrived in Boston, the facts presented might have rendered me utterly despondent, and induced me to go to some other field, but for the anticipatory grace and preparation above presented. As it was, with that truth in my heart "as a burning fire shut up in my bones," I contemplated these facts with absolute "assurance of hope." Nor was I disappointed in respect to the results. Those few who listened to that first discourse went home to think, to pray, to "speak often one to another" and to their brethren upon the subject; and in a few weeks I found myself addressing, from Sabbath to Sabbath and on the evenings of the week, the most crowded audiences that could be collected anywhere in the city. The immediate result was, that many sinners were converted, and many believers "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," and found God as "their everlasting light," while "the days of their mourning were ended." The permanent result has been, that the leaven thus cast in has remained as a perpetually assimilating and sanctifying power in the churches. As indicative of these results, I will refer to a single fact. Some two or three years after the above-stated occurrences, Dr Channing inquired of the celebrated seamen's chaplain in the city, Dr Taylor, whether the latter could designate any individuals, or class of individuals, whose inner and visible lives accorded with the revelations of the New Testament in respect to what believers are privileged to become. "There are many such," Dr Taylor replied. At Dr Channing's special request, Dr Taylor designated a lady whom he well knew, and who had for two or three years "walked in the light of God." At Dr C.'s written request, that lady called upon him. As soon as they met, the Doctor said to her, with much feeling, I desire to hear from you about this full redemption of which so much is said in the churches in the city and country." The lady then detailed to him her own personal experience on the subject, telling him how Christ had

been presented to her mind; how she had, by faith, received Him; how He had "endued her with power from on high," and what the results had been in her inner and outer life. Dr Channing wept like a child while listening to that narrative, and said, as the lady took her leave, that he should take an opportunity to converse with her again on this subject. Immediately after this the Doctor left the city on his summer vacation, and died while absent. In an address which he delivered just before he died, on the subject of slavery, he made a devout reference to Christ as having made atonement for our sins, as living in the world as "God manifest in the flesh," and as the foundation of all our hopes. The facts above stated -- facts connected with Dr Taylor and the lady referred to -- I give as given personally to me by these individuals themselves. The power under which I spoke, of this, I absolutely know, that that power was not my own. All that I can say of it is, that I consciously stood "in the light of God," and spoke "as the Spirit gave me utterance." Nor can I conceive how it was possible for me thus to have spoken but for the anticipatory baptism of light and power which I received before it was determined that I should visit the city at all. When will ministers, and believers universally, recognise their absolute dependence upon the Spirit of God for real Christian thought and utterance? Can any man "say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Ghost"? When will Christians admit the fulness and adequacy of the grace of God in Christ, and of that grace as distributed to us by the Holy Ghost for all our necessities? Are we, or are we not, "complete in Christ"?

While a gracious Providence was thus caring for all my interests, a very singular event occurred an event unlike any other which I have ever experienced, either before or since that time. I had been engaged for some time in excessive labours in New England. The result of these labours was a very depressing and almost shattering effect upon my nervous system. Any sudden calamitous event occurring at that time, or any unexpected intelligence of such an event, might have utterly prostrated my system. I was on my way from Boston, through New York, to the city of Poughkeepsie, where I had an appointment for protracted labours for a considerable period. In the city of New York, intelligence awaited me of an event of the most afflictive and startling character that could have occurred -- an event in respect to which I had had no agency or responsibility whatever -- an event which I had not the remotest reason to anticipate, and the thought of which had never approached my mind. While sitting in the cars alone by myself, and engaged in quiet meditation, a question in these exact words was directly put to my mind: "How would you feel if, on your arrival in New York, intelligence of "-- such an event -- "should meet you"? the event being specifically designated. I was never in my life more distinctly conscious that a question was put to me by another mind than my own than I was on that occasion; nor by any facts of experience, or any of the known laws of association, have I been able to account for the fact under consideration on any other supposition. The first acquaintance that I met with, on my arrival in the city of New York, gave me information of the occurrence of that event. The question put to me in the cars, however, had induced such specific reflections, and moral and spiritual preparations, that the intelligence had no disturbing effect whatever upon my mental or physical system. For myself, I can give but one account of the facts before us. That question was put to me by another mind than my own, and was put for the specific purpose of insuring a needful preparation for the intelligence which I did receive, and this as a means to a higher end, namely, that I might have strength for the accomplishment of the great work which was accomplished through my instrumentality in the city towards which I was journeying. The inference which I drew from such occurrences is this: -- Another mind than our own has the care of all our interests as "believers in Jesus," a mind that

understands all our needs, and who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," a mind whose ever wakeful and watchful presence always encircles us as a "munition of rocks," and who will not fail to anticipate all our great emergencies by needful preparations. I write these things, reader, that, by an entrance into the same rest of faith, your heart with mine may ever inwardly sing -- "Safe in the arms of Jesus, Safe on His gentle breast."

I refer but to one additional case of the kind now under consideration, and that pertains to the darkest and most trying period of my Christian life. I left Oberlin to take charge of a new university. The basis of the endowment of this institution was a tract of land of two hundred and seventy-five acres, most propitiously located in the immediate vicinity of the city of Cleveland, Ohio. This property, which promised to render the university a better endowed institution by far than any other in any of the Western States, was obtained, and by written covenant was held, by myself and two other individuals in trust, for the purposes named. By the trustees of the university, and by the trustees in trust, a power of attorney was given to one of the latter to lay out this property into city lots, and sell the same for the benefit of the institution. After matters had proceeded for a time, the trusters and community were utterly astounded by the disclosure of the fact, that, under that power of attorney, all this property had been disposed of for private speculation, the house which I had built, and in which my family was residing, being included in the sale, no deed having been yet conveyed to me. By a bogus. settlement, against which I recorded a written protest, and for which the trustees afterwards expressed the deepest regret, the ruin of the university was consummated. Standing in the midst of these ruins, with the little property I had put beyond my control, with a large family upon my hands, and with no visible means for their support, I found myself more completely insulated from former associations than I had ever been before, and under the darkest cloud with which I could be overshadowed.

Yet for what I was here called to endure I had been most fully prepared by influences and "enduements of power from on high," -- influences and enduements specifically anticipatory of what did come upon me. Some months prior to my leaving Oberlin my mind had been intensely occupied -- I could not conjecture why -- with the utterance made by our Saviour in view of His approaching sufferings at Jerusalem, namely, "Verily, verily, I say unto you. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Here, I saw, is the immutable condition of fruitfulness in the kingdom of God. What that condition is, is made manifest by the circumstances in which those words were uttered. Christ had distinctly before His mind the entire sufferings and the terrible death which awaited Him. All this He could have avoided had He chosen to do so. "No man took His life from Him; He laid it down of Himself." Had He spoken the word, His persecutors would an have fallen dead before Him. Had He "prayed the Father," "twelve legions of angels" would have appeared for His rescue. That He should surrender Himself to the baptism with which He was to be baptized, that was His Father’s will. When Christ, from simple respect to the Father’s will, and in view of the eternal fruits thence to result, thus voluntarily "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," then "the corn of wheat fell into the ground and died." So when our wills fall so absolutely into the will of God that we fully and unreservedly consent to do, to be, to become, and to suffer all that God may appoint us, asking nothing and choosing nothing but as He may will for us, then the condition required is perfected on our part, and the promise contained in the words, "If it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," is ours. Under the most distinct, deep, and impressive apprehension of this condition and promise,

that black cloud came over me, and for several years shut me in on every side. "Now," I exclaimed, "is the period of my existence when 'the corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die!' While the cloud shall remain, not a murmur, nor sentiment of discontent, must for a moment have place in my mind. Not a wish or choice must be entertained that the 'trial of fire' shall be less severe or less protracted than God wills. Not a movement of anger or ill-will must enter my heart, to whatever injuries or provocations I may be subject. In no single instance must I speak unadvisedly with my lips, and absolute integrity must be maintained, whatever the losses may be which I may suffer thereby." I have no idea but that I should have fallen in that evil day, but for the anticipatory grace and strength which had been previously vouchsafed to me. Had I failed in any particular to fulfil the condition under consideration, I might have been saved from death, but should have failed, I doubt not, of the fruitfulness which has followed, and may yet follow.

Sitting, as I did, under the shadow of that dark cloud, absolutely losing myself in the sweet will of God there, and thus "learning obedience from the things which I suffered," and being -- because I was through all that period consciously sustained by a power not my own -- "more than a conqueror through Him that hath loved us," I now, as a witness for Christ, have an absolute assurance of the all-sufficiency of divine grace, an assurance otherwise impossible to me. When God at length very unexpectedly took me by the hand, and led me out from under that cloud, and set me again in "a large place," I very soon understood why God had afflicted me. There is one grace -- the most valuable of almost all others -- one grace in which we can be disciplined and perfected but in "the furnace of affliction." When "patience has had her perfect work" there, then the mind becomes possessed, as it otherwise could not be, of "everlasting consolations and good hope through grace," of "assurances of hope," "assurances of faith," and "assurances of understanding," of divine fellowships and fruitions, and of "fulness of joy."

Reader, "despise not thou the chastening (parental discipline) of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him." Remember, also, that they only are blessed, and counted happy, "who endure temptation;" that when the hour of trial comes, then and there is the time and place when and where the "corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die." The final conclusion to which all the above facts and elucidations conduct us is, the absolute assurance with which we may intrust all our mortal and immortal cares and interests to Christ. "Because I live, ye shall live also." When intrusted to Him by an unwavering faith, our well-being is just as safe as His. There is not a condition of existence in which we can be placed in which there is any necessity that we should be anything less than "more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us." When Christ is in us, and we in Him, as He is in the Father, and the Father in Him, we shall be as secure and blessed in Him as He was in the Father, and temptations, in whatever forms they may come upon us, will have no more power over us than they had over Him. "He that abideth in Him sinneth not." In this relation to Christ, into which all may, and all are absolutely bound to enter, we can have nothing less than an "all-sufficiency for all things," and cannot but be "abundantly furnished for every good work," and can do nothing less than "all things through Christ which strengtheneth us." "Great fights of affliction," "divers temptations," "fiery trials," and "resistance unto blood, striving against sin," are eras in "the hidden life," not for inglorious defeats, but for glorious victories and triumphs, "through the blood of the Lamb and the Word of His testimony." The reason, and the only reason, why any believer, the feeblest as well as the strongest, does not "stand in the evil day," is that he expects to fall, and hence "casts away his confidence." The reason, and the only reason, why I, as

above stated, "remained steadfast and immovable" during the long years in which that dark cloud hung over me, was that I expected Christ would "keep me from falling," and held to Him as with a death-grasp. In my absolute and unlimited consecration of myself to Christ, the "corn of wheat had fallen into the ground;" and now, I said to myself; "the hour is come" for it to remain and die there, and by the grace and power of Christ it shall thus remain and die. During all that dark period my faith heard the voice of Him, for whose sake I regard it as an infinite privilege to suffer all that He wills, calling to me as from heaven, "Hold the fort, for I am coming;" and my whole inner being, with all the "little strength" I had, responded, "By grace I will." And now, reader, having not only "counted," but found, "Him faithful that hath promised," I say to you, and Christ also authorises me to say, that you need not fall when you are tempted. On the other hand, "the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried in the fire, may be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." "If thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God." "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might;" and at all times, and under all circumstances, expect to be "more than a conqueror through Him that hath loved you." Then shall you be "as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth forever."

02.B11. The Intercessory Functions Of The Spirit

Chapter 26 THE INTERCESSORY FUNCTIONS OF THE SPIRIT. In 1 John 2:1, Christ is revealed as our "Advocate with the Father." "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." In John 14:16, John 14:26, John 15:26,and John 16:17, the same original word that is rendered Advocate in the passage above cited, is rendered Comforter, and is applied exclusively to the Holy Spirit. In a very important sense, therefore, we have two Advocates with the Father; each to act in His own special sphere -- two Advocates, namely, Jesus Christ the Righteous on the one hand, and the Holy Spirit on the other. In Romans 8:26-27, we have a revelation of the nature of this peculiar function of the Holy Spirit. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." As I have never yet heard this subject satisfactorily explained to my own mind, I will dwell upon it for a few moments. In the promises, two things are absolutely pledged to the faith of the believer -- perfect security against all real evil on the one hand, and the possession of all real good on the other. As examples of the first class of promise; I need only cite the following : -- "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil." That prayer is an absolute promise to our faith. Of the other class of promises, the following will suffice : -- "No good thing will He withhold from them who walk uprightly." "But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus." "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" The promises to prayer have but one limit -- our capacities to receive. "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." So far the will of God is distinctly and absolutely revealed to us. So far we may ask, knowing assuredly that what we ask is "agreeable to the will of God," and that, ’’asking in faith,’’ "we shall have the petitions that we desired of Him." And here we have the real meaning of our Saviour in the words, "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." What every true believer wills and asks for when he prays is that he may be kept from all that would be to him an evil, and not a good; that he may receive everything which would be to him not an evil, but a good; and that "God will supply all his need," until "his joy is full."

Now, when we come to particulars, and would specify this or that particular object, here come in "our infirmities," and we do not "know what we should pray for as we ought," because we do not know whether particular objects would be to us a good or an evil. Here, also, the Spirit is present to "help our infirmities," and becomes our intercessor for "things which are agreeable to the will of God." What we may not know at all the Spirit knows perfectly, namely, what particular objects would be good, and what objects would be evil to us, and knows, consequently, what objects God wills that we should, or should not, receive at His hands in answer to prayer. The Spirit becomes our Intercessor or Advocate by drawing out our hearts, and working in us to pray "fervently," "earnestly," and with "groanings which cannot be uttered," for those blessings which are

"agreeable to the will of God," -- that is, those blessings which He wills that we should receive when we pray for them. When the reception of the blessings referred to depends upon human instrumentality, the Spirit not only intercedes with and in us, by inducing in us a spirit of prayer for such blessing, but also moves upon the hearts of those through whom the answer is to come to us, to induce them to do in accordance with our prayers. When the blessing is to come through the operations of nature, the Spirit makes intercession for us as before, and, at the same time, works in nature, our bodies in cases of disease, or in nature around, as the case may be, to produce those changes and arrangements which accord with our petitions. When the Spirit "makes intercession for us" by influencing us to pray for specific spiritual blessings which must come to us directly from God, then the same Spirit, who leads and constrains us thus to pray, answers our prayers by "shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts," "revealing Christ in us," bringing us into "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," granting "everlasting consolations and good hope through grace," "rendering us strong in weakness," "giving a tongue and wisdom" in proclaiming the truth, filling us with all the fulness of God," and "blessing us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," just according to the nature of the blessing in respect to which He draws out our hearts in prayer. Let us consider some facts pertaining to answers to prayer in the different relations above indicated.

Agency of the Spirit in Inducing a Spirit of Prayer, and then Securing an Answer through Human Agency.

I have already, in another connection, referred to the case of the building of the second Temple. The building of the first Temple had been, in deed and truth, "by might and by power." Before the work was commenced, the means for its full completion were all furnished, and the civil and military resources of kingdoms were devoted to the accomplishment of the work. The foundations of the second Temple were laid by a small, poor, weak, and despised people, and all this with no visible means to perfect the work begun. Yet the people were commanded to go trustfully forward with the work. The erection of this house was to be, not the work of might nor power, but of God’s Spirit. How was the Spirit to do this? Not directly, by a miraculous furnishment of means, but indirectly, through human agency. While the people were to go prayerfully and trustfully forward, the Spirit of God was not only to "help their infirmities" when praying, but to move upon the hearts of kings and princes, and of men who had gold and silver, to induce them, of their own free will, to furnish the means as needed, until "the top-stone of the edifice should be laid with shoutings, Grace, grace unto it!" When Nehemiah, saddened by the intelligence which he had received in respect to the condition of his countrymen in "the place of his fathers’ sepulchres," was inquired of by the King of Persia, the queen sitting by him, in regard to the cause of the sorrow which was too great to be concealed, the sacred writer tells us that "he prayed to the God of heaven" while answering the question put to him. Here we have a striking example of what may be called the double function of the Spirit -- inducing prayer in the first instance, and then influencing the heart of the royal sovereign to act in accordance with the prayer previously induced.

Permit me now to adduce some examples in common life and experience -- examples illustrative of the same great truth. During one of the pecuniary crises in America, a crisis in which almost all building operations were suspended in the city of New York, a Christian mechanic found himself entirely out of work. The only resource for the support of his family was derived from what was received from a few boarders kept by his wife. This woman had exhausted every possible means

to keep up this supply. At length she found herself in this condition: She had been enabled to get a satisfactory breakfast for her boarders and family. Not an article of provision remained in her house, and her money and credit were perfectly exhausted. When her children expressed their apprehensions in regard to the future, she replied that their Father in heaven would give them that day, as He had done in the past, "their daily bread," and retired to her chamber for prayer. Some time after she came down singing for joy of heart, and said to her children, "God will supply the means in time for our next meal. I know He will." Immediately after this, a member of the same church with this woman, the wife of a very wealthy citizen, called, and as soon as they were alone in the parlour, exclaimed with tears, "Sister, you must he in distress about something; do tell me what it is. I have not been able to keep you out of my mind for a moment all this forenoon. I have been impressed with the idea that I should come here and give you money. Here, take my purse and do what you desire with it. But do tell me what has happened to you." When shown the empty cupboard in that house, the visitant exclaimed, "I understand it now. Well, have no concern for the future. As long as my wants are met, yours shall be." And so it was. How manifest is the fact that, while the Spirit directed and helped the one individual to pray, He moved upon the heart of the other to do what was requisite to met the petition presented to a throne of grace! A city missionary in the city of Brooklyn, New York, having failed to receive his usual stipend during the week, found himself on Saturday evening totally destitute of means to supply his family with food for the approaching Sabbath. The matter was presented at a throne of grace. As the family were about to retire to their beds, in answer to the ring of the bell, the missionary found a wealthy merchant standing at his door. "As I was about to retire to bed," said the merchant, "you was so distinctly and impressively presented to my mind, that I dared not sleep without calling and inquiring whether you have any want that I can meet." Before retiring to rest that night, the family of that missionary sat down to a table bountifully supplied with full provisions for days following, and did retire with the sweet assurance that He who inspires and hears prayer, knows also how to secure the answer, and is equally trustworthy to do so. The only other case to which I would refer is that of the Rev. David Ingraham, who laid the foundation of the American missions among the freedmen in Jamaica, West Indies. This individual was the first fruit of my ministry after I was settled as pastor. He followed me to Oberlin to study there for the ministry, and early became as "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost" as any person I ever knew. After he had been in the Institution several years, physicians assured him that, on account of the asthma with which he was affected, he must spend the then approaching winter in some warm climate, such as the West Indies, or he must die. Under this conviction, he left the home of his parents in the State of Michigan, and left with means insufficient to pay his passage to the city of New York. Yet he left with a fixed determination, if possible, to get to the place he desired to reach, and did so with a fixed trust that God would furnish the means, if in no other way, from help obtained from a wealthy uncle living in the State of New York.

One of the most interesting and impressive tracts published by the American Tract Society contains an account given by a fellow-passenger, a total stranger to our friend, of the influence exerted by the latter in the vessel in which they passed from Detroit to Buffalo, and on board the packet on the canal for about one hundred and fifty miles. Through the influence of that one young man both those vessels became floating Bethels. Stepping off the packet to spend the Sabbath, our friend spoke twice in one of the churches whose pastor was absent at the time, and on taking leave on Monday morning, received an unsolicited gift of twenty-five dollars from some brethren in

Christ. From his uncle he received a similar gift, and then came to the city of New York, where Professor Finney and myself were labouring at the time. I shall never forget the quiet and peaceful aspect of that countenance, or the words he uttered, when that young man met me there. "I have no will or choice of my own," he said : "I am as ready to die here as anywhere else, and now as at any other time, if such is the will of my God. I have a deep conviction, however, that it is His will that I should put forth every possible effort to get to the West Indies. If I shall fail in this, then I shall know that the time has come for me to die, and shall most joyfully accept the will of Him 'whose I am, and whom I serve.'" Being able to hear of but one vessel which was about to sail to the West Indies, and learning that it was in the harbour at Boston, our friend, having received from Brother Finney and myself what we were able to give him, and taking with him from Brother Finney a letter of introduction to some friends there, left for that city. On visiting the vessel referred to, he was told by the captain most positively that no passengers whatever could be received on board his ship, even the cabin being engaged for goods. Returning to his room, our friend carried his case to a throne of grace, praying that God, by the Holy Spirit, would induce a change of purpose in the mind of that captain. Going down to the harbour the next day, and renewing his request, he received the same positive refusal as before. On returning to his room, "and bowing his knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," "the Spirit itself made intercession" for our brother "with groanings which cannot be uttered." On the third day he rose from his knees, and went down to the harbour with absolute assurance that then his request would be granted. As soon as he met the captain, the latter asked in the kindest words, "Will you step with me down into the cabin?" As soon as they were seated there, the captain continued, "Are you not, my young friend, out of health, and desirous for that reason to sail to the West Indies?" "Yes, sir." "Well, you can have a place on board my ship." "What will you charge me for the passage, captain?" "Sixteen dollars." The regular price was sixty dollars. Was that young man wrong in the conclusion that it was the same Spirit that gave him such fervency, faith, and assurance in prayer, that moved also upon the heart of the captain to induce such a change in the spirit and purpose of his mind? Do not the express teachings of the Bible, as well as facts such as we are now considering, teach us most absolutely, that while the Spirit intercedes within our hearts by drawing them out in "effectual fervent prayer," that He also has power to turn the hearts of men as the rivers of water are turned, when answers to prayer depend upon human instrumentality? The following facts, though not bearing directly upon our present inquiries, will be read with interest. On the voyage, the vessel in which our young friend sailed did indeed become a floating Bethel. On their arrival at Havana, the captain offered to take him, without charge, to all the places whither the vessel was to sail. Finding an opportunity to labour with high wages at his trade, that of a cabinetmaker, in a great manufactory of the kind in the city, our friend determined to stop there, the captain becoming responsible to the authorities for his good conduct. The overseer of the establishment was an American, and was the only individual by whom Mr. Ingraham could be understood, all the hands being slaves. Our friend soon understood, however, that all his fellow-workmen were horridly profane in their language. Whenever such an oath would be uttered, the offender would receive from our friend such a look of surprise, sorrow, and rebuke, that in a few weeks not an oath was heard in the establishment. The last evening which he spent in the city, he spent in prayer and conversation with one of those slaves, who had become an inquirer after the great salvation. Gaining needful information about the English islands, our friend returned to us, received ordination, and, with some associates, went to Jamaica, and there laid the foundation of the

missions above referred to. As an illustration of the character of the converts thus gathered in, I will refer to a single example. One of their early converts was an aged coloured man who had long been a beastly drunkard. Knowing that total abstinence was a necessary condition of saving the man from his former habits, one of the missionaries spoke to him on the subject. "Do Massa Jesus," replied the convert, "no wish me to drink any more liquor?" On being convinced that this was the case, he replied, "Well, since Massa Jesus no wish me to drink any more, me will nebber again taste a drop of liquor." The missionary then referred to the man's servitude to tobacco. "Why," replied the convert, "do Massa Jesus no wish me to use any more tobacca?" On being convinced that this was also true, the convert replied, "Well den, me nebber taste tobacca any more." Meeting the aged convert after this, the missionary found him very happy. "How have you got along without liquor and tobacco?" asked the missionary. "Oh, me nebber tich dem any more." "How do you keep down your appetite?" "Me pray Massa Jesus all de time." Here is wisdom! When will believers learn that "this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith"? The Intercession and Agency of the Spirit relatively to

Physical Wants.

If anything is revealed in the Bible, this is revealed there, that prayer has great efficacy relatively to diseases, to rain and sunshine, and events in the physical world around us. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." Nothing is said here about the subjective influence of prayer in preparing us to receive blessings, or in inducing us to labour diligently to secure them, and thus procure an answer to our own prayers. We are simply informed of what we may expect God to do when we pray to Him. Events, also, in respect to which prayer is affirmed to have great avail on those over which none but God has any control whatever. Such, also, are the teachings of Scripture everywhere on this subject. The individual who repeats the words, "Give us this day our daily bread," and does so, saying in his heart, under the prattle of an infidel philosophy about the laws of nature, that God will do nothing more or less in nature in consequence of our prayers, offers a direct insult to the Almighty. We ask Him, in all such cases, to do for us what we affirm He never will do for us or for anybody else. This dogma, that prayer can have, in our temporal concerns, nothing but a subjective influence, is as unscientific and unreasonable as it is unchristian.

If the Spirit of God is in and over nature, as a free and voluntary determining activity, then, if we are the sons and daughters of the Almighty, it would be, not reason, but unreason, in us not to believe that the Eternal Spirit will determine events around us in accordance with our varying necessities and Spirit inspired prayers. The Spirit is just as able to turn the currents of physical events, as He is to turn the king's heart or the heart of men "as the rivers of water are turned," and no law of nature is violated in one case any more than in the other. It as absolutely accords with the known nature and laws of matter to be influenced and controlled by the free activity of mind, as

it does with those of one spirit to be influenced, and even controlled, by the thoughts, feelings, and wills of other spirits. We must deny the living God, or admit and affirm that His free will is the universal law of nature. If God is in and over nature, as a free and rational activity, then it is no more a violation of any law of nature for Him so to direct and control the current of events around us, that He shall be ever manifested to His children as a hearer and answerer of their prayers in respect to their temporal and spiritual interests alike, than it is for an earthly parent to sustain similar relations to his offspring.

If God is not in nature as a Hearer of prayer in the sense now under consideration, then we may say with truth, not only that revelation, but nature itself, as far as rational mind is concerned, is a lie. There is no conviction more intuitive and universal, and no instinct more strictly common to the race, than is the principle of prayer to God in time of need. In times of sudden calamity, and of great and pressing exigencies, it is just as natural to us to pray to God for deliverance and relief, as it is to breathe. Heathen authors of ancient times notice this fact that, in the relations under consideration, all men in common pray, and pray to one and the same God, the Creator and Governor of the universe. Here we have a law of nature, or none such is known to us. The infidelity in the world and the unbelief in the Church, which deny or ignore the "physical value of prayer," is as openly and undeniably opposed to known facts and the deductions of true science as they are to the Bible. The facts of prayer-cure, "known and read of all men" throughout Christendom, are as absolutely verified as any scientific facts can be, and the deductions based upon the former are as strictly scientific as are those based upon the latter. Take the following fact, stated by Professor Finney under his own name in the Indpendent of New York, and, from personal knowledge, affirmed as real by all the people in Oberlin. A woman in that place had, from a complete paralysis of her system, been confined to her bed for upwards of ten years. In that place lives a sister in the Church who has absolute faith in the efficacy of prayer to procure immediate healing of the sick, whenever the Spirit draws out the heart to prayer for such persons. Having had her heart drawn in a very special manner towards this sad case, she went to the sick woman and convinced her from the Bible that she might receive immediate healing in answer to "the prayer of faith." Having gained this end, the visitant invited several of the female members of the Church, individuals of a common faith with her on the subject. She invited, I say, several of her female friends to meet her in that sick-room. While they were all bowed in prayer, and this woman was praying, the sick one rose up as fully recovered as was the mother-in-law of Peter when Christ touched her hand. From that time to the present, that woman has gone out and in before the people of Oberlin, a living and moving demonstration of the truth of the divine testimony, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."

I now give two cases which were made public through the religious and secular papers of Chicago, and that by eye-witnesses of known intelligence and credibility, no hint ever appearing that the cases were not real. A daughter of a Congregational pastor in Kansas, a child some ten or twelve years of age, had been confined to her bed as a very great sufferer from a rheumatic affection for upwards of three years. One of her limbs had become perfectly helpless by being drawn up and her knee becoming callous. This child having, as she lay upon her bed, read of the healing in Oberlin, said to her mother, "I can be cured as that woman was, and I want you to pray that I may be healed." The mother having expressed doubt, the child found the promises and declarations of the Bible on the subject, and read them to her mother. The physician having prepared a special

application, saying it might be of some use, the child refused, affirming that she desired that Christ might have all the honour of her restoration, and the application was laid aside. At length the child called the mother to her bedside, and said, "Mother, I now have faith to be healed. Will you not kneel down at once and pray for me?" The mother did kneel, and, as she testified, prayed as she never was conscious of being able to pray before. While thus employed, the child left her bed, and laying her hand upon the mother, exclaimed, "Wake up, mother! I am cured;" and "she was cured from that very hour." A clergyman who had called a week after this to see, with his own eyes, what had occurred, stated in the public papers, that he found the child out with other children sliding on the ice, and that with limbs as well and strong as theirs. A physician whose "praise is in all the churches" in the State of Illinois gives this account of his own case -- he had been for years afflicted with a disease of the eyes, a disease which utterly baffled the skill of himself and all the physicians around him. At length he went to the city of New York, and had his case examined by a council of the best physicians and oculists of that city. All with one consent pronounced his case a perfectly hopeless one, and affirmed that within three months he would be totally blind, and that for life. On returning home, he stated the facts to his wife and two daughters, all in common with himself having faith in God. To them he observed, that one, and but one, hope remained. God, in answer to "the prayer of faith," might restore his sight. Without further speaking, the wife and daughters retired each to a separate room for prayer. The husband and father kneeled where he was, and said, "If thou, Lord, seest it best that I should become blind, I freely consent to be thus afflicted. But if I can better serve Thee with my eyes restored, grant Lord, that I may receive my sight." While thus praying, he distinctly felt each eye touched as with the end of a finger, and knew in himself that a perfect cure was effected. Rising from his knees, he passed into the hall to go to his wife’s room to tell her the glad tidings. In the hall, it being totally dark, the lamps not having been lighted up, he met his wife, who threw her arms around him with the exclamation, "Husband, your eyes are cured. I know that God has heard my prayer for that blessing." While she was thus speaking, each daughter came from her room, and throwing her arms around her parents, gave utterance to the same assurance that the mother had done. When the house was lighted up, the eyes of the husband and father were found to be in as sound a state as were those of any individual present, or were those of any individual in the community. So they have remained to this day.

I must here just allude to a statement made to me, many years ago, by Dr Cleveland, then pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Detroit, Michigan. While I was at his house, a lady of the city, a member of his church, made a call upon her pastor and his family. After she had left, Dr. Cleveland said to me, "That is one of the holiest women I ever knew in my life, and such power in prayer! Her influence is felt throughout the city. Our wicked men of the highest standing are often heard to say, that if ’all Christians were like that woman, we should not be as wicked as we are.’" Her husband, then impenitent, was sick of the cholera years ago. His case utterly baffled the skill of all physicians, until he descended into the lowest state of collapse, a state from which no individual was ever before known to recover. While the physicians and others stood by expecting that each breath would be his last, the wife, looking upon the unconscious face of her husband, said very calmly, "He will not die now." "Why, madam," said one of the physicians, "he is dying, and must be dead in a very few moments." "If that man dies," said the wife, "I am not a Christian. If I have ever had faith at all, I have prayed in faith for his recovery, and if my prayer fails here, I have no hold at all upon God." The man did recover, and no physician, or any other person, could

give any account of the fact but this, that in this case, at least, "the prayer of faith did save the sick, and the Lord did raise him up." For myself I would say, that I have great heaviness and continued sorrow in my heart that the Church, instead of listening to God, has opened her ear to the senseless "twaddle" of infidelity about the fixedness of the laws of nature, until she has experienced a deep eclipse of faith in respect to her solemn duties and high privileges in respect to the subject now under consideration. If you will not believe God's positive testimony here, reader, your faith will be feeble, if you have any at all, everywhere else.

Let us now contemplate the available influence of prayer relatively to events in nature around us. "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field." The command and promise here recorded were inspired by One who understands His own relations to the movements, arrangements, and events of the world around us, and God's relations to us as a Hearer of prayer, quite as well as do those infidel scientists to whose godless teachings our religious instructors, and the flocks they lead, have so lamentably opened their ears. In the New Testament we are positively taught that prayer, relatively to the subject under consideration, and to all our temporal concerns, has all the power that it had in the days of Elias. We are required to "cast all our cares upon the Lord;" and that for this reason, "that He careth for us." To assure us of the universality and particularity of the divine care and superintendence of all our interests, our Saviour tells us. that "the hairs of our head are all numbered," and that not "one of them shall perish," and that God is so omnipresent to us as a Hearer of prayer, and so able and ready to give when we "always pray and do not faint," that "our God shall supply all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus," and render "our joy full."

Now, suppose that, in our godless unbelief we entertain the sentiment that, mere subjective influence excepted, prayer has no efficacy in respect to our temporal concerns and to the events which are passing in nature around us, we shall, as a necessary result, insulate ourselves from communion and fellowship with our Father in heaven, and put an impenetrable veil between our hearts and the face of our God in all the ordinary relations and concerns of life, and shall, consequently, find God nowhere. What is still worse, we shall become "mockers," and render our "bonds strong," by continuing to utter the words, "'Give us this day our daily bread,' give us rain, and sunshine, and fruitful seasons; heal our diseases, supply all our wants, provide for the widow and orphan, and be the Guardian of all our cares and interests," and all this while we say in our hearts, "God will change nothing and give nothing in answer to our prayers," our words thus becoming nothing but lies in the ear of God. Let me say this to you, reader, that if God shall ever "dwell with you and walk in you," He will do so in the midst of all your temporalities and relations to the world around you and as the ever-trusted Guardian of those temporalities and relations. Separate the superintendence of God from these concernments, and deny to prayer all "physical value," and your heavenly Father will not "lift upon you the light of His countenance," but will "send leanness into your soul."

Permit me to allude to a few facts bearing upon the aspect of the subject now under consideration. Here I would say in general, that I never in my life knew a single individual who had found God as his "everlasting light," and who did not, both theoretically and practically, hold the view of prayer above presented. At one period, when I was a pastor in the city of Cincinnati, Ohio, out of a population of about forty thousand, upwards of twenty-five hundred persons died of one disease,

the cholera. When the pestilence was impending over us I preached to my people very earnestly upon the subject, giving them special advice as to means, and urging them to make their own preservation and that of their families the subject of special and believing prayer. We held two separate days of fasting and prayer upon the subject As the result, not a single individual in my congregation, nor in any family of the same, died of that disease; one man excepted, who openly ridiculed the preaching and measures adopted in respect to the subject, and one little infant, of the real cause of whose death the physician was uncertain. The facts convinced us that it is not "a vain thing to call upon God." The region of Northern Ohio, the portion of the State which lies immediately south of Lake Erie, is peculiarly subject to excessive rains on the one hand, and desolating droughts on the other. From the time when I became President of Oberlin College I preached much to the Church on the efficacy of prayer in all our temporal concernments, and especially in respect to the evils resulting from excessive rains and drought, and my teachings were most cordially received. Hence it was that, in times of need from the causes under consideration, special prayer was offered and days of fasting and prayer were held. When these fasts became known, we were made the subjects of open ridicule among the population a few miles distant all around us. In a few years, however, the tone of sentiment among all these people became totally changed. In all periods of drought especially, our people, when they went into the country, would be stopped by this same people, and asked with deep concern whether Christians in Oberlin were praying about the weather, and especially whether we had appointed a day of fasting and prayer in reference to the subject. This one thing we knew, and the people around us knew, that no relation of antecedence and consequence seemed more fixed than that between the ascent of "effectual and fervent prayer" and the descent of the blessing prayed for. One year the drought was so fearful, that but few of the farmers cut any hay at all, and all the late crops failed. The churches of all denominations in two towns lying side by side in Portage County, some sixty miles from Oberlin, came together "with one accord in one place," and spent a day in fasting and fervent prayer to the God of heaven that He would give them rain. Immediately after a thick cloud overshadowed those towns, and poured down upon them all the rain that was needed. What was peculiar in this case was the fact, that the boundaries of that cloud corresponded everywhere with the borders of those two towns. There, and nowhere else in all that region, the rain fell. The people of all that county were witnesses to the strictest truth of the statement now made.

Christians, several years since, had gathered in Central Ohio for a camp-meeting of ten days' continuance, the special object of the meeting being the promotion of personal holiness among believers in Jesus. At the time when the meetings commenced, excessive rains were falling, and for some time had been falling, all over that part of the State. One half day was spent at the beginning of the meetings in united and earnest prayer that God would give them a clear sky under which they might worship Him. Immediately the sky became cloudless over their heads, and during the remainder of the ten days so continued there, and for miles all around; while outside of that circle, and that in every direction, the rains continued to fall as before. From ten to twenty thousand persons attended that camp-meeting, and all bear witness to the facts as I have stated them, and believe that God's Eternal Spirit has power, not only over the hearts of men, but equally so over the elements of nature around us, and that God is a Hearer of prayer in respect to all our cares and necessities alike.

I will, at the hazard of being regarded as "speaking as a fool," refer to an example of a personal nature. I had an appointment, during a season of afflictive drought, to preach in one of the churches of the city where I live one Sabbath morning. As we came out to our carriage, I said to my wife "There is not the remotest probability that it will rain today. I will, therefore, carry in the robe which we usually take with us," and did so. When I kneeled to pray before that congregation, I had no more expectation that it would rain that day outside than inside that house of God. When I began to pray about the drought, however, a power came upon me which rendered that prayer a wonder to myself and the congregation. The Monday's issue of our daily paper contained this statement: "The preacher in one of our churches prayed very fervently yesterday morning that it might rain, and his congregation were drenched with rain on going home at the close of that service." I can never tell when "the spirit of grace and of supplications," in that form, shall be poured upon me. Nor do I feel under obligation to have such experience whenever I pray. All that I can do, or feel bound to do, is to leave my heart open, and let the Spirit intercede in it as and when He chooses. This I do say, however, that when the Spirit does thus intercede, I always obtain the specific object for which I pray. Nor can any one pray under the intercessory power of the Spirit without the hearer, as well as himself, marking the peculiarity of the prayer. Hence it is that, for many years past, my students, in times of drought, for example, have been accustomed to say, "We shall have rain now. Did you mark our President's prayer?" Nor were they ever disappointed. The facts that I have stated above accord fully with the unvarying experience of believers in all ages -- believers who have credited God's testimony, and have availed themselves of their revealed privileges at the throne of grace. God is "the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him," and has never said to the seed of Jacob, "Seek ye my face in vain," or taught or required us to pray for what He is not ready to give. It is a fearful thing to "cast off fear, and to restrain prayer before God." We had better not pray at all, however, than to make ourselves "mockers" by approaching the throne of grace with formal requests for blessings which we say in our hearts God will never confer. A pastor of one of the churches in the city of New York sent to his Sabbath-school, years ago, a tenderly beautiful little poem, containing an account of a visit he had just made to the residence of a poor widow of his church. As he rose in the morning, he felt strangely drawn to visit that lonely habitation. Our Father knows how to meet the wants of His children. On entering, he noticed a very young lad on his knees in prayer in a corner of the room, and heard him say with much fervency, ''Our Father which art in heaven, give us this day our daily bread." Rising from his knees, and bowing to the pastor, the child said, "Our mother told us that she had no food for us today, and did not know where to get it. I told her that I could get food for us all. I would ask our Father in heaven for it. I did not think that our Saviour Jesus Christ would have taught us to pray to our heavenly Father to 'give us, day by day, our daily bread,' unless He would give it, if we should ask Him for it. For this reason I told our mother that I would ask our Father to 'give us this day our daily bread,' and He would give it to us." The pastor left that house at once. He soon returned, however, with a bountiful supply for the wants of all that family. The last stanza of the poem reads thus:

"'I thought God heard me,' said the lad;

I answered with a nod.

I could not speak; but much I thought Of that child's faith in God."

I can say, without boasting, that I have sounded the depths of the philosophies of all ages, and I have never found in any or all of them a form of wisdom more deep or divine than was manifested by that child. This I also affirm, that that philosopher has been "spoiled by philosophy" whose heart and mind science has not imbued with the identical form of faith in God which dwelt in that child's breast.

Intercessory Functions and Agency of the Spirit in the wide Realm of the Kingdom of Grace.

All evangelical Christians believe that, while the Holy Spirit moves upon our hearts to pray for spiritual blessings in all their forms, He also employs His agency to secure for us the blessings for which we pray. The Spirit, for example, induces in us "the spirit of grace and of supplication" for the salvation of sinners. While He thus intercedes in us for this end, He moves upon the hearts of the persons prayed for, convincing them of sin, and leading them to Christ.

I will give a single example in illustration of the double functions of the Spirit now under consideration. Rev. D. Nash was, prior to the time when he received "the baptism of the Holy Ghost," one of the dullest preachers that ever ascended a pulpit in the United States. Brother Finney once said of him in a public discourse, that that man always, prior to the event referred to, "prayed with his eyes open, and preached with them shut." After his "enduement of power from on high," he became one of the mightiest men in prayer that the world ever knew, and had an almost resistless power in the utterance of divine truth. Wherever he went, "the hearts of the people were moved" by his prayers and preaching "as the trees of the forest are moved by the wind." At length he was found, upon his knees in his closet, dead before the Lord. He was accustomed, from time to time, to pray with the map of the world before him, and the localities of the various missionary stations marked down on the map. Each station in succession he would make the special object of prayer for a single day or more. In his journal which he kept, his friends found, after his death, such records as the following : -- "I think I have had this day," the date being given, "a spirit of prayer for mission," the name of the mission being also designated. At a subsequent date, a similar record was found in record to another mission, and so on through all the stations. On turning to the pages of the Missionary Herald, the organ of the American Board of Commission of Foreign Missions, it was found that revivals of religion did occur in all those missions revivals occurring in the identical order, and commencing at the very date, of the various records above referred to.

Reader, if at a throne of grace you have not princely "power with God and with men," and if you have not wisdom and utterance to speak for Christ to "edification, exhortation, and comfort," it must be that unbelief has, in your mind, limited the sphere of availing prayer to a very narrow circle, or because you have not "received the Holy Ghost since you believed." Had the Spirit been thus given to you, He would be in you as an interceding presence, drawing out your heart in "effectual fervent prayer" for things which accord with the divine will, and God's Word would be in you "as burning fire shut up in your bones." On this subject I need not enlarge, but will close this chapter with some brief reflections.

General Reflections.

1. We can now understand the power which we have in prayer when we are "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." The Spirit, who understands perfectly all our need, on the one hand, and the good-will of God on the other, will not fail to "make intercession for us," that is, to draw out our

hearts in prayer for every blessing requisite to our perfect fulness of joy, or every form of good, temporal and spiritual, which God wills that we should receive and enjoy. All our petitions will come before One whose paternal heart yearns to meet every want of our mortal and immortal natures, and who has bound Himself; by absolute promise, to suffer "no evil to befall us," and to "withhold no good thing from us," when we thus pray to Him. All our petitions, also, will be presented in the name of Christ, who has absolutely assured us that "whatsoever we shall ask the Father in His name, He will give it us." The Father, therefore, cannot deny our requests without dishonouring His only Son. Finally, in all our petitions, God will hear the voice of His own Spirit "making intercessions for us with groanings which cannot be uttered," and whom He has commissioned to energise with almighty power in the world of nature and the world of grace, to insure for us "the petitions which we desire of Him." "Praying always with all prayer in the Spirit," "nothing will be impossible unto us." These, reader, are the sort of persons we all ought to be. Shall unbelief veil your heart from the face of God, and shut you out from the promise, "Thou shalt call upon me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and wonderful things that thou knowest not of"?

2. We may also clearly understand why it is that God makes the bestowment of His most precious gifts, temporal and spiritual, conditional upon our prayers for the same. How else, I may inquire, could He be so distinctly and impressively present to our hearts, and known to us as our omnipresent, all-loving, and all-sympathising Father and watchful Guardian of all our interests, the small and the great alike? We call upon Him, and He answers us "in all that we call upon Him for," and that both in respect to ourselves and others, and both in respect to temporal and spiritual interests, concerns, and relations alike, and in every case in which we "cast our cares upon Him," we receive some special and recognisable token of His paternal sympathy and regard. It then becomes omnipresently real to us that God is "our everlasting dwelling-place," and at all times, and under all circumstances, we are the direct objects of His love, sympathy, and care; that "in all our afflictions He is afflicted," while "the angel of His presence saves us;" and that whatever evil "touches us touches the apple of His eye." The main good which we receive through prayer does not consist chiefly in the specific blessings which we obtain, but in the assurance which each answer brings to our hearts that "God is our Father, and we are His sons and daughters." The former may be but a temporary good, of comparatively little value; the latter brings to us an infinite and eternal good, a blessedness as enduring as the eternal years of God, and as blissful as His everlasting smile. It is thus that, while at "the throne of grace," we "obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need," and God thus "grants us all things richly to enjoy," all things temporal and spiritual in connection with the specific gifts obtained -- "Heaven comes down our souls to greet, And glory crowns the mercy-seat"

We never can know God as our "everlasting light" until He shall be omnipresent to our hearts as a Hearer and Answerer of prayer, "the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" in respect to all our interests, concerns, and relations alike, "we casting ALL our cares upon Him," and that for the revealed reason, "that He careth for us."

3. We notice, finally, the important error of those who limit the operations and power of the Spirit to the revealed truth of God. As our Instructor and Teacher, it is, of course, the revealed office of the Spirit to "lead us into all truth ;" and this function is an infinitely important one. It is nowhere revealed, however, that this is His exclusive function, but it is distinctly revealed that this is not the case. The same Spirit under whose power Christ, on going out of the wilderness, "came into

Galilee," worked also in Christ "in raising Him from the dead." By the same Spirit which "fell upon the disciples at the beginning," God is to "quicken our mortal bodies." The same Spirit which moved Elias to "pray fervently that it might not rain," closed the windows of heaven, so that "it rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months." The same Spirit which moved him to pray again "that it might rain," caused "the heavens to give rain," and "the earth to bring forth her increase." The same Spirit which moved the Church to "pray day and night for Peter in prison," caused the chains to fall from his limbs, put his keepers to sleep, opened the prison doors, and "the iron gate which led into the city," while the angel of God led the apostle forth in safety.

While the Spirit is in us as the light of God, "leading us into all truth," He may act directly upon other departments of our natures besides our intelligence, and, by acting thus, may change our propensities, and correct evil tendencies within us. While He rests upon us as a baptism of power, He may intercede within for things which accord with the will of God, and may then energise with Omnipotent energy in the world of mind and matter around us, to bring to us from God answers of peace "in all that we call upon Him for." Let us not in any direction "limit the Holy One," but, in reference to all our revealed privileges, "be strong in the faith, giving glory unto God."

02.B12. Crucifixion And Sanctification

Chapter 27 CRUCIFIXION AND SANCTIFICATION OF THE PROPENSITIES The forms of expression by which the provisions and promises of the new covenant, of which Christ is our Mediator, are set before us are quite various and peculiar, and require special consideration on the part of all who would understand the secrets of the hidden life. In Jeremiah 31:31-33, the provisions and promises of this covenant are set forth in the following language: -- "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." In Ezekiel 36:25-27, these same provisions and promises are expressed in the following words: -- 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shalt be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

Under the old dispensation, there was a promise to believers quite analogous to those above presented (Deuteronomy 30:6) -- "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." The conditions on which God will do all these things for us are stated with perfect definiteness in the Scriptures. In Ezekiel 36:37, these conditions are thus expressed: "Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." Again we read, "Then shall ye seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Under the old dispensation, the condition of the promise, as then presented, is thus expressed. The people were to "return unto the Lord, and obey His voice, with all their heart and with all their soul."

Near the close of his life, Moses complains of the people, and charges it upon them as a great crime on their part, that God "had not yet given them an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto that day." In other words, they had not only neglected present obedience, but had not sought of God a "heart to perceive, eyes to see, and ears to hear;" in other words, they had neglected to seek from God circumcised hearts, that they might continuously "love the Lord their God, with all their heart and with all their soul." What does God complain of in respect to His Church to-day, and charge upon her as the sin which is the main cause of all her weaknesses, lapses, and backslidings? Is it not this, that she is living in content outside of the provisions and promises of the new covenant, the covenant which, according to the express teachings of the prophet Joel, and, I may add, of all the prophets, includes "the promise of the Spirit"?

Why is it, reader, if such is your state, that God has not "circumcised your heart to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul"? Why has He not "put His law in your inward

parts, and written it in your heart"? Why has He not "sprinkled clean water upon you," and rendered you "clean"? Why has He not "cleansed you from all your filthiness, and from all your idols"? Why has He not "taken the stony heart out of your flesh, and given you a heart of flesh," and "caused you to walk in His statutes," and to "keep His judgments, and do them"? Why has He not "sanctified and cleansed you," so that when your iniquities shall be searched for, there shall be none, and your sins, and they shall not be found"? Why has not God "put His Spirit within you," "endued you with power from on high," and thus "filled you with all the fulness of God"? But one answer can be given to these questions, provided you have not yet thus attained. The Lord your God has not "for this been inquired of by you to do it for you;" you have riot "hearkened unto the voice of the Lord your God," obeyed His will, believed His Word, "laid hold of His covenant," and "searched for Him with all your heart and with all your soul." This is your sin, on account of which you "walk in darkness and have no light," groan in "bondage under the law of sin and death," and are shut out from "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." If now you will believe God’s word, trust His grace, "lay hold of His covenant," "inquire of Him to do these things for you," and "search for Him with all your heart and with all your soul," "He will be found of you," and you will find all His "exceeding great and precious promises" fulfilled in your experience, and He will do exceeding abundantly for you above all that you ask or think." "But if you will not believe, you will not be established." The Nature of the Blessings Proffered to our Faith in this

New Covenant.

It is perfectly evident that two forms of genuine Christian experience are presented to our consideration in the subject before us; that the element of supreme obedience, hearkening to the voice of God, obeying His will, and seeking Him "with all the heart, and with all the soul," characterise each state alike, and that the one is conditional and preparatory to the other. When we "return unto the Lord, and obey His voice with all our heart and with all our soul," we are in one state. When the Lord our God has circumcised our hearts to love the Lord "with all our heart and with all our soul," we must be in another and different state, or the promise is without meaning. We are surely in one state and relation to God when we are "searching for Him with all our hearts," and in another and different state and relation to Him when we have "found Him," He coming to us, and "dwelling in us, and walking in us," as our God, and we having fellowship with Him as "His sons and daughters." When we are "inquiring of God" to do for us what is promised in the new covenant, we are in one state. We are certainly in quite another and different state when God, in fulfilment of the provisions and promises of that covenant, has "put His law in our inward parts, and has written it in our hearts," has "cleansed us from all our filthiness and all our idols," has "taken away the stony heart out of our flesh and given us an heart of flesh," and has "put His Spirit within us" that is, "baptized us with the Holy Ghost." No candid mind will question the truth of the above statements. But what are the provisions and promises of this new covenant? As far as they include "the promise of the Spirit" the most essential element of the covenant -- on this part of the subject I shall not now speak, having said already all that is needful here. What, then, do the words, "take the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you an heart of flesh," mean? What can they mean but a fundamental change and a renewal of our propensities? We are "by nature children of wrath," "prone to evil as the sparks are to fly upward." When God does for us what is provided for and promised to us in the new covenant, we have "a new heart" and "a new spirit," "a divine nature, which impels us to love and obedience, just as our old nature impelled us to sin. As preparatory to

a clear understanding of this subject, let us consider the following statements of the apostle. "Now, the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Behind all these forms of sin, "works of the flesh," lie certain propensities, dispositions, and tempers, which, when touched by corresponding temptations, set on fire burning and "warring lusts" and evil passions, and these induce the sins and crimes above designated. Suppose, now, that these old propensities, dispositions, and tempers are taken away, and, in this state, new ones of an opposite nature are given; in other words, that "the heart of stone is taken out of our flesh," and in its stead there is "given us heart of flesh." Under our renovated propensities, and new dispositions, tendencies, and tempers, or "divine nature," it becomes just as easy and natural for us to bear "the fruits of the Spirit," as it was, under our old ones, to work "the works of the flesh." Here, then, we perceive clearly what is pr~ vided for, and promised to, our faith in the new covenant, what Christ, as the Mediator of that covenant, promises to do for us when He is "inquired of by us to do it for us," and what He will commission the Spirit to work in us when He shall "baptize us with the Holy Ghost" With the above exposition accords all the teachings of the New Testament upon this subject. The "exceeding great and precious promises" are given us for the revealed purpose that "by these" -- that is, by embracing these promises by faith -- we "might be partakers of the DIVINE NATURE, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." "By nature" -- that is, under the influence of our old nature, or propensities, dispositions, and tempers,"we are "children of wrath," and "bring forth fruit unto death." Under the dispositions, tempers, and tendencies of our new or "divine nature," we are just as naturally "children of God," and "have our fruit unto holiness," while "the end is everlasting life." Why are we called upon to "reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord"? Because "our old man," our old propensities, dispositions, and tempers, is crucified, "put to death" with Him, that the "body of sin," our old and evil nature, "might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Our old nature, or propensities, dispositions, and tempers, the apostle calls "the body of this death," and thanks God, as we all should, that, "through Jesus Christ our Lord," we are delivered from this "body of sin and death"

One special design of the apostle in the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters of Romans is to elucidate this great truth. While the old nature remains, fight against its tendencies and promptings as we will, and form what good resolutions we may, "the good which we would we shall not do, but the evil which we would not, that shall we do." The reason, as the apostle affirms, is obvious. "The law in our members will war against the law of our mind, and bring us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members." From "this law of sin and death" Christ sets us free, putting within us, in place of that law, "the law of the Spirit of life." The same doctrine the apostle obviously teaches in the following passage: -- "So, then, they that are in the flesh (under the dominion of their natural propensities) cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh (under its control), but in the Spirit (under His control), if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. But if Christ be in you, the body," that is, the body of sin of which the apostle has been exclusively speaking thus far, "is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit," that is, the new nature or spirit which Christ gives, "is life," lives and reigns within us, "because of righteousness."

Now mark the inference which the apostle draws from his previous reasonings "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh." In other words, because that, through the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, "the body of sin," our old and evil propensities," may he destroyed," and "the old man may be crucified with Him," and we may, "through the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," be "made free from the law of sin and death," we should indeed cease to "live after the flesh," should be "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit;" and should "reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Just such teaching runs through all Paul's epistles, and, I may add, as the reader will perceive in the light of these suggestions, through the whole New Testament. Paul, for example, says of himself, "I am Crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Again he says, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." To Christians he says, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Such language implies more than this, that his old propensities, "the body of sin," "the old man," is yet living and warring in the soul, but, by the grace of Christ, are held in subjection. Mere subjection is not death. What the apostle undeniably intended to teach is this: that his propensities, dispositions, and temper had been so renovated that the world, with its affections and lusts, had no more power over him than they have over the dead. Christ, on the other hand, lived in him, and occupied all his affections, and held undisputed control over all his activities. Some important suggestions and reflections here present themselves.

Forms of Christian Experience before and after we have entered into the Privileges of the New Covenant.

We can now understand clearly the difference in the conditions and relations of the believer before and after the promises of the new covenant have been fulfilled in his experience. An individual, we will suppose, has, through the Spirit, been convicted of sin, and has exercised genuine "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." As far as his voluntary activities are concerned, he is now in a state of supreme obedience to the will of God. His old propensities, dispositions, temper, and tendencies, however, remain as they were, and remain to war against this new-born purpose of obedience. If the convert is left here, just where the mass of them are left under the teachings they commonly receive -- if the convert is left here, what, I ask, will be his future experience? Nothing, I answer, but the loss of his first love, the dying out of his primal joys, and sad falls and lapses, with periods of rejoicing and victories few and far between. It is infinite presumption to expect better results under such circumstances. And this is just what we do witness in the general experience of the Church. Open and gross immoralities excepted, the convert carries with him into the Christian life the same propensities, dispositions, and temper that he had before his conversion, and these, when strongly excited, overcome him as they did before. How absurd for a believer, in such circumstances, to "reckon himself dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Suppose, on the other hand, that the convert, instead of being left in this perilous position, is fully taught the provisions and promises of the new covenant, and is led to apprehend Christ as the Mediator of that covenant. The convert now, in the exercise of a strong faith, "inquires of Christ to do this for him." What does Christ do? First of all, "He baptizes the convert with the Holy Ghost,"

and "endues him with power from on high" for the exigencies of his new life. The Spirit, in the fulfilment of His mission, enters upon the work of universal renovation. He accordingly "takes the heart of stone out of the convert's flesh, and gives him an heart of flesh," -- "gives him a new heart and a new spirit," "writes the law upon his inward parts, and puts it in his heart," "circumcises his heart to love the Lord his God with all his heart and with all his soul," renders him a "partaker of the divine nature," "takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him," "reveals Christ in him," so that "he beholds with open face the glory of the Lord, and is changed into the same image from glory to glory," and is "filled with all the fulness of God," consummates a vital union between him and Christ, so that Christ is in him, as the Father is in the Son, and thus "blesses him with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," and "abundantly furnishes him for every good work." This all-cleansing, all-renovating, and all-vitalising process the apostle calls "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Our salvation is commenced with "the washing of regeneration," and is consummated by "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Into what new relations does the convert enter when he has passed through the first state, and entered into all the light, and privileges, and enduements of power of the second? He is now "delivered from his enemies," and may "serve God without fear, in righteousness and holiness before Him, all the days of his life." With "the old man crucified," imbued with a new and "divine nature," "filled with the Holy Ghost," and with "the power of Christ resting upon him," he may, with all assurance, "reckon himself dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ His Lord." When Christ, as "'the Mediator of the new covenant," comes to believers, He says to the old propensities, dispositions, tempers, and lusts, the old man which once held them in bondage, "Let my people go, that they may serve me." When that "old man," with his hosts of affections and lusts, pursues after God's people to bring them back into their former bondage, that old tyrant, with all his armed host, is overwhelmed and lost in the Red Sea of Christ's blood. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." What a melancholy reflection it is that most believers advance no further in the Christian life than "the washing of regeneration," are ignorant of Christ as the Mediator of the new covenant, and, consequently, have no experience of "the renewing of the Holy Ghost"!

Fundamental Misapprehension of the Christian Warfare. The common idea of the Christian warfare seems to be this -- In regeneration, the Christian is brought into a state of voluntary obedience to the will of God, and his sincere purpose is to obey the divine will in all things. His old propensities, dispositions, and tendencies remain, and rise in rebellion against this new law of the mind -- this purpose of obedience. The Christian warfare consists in fighting these rebel forces, and holding them in subjection. We shall search in vain for any such idea of this warfare in the New Testament or the Old either. "We wrestle," says the apostle, "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Every believer is "called to be a soldier in the army of the Lord." As the great Captain of our salvation, Christ has organised and disciplined His army to accomplish the purposes for which He. was sent into the world, namely, to "make an end of sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." Believers are in the world as Christ was in the world. "As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world." "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

Christ was not sent into the world to fight rebel propensities, dispositions, and tendencies in Himself, but to make war upon the sin and evil that is in the world, and thus to bring the world back to God. The proper warfare of every believer is identical with that of Christ. Hence, "the weapons of our warfare," the apostle tells us, "are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Again, the apostle says, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." That we may, as soldiers of the cross, be perfectly free to serve Christ, and fight His battles against sin and the evils that are in the world, He Himself takes charge of our inward foes, putting them to death, and not suffering them to weaken our energies in His service. In warring upon the powers of sin, we, of course, meet with resistance, and are subject to assaults from our great adversary. Hence our furnishment with divine weapons and armour for defensive as well as offensive purposes. All this furnishment, as presented in the New Testament, has reference to enemies without, and not within the soul. In "fighting against sin," ancient saints "resisted unto blood." Though we may not be, as they were, called upon thus to resist, our warfare is identical with theirs; and in this warfare we, as well as they, are called upon to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ." The dogma that the Christian warfare is with foes within, and not with the enemies of God and man without the soul, utterly misleads the mind in respect to the fundamental end and aim of our sacred calling. Christ does not intend that those who serve Him and fight His battles against the kingdom of darkness shall have two enemies to fight at the same time, and the strongest in the citadel of their own souls. In His people, He designs that His reign shall be absolute. Then, indeed, will the sacramental host be "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." With the views now under consideration accord the experience of believers in all generations -- believers who know Christ and trust in Him as the Mediator of the new covenant. As a witness for Christ, I would say that, were there a perfect oblivion of the facts of my life prior to the time when I thus knew my Saviour, I should not, from present experiences, ever suspect that these old dispositions, which once tyrannised over me, had ever existed. Those who have known me most intimately for the last twenty or thirty years, and had not known my former life, often, as stated before, say to me, "We could be as quiet under injuries and provocations, and as peaceful and contented under afflictive providences as your are, if we only had your temperament." My reply to all such is: I once had a more fiery temper, and a more easily disquieted and restless spirit than you now have; and you can be as I am if you will inquire of Christ as I did. Of all that I have written about the new covenant, I can truly say, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you. that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full,"

Entire Sanctification.

We may now attain to a somewhat distinct understanding of the following words of the apostle: -- "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The original word rendered wholly, I would observe, is one of the strongest words known in the Greek or any other language. It is made up of two words, olos, or all, and telos, everywhere in the New Testament translated perfect. The word made up of pantos, all, and telos, and rendered uttermost in the

passage "He is able to save unto the uttermost," is a word of the same strength of meaning. In the passage above cited, the words "sanctify you wholly," from their original meaning, namely, sanctify you entirely in all respects, and in the connection in which they here stand, can mean nothing less than this -- a total renovation and purification of all our propensities, dispositions, temperaments, and activities, mental, moral, spiritual, and physical. The words, "I pray God, your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless," also impart to the phrase "sanctify you wholly" this full breadth of meaning. When we are in this state, we then become partakers of just what is provided for and promised to us in the new covenant. Sanctification, in this form, is also absolutely promised to our faith in connection with the prayer of the apostle under consideration. "Faithful (worthy to be trusted) is He that calleth you, who also will do it." When thus Sanctified, we are not Free from Temptation.

How often do we hear it said, that if we were once thus sanctified we should never more be tempted! Christ, during His whole life, was thus sanctified; "yet He was tempted in all points like as we are." Our first parents, prior to the fall, were totally free from all evil propensities, dispositions, and temperaments, yet they were tempted and fell. Angels, from their creation, had a divine nature; yet, through temptation, they failed to "keep their first estate." Temptation is incidental to finite natures, it may be, in all conditions of existence. Suppose all our propensities, dispositions, and temperaments are, as they may be, restored to a perfectly normal state. We shall still be subject to tribulation from hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness, disease, the sundering of domestic ties, and from man’s inhumanity to man. In "fighting against sin," we shall meet with resistance, and shall need "the shield of faith to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord." Christ was tempted, and so shall we be tempted. With our old nature crucified, and a divine nature given in the stead of the former, with "Christ formed within us the hope of glory," and the power of His Spirit resting upon us, we shall be in very different relations to temptations and "trials of faith" from what we once were. Here we were taken captive when assaulted with temptation; now, in the same circumstances, we are "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." In what Sense may all Believers accept Christ as their Present Sanctification.

I hear much said, and much is written, about receiving Christ as our present sanctification -- much which, as it appears to me, should be received with great caution and self-reflection. When we look to Christ to save us from actual sin, of course we should expect Him to do it now. But when we inquire of Him, as the Mediator of the new covenant, to do for us all that is promised in that covenant, the case is different. Heart-searching may precede the final cleansing, searching for God with all the heart must precede the finding of Him, and waiting and praying may precede, we cannot tell how long, the baptism of power. Here "the vision may tarry;" and if it tarries, we must "wait for it," and watch and pray for its coming with "full assurance of faith," "full assurance of hope," and "full assurance of understanding." The disciples had to tarry for "the promise of the Spirit," and so may we.

Christ, I frequently hear it said, is in us. When we admit the fact that He is thus present in our hearts, then "we enter, at once, into the rest of faith," and become possessed with fulness of joy. I never make such statements myself, and I always listen with regret and apprehension when I hear them made by others. For me to admit that Christ is thus present, and that I am "complete in Him," and to trust Him accordingly, is one thing, and is an essential condition of my entering into rest.

For Christ to "manifest Himself to me," and, with the Father, to "come to me, and make His abode with me," is quite another. Faith on our part does not of itself give us rest. The rest of faith is what Christ gives "after we have believed." "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." I believe, for example, that Christ is present "in my mouth and in my heart," and I trust Him to "supply all my needs." If, now, the Spirit should not "take of the things of Christ, and show them unto me," if He should not "enlighten the eyes of my understanding, that I might know the things which are freely given us of the Lord," I should not "enter into rest," nor would "my joy be full." We believe Christ's word, trust His grace, dedicate our whole selves to Him, and yield our wills to His. This is our part of the covenant. Christ now "prays the Father for us," and He gives us "the Comforter," the Holy Ghost "to abide with us for ever." The Spirt "reveals Christ in us," enables us to "behold with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord," and brings us into "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." We thus "enter into rest," "the rest of faith," and become possessed with "fulness of joy," while, with ineffable sweetness, our hearts sing -- "Safe in the arms of Jesus, Safe on His gentle breast"

"He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this He spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." "The Holy Ghost is now given," and you can have this blessed experience, because that when you shall "inquire of Christ to do it for you," He will "baptize you with the Holy Ghost," and do for you all that is promised in the new covenant.

Chapter 52

02.B13. Parental Discipline Of The Sons Of God

Chapter 28 PARENTAL DISCIPLINE OF THE SONS OF GOD. The Terms Defined. The revealed plan of God in regard to His children, while He continues them in the world, is to develop and perfect in them every form of virtue possible to their nature. Every form of such virtue has its specific conditions of growth and development, and we must be subjected to these conditions, or we cannot become possessed of the corresponding virtues. Subjecting believers to these conditions, for the purpose designated, is called in the New Testament the paidela, or child-discipline of the sons of God. To this subject the apostle refers with most impressive interest in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews. He there refers particularly, not to afflictions which come upon us in consequence of our own sins, but to the contradictions and tribulations to which we are subject in consequence of our testimony against the sins of others. He calls upon believers to "consider Him who endured such contradictions of sinners" against Himself, lest they, in consequence of meeting with similar trials, "should be wearied and faint in their mind." They, as Christ had done before them, "had not resisted unto blood, striving against sin." The apostle then goes on to specify God’s plan and purpose in permitting His people to be subject to such tribulations, and to afflictions in all their forms, whether they descend upon us in the arrangements of Providence or as reproofs for sin. All in common come upon us for one and the same purpose, child-discipline -- the discipline of virtue. Such discipline, therefore, should be patiently endured. Christ "learned obedience from the things which He suffered." So should we. Our parents subjected us to child-discipline, and we gave them reverence. "Shall we not rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us" (subjected us to child-discipline, the literal rendering of the original) "after their own pleasure: but He" (subjects us to such discipline) "for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." Such is the light in which all afflictive providences, from whatever immediate causes they may descend upon us, should by us be regarded -- that is, as forms of necessary child-discipline, forms of discipline in virtue, which, when patiently endured, will not fail to "yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness" -- "peace, quietness, and assurance for ever." All who do not thus regard and improve such providences, the apostle assures us, "are bastards, and not sons." In all our afflictions we may have, and should have, this life-imparting assurance -- namely, we are the sons of God, and He is dealing with us, even when He seems severe, "as sons." With what infinite reason does the apostle bring home the exhortation to our hearts, "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees"!

What it is to Endure Chastening or Child-Discipline

"If ye endure chastening" (child~discipline), says the apostle, "God dealeth with you as with sons." "My brethren," says another apostle, "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trial," or discipline, "of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Again he says, "Blessed is he that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience

(endurance) of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord" -- that is, the blissful consummation to which He conducts those who endure -- "how that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." All the sacred writers speak thus of God's discipline of His sons and daughters, the words, "temptation," "trials of faith," "fiery trials which are to try you," and "chastening," or child-discipline, being frequently employed by them as synonymous terms. In reflecting upon this subject, we should ever bear this in mind, that to be merely subject to afflictive providences, and to endure "chastening," "temptation," "trials of faith," or child-discipline, are very different things. To endure is to maintain our fidelity while under discipline -- that is, during the time while the pressure of the trial is upon us. He that blesses at the time when he is reviled, remains meek, quiet, and unangered at the time when heavy provocations are heaped upon him -- "whose spirit lies down and is still," lies down in quiet submission in the centre of the sweet will of God at the very time when great afflictions press upon him -- that "chooses rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," "enduring as seeing Him who is invisible,"- and replies to every temptation to sin, "I cannot do this great wickedness, and sin against God," -- these, and these only, "endure chastening," "endure temptation," and. "endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ."

Remember this, reader, that if, at the moment when you are under the trial, your faith fails you, you may, by subsequent repentance, escape condemnation, but that you suffered an irreparable loss by missing the golden opportunity then presented to become disciplined in virtues, which would have insured to you an "eternal weight of glory," over and above what you will now receive. At the time when tribulations encircle us, then and there is the time and opportunity for you to "wash your garments, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Special and Peculiar Characteristics of the Child-Discipline of the Son of God.

"No chastening" -- that is, no form of child-discipline, says the apostle, "for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous." "Wherein," says the apostle Peter, "ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." God is able, we should bear in mind, to keep His people, at all times and under all circumstances, so full of joy and gladness that no providence would "seem to be grievous," and they should never be "in heaviness" at all. It is only "if need be" -- that is, if the discipline of their virtues require it -- that they should ever be possessed of less than perfect fulness of joy. When the discipline of virtue requires, on the other hand, then the Spirit will, for the time, shed no more of the love of God abroad in our hearts, grant us no more of present peace and joy, and suffer to descend upon us just the degree of heaviness, and no more than is requisite, to develop and perfect that virtue in its divinest form. The grace of patience, for example, can be developed and perfected but under the pressure of tribulation. That "patience may have her perfect work," we must have grace to endure, but not the fulness of joy, which would cause the affliction to seem, for the time being, not "grievous," but "joyous."

"Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord." God designed that this, His servant, should not only be possessed, in a preeminent degree, of this divine virtue, but that he should be to the world, in all coming time, an example of patience, as Abraham is of faith. As a means to this end, Job was, first of all, overwhelmed with unexampled calamities, and this under circumstances which for a time shut him out from the sympathy of all his friends, even the mother

of his children being estranged from him. Under these circumstances the man of God was sustained by the most distinct inward assurance of the genuineness of his piety, of the divine approval, and that, after he should be tried, God would lead him out of the furnace, and more than restore to him all that he had lost. To render the discipline perfect for the work intended, however, God withheld, for the time being, the light of His countenance from the afflicted one, and "left him to tread the wine-press alone." This was requisite that "patience might have her perfect work," and that the sufferer might become "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Suffering having fully accomplished its sacred mission, God more than restored "the light of His countenance" as formerly enjoyed, became to the sufferer, as He never could have been before, "an everlasting light," placed him on high as among "the foremost of the sons of light," and all the world, and heaven too, now regard him as one of the happiest of men.

I will now allude, in further illustration of the great truth before us, to an important fact of my own experience. During the dark period of my life, the period in which I dwelt amid the ruins of the great university which I began to found, I was for the time about as completely isolated from former friendships and associations as was Job when God "chose him in the furnace of affliction." With one or two exceptions, "no man stood with me," but "all forsook me." At the same time, "the light of the divine countenance" was so far withdrawn that all my afflictions pressed with great "heaviness" upon all my susceptibilities, providential disappointments defeating all my plans and efforts for relief. Such were the temptations, trials of faith, and chastening to which I was subject. Such, on the other hand, were the divine helps and strengthening by which I was sustained during all that period. God gave me the most absolute inward assurance that my interior and outward life was fully approved by Him, that these sufferings were for an end of infinite moment to me, and were preparatory to greater fruitfulness in the kingdom of grace than was otherwise possible; that the immutable condition of ensuring this personal good and divine fruitfulness was that "the corn of wheat" must at that very time "fall into the ground and die;" in other words, that until God, in His own time and way, should send deliverance, I must remain in absolute submission and content in the centre of the divine will, entertaining no desire or choice that the pressure of affliction should be less severe or of shorter continuance than God should choose. At times Christ directly manifested Himself to me, not in a manner to fill me with rapture, but to assure me of His deep and abiding sympathy, of the divine results which were being worked out in my interior life, of the fruits that were to follow, and of "the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory", which lay in reserve in the great hereafter. At other times, the Spirit would open upon my mind a vision of Christ Himself in Gethsemane, in the judgment-hall, or on the cross, and everywhere so meekly submissive to His Father’s will, and so patiently enduring when His "soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Tribulation, affliction, and sorrow, even unto "great heaviness," now became sacred in the mind’s regard; and one desire and choice possessed the whole being -- namely, to have nothing occur but as God willed. I knew well what Paul meant when he said, "Unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." When my will had come into this sweet and absolute acquiescence in the divine will, and was rooted and grounded in that acquiescence; and when all the sensibilities had also become disciplined to similar subjection, so that there was nothing in the heart or soul to dispute the absolute reign of Christ over the whole being, then the paideia, "patience, having had her perfect work," had consummated its mission, and "heaviness" and "great tribulation" could do no more for the discipline of virtue. Deliverance accordingly came; and when "the Sun of Righteousness" passed

out from that temporary eclipse, and I stood in the broad sunlight of the face of God, I well knew why I had been thus disciplined in the school of sorrow -- namely, that I might become possessed of the great and enduring joys, "the everlasting consolations and good hope through grace," amid which I am now permitted to have my present dwelling-place. Do you ask me, reader, why it is that I affirm, with such absolute assurance, that "we are complete in Him," that "we can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth us," and that "we may learn in whatever state we are, therewith to be content"? I should refer, as one of the main reasons, to the paideia of which I have been speaking, and to other like seasons in which God put me into "the furnace of affliction," subjected me to great "heaviness," but put strength into me to endure, and disciplined my whole being into sweet acquiescence in His holy will, and thus did for me there in that sacred place. Do you ask me why it is that what the prophet meant in the following wondrous words are so real in my experience? "The sun shall no more be thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; but the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." I should still, as one of the main reasons, refer you to the paideia, in which Christ taught me "obedience from the things which I suffered." The "endurance of temptation" not only disciplines the will to subjection to the will of God, but also capacitates the whole mental being for fellowships, intercommunings, and fruitions, for which nothing else can so fully prepare us. My object in writing these things, reader, is this -- that you "may know your God, understand His way, and find grace in His sight." When you put yourself under the will of God, and do it "with all your heart, and with all your soul," remember this, that you have His absolute word of promise that He "will instruct you, and teach you the way you should go, and guide you by His eye." Do not, therefore, mark out for yourself any particular and specific forms of experience through which you must be led. Let this be your only concern, to keep your hand in the hand of God, and your will in absolute subjection to His. While conscious of this relation to Him, do not be disturbed by any providences which may encircle you, or any "heavinesses which for a time, if need be," may be laid upon you. While you shall "keep the faith," "endure as seeing Him who is invisible;" and "shall cry, My Father, my Father," "not as I will, but as thou wilt," remember this, that God will deal with you but as His son or daughter, all of whose interests are as dear to Him as the apple of His eye. If His parental discipline may sometimes seem severe, bear this in mind, that it is all "for your profit, that you may be a partaker of His holiness." Thus "following on to know the Lord," "your peace," at length, "will be as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea," and your deepest sorrows will be found to be but birth-throes of joys and consolations as great as your mental being can receive, and as enduring as "the eternal years of God."

Chapter 53

02.B14. Everlasting Consolation, Or Our Highest Joys

Chapter 29 EVERLASTING CONSOLATION, OR OUR HIGHEST JOYS WELLING OUT OF OUR DEEPEST SORROWS. The apostle Paul puts up this wonderful prayer in behalf of his converts at Thessalonica: -- "Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolations and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work." One of the most wondrous and memorable characteristics of the hidden life is the fact that our greatest and most enduring joys well out of our deepest sorrows, and those who in heaven stand nearest the eternal throne, and behold with the deepest bliss the face of God, are "they who came out of great tribulation," "endured great fights of affliction," "learned obedience from the things which they suffered," and thus "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "Ye now, therefore," says our Saviour to His disciples, "have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." The joy which the disciples experienced after the Saviour appeared among them, "as they mourned and wept," was incomparably greater than it could have been but for the great sorrow by which their new-born joy had been preceded, and into which the former blended and was lost. The joy which succeeds, supersedes, and takes up into itself sorrow, is called "consolation;" and because the joy which thus supersedes sorrow in Christian experience is eternally enduring, it is called "everlasting consolation."

Let us see if we cannot attain to some adequate apprehension of this most important subject. Consolation, as I have intimated, is what, for the want of better terms, I would denominate a blended state of mind -- a state resulting from the blending of two other mutually genial states, sorrow on the one hand, and a genial form of joy on the other; the former sweetly blending into and losing itself in the latter, the new form of joy thus induced becoming a permanent well-spring of life in the mind.

I will give an illustrative fact which occurred in my own family. As I came down from my study and entered our parlour one day, I found our second child, a little daughter about three years of age, alone there, the mother, with the elder daughter, having gone out and left this one in the care of the kitchenmaid. I found this child, from some cause -- I never knew what -- in a state of mental agony such as I had never witnessed before. Her grief had reached a stage wholly past weeping, and which rendered her utterly unable to speak a single word. As she turned her face to me, there was the look of death in her eyes. Of course I was deeply alarmed. I did not attempt to allay her grief by words. Grief asks our sympathy, not words. I said to her at once, "My dear precious daughter, come to your father and sit here upon his knee, laying your head upon his bosom close to his heart." As she came to me, I took her tenderly up, placed her upon my knee, and pressed her head very gently to my heart. At every sigh I apprehended that the thread of life would break. I spoke not a word; but at each paroxysm I pressed her more closely to my heart, I soon perceived that those sighs became gradually less and less severe. At length they wholly ceased. A little while after, she looked up with a happy smile, and asked me if I recollected a certain event which had given her great pleasure. I entered at once into her new-born joy, enlarging very affectionately and

smilingly upon that pleasing event. In a short time we were sweetly conversing together there, the happiest child and the happiest father I ever knew. My manifested sympathy and love had gently drawn from the heart of that child that great sorrow, and had induced in its place a form of joy unlike, and greater than, any she had ever experienced before, and which never could have been generated but in circumstances like those above detailed. Nor did that joy ever pass away. From that moment onward I became to that child a new being. Whenever ir was possible, she would be with me, sitting by me in my study, and walking with me, and seeking every practicable opportunity to exchange words with me. Now and then she would fix her eyes upon me, as if she could not take them away. Some three or four years after the occurrence above stated, while she was sitting with her mother in our parlour in Oberlin, I being absent for the long vacation, she took her pencil and paper, and after studying and writing awhile, handed to her mother a beautiful little poem, a poem that would have honoured a young Tennyson. The measure was peculiar, each stanza being composed of three lines. The subject of the poem was the great void in her heart, the void occasioned by the absence of her father, and her intense desire for his return. When she was on a visit to our house, at the time when she was quite forty years of age, she being herself a parent then, I related to her the incident of her childhood given above, a fact which she had of course forgotten. Then she understood the cause of the mysterious bond which had so linked her being with mine, and rendered her father such a form of sunlight to her heart. Here we have the true idea of consolation, a peculiar and special kind of joy, which takes form in the soul only in seasons of special sorrow -- a form of sacred joy "that is born, like the rainbow, in tears," but which never, like the rainbow. passes away.

Now, one of the most distinguished and special peculiarities of the gospel. that which separates and peculiarises it from all other religions or any other forms of belief, is the fact that for every form of sorrow with which the heart can be smitten this gospel brings to the believing, trustful, and enduring spirit "everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace," changing such sorrows into forms of joy which are ineffably blissful and eternally enduring. Examine all other religions the earth has ever known, sound the depths of every system of philosophy which unbelief has ever developed, and you will fail utterly to find in any one of them, or in all of them together, a single ray or element of consolation, a single element of power to bring joy and gladness to a broken heart or a wounded spirit.

"I do wish," said a widowed daughter of a very wealthy citizen of the city of New York, as the family had returned one Sabbath from their place of worship, their minister being a celebrated preacher of the Broad Church, -- "I do wish that our pastor would say something to bring consolation to a bereaved heart such as I have." "Why," said a friend of ours who had accompanied the family to their place of worship that day, "the God your pastor preaches is a mere force, utterly void of all feeling or emotion of any kind, and is, therefore, wholly void, and incapable of any kind of sympathy with human joy or sorrow." The next time my friend visited that family, he found them worshipping in an Evangelical congregation, where an incarnate Saviour is preached, a Saviour who has been anointed by the Eternal Father to "bind up the broken-hearted." What absolutely evinces the gospel as, like the New Jerusalem, coming down to us from "God out of heaven," is this power to bring to every sin-blighted and sorrow-smitten heart such "everlasting consolations and good hope through grace."

All the world have read with admiration and wonder the beauteous scene which transpired at the house of Simon the leper, the scene in which Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointed both the head and feet of Jesus with precious ointment. Having been informed by our Saviour of His approaching death, she had purchased the ointment, and had "kept it against the day of His burying." Seeing Jesus sitting with her brother at the feast, her love and gratitude induced her to change her purpose, and to anoint that sacred body "beforehand to the burying." What so deeply moved the gratitude of that sister, and brought such "everlasting consolation" to her heart, was not the mere fact that her brother had been raised from the dead, but the melting scene which preceded that event. Let us read it. "Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying unto him, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how He loved him!" All heaven must have looked with silent, if not with tearful, wonder at that spectacle.

It was not the mere fact, I repeat, of the resurrection of that brother, but the ineffable compassion, sympathy, and love, manifested in connection with the bestowment of the gift that ever after made such eternal sunlight in the hearts of that brother and his two sisters. In the event, the sisters received a temporary good of great value. In the love revealed in the manner of the gift "everlasting consolations and good hope through grace" came to their hearts. As the perfections and glory of Christ shall unfold more and more, through eternal ages, before their mind, the fact represented in the words, "Jesus wept," will be a central light through which that glory shall be seen. So it will be with all the universe. In like manner, when the sanctified mind is smitten with any form or degree of sorrow whatever, let the Spirit unveil to that mind the face of Christ looking with ineffable love upon the face of that soul, and all its sorrow will sweetly blend into a form of joy and consolation eternally enduring. Just such power has Christ over all our sorrows.

Let us now turn our thoughts to another scene. "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni; which is to say Master."

I have often enquired with myself as to the tone and manner in which that name was then uttered, and have asked myself "How shall I utter it when I read the passage?" On some former occasion, perhaps at the time when He restored her to her right mind, or immediately after that event, He must have uttered her name in a tone and manner which thrilled through her whole being, and made the utterance one of the memorable facts of her existence. No wonder that when Jesus now pronounced that name with the same tone and manner as on that, to her, eternally memorable occasion, no wonder, I say, that she instantly exclaimed "Rabboni." She intuitively apprehended that no being but Christ could thus pronounce that name. As she heard that name thus

pronounced, how instantly did the deep midnight of her soul change into eternal sunlight! how instantly did her great sorrow blend and lose itself in "everlasting consolation and good hope through grace"! But for that great sorrow, Christ could not have become to her what He afterwards was, and ever will be to eternity. The new-born joy which then filled her whole being is in her yet, and there it will remain, deepening and expanding for ever and ever. The word "Mary," as Jesus then pronounced it, will ever cause her heart-strings to vibrate with a music that "will make melody in the ear of God."

Few people seem at all to understand the full meaning of the apostle John in the words, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." The last evening which He spent with them before He suffered, He thus spoke of the sorrow which then filled their hearts: -- "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." After their hearts were filled, and even burdened, with "joy unspeakable and full of glory" at the reappearing of Christ in their midst, John, calling to mind the words of our Saviour, the words above cited, says, "Then," that is, just as Christ said it should be, "WERE the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." Jesus said, "I will see you again,, and your heart shall rejoice," and so we found it. Jesus also said, "Your joy no man taketh from you," and "neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor peril, nor sword, nor death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature," hath been able, nor ever will be able, to take that joy out of their hearts. So it ever is. The joy which wells out of sorrow in the true believer’s heart can take on but one form, that of "everlasting consolation and good hope through grace."

I must refer to one additional illustration taken from Scripture -- the manifestation of Christ to John when the Saviour appeared in glory to the apostle at the opening of the vision of the Apocalypse. The following passage presents the fact to which I refer: -- "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the First and the Last: and I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for ever more, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." The beauty and impressiveness of the original is almost wholly darkened by the above translation. The object of our Saviour in the words addressed to John was to allay his dread, and impart to him such an assurance that he could calmly receive the message which Christ was to send to the Churches through His disciple. The words, "Fear not; I am the First and the Last," would have tended but to deepen and perfect the death-terror which Christ’s appearance had induced.

Literaly rendered, the passage reads thus:-- "Fear not; it is I, the First and the Last: and I am alive; and I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever more, Amen : and have the keys of hell and of death." The original words which I have translated "It is I," had been, in the exact form here repeated, twice uttered in the hearing of John, and that under circumstances of most memorable and tenderly impressive interest: first when our Saviour came "walking upon the water," during the night-tempest on the Sea of Galilee, and allayed their fears by saying, "It is I; be not afraid;" and secondly, when He first appeared in their midst after His resurrection, and again allayed their fears by saying to them, "Be not affrighted; handle me, and see that it is I myself." Now, when Christ so gently laid His right hand upon the apostle, who was almost dead with terror, and so tenderly

repeated those ever-memorable words in his ears, at the same time recalling those wonderful memories which had made such melody in the apostle's mind, how adapted all this was to revive his spirits, put strength into him, and to "assure his heart" in the presence of his glorified Redeemer! It is no wonder that, from that moment onward, all dread and terror of Christ departed for ever from the. heart of the apostle, and he became possessed with but one sentiment in view of every form of the coming of his Lord: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen." My object in presenting such facts is to assure the reader of this great truth, that when we are in Christ, He will turn all our sorrows into everlasting joy and gladness, gird us with immortal strength in all our weaknesses, impart to us in our darkest hours the everlasting light of God, and in all our necessities do for us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

I will now allude to a case which came to my knowledge since my present sojourn in this city. While in attendance at a meeting for the promotion of personal holiness, a lady, giving me her hand, inquired if I did not recollect her? My reply was, that I did recollect her countenance, but could not designate her name, or the circumstances in which we had met. "Do you not recollect that, when you were in London, some twenty-five years ago, a Mrs N., a lady friend of yours from America, introduced you to the family of a Mr M.?" "I well recollect that family," I replied. "I often spoke of it in my own country, and have inquired after it since my late arrival in London." "I am Mrs M. My husband is also present, and will rejoice to take you by the hand. You will recollect how great was my peace and joy in believing when you first saw us. I had been greatly blessed in reading your work on 'Christian Perfection.'" Mrs M., an influential member of one of the churches of the Establishment in this city, was among the happiest believers I ever met with. "Well," she continued, "the joy that then dwelt in my heart has never departed nor grown less, but has increased more and more. Do you remember our children?" "I recollect that you had children about you then, but that is all." "Well, our eldest, our only son, grew to be twenty-three years of age. Christ called for him then, and we gave him up. Our daughter, next in age, grew to twenty-five. Christ asked for her also, and we replied, 'As Thou wilt, Lord only give us more of Thyself.' We had one lamb left, 'a little one,' a daughter ten and a half years of age. Christ called for her too, and our reply was, 'The cup which our Father giveth us, shall we not drink it?' Thus 'we were written childless.' But it is all the same. Our light has never gone out or grown dim, but shineth more and more as the perfect day dawns on." This, I said in my heart, is the consolation. Surely "we can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us." With what unspeakable interest have I listened to the rich testimony for Christ which that husband and wife have given in conferences which I have attended! A poor slave, after he had been, for no reason for which slaves are usually beaten, scourged till he barely had the breath of life in him, crept away to his lonely hut, and lay groaning there. The Spirit of God soon brought heaven so near to the sufferer's mind, and made his sufferings appear so momentary to him, that he sat up and began to sing for joy of heart -- "My suffering time will soon be o'er;

I soon shall weep and sigh no more. My ransomed soul shall soar away, And sing God's praise in endless day." The master, who had been listening outside, now rushed in, and implored the forgiveness and prayers of the sufferer. From that moment suffering and toil were other things than they had been to that slave's mind -- the suffering and toil appearing so short, and the glory to follow so infinite and endless, that the former had no power to disturb his peace. This, I repeat, is the consolation. So were "the sufferings of this present time" to the mind of Paul. God's Spirit

made them appear to him as they are in themselves, and as they are in their endless consequences, to all who "endure temptation," and "learn obedience from the things which they suffer." Over such minds afflictions have no power but to discipline and perfect virtue, and induce new forms of "everlasting consolations and good hope through grace" They consequently "glory in tribulation." The reader may be inclined to ask, How is it possible that pain, suffering, and sorrow can induce such joyful experiences? Take a single case in illustration. Many years since, a young man of a very wealthy family in Charleston, S.C., came to the city of New York and submitted his case to a council of physicians. As the result of the examination, he was informed that his case was indeed a sad one, that a hard substance was forming about one of the orifices of his heart, and would soon close it up and cause his death. In answer to the inquiry whether the substance could be removed by a surgical operation, he was told that the event was possible, but that the probabilities appeared as a hundred to one against him. "But death is certain if this tumour is not removed?" "Yes." "Then I take the risk," replied the youth. The surgeons refused to do anything about it until they had sent to the parents a written statement of the perils of the operation, and had received from them a written request to undertake it. When the operation was commenced, the young man was told that if at any time the operators should stop cutting his flesh, he might know that death must ensue. At length, contrary to all prior calculations, a suspension for a few moments became necessary. No one spoke or whispered. What a moment of suspense to the young man! Was it death? At length the experience of an acute pain indicated that the operation had been recommenced. "That pain," said the young man afterwards, the operation proving a success, -- "that pain was to me the most blissful feeling I ever experienced in my life." The reason is manifest. The pain stood connected in his mind with a promise of life, and the absence of pain with the assurance of death. Now the Spirit of God can so connect with every pain and affliction and form of sorrow we may experience a promise of life eternal, that suffering shall seem blissful rather than distressing, while the promise shall induce forms of fulness of joy eternally enduring. This is the consolation reserved for the believer in all "the sufferings of this present time." As far as my own case is concerned, I would say, that sorrow and suffering, bereavement, disappointment, and "hope deferred," seem to have but one mission -- to develop, refine, and enlarge the susceptibilities, and to new capacitate the mind for the reception of new and higher forms of blessedness than were before possible. Each special form of sorrow is attended with some special and correlative manifestation of the character, love, or grace of Christ, a manifestation which ever after remains in the mind as a source of everlasting consolation and "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Among the aspects of Christ’s character and grace -- aspects which induce the fullest and most abiding blessedness -- are those which the Spirit has unveiled to the mind when some great sorrow lay upon the heart. Hence it is that afflictions, tribulations, and great heavinesses become almost sacred in the mind’s regard, followed as they all are, and that so soon, with such "everlasting consolations and good hope through grace." The mind does not desire or pray for such providences. When they are sent, however -- As clouds of glory do they come, From God, who is our home."

Since that great paideia, that sacred heaven-descended paideia, sorrow and affliction sustain different relations to the mind from what they ever did before. They have power to melt the soul, but not so to affect the sensibilities as to produce mental pain or agony. Simultaneously with the sorrow comes the joy of the Lord, with such fullness that the former blends into the latter without paining the soul at all. Under the severest bodily suffering the mind lies in perfect quietness and

assurance.

I may refer in illustration to one scene. During the late war in the United States, our only son entered the army. On occasion of the first great battle where he was present, he rose from a sick-bed, and, contrary to the absolute prohibition of his physician, as first lieutenant led his company into the scene, and remained with them during the day, leading fifty-six men into the battle, and sixteen out of it. In the next great battle into which, as captain, he led his company, he himself received a fatal injury, from which he died some six months afterwards. And such a death. He seemed to "see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God," the Son of Man holding out to the dying one "a crown of life." From the grave of our son, the wife of my youth went home with me to die, she having fataly overtaxed her strength in caring for him during the last months of his sickness. A blooming daughter, twenty-two years of age, whose being had ever been strangely linked with that mother and brother, drooped under the bereavement, and, despite all our efforts to sustain and save her, "dropped into the lap of God," her death being not so rapturous, but as peaceful, as that of her brother. Under these bereavements my whole soul was melted and flowed out like water. At the same time, the peace of God was so full, pervading, and so ineffable in my heart, that I could not tell what was the chief cause of my tears -- the great sorrow on the one hand, or the unspeakable joy of the Lord on the other.

Such, reader, is the real experience of those who are in the world and in Christ while here. If they have sorrow -- and "in the world they will have tribulation" -- their sorrows are but momentary birth-throes of joys ineffable and eternally enduring. The deepest shades with which earth’s tribulations can darken their horizon are but the shadows which the Sun of Righteousness casts before Him when He is about to rise in our hearts "with healings in His wings." When walking with God -- "Take this thought with you as you go abroad, That shade is the creation of light, And light is the shadow of God."

Chapter 54

02.B15. Spiritual Discerning And Enlightenment

Chapter 30 SPIRITUAL DISCERNING AND ENLIGHTENMENT.

"The things of God," we are taught in the Sacred Word, "knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." "The things of God," when revealed to us, are called "the things of the Spirit of God," because "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." Now, of "the things of the Spirit of God," that is, of "the things which God hath revealed to us by His Spirit," the Scriptures contain the exclusive and all authoritative record. Outside of the Sacred Word, we have no authoritative record or standard of revealed truth. "The things which are revealed" in "this dearest of Books, that excels every other," "belong unto us and to our children." "Things of God" not herein revealed, those excepted "which are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made," are "secret things which belong unto God." One of the most important questions which any believer can put to himself is this, How may I know "the things of the Spirit of God," "the things which are freely given us of God"?

There are two classes of individuals who, as the apostle informs us, do not, and cannot, know these things -- "the natural man," the man who, in the pride of self-sufficiency, relies upon his own unaided powers of inquiry, and, consequently, repudiates as folly the idea of being taught of God, and as foolishness "the things revealed by the Spirit of God;" and the believer who is yet under the influence of a carnal spirit, of carnal principles, and carnal apprehensions. "He that is spiritual," on the other hand, does know "the things of God," the things which "God has revealed to us by His Spirit." The reason why he knows these things is the fact that the Spirit so "strengtheneth him with might in the inner man," and so "enlightens the eyes of his understanding," that he "discerns" or apprehends these things as they are in themselves. "The natural man cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned;" that is, they are, and must be, as the immutable condition of our apprehending them, presented to the mind by the Spirit.

Let us see if we cannot understand, clearly and distinctly, the real relations of the three individuals under consideration to the revealed truth of God -- the three individuals, namely, "the natural man," the believer who is yet carnal or a babe in Christ, and "the spiritual man." We will take as the basis of our elucidation the account which we find in 2 Kings 6:15-17 : -- "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." Let us suppose that, at the time when these events transpired, there had been present with the prophet, in addition to his servant, two other individuals, corresponding to "the natural man" on the one hand, and the unspiritual believer on the other, and that to these the prophet had stated the facts just as his servant afterwards saw them. How would his utterances have affected these three individuals, the eyes of the servant, and his only, being opened to see

what was before and around them? The natural man would have promptly replied thus, "I don't believe a word of it. I see the hosts of the Syrians; but I don't see, and nobody can see, 'the chariots of fire' or 'the horses of fire' to which this man refers. It is all superstition and delusion." "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." The unspiritual believer, on the other hand, would say, "What the prophet says is unquestionably true, and it gives me a degree of inward joy and peace to think so. Yet I cannot make his statements seem real. I see the hosts of the Syrians; but do not see ' the chariots of fire' or ' the horses of fire.' Hence it is that I cannot wholly expel the sentiment of fear and apprehension from my mind. I wish I could feel as the prophet and his servant do; but I cannot do it."

Ask the servant, now that "his eyes have been opened," if he believes what the prophet has uttered, and his reply would be, "I know that what he says is true. Why, the mountain is full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. I see them as plainly as I see the hosts of the Syrians, and 'they that be with us are more than they that be with them.'" The conscious security and peace of the prophet and of his servant could not but be absolute.

Let us now apply the above illustration to the three classes of individuals under consideration, "the natural man, the believer who is yet carnal, and "the spiritual man. In the same sense in which all could have understood the statements which we have supposed the prophet to have made, all of common intelligence can understand the Bible. Without special divine illumination, learned men may understand the facts and doctrines of this Book, and systematise the same, just as they can determine and interpret the teachings of any other book. Some of the ablest commentaries upon the Scriptures that have ever appeared have been composed by individuals who utterly repudiate the inspiration of these writings. Individuals of the same class have also correctly stated and systematised the doctrines of Scripture, and have proved beyond dispute that the Bible does, in fact, teach all the doctrines and principles of the evangelical faith. Nor are correct interpretations of the Scriptures or true presentations of its doctrines to be undervalued, and last of all will they be undervalued by really spiritually-minded believers. In what sense, then, is it true that neither the "natural man," nor the believer who is yet carnal, or "a babe in Christ," can "know the things of the Spirit of God"? In what sense is it true that these things are "spiritually discerned"? -- that is, can be apprehended as they are but by special illumination of the Spirit? A ready answer to these questions can now be given. The servant of the prophet, had the latter stated the facts to the former, could have understood that there was a celestial host with "horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." Until the eyes of that servant were opened, however, and he saw that host for himself, he could by no possibility have formed real apprehensions of that host. So I may correctly understand what inspiration affirms of "the things of the Spirit of God." I can apprehend the things themselves, and know them as they are, but upon the condition that, by the Spirit of God, "the eyes of my understanding are enlightened," so that I see these things, that is, mentally apprehend them, as they are in themselves.

Moses, for example, knew well that the glory of God was infinite. He was equally well aware; however, that no finite mind could know that glory -- that is, could apprehend it as it is -- but upon the exclusive condition that God Himself should show His glory to the creature. Hence the prayer of that man of God, "I beseech Thee show me Thy glory." To all eternity an impenetrable veil would have remained between that man and the divine glory, had not God fulfilled in the

experience of His servant the promise, "I will cause all my goodness to pass before thee." The same great truth is implied in the prayer of the psalmist, "Open Thou mine eyes, and I shall behold wondrous things out of Thy law." The psalmist well knew that wondrous things were revealed in the Word of God. He was equally aware of the fact that he could behold these things but upon the condition that God Himself should open the eyes of his understanding to apprehend them, just as the eyes of the servant were opened to behold the flaming hosts that were "round about Elisha." So of all the eternal verities revealed to our faith in the Scriptures. We can understand what is written about these realities. The realities themselves, however, we can apprehend as they are but upon the condition that the Spirit of God shall Him self "take of these things and show them unto us," we thus "beholding with open face as in a glass" (as we behold our own selves in a mirror) "the glory of the Lord," "the love of Christ," and all "the things which are freely given us of God."

We have before us, we will suppose, to use another illustration, a correct map and a full and true delineation of the entire scenery of the Alps. Careful study will enable us to understand fully the map and the writings in our possession. We afterwards visit that scenery and behold it with open vision. On comparing the apprehensions obtained by reading and study with those received through a direct beholding of the scenery itself, we should find that the former apprehensions very imperfectly represent the latter. Suppose now that, while we are studying the documents and map referred to, God should enable us to form the same apprehensions of that scenery that we do when beholding it with direct and open vision. He would then do for us relatively to this scenery what the Spirit does relatively to the eternal verities revealed in the Scriptures. In the study of the Scriptures the Spirit of God so "enlightens the eyes of the understanding" of "the spiritual man," that he beholds, as with direct and open vision, "the wondrous things" of which he reads. The relations of the three individuals under consideration to "the things of the Spirit of God," now admit of a ready explanation. "The natural man" does not apprehend these things for two reasons. They are "foolishness unto him" in the first place, and he does not endeavour to understand them. Then, in the next place, "they are spiritually discerned," and he "has not the Spirit of God." The believer who is "yet carnal" may understand and believe what is written about these things. Of the things themselves, however, he has no divinely-illumined apprehensions. He believes them to be eternal verities. Yet they do not seem real to him, and he cannot make them seem thus. According to the Scriptures, Christ is at the door calling and knocking for admittance. The man understands what is written, and confesses that it must be so of a truth. To him, however, Christ does not seem to be thus near, thus loving, and ready to save and to bless; but afar off in heaven, afar off where He cannot be found. The love of Christ to us, according to the Scriptures "passeth knowledge." The man understands what is written, and admits its truth. To his mind, however, it is not, and he cannot make it seem, a present and heart-moving and transforming reality that "Christ loved him, and gave Himself for him," and loves him now. To "the spiritual man," on the other hand, nothing seems so real, and of such ready and all-impressive apprehension, as "the things of the Spirit of God." He not only understands and believes what is written about the love of Christ, but inwardly "beholds with open face" Christ Himself as a personal presence in the actual exercise of a love towards the believer "that passeth knowledge." The Spirit "takes of the things of Christ," and shows them to this individual, and "shows him plainly of the Father." Such a believer, consequently, "knows the things which are freely given us of God." To his mind "the things of the Spirit of God," -- "things unseen and eternal," "revealed to us by the Spirit of God," -- are realities as palpable as was the fiery host round about Elisha to the servant of the prophet after "the Lord

had opened the eyes of that servant." In the same sense in which the Spirit of God opened the eyes of that servant to behold the "horses and chariots of fire" referred to, does the same Spirit "enlighten the eyes of the understanding" of "the spiritual man" to "behold the glory of the Lord," to "comprehend the breadth, and depth, and length, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

We are now prepared to understand clearly the meaning of the apostle in the following passage: -- "He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." The obvious meaning of the passage is this: "The spiritual man" understands, and appreciates as they are, the views and experiences of all other men, not, like himself, under divine illumination. Those who have not received this illumination, however, cannot judge the spiritual man -- that is, understand his views and experiences -- because they have never become possessed of such views and experiences. They can, if they will, know that he has views and experiences which they have not, and which they imperiously need to possess, and they may and can inquire of God, as he did, that the Lord may open the eyes of their understanding, as He did those of his, that they may thus "know God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent," as he knows them; that they with him may "have fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," and, like him, "be filled with all the fulness of God." All these things they may inquire after, and "will know if they follow on to know the Lord." Until they do thus inquire, and God, by His Spirit, "shall give them light," they will walk in darkness, while he "has the light of life," and his divine and blissful views and experiences will be veiled even from their apprehensions.

I am here reminded of a very melancholy fact which we often meet with among professing Christians. I refer to those who persistently shut themselves out from "the liberty of the sons of God," and veil from their hearts "the light of God," in which it is their blood-bought privilege to walk. Before I speak particularly of this class, however, let me refer to another class who are in darkness, but are seeking "the light of life." By special request, I once, for example, visited the room of a theological student who was spiritually in "a horror of great darkness." Before him lay an open Bible, with his eyes resting upon some of its most soul-moving revelations.

"President Mahan," he said, "what is here revealed is all real to you. No wonder, therefore, that you are one of the happiest of men. To me, however, they don’t seem real at all. I read that ’Christ tasted death for every man,’ and Paul says of Him, ’He loved me, and gave Himself for me.’ It don’t seem to me that I have any interest at all in Christ’s death, or that He has any love for me whatever. I can understand Job when he cried out, ’Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come near even to His seat. Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him: He hideth Himself on the right hand that I cannot see Him.’ Is there any hope for me?" As I took my seat by the side of that young man, I said to him, "My brother, you are now in the most hopeful condition possible. If you will ’only believe,’ your next step will be upon the pinnacle of the delectable mountains, where ’the Lord shall be to you for an everlasting light, and your God your glory.’ ’Only believe,’ and you will find the darkness around you to be that which precedes the brightness of the divine rising."

"But how shall I believe, when nothing seems real to me?"

"God says, in His own Word, does He not, that 'Christ did taste death for every man,' and consequently for you; that He loves the world, and consequently loves you; that if you will 'confess your sins,' He 'will forgive you your sins, and cleanse you from all unrighteousness;' that He 'will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him,' and that none that 'follow Christ shall walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'"

"I know that God says these things, and I suppose they are realities in themselves. To me, however, they are not realities, and I cannot make them appear so."

"Cease for ever now all efforts to make these realities seem real to your mind. Admit them to be such, and that on the simple testimony of God. Confess your sins to God, trusting Christ, for the reason that He says He will do it when you thus confess, to 'take away your sins.' Having done this, and having surrendered your whole being to the divine will, ask your Father in heaven, simply because He has promised to do so to all who ask, to give you the Holy Spirit of promise, that you may realise and 'know the things which are freely given you of God.' Do this, my young brother, and your darkness will soon pass away, and you will wonder, with unutterable wonder, at the marvellous light of God which shall shine upon you."

I have, during the last forty years, met with very many individuals, as that young man was, in the deepest spiritual darkness, and have never yet met with one who has followed such simple counsels, and who did not soon find him self "sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," and "rejoicing there with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

I will here give a single example in illustration of the above statements. Several months since, I met at the house of a mutual friend in this city a physician and his wife, both from my own country, and both influential members of a leading Presbyterian church in the city of New York. Mrs S. was in a very peculiar and self-dissatisfied state of mind. She had read, as she stated, the productions of the leading writers on the higher life, had honestly endeavoured to follow the directions given therein, and had supposed that she had attained to the state of which such authors and teachers speak; yet she had found herself mistaken. What was called salvation from sin, she had found to be nothing but the substitution of one form of sin for another still more hateful in the sight of God spiritual pride. She had, accordingly, repudiated wholly this whole doctrine of the higher life.

Such had been her spiritual darkness, however, that when they were in Rome she had inquired of the highest authorities there whether there was for her any way out into "the light of God." Their answers were, of course, wholly unsatisfactory and she was in a state of almost utter hopelessness in regard to any escape from "the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God," of which the Bible says so much. I assured her that the Bible was a lie throughout, or this liberty, in all its fulness, was in reserve for her. Christ had prayed for her that she might be one with Him, as He is one with the Father, and that the Father might, consequently, love her as He loves His only begotten Son; and that prayer would be fulfilled in her experience, provided she would "lay hold on the hope set before her." The oneness with Christ referred to is called in the Bible "the union and fellowship of the Spirit." We "are builded for an habitation of God through the Spirit." It is through the Spirit that "God dwells in us and walks in us," and "reveals His Son in us." We must be "strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man," or Christ cannot "dwell in our hearts by faith," and be "formed within us the hope of glory." "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;" and there is, and can be, this liberty nowhere else. Such, and only such,

do or can behold "with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord." "In that day," the day when "the Comforter shall come unto you," says our Saviour, "ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." "The promise of the Spirit" is before you. If you desire this vital union with Christ, and with the Father through Him, having committed your whole being to Christ, ask Him, and trust Him, first of all, "to pray the Father for you, that He may "give you the Comforter," that "He may abide with you forever," and, as God is true, He will "endue you with power from on high," and "fill you with His Spirit," as He did "the disciples at the beginning;" and then, as they were, you "shall be filled with all the fulness of God."

"The mistake, as it seems to me," I remarked, "of very many who teach the doctrine of the higher life, is the fact that they do not set forth, as the immutable condition of entering into and continuing in that life, that we must receive 'the promise of the Spirit in our hearts.'" I then told her how that, having sought and obtained "the promise of the Father," I had for forty years "walked with God," and known Him as my "everlasting light." "Among 'the sons and daughters of the Lord,'" I remarked, "I am no specially privileged believer. What I have obtained and enjoyed, you may obtain and enjoy."

Such is the substance of my statements to this individual. After a season of prayer we separated, she with a fixed "purpose of heart" never to rest until she had obtained the promised baptism, and I with a fervent inward prayer that God would grant her what she desired, and, through the power of His indwelling Spirit, "do for her exceeding abundantly above all that she might ask or think." The following extracts from this lady's letter, received by the wife of the mutual friend referred to, will indicate the results of that conversation: -- "Within three days of our return," she says, "the Doctor's father was brought down to our house very feeble, and suffering with heart disease. For five weeks I nursed him night and day. . . . . December 6, he went home. . . . . Before I had any time to rest, I came here Philadelphia, to my mother to spend Christmas, and to help to cheer her through this, to her, sad part of the year; for a year ago, last night, my own father entered into glory. Two more peaceful death-beds than the two I have stood beside this year could never be, and heaven seems nearer and more real from the lessons I have been taught by them."

Out of sorrow into "everlasting consolations and good hope through grace" is the fixed order of true Christian experience. "Never shall I forget," she goes on to say, "that Sabbath evening which I spent with Dr. Mahan. I wonder if he is yet in London? If so, will you give my love to him, and tell him Jesus has been making plain to me what I so vainly tried to comprehend during that conversation. Never in my life have I seen what a soul-union there might be between the believer and his Saviour as the Lord has shown me of late. 'One with Christ' does not seem too strong language now. I am so glad that I am one of the weak foolish ones of the earth; for I have not had the trouble which I should have in trying to come to an intellectual comprehension of how this could be. I cannot tell the 'how' even now but I do know that Christ has taken me in a sense He never did before, and is keeping me very close to Himself. Oh, how my very heart goes out for you to know this great treasure, my dear sister! It seems as though, if I could cross the ocean that divides us and sit by your side, I could show you from the Word how much more Jesus has for us than either you or I imagined last September. I begin to have a little taste of that 'love which passeth knowledge,' and it makes my heart bound and ache with the longing I have that others should know it too. . . . . I owe so much to you for your kindness in regard to Dr Mahan. I have never been satisfied since the talk we had in your parlour. I saw, and you did also, that he had a

secret we did not possess."

She then states that she soon became conscious of the defects I had stated in the very common teachings in regard to the higher life, and then adds, -- "A strong faith is not enough; there must be a filling with love. I do not know how to express it except as a conscious 'oneness with Christ.' I cannot tell you as I would like to of this dear Jesus; but if you look into your Bible, you will find what I mean on almost every page of the Acts and Epistles. Now that I really believe every promise, just as I would promises from any reliable, loving friend, the whole thing seems plain and unmistakable. I did not intend to write as I have done when I began, but what was in my heart has dropped off from my pen." All who thus seek, find; and of all who do thus seek and find, "there is not a weak nor sickly one among them." All in common are "more than conquerors through Him that hath loved them."

How do individuals shut themselves out from this "everlasting light," and from all this "glorious liberty of the sons of God"? When they are spoken to about "the promise of the Spirit," and of "the glory which follows" this "enduement of power from on high," their reply is, "that all Christians receive the promised 'baptism of the Holy Ghost,' at the time of their conversion, and no such promise as you speak of is in reserve for us now." While they reply thus, they will not deny that they are in darkness, and walk in darkness, and have lost "the blessedness they knew when first they saw the Lord." Whatever the past may have been, do they not now need to be "baptized with the Holy Ghost"? They admit that they "can neither fly nor go to reach eternal joys." Do they not need the "enduement of power," by which they can "mount up on wings as eagles," and "run and not be weary, and walk and not faint "? Still their reply is, "All believers were 'baptized with the Holy Ghost' at the time of their conversion, and they now 'have the Spirit of Christ,' and their 'bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost.'" But does not Christ make prior obedience the express condition of the reception of "the Comforter," and does not the Bible as expressly teach that God "gives the Holy Ghost to them that obey Him"? Does not inspiration speak expressly of two classes of converted persons, -- of the one class as "spiritual," and the other as "yet carnal," -- the one as made, and the other as not yet made, "perfect in love, -- the one as having, and the other as not having, "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, -- the one as having received, and the other as not having received, the Holy Ghost since they believed -- and of the "joy" of the one class as being, and of the other as not being, "full"? Still the reply is, "All believers do receive 'the baptism of the Holy Ghost' at the time of their conversion, and no such promise as you speak of is in reserve for us." Thus individuals plead and argue for their blindness, and darkness, and feebleness, their bondage under the law of sin and death, and their barrenness of spiritual joy and power, as if they were certain that "life eternal" is to be found in these things and nowhere else. How can they find the light of life when they thus turn away from God's "exceeding great and precious promises," and will not accept the testimony of God, on the one hand, and that of those who have believed, and "have entered into rest," on the other!

Chapter 55

02.B16. The Letter And The Spirit, And The Flesh

Chapter 31 THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT, AND THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT. The sacred writers speak of "the letter and the Spirit" on the one hand, and of "the flesh and the Spirit" on the other. Paul, affirming himself and associates to have been made by God Himself "able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit," says that "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." On the distinction between "the flesh and the Spirit" our Saviour thus speaks: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Let us see if we cannot understand this great subject. Our Saviour, having spoken of Himself in distinction from natural food, flesh, and from the manna, as "the living bread which came down from heaven," told the people that that bread was His "flesh, which He would give for the life of the world." When the Jews strove among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat"? Jesus assured them that they "must eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood," or they could "have no life in them." At such utterances even some of His disciples took offence, they, in common with other Jews, understanding His words in their literal sense. Christ now informs His disciples that soon He should "ascend up where He was before," and where, consequently, they could not approach His body; that could they do this, and even in the literal or fleshly sense, "eat His flesh and drink His blood," they would thus receive from Him no profit at all. That the words which He had employed symbolised a great and all-vitalising spiritual truth, a fixed relation which must obtain between Him personally and their spirits, or "they could have no life in them;" and that when, and only when, they should apprehend and believe in Him in that relation, would they understand the real import of the words He had employed.

He Himself was to their spirits what food was to their bodies. When they should apprehend and know Him in this relation, they would receive eternal life through Him, just as their natural lives were sustained by the food which they ate. As symbolising this all-vitalising relation, "His words were spirit, and they were life." As, in the literal sense, "eating His flesh and drinking His blood" would "profit them nothing," so His words, not understood and received in their true spiritual import, would be of no benefit to them. The immutable condition of our knowing Christ in this all-vitalising relation is, as our Saviour affirms in this connection, that we are "taught of God," that is, by the Spirit of God, and thus "drawn to Him by the Father." This knowledge we can by no possibility receive but through the illumination of the Spirit in His special office as the promised Comforter. The same distinction the apostle Paul represents by the terms "letter" and "spirit." When we apprehend the real meaning of the language of Scripture, we are in "the letter." When we have a direct, immediate, and all-transforming apprehension of the realities symbolised by that language, then we are in "the Spirit." While we are in "the letter," truth is to us as "a dead letter," and exerts very little, and commonly no vitalising power at all. When in "the Spirit," every truth apprehended has a life-imparting power over our whole moral and spiritual nature. "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." Here again we apprehend the special functions of the Comforter. "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to

glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Such is the revealed distinction between "the flesh and the Spirit" on the one hand, and "the letter and the Spirit" on the other. In illustration of the above distinctions, permit me to adduce a fact which occurred in my own family. When my elder children were small about me, and when I had begun to experience the life-imparting power of an apprehension of "the glory of the Lord" upon my own inner life, I made this a specific and special object of prayer, that I might be enabled to get the character of Christ before the minds of my children, so that, as the beauty, and grace, and perfection of the Lord should take form in their apprehensions, their spirit, and character, and life should be drawn and moulded into conformity to His. After I had been praying thus for some time, I found myself in our family circle, at the time of evening prayer, in circumstances most favourable to the end for which I had been praying. I accordingly remarked to my children, that I would read and talk to them about Jesus Christ, and particularly of His love to children. As I began to read the wonderful account pertaining to this subject, our little son, just upwards of three years of age, came to me, and putting his elbows upon my knee, looked me intently in the face. As I read on, and commented upon what I read, "Oh!" he exclaimed, while the most affectionate wonder sat upon his countenance. Such exclamations were repeated as every new feature of Christ's character lifted its divine form before that child's mind. Perceiving that I was beginning to receive what I had been praying for, I remarked, that the next evening we would read and talk again about the dear Jesus. On this occasion our little son was at my knee as before, and listened with the same expressions of wonder and surprise. From that time onward for a long period, these apprehensions of Christ remained, and visibly moulded his whole moral being. Often would he come into my study, and say to me, "Pa, won't you talk to me about the dear Jesus?" As I would speak to him upon the subject, "Oh!" he would exclaim. As I would tell him how happy it made me to think about Christ, "It makes me happy too," he would reply. When I think of the wonderful death of that son, I have, to account for the fact, to go back to the event" in his childhood-life above presented.

I spoke formerly of the peaceful death of a daughter. At her funeral, her pastor remarked, that he had never in his life received such benefit in visiting a sick-room as he had in visiting that of that young woman. The reason was, that she had known not about Christ, but Christ Himself as her life. How did these dear ones thus know Christ? Because "the Spirit took of the things of Christ and showed them unto them," Communications from my home in my own country have just brought me intelligence of the death of another beloved daughter. She also "died in the Lord," and when I would account for the manner of her death, I must refer back to the knowledge of Christ which she received when a little child. To show early spiritual discernment may arise in the minds of the very young, I will refer to a single fact given in the religious papers by one of our female teachers years ago. In the school taught by this young lady was a little boy of wondrous brightness of intellect and purity of mind, a child so young as to be unable to speak many of his words plainly, and so sprightly, that he was the sunbeam of the school. At the close of the school each day, he would come to his instructress and ask; "Teacer, is I a good boy to-day?" At the close of the school one day, the teacher read the account of Christ's blessing children, and told her school how He loved little children. After dismissing the school, and while seated at her table adjusting her papers, with no thought that any one but herself was in the room, this little child put his hand gently upon her shoulder, and with the deepest interest said, "Teacer,who is Quist et loved little children?" "I had an appointment after school, and was in a hurry to be gone, and, as Christians too often do, neglected the present opportunity, and put this child off by promising to tell him about Christ the

next day. The next day I was startled at not hearing the ringing voice of that child among my scholars, and all day my conscience smote me on account of that neglected opportunity. As soon as my school was dismissed, I started for the house of the child's father, who was not a Christian man. On the way I was met by the child's sister, who came running, and saying, 'Do hasten to our house; my little brother is very sick, and is constantly calling for his teacher, to tell him who is Christ that loved little children.' As I stood by his side, he said to me, 'Teacer, who is Quist et loved little children?' I attempted now to convey to his mind the knowledge he desire. The fever was on him, however, and his mind wandered, so that he could not understand what I told him. At the father's request we kneeled in prayer, and I prayed that God by His Spirit would impart the knowledge which I was now unable to communicate. As we rose from out knees, the little one exclaimed, 'Do, do, tell me who is Quist et loved little children? ' -- ' Will not somebody tell me who is Quist et loved little children'? 'Won't you pray again for the child?' said the weeping father. Then I prayed as I never did before in my life. As we rose from prayer and looked upon the form before us, his countenance suddenly brightened, and extending his hands, he exclaimed, 'There, there is Quist et loved little children!' and his spirit departed to the everlasting arms of the divine Lover of little children." The lessons which such facts as the above teach us are to my mind such as these: that it is the Spirit, and He only, that can "reveal Christ in us," so that we shall know, not merely about Him, but Christ Himself; in His personal beauty, glory, and perfection; that the Spirit can make this revelation even to our children; that religious instruction in all its forms, in the family, the Sabbath-school, and everywhere else, is blindly directed when the fixed aim of such instruction is not to communicate this knowledge of Christ; and that when the Spirit does "take of the things of Christ and show them unto us," and imparts to the mind a direct and open vision, or "beholding" of Christ Himself in His personal beauty, glory, and perfection, one fixed desire will possess the mind, the desire to know Him, to be like Him, and for ever to "abide in His love."

I also take from such facts as the above my apprehension of the entrance of our babes and little children into the kingdom of light. I think that the Spirit of God will, first of all, impart to the minds of such little ones direct and immediate apprehensions of Christ in His personal beauty, glory, and love -- love to such little ones -- and that the opening of this vision upon their minds will be the beginning and starting point of their intellectual, moral, and spiritual development and growth for an eternity to come.

Some fifteen or sixteen years after the death of our infant son, "I had a vision in my sleep," -- a vision the remembrance of which no earthly considerations would induce me to part with. I supposed myself to have left the body, and to be in the precincts of the celestial city. I was slowly advancing towards the eternal throne, which was just visible in the distance. If the blessedness of the soul in heaven can be more perfect than mine was then, I can form no conception of what that blessedness can be. "The glory of the Lord did lighten the place, and the Lamb was the light thereof." Infinite quietude and bliss was all about me, and every capacity of my nature was filled with the light, and peace, and blessedness of God. As I was thus slowly advancing towards the throne, there appeared directly before me a youth in all the freshness and bloom of immortality -- a youth who approached very near, and, with intense inquiry, looked me in the face. Suddenly his whole countenance lighted up with a smile of joyful recognition "It is my father come at last." Thus may we expect to meet our little ones who have gone before us, provided we ourselves shall be permitted to "pass through the gates into the city." The effect of that smile of recognition upon me

was such that I suddenly awoke. Since I had the vision, however, heaven has appeared more like home to me than it could otherwise have done. I have wandered from my subject, namely, being not in "the flesh," nor in "the letter," but in "the Spirit."

Reader, do you desire to possess this all-renovating and all vitalising knowledge? Go to your Father in heaven and say unto Him that you desire to "know Him, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent," and that, as a means to this end, you ask that He will "baptize you with the Holy Ghost," that the Spirit may "take of the things of Christ and show them unto you," and "show you plainly of the Father," and thus "lead you into all truth." Do this, and you will "receive the promise of the Father," and, having thus received, you will "behold with open face as in a glass the glory of the Lord," will "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," will be "made perfect in love," and will be "filled with all the fulness of God." Neglect to do this, and you will ever remain in "the flesh" and in "the letter," and all this, while you might have walked in the light as God is in the light"

02.B17. Christ In Us, And Christ For Us

Chapter 32 "CHRIST IN US, AND CHRIST FOR US."

We sometimes meet with utterances which, on account of their wonderful adaptation and comprehensiveness, obtain a permanent and influential place in our minds. Such an utterance we met with, when in Edinburgh twenty-five years ago last summer. "Some months since," said a gentleman to us, "I had occasion when in Aberdeen to call upon an Italian artist. After completing my business arrangements, the artist inquired of me in respect to the state of religion in the Protestant Churches. On being told that it was very low, the stranger replied that it was so in the Catholic Church, of which he was a member. 'My house,' he added, 'is the home of our Catholic priests. I not unfrequently find them so vulgar and vile in their conversation that I rise up and drive them out of my residence.' This the man said with tears, and then added, 'The sum of the gospel, sir, is this -- Christ in us, and Christ for us.' -- This, I said, is an utterance to be held in perpetual remembrance, as it fully represents all the relations which do exist, or can exist, between Christ and the believer. When we think of all our necessities as creatures, and above all, as sinners, Christ appears as our security in respect to them all. There is not one of them that He has overlooked, and not one for the supply of which He has not made full and abundant provision. We think of our sins, and of the infinitude of our guilt as sinners, and even here Christ, "who is our life," appears for us as having "borne our sins in His own body on the tree," and as our "Advocate with the Father," "making intercession for the transgressors." "Sinners may hope," since "Christ has died, yea, rather, has risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." We think of our hopeless ruin and bondage under "the law of sin and death," of the number and strength of the evil principles and propensities by which we have been so long held in abject and powerless servitude, and of the resistless powers wielded by our great enemy in the world around us to perfect and perpetuate our bondage. Here again Christ is for us, to take away our sins, to break the power of all evil principles and propensities, to render us "more than conquerors" in every conflict "with the world, the flesh, and the devil," to "sprinkle clean water upon us that we may be clean," to "cleanse us from all our filthiness, and from all our idols," to "wash us, and make us whiter than snow," that we may be "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," that we may "be holy and without blemish." In respect to the temptations that beset us, Christ is with us and for us, never to "suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but with the temptation to make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it," Yes, Christ is ever with us and for us, as "able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him." In reference to our many and great infirmities, He is for us to "render God's strength perfect in our weakness," so that "when we are weak we shall be strong." In regard to our cares great and small, our tribulations and "fiery trials," our afflictions and sorrows, Christ is for us, to "teach us in every state in which we are therewith to be content," to "keep us in perfect peace," to fill us with "everlasting consolation and good hope through grace," to enable us to "learn obedience from the things which we suffer," and to cause "our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, to work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. When we approach "a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and

find grace to help in time of need," He is for us there, interceding with the Father, that He will "do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

We have a mission and a work appointed for us here. "As Thou has sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world." "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also." "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." When we reflect upon our own insufficiency, and on the magnitude of the work assigned us, we naturally cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" When we think again, and call to mind the fact that Christ is with us and for us in "all our work and labour of love," we rest in the assurance that we, having in Christ "all-sufficiency for all things, shall be abundantly furnished unto every good work." In regard to what awaits us after death, Christ is for us here also, preparing, amid the many mansions in His Father's house, "a place for us," and ready, when we have "finished the work which He has given us to do," to "come to us, and take us to Himself; that where He is, there we may be also." And, finally, at the eternal judgment, He will be for us then and there, not to condemn, but to justify us, and to "welcome us, as the blessed of His Father," to "inherit the kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world." Then, reader, take this thought with you when you go forth to meet coming events, that whatever necessity may come upon you, Christ is for you for the supply of that want, and with the supply to bring to your heart the assurance that "no evil shall befall you," and that "no good thing shall He withhold from you."

But, reader, in all the relations in which Christ is for us, He is for us as a means to a still higher end, that He may be in us, and live, and dwell, and reign within us for ever and ever. The heart of the creature is the home of God, the proper dwelling-place of every person of the sacred Trinity. Sin has banished God from His own house, and rendered it the abode of every foul and unclean thing. Christ has come, and is for us, for the cleansing of this, His own sanctuary, and to rebuild it "for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Christ will never "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied," in respect to you or me, until He shall take up "His abode in us," and shall dwell in us as the father dwells in Him. With what impressive language is this great truth of an indwelling Christ expressed in the Bible! -- as, for example -- "Christ in you the hope of glory;" "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ;" "Till Christ be formed in you;" "Abide in me, and I in you;" "I in them, and Thou in me;" "Christ liveth in me;" and "I will dwell in them and walk in them;" "We will come unto him, and make our abode with him;" and "In whom ye also are builded for an habitation of God through the Spirit." When Christ shall be "formed within us," and shall be "in us the hope of glory," His indwelling will be attended with that of each of the other Persons of the Trinity, and He will bring with Him, when He shall enter the sanctuary of our hearts, "all the fulness of God," and we shall be filled with the same. Then shall we "behold with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord," and shall be "changed into the same image from glory to glory," and shall become possessed, in our measure, of every virtue and grace, and form of moral beauty and perfection, which adorn the character of Christ. Then shall we "comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and shall know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," and in "knowing and believing the love that God hath unto us, our love will be made perfect." Then shall "our fellowship be with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," and "God shall become our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning shall be ended."

Then, I remark again, shall we fully understand and know all that our Saviour meant in the following utterances : -- "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. And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me." When Christ shall be in you, reader, I would add still further, prayer will be to you a new service. "Moses spake to God face to face, as a man speaketh with his friend." So you, in prayer, will address God not merely as your "Father in heaven," but as directly and immediately before and within you, with a present Christ before and in you to intercede for you, and you will know that "God hears you, and that you have the petitions that you desired of Him."

You will literally "read your Bible with new eyes." The great realities of which it speaks will be as mentally visible to you as to the servant of the prophet, after the Lord had opened his eyes, was the celestial host "round about Elisha." Nothing will be more real to you than Christ as a personal presence directly and immediately before you, and "in you the hope of glory;" nothing will be beheld with such open-faced distinctness and impressiveness as "the glory of the Lord ; nothing will be so comprehensible as ’the love of Christ which passeth knowledge;" and nothing so receivable as "all the fulness of God." This is very strong language. But what else do the words of Christ permit us to write? ’ We will come to him, and make our abode with him." "I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." "I will dwell in them, and will walk in them, and be their God, and they shall be my sons and daughters."

If any one should ask us to explain in what sense, and in what form, Christ dwells and lives in believers, I would reply, that those who have not had an experimental knowledge of that indwelling can have no more apprehensions of it than we can now have of heaven, and of what we shall be when we are there. We know that in heaven our "bodies will be fashioned after the likeness of Christ’s glorified body," and that we shall be morally and spiritually "like Him, because we shall see Him as He is." So we know also that when "Christ shall be in us, and we in Him," our union, fellowship, and intercommunion with Him, and His with us, will be the same in kind as mutually obtain between Christ and the Father. "As Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also maybe one in us." "I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." In that union we know still further that Christ will so completely control and determine our mental and moral states and activities, and so completely transform our whole moral characters after His own image, that the Father will love us as He does Christ. "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them," "That the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me." In this indwelling of Christ in us, our love to Him will, in our measure, be rendered as perfect as His is to us. "Herein is our love made perfect." When Christ is in us, He will render our content under all the allotments of Providence as perfect, our submission to the divine will as absolute, and our peace and joy as constant and full as were His. "That they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." When Christ shall thus dwell in a number of believers, their "fellowship one with another" will be the same in kind as that which exists between Christ and the Father. "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." The final result will be this: The world, seeing "how believers love one another," perceiving them, all in common,

"walking in the light of God," "kept in perfect peace," and "rejoicing with joy unspeakable, and full of glory," will "believe" and "know" that "the Father has sent Christ into the world," and "has loved believers as He has loved Christ." "I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved me." Thus we can designate some of the results of the union between Christ and believers -- the union represented by the words, "I in them, and Thou in me;" and this is all the explanation we can give of the subject.

If any one should inquire after the condition on which our experience can accord with the union, fellowship, and intercommunion represented by the words, "I in them, and Thou in me," a twofold answer must be given to such an inquiry. We must, in the first place, through faith in Christ, in the varied relations in which He is for us, as a Saviour from sin, be brought into a state of full present consecration to Christ, and obedience to His commandments. On this subject the words of our Saviour are perfectly plain and explicit. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto Him (not Iscariot), Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Before Christ will "manifest Himself unto us," and before "He and the Father will come unto us, and make their abode with us," we must first "love Christ" and "keep His words." With loving hearts and obedient spirits, with these, and these only, will Christ and the Father make their abode.

Before this indwelling can arise, even then another condition must be fulfilled, namely, "the Comforter" must be sent to us, to enlarge our capacities to receive Christ and the Father, and to "enlighten the eyes of our understanding," that we may "behold the glory of the Lord," and "comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." "If ye love me," says our Saviour, "keep my commandments; and I will pray the Father for you, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth." "At that day," the Saviour adds, the day when the Comforter shall come unto you, "ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Christ and the Father can dwell in us but upon the condition that the Spirit shall first "strengthen us with might in the inner man;" shall "take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us," and shall "show us plainly of the Father." Christ and the Father are, at all times, very near to us. We shall never find them, however, until the Spirit shall open our eyes to "beheld with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord." "In whom ye also are builded for an habitation of God through the Spirit." It is "the Spirit whom Christ sends unto us from the Father" that brings us into "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." Hence this fellowship is called "the communion and fellowship of the Spirit." It is when, and only when, we have "received the promise of the Spirit," and are thus "filled with the Holy Ghost," that we can "know the love of Christ," "beheld the glory of the Lord," and "God become our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning be ended."

Read often and ponder deeply, reader, the words of inspiration: -- "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture bath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Remember this, that this promise can be fulfilled in your experience

but upon the condition that you shall love and obey Christ, as the disciples did, and "the Holy Ghost shall fall upon you as He did upon them at the beginning." Then, and only then, "will Christ be in you the hope of glory." A question of very great practical importance here presents itself; a question which each believer should, with deep and solemn interest, put to his own heart and conscience, namely, In what relations, and to what extent, do I really and truly know my Saviour? "This," He tells us, "is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." "This is life eternal" is ours in possession, in exact accordance with the extent and limits of the knowledge referred to. In regard to the mass of professing Christians, it is no slander to affirm that they in reality know no more of Christ as a manifested indwelling presence than they do of heaven. In the relations in which Christ is for us, their real knowledge of Him is circumscribed almost wholly within the sphere of our justification, the sphere in which "we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." As a consequence, as soon as the freshness of the consciousness of "sins forgiven" has passed away, their primal joys fade out, leaving in the centre of the heart "an aching void the world can never fill." As long as these circumscribed views of the relations in which Christ is for us continue, that void will not only remain unfilled, but new and higher joys will not well out in the soul, none of the conditions of Christ's manifesting Himself to, and living in, the believer being fulfilled. What a fearful error it is to teach such believers that they have received "the promised baptism of the Holy Ghost;" that they are "in Christ, and Christ in them;" that "their bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost;" that "God dwells in them and walks in them;" and that they are "beholding with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord," and are being "changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord ," -- all of which is absolutely affirmed of all who have received "the promise of the Spirit."

Must we suppose that all that such language really imports is what is realised in the common experience of the mass of professing Christians, whom Christian charity requires us to regard as converted persons? "He that believeth on me," says our Saviour, "as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Does this mean nothing more than the experience of which we are speaking? All this, as the Saviour absolutely affirms, is, and shall be, true of all who shall receive "the promise of the Spirit." "But this He spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." If what Christ then promised has not been made real in your experience, reader, you do yourself infinite wrong if you entertain the idea that you have been "baptized with the Holy Ghost."

We also understand the conditions of the possibility of our receiving what the inspiration means in the following wonderful words, namely, "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to," or through, "the power (of the Holy Ghost) that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Before we can come into such relations to Christ, relations in which what is here referred to can become real in our experience, we must pass through the process to which the apostle refers in the preceding parts of the epistle, and especially in the verses which immediately precede that under consideration.

First of all, we must be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," and "the eyes of our understanding must thus be enlightened, that we may know what is the hope on His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Then we must "be strengthened with might by the

Spirit in the inner man," and this as a means to this end, "that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith," "that we," by such indwelling, "being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God." When we shall have received "the promise of the Father," "the baptism of the Holy Ghost," and when the Spirit shall have led us on through all these enlightenments and experiences, then we shall have been brought into such relations to and fellowships "with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," that all that "we ask or think" will fall infinitely short of what the Spirit will ever after evince Himself as able to do for us. On no other conditions are the experiences and fulnesses under consideration possible to us, and they are, in all their "lengths, and breadths, and depths, and heights," possible to all who will "follow on to know the Lord," as He has made known to us the way.

02.B18. Religious Joy

Chapter 33

RELIGIOUS JOY. In the Scriptures we are told that "the joy of the Lord is our strength," that "the fruit of righteousness shall be. peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." Religious joy is also positively required of us in the Word of God. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." We are required and admonished by our Saviour to "ask and receive, until our joy is full." One of His special petitions to "His Father and our Father," to "His God and our God," was that we "might have His joy fulfilled in ourselves." What He promises to all that come unto Him, however burdened they may be, is that He "will give them rest," and that "they shall find rest unto their souls." "Peace," says our Lord, "I leave with you; my peace I give unto you." "These things," says the inspired writer, "write I unto you, that your joy may be full." The angels of God heralded the advent of Christ on earth as "glad tidings of great joy." While all the world "weep for sorrow of heart," all believers in Jesus are expected to "sing for joy of heart." Among the revealed "fruits of the Spirit" are "joy, peace." All the promises come to us ’’ heavily laden" with "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," "joy unspeakable and full of glory," and everlasting consolations and good hope through grace."

Peace and joy, ever full and eternally enduring, are also represented as one of the special and peculiar characteristics of the new dispensation, that under which we now live. "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." Such being the revealed facts of the case, we should not undervalue or avoid to seek religious joy as a supreme good of our immortal natures. Every believer owes it to his God and Saviour, to himself, to the Church, and to the world, to verify in his inward experience and visible life the truth that "the fruit of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever," and that "whosoever believeth in Christ, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly do flow rivers of living water," "the Spirit now being given, because Jesus has been glorified."

If you, reader, affirm yourself "a believer in Jesus," and your experience and life do not accord with the above revelations, then your testimony and influence before the Church and the world are not for the truth, but against the truth. How and why the ministry and the churches do and can expect "that the Gentiles shall come to the light of Zion, and kings to the brightness of her rising," while the sacramental host is moving on very much as a funeral procession, singing their dirge songs, and testifying one to another of the loss of the blessedness each knew "when first he saw the Lord," of his utter impotence to "fly or go to reach eternal joys," is a mystery to me. Neither you nor I have a right to testify before the Church and world that you have found Christ, unless you can also testify that in Christ you have found God as "the everlasting light" of your soul. If you have not yet thus found Christ, He is yet to be found by you, and "you will seek Him and find Him" when,

and only when, "you shall search for Him with all your heart." Be assured of this, reader, that if "your peace is not as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea," and "the peace of God" and "joy of the Holy Ghost" do not abide in your heart, your "heart is not right with God," and your relations to Him must be newly and rightly adjusted, or your immortal interests are imperilled. When I, for example, became conscious that my primal Christian joy had faded out, leaving "an aching void" within, that God was not "my everlasting light," nor "the days of my mourning ended," and that my faith in Christ did not induce in my heart "joy unspeakable and full of glory," and that "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, did not keep my heart and mind through Christ Jesus," I said to myself, as I have before stated, "I know that I have missed my way, and that my inner life is not rightly adjusted relatively to Christ and His salvation. I know that I have essentially erred somewhere, and I will never rest, and will give my God no rest, until the error is discovered and corrected. I will never rest, nor faint in prayer, until I am conscious in myself of all the forms of moral purification, ' fruits of the Spirit,' 'rest of faith,' ' fulness of joy,' arid immortal fruitions revealed in the Scriptures as the blood bought privileges and immunities of the sons of God." It was because I thus reasoned and acted, and did not, as most believers do, content myself to "walk in darkness and have no light," that I was, at length, "led out of darkness into light," the marvellous light of God; and for these forty years, have had such divine fellowships, such endurances, such victories of faith, such enduring peace, quietness, assurance, and fulness of joy. All this, reader, is in reserve for you. You will become possessed of it, however, on this condition, that, with all sincerity, earnestness, and tireless perseverance, "God shall for this be inquired of by you to do it for you." If you do not value "the joy of the Lord" sufficiently to induce you to "search for it as for hid treasures," to inquire after it, pray for it, and rest not until you possess it, you, in all probability, will never find it in this world or the next. Nothing but the love and joy of the Lord in your heart, and filling it, will keep the world and "its affections and lusts" out of your heart. If the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding, does not keep your heart and mind by Christ Jesus," care and trouble, and discontent and worldly vexations, and fearful lookings for what may come upon you, will occupy them. You must "obtain joy and gladness," or "sorrow and sighing will not flee away." When you are told not to make any efforts to banish your cares or sorrows, or to induce religious peace and joy, you receive wise and healthful advice. The tempest of trouble and care and discontent dies within us, and the calmness of peace and holy joy reigns in our hearts, not at the bidding of our wills, but at the bidding of Christ. The rest which we cannot induce in ourselves, Christ gives us when we come unto Him for it. "God," and not we ourselves, "keeps us in perfect peace when we stay ourselves upon Him, because we trust in Him." Pardon, sanctification, and peace are all in common and alike "gifts of God through Jesus Christ our Lord," and are available to us, each on the same condition, namely, that "God for this be inquired of by us to do it for us." When inquirers are told, however, as they frequently are, not to think anything about their feelings, nor to give themselves any concern about them one way or the other, then advice is given which divine wisdom admonishes us not to heed. Moses prayed not unwisely, nor undirected by the Spirit of God, when he sent up the following petition: "Oh, satisfy us early with Thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein Thou has afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil." Nor was David undirected by the Spirit when he thus prayed, "Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto

Thee."

If Christ has been anointed to "bind up the broken-hearted," and to "set at liberty them that are bruised," broken hearts and bruised spirits should be taken to Him for healing. When He says to us, "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full," He specifically directs us to make religious joy a special object of thought and prayer. When the presence and love of Christ, and the power of His Spirit, fail to move and to melt our sensibilities, kindle emotion, and to stir up the great deep of the soul, then is a time for special heart-searching and prayer. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God." When I was once sitting in a circle of Christian friends, prayer was proposed, in which all were to lead in succession, one after the other. The prayer of a lady in that circle I shall never forget. It was to this effect, and nearly in these words: "Lord, when Thou didst take from me my only child, and all hope of its place being supplied by another, I said to Thee that Thou hadst made a great vacancy in my soul, a void which nothing but Thyself could fill, and that I trusted Thee so to fill that void with Thine own fulness, that I should never more feel the absence of that child. I told Thee that I must now have far more of Thyself than I had ever had before. I bless Thee that that prayer was heard, and that Thou didst so occupy my whole being with Thy manifested presence and love, that the absence of that dear one occasions no sense of loneliness at all. I joy to think of it now as in Thine everlasting arms, where I expect myself soon to be." The special form of the prayer was occasioned, I doubt not, by the peculiar tone of the conversation immediately preceding, the burden of which was the power of Christ to take away our sorrows as well as our sins, to perfect our joys as well as our virtues and graces, and to meet fully every want of our being as it arises. The lesson which we learn from such examples, as well as from the express teachings of the Word of God, is the great truth that our emotions, as well as our moral states, should be the objects of reflection, faith, and prayer. The divine direction is this: -- "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds by Christ Jesus." The promises pertaining to our peace are as really the objects of faith and prayer as those pertaining to our justification or sanctification. We should not, of course, expect that our emotive states shall be always of an ecstatic character, heaven having its seasons of silence as well as of singing and shouting. We should expect, however, to be "kept in perfect peace," and should trust God to render our "peace as a river, as well our "righteousness as the waves of the sea." When "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," does not "keep our hearts and minds by Christ Jesus," and "our joy is not full," we should conclude that our faith, prayer, or obedience "has been hindered."

Paul considered religious joy as an immutable condition of his "making full proof of his ministry." Let us carefully weigh his words: -- "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." When God shall become "the everlasting light" of His people, and "the days of their mourning shall be ended," then, as inspiration informs us, "will the Gentiles come to their light, and kings to the brightness of their rising." That which peculiarises the gospel, and distinguishes it from all other religions and forms of belief; is its sovereign power to "take away sin," and to bring in its

stead "everlasting righteousness," on the one hand, and, on the other, to "take away" sorrow in all its forms, and to induce in its place "everlasting consolations and good hope through grace." You must know this gospel, reader, not only in theory, but in full experience, as possessed of these two forms of sovereign power, or you fail essentially in fundamental qualifications to serve Christ effectively in any department of your divine and holy calling as a believer in Jesus.

02.B19. Miscellaneous Topics and Suggestions

Chapter 34 MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS AND SUGGESTIONS

There are certain general questions of a miscellaneous character -- questions which require special consideration before I close this treatise. I place them together, not because they are naturally connected, but because neither would demand a separate chapter.

Section A -- Giving Testimony in respect to Facts of Personal Experience. In many minds there is a strong prejudice against public testimony to facts of personal Christian experience. Such testimony, it is said, reveals pride of heart in the first instance, and tends to increase the evil in the next. Perhaps those who entertain such sentiments need a word of caution and admonition here. We should be very careful about impugning motives, "judging a brother, and setting at naught a brother." Let us for a moment contemplate the impeachment under consideration. I have been sick, apparently unto death, we will suppose, and have found a sovereign remedy in the use of a certain medicine, and have found by observation that the same medicine has had the same efficacy in all similar cases to which it has been applied. To commend the use of the medicine on the part of all who need it as I did, I state the fact of its efficacy in my own case and that of others. Is there good ground to impeach motives, and affirm a tendency to promote pride, on account of such testimony?

I become conscious of a spiritual necessity, a disease of the mind -- a want for which no remedy exists in myself; or in any finite objects in the universe around. I look to Christ as the great Physician of the soul, and that all-overshadowing want is perfectly met. As a means of commending this "precious faith" to all others, I tell them of "the great things which God hath done for me," how, when I sought unto Him, "He had mercy on me." I tell them, also, how it is that "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeps the hearts and minds, by Christ Jesus," of all who, "by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make known their requests unto God." Why is the motive to be impeached in such case any more than in that first presented? Why is a tendency to induce pride affirmed in one case any more than in the other?

Those who object to such testimony do, in fact, condemn the example of Christ, of the prophets, apostles, and all the sacred writers. Why did Christ testify to the fact of the saving power that resided in Him, and that the Father always heard when the Son prayed to Him? That men might "believe that Jesus is the Christ, and, believing, might have life through His name." Why did He direct the demoniac of Gadara to "go home to his kindred and friends and tell them how great things the Lord had done for him, and how He had mercy on him?" That, hearing, "they might believe, and that, believing, they might have life through His name.

Let us see if we cannot find an example of inspired wisdom -- an example bearing directly upon the subject before us. "I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Many

shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." "That which we have seen and heard," says the apostle John, "declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." Here is personal testimony to the fact of the highest attainment that can be made by a creature of God, "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." The reasons which justify such professions are obvious. The testimony was true, in the first instance, and was requisite to induce all believers to seek and attain the same divine fellowship and fulness of joy of which the apostle was possessed. Paul gives this testimony to his own attainments through the faith of Christ: "I am crucified with Christ" -- "By whom I am crucified to the world, and the world to me" "I thank my God, whom I serve with a pure conscience" I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content," and "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." His motive in giving such testimony to his own personal attainments is undeniable -- that "we may believe, and therefore speak," as he did. Those who question the propriety, expediency, and necessity of such testimony, have not, it is quite evident, taken their views on this subject from the Word of God. All depends upon the validity of the testimony, and the motive which prompted it. If I, for example, in what I have written of my own inner life, have consciously misstated facts, or "have sought my own glory," then Christ will put me to shame before Him at His coming. But if my single purpose has been to make known to you, reader, facts as they are, and to secure in you a full understanding and appreciation of your privileges and immunities as one of "the sons or daughters of the Lord, the Almighty," and as "a believer in Jesus," then I may reasonably expect the everlasting "smile of the Lord as the feast of my soul," on account of what I have written. "These things I have written, that your joy might be full."

Section B -- Proposed Remedies for Pride of Heart.

Pride of heart on the one hand, and subjection to appetite on the other, constitute the primal sins of human nature, and are the main sources of sin in all its forms. "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." If the grace of Christ were not adequate to save us from these primal sins, our salvation would be an impossibility. The remedy which the gospel prescribes for pride, for example, is very simple and of ready application -- namely, that we consider the spirit of pride, in all its forms and manifestations, as morally criminal in itself, and a great sin before God; that we sincerely repent of, and confess it as such; that we look to Christ to be saved from the penalty, and delivered from the spirit and power of the sin, and to perfect us in the opposite virtues, meekness and humbleness of mind. In the Scriptures, permit me to add here, self-ignorance is never represented as an element of humility, or as promotive of the same; nor is self-knowledge prohibited, or referred to as an element of pride, or as conducive to the same. On all subjects in common, believers are represented as "children of the light and of the day," and as living and acting "according to knowledge." While we are prohibited "thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think" -- that is, to think ourselves better than we really are -- we are positively required "to think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" that is, to understand our moral states, gifts, and adaptations as they are. Nothing is more particularly required of us than self-knowledge in the widest acceptation of the term. Nor does pride, according to the Bible, consist in our holding in high regard the virtues of

which we, as believers in Jesus, become possessed. When our characters, through faith in Christ, take on "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," they take on adornings "which, in the sight of God, are of great price," adornings on account of which "Christ is glorified in us," and "God is not ashamed to be called our God." "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our consciences, that, in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have our conversation in the world." When our Saviour uttered these words, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother," He intended to impress our minds with the conviction of the infinite importance and worth of such obedience.

It is equally manifest, also, that just commendation for moral excellence, in all its forms and manifestations, meets with the divine approval. In the Sermon on the Mount, our Saviour told the young converts before Him that they were "the salt of the earth," and "the light of the world." In the presence of Mary and the company assembled at the house of Simon, the Saviour affirmed that "she had done a good work upon Him," and that what she had done should "in all the world, wherever His gospel should be preached, be told as a memorial of her." "O woman! great is thy faith." "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel." Such was the conduct of our Saviour everywhere, and such also are the examples and teachings of the Bible throughout. One of its most striking peculiarities, that which most especially manifests the divine integrity of its writers, is the fact that men and things are set before us, with their good and bad qualities, just as they are. Commending goodness and good men is as absolutely required of us as is testifying against sin and bad men.

Nor, let me add once more, is the fact that we receive with gratitude and joy the approbation of our own consciences, and the approval and manifested favour of God, and of all the good in heaven and on earth, any evidence at all of pride in us. All this is the revealed reward of righteousness, and it would be no reward at all if we did not enjoy it. The perfection of Christian character, and the best evidence of true humbleness of mind, is a just and righteous appreciation and treatment of all objects of thought, both in relation to ourselves and others. Pride, on the other hand, makes self its centre, and the exaltation of self its supreme aim, and thus becomes the source and fountain of envy, detraction, defamation, self-boasting, and flattery, when commending others will secure personal ends. You meet an individual who always keeps himself; and only the bright sides of his character, before you. You know very well that pride is at the bottom of such representations. You meet with another individual, who manifests a just regard for persons and things, speaks of them as they are, and of himself but as a means of doing good. Here is "the honest man," and here too is the truly humble man. The reader will naturally infer from the above, that I do not approve of not a few of the representations we have in respect to pride and its remedies and preventions. In a very important article, one written by an individual who has great wisdom in teaching the essentials of the life of faith, I find the following statement and advice, which, of course, I do not approve: --

"Years ago I came across this sentence in an old book: ’Never indulge at the close of an action in any self-reflective acts of any kind, whether of self-congratulation or of self-despair. Forget the things that are behind the moment they are past, leaving them with God.’ It has been of unspeakable value to me. When the temptation comes, as it always does, to indulge in these reflections, either of one sort or the other, I turn from them at once, and positively refuse to think about my work at all, leaving it with the Lord to overrule the mistakes, and to bless it as He chooses." In another Book, "that dearest of Books, that excels every other," we find this precept:

"Let every man prove" (determine the real character of) "his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." If we have spoken or acted in any form for Christ, we are required absolutely to reflect upon what we have done, and know its character as it is. If we have spoken or acted well, we should thank God for the grace given to us. If not well, we should humble ourselves before the Lord, and seek grace and wisdom for the future. The whole life of the believer should be one of self-reflective activity. We should know what we have done, what we are doing, and what we ought to do in the future.

It is quite common with individuals to suppose it conducive to humility, and a sure preventive of pride, for Christians to hold a low estimate, of the Christian virtues of which they may be possessed. Because the prophet confessed that all "the righteousnesses" of a "disobedient and gainsaying people," were "as filthy rags," not a few believers suppose that humility requires that they employ the same language to represent the divine virtues with which Christ has adorned their character. If Christ, reader, has saved you from your sins, and has adorned your character and life with any form of Christian virtue -- and you are not His at all unless He has done so -- you do injustice to truth and to the honour of your Saviour when, in such confessions as the above, you represent Him as having put upon you a mass of "filthy rags." If; on the other hand, you do not place an infinite value upon those virtues, and do not seek to be perfected in the same, you will be certain to lose what you have received. Not a few individuals fail utterly to distinguish between flattery, which is a grievous sin, and a just appreciation and commendation of excellence wherever, and in whomsoever, it appears. A flatterer is one who idolises self and particular individuals, and appreciates excellence nowhere else, or who, for personal gain, and irrespective of truth, praises all he meets, and generally decries them behind their backs. Such an individual is "a spot in our feasts of charity," and "a cloud without water" everywhere. Christian integrity, on the other hand, judges and speaks truthfully of all men, and approves and commends goodness, and reprobates and reproves wrong, wherever they appear. The personal commendation of such persons has no tendency to promote pride, but everywhere conduces to "love and good works." Christ helped the special gifts of James and John by naming them "sons of thunder," and of Peter by naming him "a rock," and rendered permanent the integrity of Nathaniel by calling him an "Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Just commendation is one of the divinely-appointed means by which we are to "support the weak, comfort the feeble-minded," and encourage the timid. Should any desire to understand what kind of encouragement and commendation young converts should receive "for their work and labour of love," let them read the Epistles to the Thessalonians. Take the following as an example: -- "And ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the Word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything." How such commendations tended to strengthen and encourage those converts to persevere and endure unto the end! Not a few of my pupils remind me, when I meet them, of the life-benefits which they received from words of encouragement and commendation at particular crises of their student-lives. The prejudice which exists in the Churches against true and just commendation of virtuous deeds and manifestations has no foundation in Scripture teaching or example.

Section C -- Confessing Sin.

If you, reader, have sinned against God, by doing what you ought not, or omitting to do what you ought, if you are living below your known and acknowledged privileges, "an evil thing and a bitter" is written against you in the book of God. Careless and general confessions, my brother, will not meet your case. Your humiliation must be deep and unfeigned, or those sins will stand against you at the eternal judgment. If; with "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," you shall "confess your sins," you will be "forgiven and cleansed from all unrighteousness." If you fail to do this, your expectation of being "saved from death" will be "as the giving up of the ghost." God will not accept at our hands, as the condition of pardon, any general, formal, and unheart-felt confessions of sin. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Are you thus, my brother, really and truly repenting of the sins which you admit to characterise your daily life? I refer to such as admit this to be the fact in their case.

We are now prepared to understand and appreciate one of the most offensive and alarming features of ordinary religious service. In such services, the Church publicly acknowledges herself, and that before God and the world, guilty of sins of the most inexcusable and aggravating character, of "doing many things which ought not to be done, and of leaving undone many things which ought to be done." Yet those sins are confessed with a manner and spirit which clearly indicate that said sins are very little, if at all, cared about, and the absence of all serious intention to abandon them. No custom whatever can have a stronger tendency to "sear the conscience," harden the heart, and "render our bands strong." In all such confessions, we say to men of the world, If you are anxious about your sins, you concern yourselves about that of which we have very little regard. By such confessions, young disciples are schooled into hardened indifference to their covenant vows. Yet, perhaps most professing Christians seem quite satisfied with a prayer, however cold and formal it may be, if it contains a confession of daily sin, and greatly dissatisfied with one, however fervent, if it wants such confession. For one, I never gratify such a prejudice, and, as I view the subject, I should peril my immortal interests by so doing. That of sinners I am one of the chief, I well know, and confess this fact most sincerely. Hence I am always at home in the utterance of the Lord’s Prayer. Sins of "this present time" I publicly confess when my conscience convicts me of the same, when such sins are publicly known, and I am conscious of unfeigned repentance for what I confess. Secret sins, when convicted of them, I adjust between conscience and God. I do not feel authorised, but prohibited by the Word of God, to make confession before a congregation that all believers present are living in the daily commission of known sin. I should "judge my brethren, and set at nought my brethren" by so doing. If we should be solemnly sincere anywhere, it should be in our confessions of sin. The fearful influence of the habit of making heartless confessions is manifest in this, that those who are most zealous about their general confessions will not allow you to admonish them in the most gentle manner for any specific sin, nor even for a common fault. "Thus saith the Lord, Be ye not mockers, lest your hands be made strong."

Section D -- Important Misapprehension. In his work entitled "The Higher Life," one of the most valuable publications of the class that has yet appeared, Dr Boardman makes a statement to this effect: "The brethren at Oberlin had made most important attainments in the divine life. For what they had attained, they sought a name, asking, ’Is it manna?’ They at length designated these attainments by the words ’Christian perfection,’ or ’entire sanctification.’ In doing this," as Dr B. infers, "they greatly erred. They should have gone forward preaching Christ without giving a name

to the attainments they had made." In this our brother is fully right, supposing him to have been correctly informed of the real facts of the case. Through misinformation, however, he has most essentially erred in his statement of facts. No question like this ever arose among us, namely, What shall we call this state to which we have attained? In the term "Higher Life," Dr Boardman does not, as I understand him, merely present a name for personal attainments consciously made, but a revealed privilege to which "believers in Jesus" are authorised to expect to attain. So with us in the use of the terms above designated. In all our writings, such terms are employed exclusively to represent what we regard as revealed privileges of the sons of God, and never in any instance to represent mere personal attainments. The question, what attainments we have made, lies wholly between our consciences and our God. The question, what are our revealed privileges, is to be settled, not by an appeal to the conscious or visible attainments of any individual or class of individuals, but wholly and exclusively by reference "to the law and to the testimony." The Spirit of the Lord does know, and He only can know, what "things are possible with God" on the one hand, and what "things are possible to him that believeth" on the other. In determining the possibilities of faith, we must refer exclusively to what God, by His Spirit, has taught us on the subject. In my endeavours to find the true revealed answer to such inquiries, I judge, that I may truly say, that I proceeded with the greatest care and circumspection. I at once perceived that if God, as many suppose He has, has absolutely revealed the fact that no believer in Christ ever has been, or ever will be, in this life, saved from all sin, that settles for ever the whole question. My first inquiry therefore, was directed to all those passages which, as I had supposed, and many do suppose, do teach the doctrine of Christian Imperfection, that is, of the continued sinfulness of all believers in Jesus. In my examinations, I determined to take each passage by itself; and, in the clear light of the known and acknowledged laws of interpretation, determine its real meaning, and then its bearing upon the inquiry before us. This I did, and, to my surprise, found that not one of these passages presented the remotest evidence in favour of the doctrine it had been supposed to teach. In the work on "Christian Perfection," all these passages are fully explained, and the explanation there given has never yet been replied to.

I then turned to the inquiry, What do the Scriptures directly and positively teach in respect to the privileges of "the sons of God" in this life? On this subject, as I found, the teachings of the Bible are of the plainest and most absolute character possible. In regard to what is revealed respecting Christ’s power to save from sin, let this one passage suffice: "Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." The original word rendered uttermost is, as I have said, and as every Greek scholar knows, one of the strongest words that can be found in the Greek or any other language, being compounded of two words, pantos, which means a1l, and telos, uniformly translated in our New Testament perfection. That Christ, in the most absolute sense, is able to save us from all sin, is undeniable. What can be the object of revealing this fact in this absolute form, but to induce us to trust Christ thus to save us? Any other supposition affirms that His grace and love are limited, while His revealed power to save is unlimited.

Equally explicit are the teachings of inspiration in respect to the provisions of grace for our present salvation from sin. "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish;" "who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto

Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Hence we are told that "we are complete in Him," and "can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us," and that "all things are possible to him that believeth." If such revelations do not authorise us to look to Christ to be saved from all sin, expecting to receive nothing less from Him, they do not authorise us thus to trust Him for anything at all. But what of the promises which are given unto us for the revealed purpose that "by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust"? Take one of these as an example of the rest. "Faithful (trustworthy) is He that calleth you, who also will do it." No promise can be more explicit and positive than is this. In regard to the nature of the blessing promised, no candid inquirer after the true meaning of the Word will err in judgment "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The original term rendered wholly, like that rendered uttermost in the passage above cited, is compounded of two words -- one olos, meaning all and the other telos, meaning perfection. The promise before us presents to our faith sanctification in this utter fulness, or it authorises us to expect nothing at all. In the remaining portion of the verse, preservation in this entirely sanctified state is also designated. Nothing less can be implied by the words, "your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," To limit such promises is to "limit the Holy One of Israel" in a form which does peril to our immortal interests. In the midst of such revelations, which abound everywhere in the Scriptures, stands this as the crowning glory of the whole: -- "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end, Amen." I accordingly hold and teach "Christ as the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and as a Saviour from sin as fully and perfectly in the sphere of our sanctification, as in that of our justification. I dare not limit His grace in the one sphere any more than in the other. If I am asked, "Do you, as Paul did, serve God with a pure conscience?" I answer, as Paul did, "Yes." But do you never commit a sin? I answer such a question in the words of Paul, "I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord." But is it not well, since people are so much prejudiced against the word perfection and kindred terms, to avoid, their use? To such questions my reply is ready. "I give place by subjection" to such prejudice, "no not for an hour." Since these terms are most frequent in the teachings of our Saviour and of His inspired apostles, and represent their most important and impressive truths, I should convict myself of being "ashamed of the gospel of Christ," if I should avoid presenting that gospel in "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." We should more than suspect our doctrines, when they induce in us prejudice against words employed under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, as Christ and all inspired writers employ those under consideration. A prejudice which, as this undeniably does, tenders wholly inoperative upon the heart and conscience large portions of the most important teachings of Christ and of His inspired apostles, is a prejudice to be repented of, and not gratified. Who does not know that, when very many ministers and members of our churches meet with a passage containing any of the words under consideration, they pass such passage by without reflecting upon it at all? Such relations to the Word of God are most perilous to our highest spiritual interests. It was by no inadvertence that the Spirit of God put such words into the New Testament, and it is no indication of veneration in us for the wisdom of that Spirit, when we become prejudiced against words and forms of language which He so frequently employs, and that to represent the most important truths of God.

Section E -- Great and Little Faith

Much is said, by our Saviour especially, about great and little faith. The latter considers the difficulties to be overcome in the accomplishment of needed and required ends, and becomes appalled and doubtful in view of the same. The former thinks of the power of Christ to do all that we need, and "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," and of His absolute fidelity to His promises, and consequently "rejoices in the hope of the glory of the Lord." The latter thinks of the vastness of our necessities, and of the absence of all visible means to meet them, and thus becomes "careful and troubled about many things." The former thinks of the wealth and. resources of our Father in heaven, and of His omnipresent "help in trouble," and "by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, makes known its requests unto God," and, as a consequence, is "kept by the peace of God, which passeth all understanding." The language of the latter is, "If thou canst do anything, help us, and have mercy on us." The language of the former is, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean," and "Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." The former takes a feeble hold of the love and promises of Christ, and with doubting expectation approaches the throne of grace." The former magnifies the love of Christ, and laying hold, with a death-grasp, upon the promised help, replies to every difficulty and seeming repulse, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master’s table." The latter, consequently, receives rebuke when it obtains the blessing sought, while the former receives both the blessing and the divine commendation, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee as thou wilt;" "I will; be thou clean;" and "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel." Had the disciples been possessed of great faith, they would have reasoned thus amidst the terrors of that night-tempest, namely: "We are just as safe here as Christ is. The Father will not suffer Him, nor a hair of His head, to perish here, and Christ will care for us as the Father does for Him. He will live, and because He shall live, we shall live also." Thus their quietness and assurance would have been absolute under those very circumstances.

Remember this, reader, that Christ is most pleased with you and with me, when He sees in us this great faith which counts it a very small and easy thing for Him, with His infinite power and boundless love, grace, and resources, to meet all the necessities of creatures so small as we are, and which never doubts or questions His absolute fidelity to His promises. The firmer our grasp upon His plighted word, the more ineffable is His delight in us, and the more deeply is His heart moved towards us. Nothing will be impossible to us if our faith does not fail.

There is still another equally essential particular in which great and little faith differ the one from the other. The latter is not only staggered by things vast and difficult, really counting these as "too hard for God," but equally so at the minute, counting our daily and momentary cares and perplexities as of such a trifling character as to be beneath the notice of the Almighty, and thus, failing alike in respect to the vast and the minute, finds true rest and peace nowhere. Great faith counts nothing that concerns us as God’s sons and daughters as above the power or beneath the notice and care of our heavenly Father, and thus in a "universal trust and confidence, and continued prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving""in all things" alike, finds peace, quietness, assurance, and deliverance everywhere. Little faith opens its ear to "the prattle of infidelity" against the physical value of prayer," loses all confidence in regard to God’s control of physical events, and in regard to all His promises in respect to our temporal concerns. Great faith, on the other hand, "looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein," and rests with absolute

assurance upon the testimony and promise of the Author of the universe, regarding Him as better informed in respect to His relations to His own works than creatures of yesterday can be.

We often hear about "trusting Christ in the dark" that is, counting Him faithful that hath "promised," when we have nothing but God's naked word to lean upon, and all is darkness and tempest around us. Permit me to give a single fact here in illustration of this great truth. In the early settlements in America, people are accustomed to dig their cellars beneath their rude habitations, and to enter those cellars through trap-doors in the centre of the main room of the house. An a father, without a light, was in his cellar one day, a little child looked over the brink into the palpable darkness beneath. "Do you see me, my child?" asked the father. "No, pa; it is all dark down where you are, and I can't see anything there." "Well, I see you, and my arms are right beneath you. Step right off now, and you will drop into my arms. Don't be afraid at all. I won't let you fall." Thinking a moment, the child said, "Pa, I will do as you tell me," and stepping off, found itself safe and happy in those arms. How lovingly did that father receive that trusting child to his embrace! So reader, beneath every one of "the promises are "the everlasting arms." With God's promise to receive you, do not fear to let go every hold, and drop into those "everlasting arms," however dark all but the naked promise may appear. When you shall become thus trustful, you will "enter into rest."

Section F -- When the Gospel will Exert its Full Power over our Hearts and Character.

One question more demands our special attention before closing this chapter. The question is this -- When, and upon what conditions, will the gospel exert its full power upon our hearts and character? My method of attaining this high end is this: -- My desire and aim is, that each truth, each precept and promise of the divine Word, shall exert its own distinct and utmost influence upon my mind. When I meet with any such truth, promise, or precept, I place myself before it, and abide in its presence until, through the Spirit, it sheds its full influence upon my mind. I read, for example, the following absolute command of Christ: - "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." I do not turn away from this precept, saying obedience to it is not expected of creatures. I read the prayer, on the other hand, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is done in heaven," and I thus understand clearly the meaning of the precept.

I read still further the solemn asseveration, "Whosoever, therefore, heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man that built his house upon a rock;" and "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man that built his house upon the sand." I hence conclude that Christ was in earnest when He uttered this command, and expects me to heed it; to regard myself as without excuse for not rendering the obedience required, or for resting at all when consciously coming short of that obedience. I accordingly look to Christ, as the Mediator of the new covenant, to have Him put this, His own precept, "in my heart, and write it in my inward parts," and cause me to keep it. So when I read of Christ's power to save, and of the provisions and promises of His grace, I conclude that God is in earnest in such revelations, and means what He says. Without limiting the meaning of what is written, without adding to or taking from the sacred Word of God, "counting Him faithful that hath promised," and not saying to myself; "Christ will not do this, and will not do that," I look to Him to "save me unto the uttermost," as He is able to do; to render His own provisions of grace fully effective in my experience; to render real in me, in all their fulness, every one of "the exceeding great and precious promises;" and, finally, to do in and for me "exceeding abundantly above all

that I ask or think." Thus to believe, and thus to trust, I recognise my obligation as absolutely infinite, and I do thus believe and trust. In the same manner do I treat the admonitions of the gospel, such, for example, as the following: -- "Fear Him who, after He hath killed the body, hath power to cast into hell;" "Be sober, be vigilant;" "Watch unto prayer;" "Hold fast till I come;" "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast even unto the end;" and "Let no man take thy crown." While, with "full assurance of faith," "full assurance of hope," and "full assurance of understanding," I sit under the canopy of God’s "exceeding great and precious promises," I desire to have all such admonitions throw their full and solemn shadows over my mind. Thus trusting, thus believing, and thus heeding all that is written, we shall "walk in the light, as God is in the light," and our "feet shall never stumble." Heeding a part, and disregarding a part, of what God has written for our instruction, consolation, and admonition, we shall "walk in darkness and have no light," and shall very likely be rejected at last as "reprobate silver." And now, reader, "I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." "These things have I written unto you, that you may believe, and that believing you may have life through His name." THE END.

03.00. Scriptural Doctrine of Christian Perfection

SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION by Asa Mahan, D.D.

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[Scanned for the computer by Rick Friedrich of Alethea In Heart 12/99-11/01] FOREWORD TO THE 1962 REPRINT

Few Bible doctrines have been more maligned and misrepresented than Christian Perfection. Dr. Asa Mahan, D.D. was one of the most able champions and examples of that glorious truth the church has seen.

Sanctified, while President of Oberlin College, he infused students and faculty with an insatiable desire to "spread scriptural holiness over these lands." He was mightily used of God in winning thousands to Christ and holiness.

Dr. Mahan was an Englishman, well qualified by education and experience to write and teach the "deep things of God." He was contemporary with many of the great souls of the 19th century, Charles G. Finney the great revivalist, Dr. Daniel Steele and many others.

"Christian Perfection" is a small book, but it has been much sought after by saintly scholars. It is being reproduced unabridged through the good providence of God and the kindness of W. Reed of Wales who has loaned his copy for this reprint. The Reverend H. E. Schmul 124 Georgetown Rd. Salem, Ohio LONDON, DEC. 1, 1874.

DEAR BROTHER WARNER,

It is now about forty years since, after the most careful and prayerful examination of the Word of God upon the subject, I embraced the views set forth in my work, entitled "Christian Perfection." All my subsequent examinations, and all my observations of facts, from that period to the present, have tended but in one direction—to confirm and render absolute my confidence in the truth and supreme importance of those views. Our SAVIOUR has, Himself, stated definitely the condition on which the world will come to know, that "he came forth from God." "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." My life-labours are, therefore, supremely directed to this one end—"the perfecting of the saints."

Yours in the hands of Christ, ASA MAHAN.

INTRODUCTION.

MORE than twenty years ago a good brother said to us, "I have a good book here I will give you, and if you will read it through on your knees it will do you five pounds' worth of good." We wanted to get good, and accepted the book; it was "Christian Perfection, by Dr. Mahan." We read it through on our knees, and got good—good, not to be balanced by five pound notes. We knew something of the experience of Christian Perfection, and this book greatly tended to show its scriptural foundation, and to establish us in the faith. We never read any other book through on our knees, save our Bible; we have thus read that annually every year since, and every year of our life are more fully convinced that it is God's will that His people should be fully saved from all sin, and be "filled with the Holy Ghost." During the last twenty years we have read almost everything on the subject we could lay our hands on, but on the whole, know of no human production which more clearly sets forth the scriptural character of this great grace than does the present work. Meeting with the author, he readily gave us permission to reprint his work, for the edification and salvation of those interested in the subject. The question is not, "What is the experience of the Church?" but, "What are the provisions of grace?" The experience of the Church may be far too low, and must never be our standard of appeal. God has more light to pour upon the world than we have yet seen; and more grace to bestow than we have yet received. The question with which we should approach God's word is, "What is my Father's will concerning me?" George Fox, the Quaker, preached the Gospel of salvation from sin—Antinomians met him at his open air meetings, and contended that we could never get further in this world than, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" They would proceed to quote passages which they supposed supported their views, but the Quaker stopt them with, "Nay, friend, thou must not take God's Holy Word to prove thy dirty doctrine!" And he was right. God's Holy Word enjoins a holy religion. A good brother says:—"The doctrine we contend for is not limited to a bare and questionable place, a doubtful and uncertain existence in the holy records, but is repeatedly and abundantly.—explicitly, and with great clearness—embodied as a cardinal feature throughout the whole system. It breathes in the prophecy—thunders in the law—murmurs in the narrative—whispers in the promises—supplicates in the prayers—sparkles in the poetry—resounds in the songs—speaks in the types—glows in the imagery—voices in the language—and beams in the spirit of the whole scheme, from its Alpha to its Omega—from its beginning to its end. Holiness! Holiness needed! Holiness required! Holiness offered! Holiness attainable! Holiness a present duty—a present privilege—a present enjoyment, is the progress and completeness of its wondrous theme! It is the truth glowing all over—webbing all through revelation; the glorious truth which sparkles, and sings, and shouts in all its history, and biography, and poetry, and prophecy, and precept, and promise, and prayer; the great central truth of the system. The wonder is that all do not see, that any rise up to question, a truth so conspicuous, so glorious, so full of comfort." The experience of Dr. Mahan, as related towards the end of the work, goes to show that the reception of this grace was to him what the Old Methodists would call the "Second Blessing." He was a Professor in a College, and a successful Minister of the Gospel, and yet but a babe in grace. He had pointed many sinners to Christ for justification, and yet often felt as if he would give the world, if he had it, if some one would help him into the enjoyment of that which he dimly saw was in reversion for him. However, the time of his deliverance came, and now for about forty years he has lived and preached on a higher plane, and

has seen a complete revolution of thought on this subject in the Church with which he is associated. His testimony is the more important, in the estimation of some persons, coming as it does from outside Methodism, and yet according with her acknowledged standards. A good brother said to us, some time since, when we had been insisting on the doctrine as a present privilege, to be received at once by faith, that there were some amongst us who were teaching that it was a grace into which we were to grow, but he had always believed we were to receive it at once as God’s gift, and then grow in it. That was evidently Mr. Wesley’s view of the subject. In the early part of the Methodist Revival, many were brought into the enjoyment of full salvation. Concerning these, he said:—

"Not trusting to the testimony of others, I carefully examined most of these myself; and every one (after the most careful inquiry, I have not found an exception either in Great Britain or Ireland), has declared that his deliverance from sin was instantaneous; that the change was wrought in a moment. Had half of these, or one third, or one in twenty declared that it was gradually wrought in them, I should have believed this with regard to them, and thought that some were gradually sanctified, and some instantaneously. But as I have not found in so long a space of time a single person speaking thus, as all who believe they are sanctified, declare with one voice that the change was wrought in a moment, I cannot but believe that sanctification is commonly, if not always, an instantaneous work."

We heard Dr. Mahan, now in his seventy-sixth year, preaching the doctrine of holiness with uncommon energy of body and mind, and we asked him to give us a line to prefix to this issue of his work, saying if his opinions were still unchanged, and the following day we received the communication which we print.

We have ventured on a large edition, in order to be able to offer it at a low price, and now send it forth in God’s name to do His work. We hope to spend our days in sanctified effort to "fill Jerusalem with this doctrine," and for Christ and His Church are yours, in the King’s Highway of Holiness.

GEORGE WARNER.

65, Stepney Green, London, E.,

January, 1875.

Chapter 60

03.01. The Nature of Christian Perfection

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

DISCOURSE I. THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."— Matthew 5:48.

Two important features of this passage demand our special attention:—1. The demand, "Be perfect." 2. The nature and extent of the command; "even as your Father in heaven is perfect." In other words, we are here required to be as perfect, as holy, as free from all sin, in our sphere as creatures, as God is in his as our Creator and our Sovereign. My design in the present discourse is to answer this one question,—What is perfection in holiness? In answering this inquiry, I would remark, that perfection in holiness implies a full and perfect discharge of our entire duty, of all existing obligations in respect to God and all other beings. It is perfect obedience to the moral law. It is "loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and our neighbour as ourselves." It implies the entire absence of all selfishness, and the perpetual presence and all-pervading influence of pure and perfect love. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." In the Christian, perfection in holiness implies the consecration of his whole being to Christ—the subjection of all his powers and susceptibilities to the control of one principle,—"faith on the son of God." This is what the moral law demands of him in his circumstances. Were the Christian in that state in which he should "eat and drink, and do all that he does for the glory of God," in which his eye should be perfectly single to this one object; or in which the action of all his powers should be controlled by faith, which works by love, he would then, I suppose, have attained to a state of entire sanctification—his character would be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Every duty to every being in existence would be discharged.

It will readily be perceived, that perfect holiness, as above described, does not imply perfect wisdom, the exclusive attribute of God. The Scriptures, speaking of the human nature of Christ, affirm, that he "increased in wisdom." This surely does not imply that his holiness was less perfect at one time than at another. So of the Christian. His holiness may be perfect in kind, but finite in degree, and in this sense imperfect; because his wisdom and knowledge are limited, and in this sense imperfect.

Holiness, in a creature, may also be perfect, and yet progressive—progressive, not in its nature, but in degree. To be perfect, it must be progressive in the sense last mentioned, if the powers of the subject are progressive. He is perfect in holiness, whose love at each successive moment corresponds with the extent of his powers. "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

Hence I remark that perfection in holiness does not imply, that we now love God with all the strength and intensity with which redeemed spirits in heaven love him. The depth and intensity of our love depend, under all circumstances, upon the vigour and reach of our powers, and the extent and distinctness of our vision of Divine truth. "Here we see through a glass darkly; there face to

face." Here our powers are comparatively weak; there they will be endowed with an immortal and tireless vigour. In each and every sphere, perfection in holiness implies a strength and intensity of love corresponding with the reach of our powers, and the extent and distinctness of our vision of truth in that particular sphere. The child is perfect in holiness who perpetually exercises a filial and affectionate obedience to all the Divine requisitions, and loves God with all the powers which it possesses as a child. The man is perfect in holiness who exercises the same supreme and affectionate obedience to all that God requires, and loves him to the full extent of his knowledge and strength as a man. The saint on earth is perfect, when he loves with all the strength and intensity rendered practicable by the extent of his knowledge and reach of his powers in his present sphere. The saint in heaven will be favoured with a seraph's vision, and a seraph's power. To be perfect there, he must love and adore with a seraph's vigour, and burn with a seraph's fire. To present this subject in a somewhat more distinct and expanded form, the attention of the reader is now invited to a few remarks upon 1 Thessalonians 5:23,—"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The prayer of the apostle for Christians here is, in the language of Dr. Scott, that the "very God of peace" "would sanctify them wholly, and in respect to their entire nature, as consisting of a rational and immortal soul, an animal life, with its various sensitive appetites, and a material body; that every sense, member, organ, and faculty might be completely purified, and devoted to the service of God; and that thus they might be preserved blameless till the coming of Christ." In short, the prayer of the apostle is, that all the powers and susceptibilities of our being may not only be purified from all that is unholy, but wholly sanctified and devoted to Christ, and for ever preserved in that state. Now, the powers and susceptibilities of our nature are all comprehended in the following enumeration:—the will, the intellect, and our mental and physical susceptibilities and propensities. The question to which the special attention of the reader is invited is this: When are we in a perfectly sanctified and blameless state, in respect to the action of all these powers and susceptibilities?

1. That we be in a perfectly sanctified and blameless state in regard to our wills, implies, that the action of all our voluntary powers be in entire conformity to the will of God; that every choice, every preference, and every volition, be controlled by a filial regard to the Divine requisitions. The perpetual language of the heart must be, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?"

2. That we "be preserved blameless" in regard to our intellect, does not imply that we never think of what is evil. If this were so, Christ was not blameless, because he thought of the temptations of Satan. Nor could the Christian repel what is evil, as he is required to do. To repel evil, the evil itself must be before the mind, as an object of thought. To be blameless in respect to the action of our intellectual powers, does imply, 1. That every thought of evil be instantly suppressed and repelled. 2. That they be constantly employed on the inquiry, what is the truth and will of God, and by what means we may best meet the demands of the great law of love. 3. That they be employed in the perpetual contemplation of "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," in thinking of these things also. When the intellectual powers are thus employed, they are certainly in a blameless state.

3. That our feelings and mental susceptibilities be preserved blameless, does not imply that they are, at all times and circumstances, in the same intensity of excitement, or in the same identical

state. This the powers and laws of our being forbid. Nor, in that case, could we obey the command, "Rejoice with those that do rejoice, and weep with those that weep." Nor does it imply that no feelings can exist in the mind, which, under the circumstances then present, it would be improper to indulge. A Christian, for example, may feel a very strong desire to speak for Christ under circumstances when it would be improper for him to speak. The feeling itself is proper. But we must be guided by wisdom from above in respect to the question, when and where we are to give utterance to our feelings. That our feelings and mental susceptibilities be in a blameless state, does imply, 1. That they all be held in perfect and perpetual subjection to the will of God. 2. That they be in perfect and perpetual harmony with the truth and will of God as apprehended by the intellect, and thus constituting a spotless mirror, through which there shall be a perfect reflection of whatsover things are "true," "honest," just," "pure," "lovely," and of "good report."

4. That our "bodies be preserved blameless," does not, of course, imply that they are free from fatigue, disease, or death. Nor does it imply that no desire be excited through our physical propensities, which, under existing circumstances, it would be unlawful to indulge. The feeling of hunger in Christ, under circumstances in which indulgence was not proper, was not sinful. The consent of the will to gratify the feeling, and not the feeling itself, renders us sinners. That we be preserved in a sanctified and blameless state in respect to our bodies, does imply, 1. That we endeavour to acquaint ourselves with all the laws of our physical constitution. 2. That in regard to food, drink, and dress, and in regard to the indulgence of all our appetites and physical propensities, there be a sacred and undeviating conformity to these laws. 3. That every unlawful desire be instantly suppressed, and that all our propensities be held in perfect subjection to the will of God. 4. That our bodies, with all our physical powers and propensities, be "presented to God as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable," to be employed in his service.

Such is Christian Perfection. It is the consecration of our whole being to Christ, and the perpetual employment of all our powers in his service. It is the perfect assimilation of our entire character to that of Christ, having at all times, and under all circumstances, the "same mind that was also in Christ Jesus." It is, in the language of Mr. Wesley, "in one view, purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is the giving God all the heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God. In another view, it is all the mind that was in Christ Jesus, enabling us to walk as he walked. It is the circumcision of the heart from all filthiness, from all inward as well as outward pollution. It is the renewal of the heart in the whole image of God, the full likeness of him that created it. In yet another, it is loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves."

REMARKS.

I. We will, in the first place, notice some of the features of the subject now under consideration, in respect to which all evangelical Christians are agreed.

1. All, I have no doubt, will admit that the nature of Christian perfection has been correctly stated in the preceding remarks; that were any individual actually in the state there described, his moral and Christian character would be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

2. All agree that this entire perfection in holiness is definitely and positively required of us in the Bible, and that, for not rendering such obedience to God, we are wholly without excuse.

3. All agree that the fact, that one is not thus perfect, should be to him a subject of deep repentance and humiliation, and of unfeigned sorrow and contrition of heart. It is certainly no pleasing feature of Christian character, that we are living in partial disobedience to the reasonable requirements of our God and Saviour; and the individual that can contemplate the fact that he is thus living, without deep' unfeigned, and unmingled contrition, penitence, and self-abasement, gives fearful evidence that he is a stranger to the love of Christ.

4. All admit that it is the indispensable duty of every Christian to aim at entire perfection in holiness, and that the individual, who is not aiming at a full discharge of every duty, is wanting in, at least, one fundamental requisite of Christian character.

5. All agree that, we are not only under obligation to aim at such a state, but to make it the subject of constant and fervent prayer, that God himself will thus sanctify us.

6. All agree that it is practicable for professors of religion, generally, to make far higher attainments in holiness than they now do, In view of this admission, let me ask the question—Can he be a Christian who is conscious that he is living far below his privileges, and is yet comparatively satisfied with his present state, and is not making vigorous and prayerful efforts to arise to the full standard of practicable attainment? Is he not living in the habitual and allowed neglect of an acknowledged duty?

7. All agree that no line can be drawn this side of entire perfection in holiness, beyond which it is not practicable for the Christian to go.

8. All agree that, at death, or a short period prior to that event, every Christian does arrive at a state of entire sanctification.

Such are the questions connected with this subject, in reference to which all Christians are agreed. We will now,

II. In the second place, consider the question in respect to which they differ. It is in reference to the simple question, Whether we may now, during the progress of the present life, attain to entire perfection in holiness, and whether it is proper for us to indulge the anticipation of making such attainments? One part of the Church affirm, that the perfect obedience which God requires of us, we may render to him. The other affirm, that it is criminal for us to expect to render that obedience. One part affirm that we ought to aim at entire perfection in holiness, with the expectation of attaining to that state. The other part affirm, that we ought to aim at the same perfection in holiness, with the certain expectation of not attaining to that state. On the one hand, it is affirmed, that we ought to pray that the "very God of peace will sanctify us wholly, and preserve our whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," with the expectation that God will answer our prayers by the bestowment of that very blessing. On the other hand, it is affirmed, that we ought to put up that identical prayer, with the certain expectation of not receiving the blessing which we "desire of him." On the one hand, it is affirmed that grace is provided in the Gospel to render the Christian, even in this life, "perfect in every good work to do the will of God" On the other hand, it is affirmed, that no such grace is provided.

Such is a fair and unvarnished statement of the questions connected with the subject under consideration, in respect of which Christians agree and disagree.

III. No evil can result from the belief that entire perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, provided the true standard of perfection be kept constantly and distinctly before the mind. No one can show anything intrinsic in this doctrine, thus entertained, at which the Church ought to be alarmed. On the other hand, the belief of this doctrine, under the circumstances supposed, must be of the highest practical utility; because it lays the only adequate foundation for the most vigorous and prayerful efforts after those attainments in holiness, at which all admit we are bound to aim. To aim at a state, with the certain expectation of not reaching it, must be a hard task, truly, and must render all our efforts well nigh powerless. To aim at a state, on the other hand, with the belief that it is attainable, is the indispensable condition of efficient action.

IV. Whatever our present condition and circumstances may be, there is no presumption in our indulging the expectation of attaining to entire perfection in holiness, provided corresponding provisions are made in the Gospel, and God himself has promised thus to sanctify us. If Christ has promised to guard us against all temptation, we ought to expect to be thus kept by him, whatever the temptations may be which beset us. If God, on condition of our trusting him for this very blessing, has promised to "sanctify us wholly," we ought to expect to be thus sanctified. In view of such provisions and promises, there is no more presumption in expecting perfect, than partial sanctification; since our faith, alike in both instances, rests not upon an arm of flesh, but upon the grace and power of God.

V. The question, Whether entire perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, depends exclusively upon the question, What are the nature and extent of the provisions of the Gospel for our present sanctification, and of the "exceeding great and precious promises" of Divine grace? In pursuing our inquiries in respect to this question, we are to look away from our condition and circumstances as sinners, and from our natural powers as moral agents, to the provisions and promises of the grace of God. If the "riches of Christ’s inheritance in the saints" comprehends their entire sanctification in this life, we certainly are under obligations infinite to possess that inheritance in all its fullness. Are you, Christian, prepared to enter upon the investigation of the subject before us, with the simple inquiry, what has God provided for and promised to me, as a Christian? When will the Church be again able to say, "We have known and believed the love which the Father hath unto us?"

VI. Finally, inasmuch as entire perfection in holiness is required of us, not only in the law, but also in the Gospel, and is a ceaseless demand of our being, we are under complete obligation to approach the inquiry, Whether the doctrine, that such perfection is attainable in this life, is contained in the Bible? with the hope of finding it there. To this inquiry the attention of the reader will be directed in the following discourse.

03.02. Perfection in Holiness Attainable

DISCOURSE II.

PERFECTION IN HOLINESS ATTAINABLE.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect."— Matthew 5:48. THE object of the preceding discourse was, to illustrate and explain the nature of Christian perfection. The object of the present discourse is to answer the inquiry, "Is such a state attainable in this life?"—to ascertain the fact, whether it is practicable for us, as Christians, to consecrate our entire being, with all its towers and susceptibilities, to Christ, and to live under the continual influence of the all-pervading and all-controlling principle of pure and perfect love—"of faith on the Son of God?"

I use the terms attainable and practicable, with reference not merely to our power as moral agents, but also with respect to the provisions and promises of Divine grace. If provision is made in the Gospel for the entire sanctification of believers in this life; if God has promised to render those "perfect in every good work to do his will," by whom he is inquired of by faith to do it for them,—then is such a state, in the highest and most common acceptation of the term, attainable; and we are under the most sacred obligation to aim at that state, with the full and joyful expectation of attaining it. The question now returns, Is perfection in holiness, in the sense of the term as above explained, attainable in this life? That it is attainable, I argue from the following reasons:—

I. The Bible positively affirms that provision is made in,the Gospel for the attainment of that state, and that to make such provision is one of the great objects of Christ's redemption. Romans 8:3-4,—"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." The phrase "righteousness of the law," obviously means the precepts of the law, or the moral rectitude which the law requires. This I argue, 1st, From the fact that the same phrase is undeniably used in this sense in the preceding part of the epistle, Romans 2:26,—"If the circumcision keep the righteousness [the precepts] of the law." Without the best of reasons, we should not suppose the apostle to use the same phrase, in entirely different senses, in the same epistle. 2nd, Justification, the only other sense ever, I believe, attributed to the phrase under consideration, is never in the Bible called the justification of the law, but is definitely distinguished from it, by being called "justification by faith." 3rd, If justification were the thing primarily referred to in this phrase, still the moral rectitude required by the law, i.e., sanctification, is also implied in it. For, if Christ should justify, and not to the same extent sanctify his people, he would save them in, and not from, their sins. The phrase righteousness of the law," then, directly and primarily means, or obviously implies, the precepts of the law, or the moral rectitude required by the law. To have this righteousness fulfilled in us, implies, that it be perfectly accomplished in us, or, that we are brought into perfect conformity to the moral rectitude required by the law. This is declared to be one of the great objects of Christ's death. Such conformity, then, is practicable to the Christian, or Christ

failed to accomplish one of the prime purposes of his redemption.

Again, 1 Peter 2:24,—"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness." To be dead to sin, and alive unto righteousness, implies entire sanctification; or, to be dead in sin, does not imply total depravity. That we might be thus dead, and thus alive, Christ "bore our sins in his own body on the tree." Entire sanctification, then, is attainable, or Christ failed, in one important respect, to finish the work which his Father "gave him to do."

2 Corinthians 5:15,—"And he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again." In other words, Christ died that his people might be free from all selfishness, and become purely and perfectly benevolent. Did he fail to accomplish his work?"

2 Peter 1:4,—"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

2 Corinthians 7:1,—"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." If to "escape the corruption that is in the world through lust," and to be "made partakers of the Divine nature," to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," and to "perfect holiness," do not imply entire sanctification, how, I ask, can that doctrine be expressed? That the Christian may be thus sanctified is the declared object for which the promises were given. Who will deny that they are adequate to this object? Unless they are thus inadequate, perfection in holiness is, in this life, practicable to the Christian.

Under this head I might cite many other passages, equally to my purpose; but these must suffice. On these and other kindred passages, I have one remark to make, to which the special attention of the reader is invited. It is this: We have the same evidence from the Bible, that provision is made for the entire sanctification of Christians, that we have that provision is made for their entire justification. Any principles of interpretation that will show that provision is not made for the former, will be equally conclusive to show that it is not made for the latter.

II. Perfection in holiness is promised to the Christian in the new covenant under which he is now placed. To present this part of the subject distinctly before the reader’s mind, we will first inquire what is the old or first covenant.

Exodus 34:27-28,—"And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words; for after the tenor of these words have I made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." Deuteronomy 9:11; Deuteronomy 9:15,—"And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the Lord gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant." "So I turned, and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire; and the two tables of the covenant were in my hands." The first, or the old covenant, then, is the moral law, that law by which we are required to "love the Lord our God with all our powers, and our neighbor as ourselves." This covenant, as we learn from Hebrews 9:1-4, had annexed to it the types and shadows of the ancient dispensation. "Then verily

the first covenant had" attached to it "ordinances of Divine service, and a worldly sanctuary," etc.

What the new covenant is, we learn from Jeremiah 31:31-34, and Hebrews 8:8-11,—"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt (which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord); but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more." The following blessings, specifically promised in this covenant, demand our special attention:—1. A confirmed state of pure and perfect holiness, such as the first covenant, or moral law, demands—"I will put my law In their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." 2. The pardon of all sin, or perfect justification—"I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more." 3. The perpetual fruition of the Divine presence and favor—"I will be their God, and they shall be my people." 4. The general spread of the Gospel among mankind—"All shall know me."

We will now notice the relations of these two covenants.

I. The same standard of character, perfect holiness, is common to both.

II. What the old covenant requires of Christians, the new promises to them. For example,—

1st, The old covenant requires perfect holiness. Its language is, "Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God;" "He that keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point, is guilty of all." On the other hand, the new covenant promises to the believer perfect holiness. Jeremiah 31:32,—"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." See also Hebrews 8:10. Here, as above remarked, the very thing which the moral law requires is positively promised to the believer. Ezekiel 36:25-27,—"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Is it in the power of language to express the doctrine of entire sanctification, if it is not here expressed?

Jeremiah 50:20,—"In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve." What other thought, let me ask, is such language adapted to convey but this,—a state of entire sanctification?

Deuteronomy 30:6,—"And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Here the perfect holiness required by the law is promised in the very words of the law itself.

Again, 2nd, The old covenant or moral law requires not only perfect, but perpetual holiness. Galatians 3:10,— "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." The new covenant, on the other hand, promises not only perfect but perpetual holiness. Jeremiah 32:39-40,—"And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." If, to give to Christians one heart and one way, that they may fear God for ever, and never depart from him, does not imply, not only perfect, but perpetual holiness, we may truly say that language cannot express that idea.

Ezekiel 37:23,—"Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions." Every one will perceive, that if the Holy Spirit has not here given us the promise, not only of perfect, but perpetual holiness, he has made as near an approach to it as is in the power of language to make, and that, if he had designed to express that promise, no stronger language could possibly have been used. The same truth is taught with equal distinctness in Isaiah 59:21, and Luke 1:74-75,—"As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." "That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."

I cite but one other passage under this head—a passage, which, if we had none others of the kind in the Bible, would place the doctrine under consideration upon an eternal rock. 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24,—"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." Here we have, 1. A prayer for perfect and perpetual holiness, dictated by the direct inspiration of the Spirit of God. Who can believe that the Holy Spirit has dictated a prayer which is not "according to the will of God," and which he requires us to believe that God will never answer by the bestowment of the blessing "desired of him?

2. We have the positive declaration of God himself, that this blessing, when asked in faith, shall be granted—"Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." On the promises of Scripture, as thus presented, I remark,—

I. That we have evidence just as conclusive, that perfect and perpetual holiness is promised to Christians, as we have that it is required of them. Any principles of interpretation that would prove that the former is not promised, would be equally conclusive to show that the latter is not required.

II. We have the same evidence from Scripture, that all Christians may, and that some of them will, attain to a state of entire sanctification in this life, that we have that they will attain to that state in heaven. No passages can be adduced which more positively affirm the latter than the former. Any principles of interpretation that will show that such passages as I have cited, and shall hereafter cite, do not prove the practicability of perfect holiness here, will annihilate all evidence that heaven itself is a state of perfect and perpetual purity. An objection, deserving a passing notice, is sometimes brought to the view of the new covenant here given. This covenant, it is said, is applicable to the Jews only. To this position I reply,—

1st, That to the converted Jew, at least, entire sanctification is undeniably attainable. Why deny it to other Christians?

2nd, Christ is the mediator of the new covenant, does he, as mediator, sustain one relation to the Jewish, and another to the Gentile Christian? Has he not "broken down the wall of partition between them," and made both one?

3rd, In Ephesians 3:6, and elsewhere, we learn that the Gentiles have become "fellow-heirs," and "of the same body," and partakers of the same promise with the Jews.

4th, The promise, from Thessalonians, above cited, is expressly addressed to all Christians, without discrimination.*

* [I have recently learned that certain objections to the views of the "two covenants," presented in this volume, have been started by some, on account of the declaration of Paul, Hebrews 8:13,—"In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now, that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." If the old covenant is the moral law, does not the apostle, it is asked, here affirm its abrogation? In reply, I would remark, that the old covenant, as shown in this discourse, is the moral law, with the types and shadows of the ancient dispensation annexed to it. It includes, therefore, not only the "ten commandments," but all the precepts of the Pentateuch, together with the whole ritual of Moses. All these together, considered as a system of moral influences for the moral renovation of man, constituted the old covenant. The moral law, as embodied in the ten commandments, was, by way of eminence, called the covenant, because it embodied the most essential elements of that covenant. Now, the moral law, considered as a rule of action, constitutes an essential element of both covenants, the new as well as the old. In this sense it can never "wax old," nor be abrogated. But, contemplated as a part of the ancient dispensation, and as a part of a system of influences for the moral renovation of man, it has, together with the entire ritual of that dispensation, already "waxed old and vanished away."]

III. I infer that a state of perfect holiness is attainable in this life, from the commands of Scripture, addressed to Christians under the new covenant. I refer here, not merely to the fact, that perfect holiness is required of Christians, but to the manner and circumstances in which these commands are given. A general sends to a subordinate officer a dispatch containing several distinct and specific requisitions. The officer selects one of these requisitions, given in the same manner and circumstances as all the rest, and affirms, that his commander never expected obedience to this command, and that it would be criminal to suppose he did. What would be thought of such a conclusion? In the light of this illustration let us first contemplate the command of Christ, Matthew 5:48,—"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." To every other precept found in this discourse, all admit that obedience is not only required, but expected. On what authority, I ask, is this one precept selected from the midst of such requisitions, as a solitary command to which obedience is not expected—a command clothed in similar language, given at the same time, and under the same circumstances as all the others among which it is found?

Again, 2 Corinthians 13:11,—"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." Why except the first of these precepts, and maintain that obedience to all the rest is expected? How could the expectations of the spirit be more clearly indicated, respecting the precept, "Be perfect," than by

clustering it, in this manner, with other precepts, in respect to which we know that such expectations exist?

2 Corinthians 7:1,—"Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Who would dare affirm to the Christian, that what he is here exhorted and commanded to do, he never can nor will do, and that it is heresy for him to expect it?

1 Timothy 6:13,—"I give thee charge, in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, who, before Pontius Pilate, witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." The command here referred to, as any one will see, who will read the context, includes everything required of Christians. Let us suppose that Timothy had answered this epistle, informing Paul that he had read his charge with solemn interest, and that, by the grace of God, he expected to keep it. What should we think, if, in Paul's second epistle, such a rejoinder as this were found:— "Timothy, your letter to me has filled me with amazement and sorrow of heart. You have become a wild fanatic—a Perfectionist. How could you have misunderstood me so much, as to suppose that I ever dreamed that you would expect to keep that awful charge?" Why should we be shocked at such a reply? Simply because we cannot believe that such a charge could be dictated by the Spirit of God, not only in the absence of all expectation that it would be kept, but with the intention of impressing the subject with the opposite belief.

IV. I argue, that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, from the fact, that the attainment of this state in this life is the declared object for which the Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of God's people, and for which all the gifts that Christ bestowed upon the Church when he ascended up on high were conferred. Ephesians 3:14-21,—"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Also Ephesians 4:11-16,—"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lay in wait to deceive; but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."—To be "filled with all the fulness of God" implies, unquestionably, that we be put in possession of all the moral perfections of God, as far as finite can resemble infinite; which can be nothing less than entire perfection in holiness. The same thing is, with equal manifestness, implied in the phrases

"unity of the faith," "unto a perfect man," and "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Ephesians 4:14-16, make it undeniably evident that these passages are to be understood with reference to this life. Now, that Christians may attain to this state of perfect holiness, is the declared object for which the Holy Spirit is here represented as dwelling in the hearts of God's people, and for which the ministry of reconciliation, etc., was conferred upon the Church, by our Saviour, when he "ascended up on high, and gave gifts unto men." Thus Christ expressly adapted means to an end, which means are inadequate to that end? If not, perfection in holiness is not only to be regarded as attainable, but to be expected, in this life.

V. As a fifth argument in favor of the attainableness of entire sanctification in this life, we will now consider the prayer dictated by our Saviour to his disciples, together with the one put up by him, in behalf of the Church, on the evening preceding his crucifixion. Who can believe that Christ has dictated a standing petition for the Church, which he requires her to believe that it is not for the glory of God to answer? Matthew 6:10,—"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." That this is a prayer for perfection in holiness, none, I presume, will deny. From the fact that Christ dictated this petition, I infer, 1st, That the object of this petition is agreeable to the will of God, and, consequently, that when the Church puts up the petition in faith, she will be heard, and will have the petition which she desired of him. 2nd, That, in the petition, we have the pledge of Christ, that it shall be granted when asked in faith, just as the petition, "Thy kingdom come," contains a pledge that that kingdom shall come.

Again, John 17:20-23,----"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. And the glory which thou gayest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." On this passage I remark, 1st, That the union here prayed for is a union of perfect love—"As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." In other words, perfection in holiness is the object of this prayer. 2nd, The salvation of the world is declared to be suspended upon the existence of this love among believers— "That the world may believe and know that thou hast sent me." Consequently, we must admit that this love, and consequent union, will exist among believers, or maintain, 1st, That Christ, at that solemn hour, prayed for that which he requires us to believe that it is not for the glory of God to bestow upon his children. 2nd, That the world are never to believe in Christ. Christian, ponder this prayer, and then ask yourself if you can believe, or dare affirm, that this love shall never, in this life, exist in your heart.

VI. I argue, that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, and that the sacred writers intended to teach the doctrine, from the fact, that inspired men made the attainment of this particular state the subject of definite, fervent, and constant prayer.

Colossians 4:12—"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Hebrews 13:20-21—"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." The prayer of the apostle, in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, is also distinctly before

the reader's mind,—"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly," etc. On these, and kindred passages, I remark—

1. Such prayers are in perfect conformity with the prayer of Christ himself in behalf of his Church, as recorded in John 17:20-23, and cited above. They are also in conformity with the standing petition which Christ dictated to his Church—"Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in Heaven."

2. All such prayers were dictated by direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Now, in Romans 8:27, we learn, that the "Spirit maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." In 1 John 5:14-15, we also learn, that this is the confidence that we live in him [Christ], and if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, we know that whatsoever we ask, we have the petitions that we desired of him." Have we not, then, proof positive, that when we pray, and pray in faith for perfect holiness, that blessing will be bestowed upon us? Is it possible, reader, for us to believe, that Christ himself prayed, and taught his Church to pray, and the Holy Spirit inspired and influenced apostles and saints to pray, for a blessing which the Scriptures require us to believe God will not bestow upon his people?

3. Let us suppose that God has revealed to us the fact, that he has made no provision for the bestowment of a certain blessing upon us; that whatever our prayers, intentions, and efforts actually may be, infinite wisdom has unchangeably determined to withhold the grace necessary to its attainment in this life. Would it be proper for us, under such circumstances, to pray for that blessing? What would such a prayer be, less than a request that God would reverse the revealed dictates of infinite wisdom? In what other light shall we regard the prayers of inspired men for the perfect holiness of Christians, on the supposition that God had revealed to them the fact, that no provisions were made in the Gospel for the bestowment of that blessing; that he had irreversibly determined not to confer the grace necessary to its attainment, whatever the prayers and efforts of the people actually might be; and that it is a dangerous error for them to suppose the opposite? Is not the fact, that inspired men prayed thus fervently and constantly for this blessing, the highest possible evidence that they regarded the attainment of the blessing as coming within the range of the provisions and promises of Divine grace?

VII. I infer that perfect holiness is attainable in this life, from the many promises of Scripture which are conditioned on this state. For example, Isaiah 26:3,—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Matthew 6:22,—"If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." 2 Corinthians 13:11 —Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." Php 4:6-7,--"Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus." All the blessings promised in such passages, of which the Bible is full, are conditioned, directly or indirectly, on the existence of perfect holiness in the subject. When, for example, God promises "perfect peace to those whose minds are stayed on him," the condition of the promise is, of course, perfect faith, or confidence; because the want of such confidence would forfeit the blessing, or render the enjoyment of it an impossibility. So also the "single eye," the command, "be perfect," and "be careful for nothing," etc., directly require the same thing, a state of perfect holiness. Does God promise to his people, in this life, blessings of infinite value, upon conditions which he requires them to regard as

impracticable? What is this but the most solemn mockery conceivable? A parent continually holds before his children promises of the richest blessings in his power to bestow, but all pledged upon the conditions with which he holds it criminal in them to believe they will ever comply. What would he thought of such a parent? Shall we charge such conduct upon God? In reply to the above argument, it is sometimes said that Christians do experience the fulfilment of these promises in proportion to their fidelity. Very true, I reply. This fact, however, does not in the least diminish the force of the argument, as above stated. God does hold out the richest blessings upon the definite condition of perfect holiness in us. Now as is true, according to the common theory, he requires us to believe that these blessings are proffered upon a condition with which we shall not comply, what is this, I ask again, but the most solemn mockery conceivable?

VIII. I argue, that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, from the testimony of Scripture that some did attain to that state. On this subject I remark—

1. That from what the sacred writers have left on record in respect to the provisions and promises of Divine grace, from their prayers, exhortations, precepts, etc., in respect of this identical subject; in short, from the fact that this particular subject was the special theme of their meditations, discourses, and prayers, we ought to conclude, in the absence of positive proof to the contrary, that they did attain to this state, just as, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, we ought to conclude that they died in the triumphs of faith.

2. The fact, that some of them are said to have fallen into sin in some particular instances, is no evidence at all that they did not subsequently attain to a state of entire sanctification, any more than the sins of Paul previous to his conversion are proof of his want of holiness subsequent to that event.

3. There is no positive evidence on record that many of those men did not attain to this state, any more than there is that they did not "die in faith."

4. There is, on the other hand, positive evidence that some of them did attain to this state. To show this, I begin with the character of Paul, as drawn by the pen of inspiration. In respect to this apostle, I remark—1. That there is but one act of his entire Christian life, on record, which is of a doubtful character. I refer to the controversy with Barnabas. 2. With this exception—and whether it be an exception, is, to say the least, doubtful—his character, as presented by the sacred historian, is "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." 3. The testimony of the apostle to his own attainments, shows that he had arrived to a state of entire sanctification. Galatians 2:20,—"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith on the Son of God." 1 Thessalonians 2:10,—"Ye are witnesses, and God, also, how holily, and justly, and uublameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe." 1 Corinthians 4:4,—"I know nothing by myself," i.e., I am conscious of no wrong. Acts 20:26,—"Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure of the blood of all men." Now, who would dare to apply such language to himself, who was conscious of being in any other than a state of entire consecration to Christ? How can he be "pure of the blood of all men," who is constantly failing in his duty? And we do fail in our duty to men, when we are not wholly consecrated to Christ. How can he be conscious of no wrong, and affirm of himself that he lives "holily, and justly, and unblameably," not in the sight of men merely, but also in the sight of God, who is conscious of daily and hourly departures from the rectitude required by the Gospel? Who, let me ask, in view of the character of Paul, as drawn

by the pen of inspiration, and of his own testimony to his own attainments, will dare to lay sin to his charge, or affirm that he did not arrive to a state of perfect consecration to Christ?

Further, the apostle presents himself as an example for the imitation of Christians, requiring and exhorting them to copy that example, without any intimation, that, in so doing, they will not discharge their whole duty. Php 4:9,—"Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you." Php 3:17,—"Brethren, be ye followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample." 1 Corinthians 11:1,—"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ;" i.e., Be ye imitators of me, inasmuch as I am an imitator of Christ. Now, who would dare to address such language to Christians, unless he was conscious of presenting to them a perfect pattern for their imitation? Such, then, was Paul. If he did not claim to have been in a state of entire sanctification I know not by what language such a claim can be expressed.

Again 1 John 3:21; 1 John 4:17-18,—"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." "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." "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear." Who can read such declarations, without the conviction that the apostle is here speaking of what he knew to be true from actual experience? Was he a stranger to a heart that doth not condemn, and its effects, and to perfect love, and its consequences? Is he not testifying as a witness to what his own consciousness affirmed to be a reality?

If the "one hundred and forty and four thousand also, who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," are not declared, Revelation 14:4-5, to have attained to perfect holiness in this life, I have failed to divine the meaning of the passage. "These are they who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins." "And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God." The phrase "they are without fault" evidently relates to their character as Christians in this life; because the conjunction "for" connects this with the preceding part of the sentence, the meaning of which is perfectly evident; also, because the reason is here assigned for their pre-eminent glory in heaven. All this may be said to be mere hyperbole. I will not, therefore, insist upon it. The same principle, however, would be equally applicable to any phraseology that could have been adopted.

Isaiah 6:5-8,—"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged."

Previous to this event, the prophet had at least some degree of holiness. What was his state subsequently when "his iniquity was taken away, and his sin purged?" was it a little higher degree of holiness than he before possessed? Was it not, as the language used implies, a state of perfect holiness?

Other cases might be cited; but these must suffice.

IX. I argue that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, from the fact, that no one can point out any incentive to sin, from within or around him, for which a specific remedy is not provided in

the Gospel. Do our lusts rebel? We are told, that if "Christ be in us, the body is dead because of sin;" that "the old man is crucified with him;" and that if we will "walk in the spirit, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Do the world and Satan entice? We are assured that "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith;" that "stronger is he that is in us, than he that is in the world; and that, when we have "put on the whole armour of God," we shall be able, with the shield of faith, to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." In short, from whatever source temptation to sin arises, we are assured that God will not "suffer us to be tempted above what we are able," but will, "with the temptation, make way for our escape." With Christ within us, and these "exceeding great and precious promises" around us, we are commanded to "reckon ourselves dead indeed to sin, and alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ." In the presence of such facts and promises, who would dare to say to the Christian, It is impracticable for you to "cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh, and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God?"

X. I argue that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, from the fact, that no one can lay down any line this side of that state, beyond which it is not practicable for the Christian to go. Who would dare to lay down such a line, and then say to the convert, panting after holiness, "as the hart panteth after the water-brooks," "Hitherto mayest thou come, and no farther?"

IX. As another argument in favor of the attainableness of holiness in this life, I adduce the striking contrast between the language of inspiration and of the Church upon this subject, wherever the Church has denied the doctrine under consideration. I appeal to the conscience and memory of every one who reads these pages, whether from the pulpit, the press, or the private walks of life, as far as this doctrine has been denied, you have ever heard language which corresponds with the plain, positive, and unqualified declarations of the Bible upon this. subject, which have now been spread out before you. Why this contrast between the language of inspiration and of the Church? One supposition, and one only, in my judgment, solves the mystery. The Church and the sacred writers hold different sentiments upon this subject.

Let any minister, for example, holding the common sentiments upon this subject, begin, in the simple and unqualified language of inspiration, to pray that his people may be "sanctified wholly, and preserved in that state unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;" let him charge them, "before God and our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep the commandments of God without spot unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ;" let him begin to talk of the perfect peace of pure and perfect love; let him tell his people that the blood of Christ "cleanseth from all sin," and that he "bore our sins in his own body on the tree;" that we, "being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness;" that the "righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us," etc.,—what would his Church and Congregation think of him? Would they not conclude that he had adopted some entirely new theory in regard to Christian perfection? I ask again, why has the language of the Bible so entirely disappeared, so far as this doctrine is denied? and why is it, that, as soon as this doctrine is adopted, the simple and expressive language of the Bible reappears, as the only language appropriate to express the sentiments of the preacher and the Church.

XII. The convictions of the Church, as universally expressed in her covenants, demand the admission of the attainableness of perfect holiness in this life. I have never, that I recollect, read or heard of such a covenant, which did not pledge its members to a state of entire sanctification. Every one, in the presence of God, angels, and men, and that under the sanction of the most

solemn oath, avouches the Lord to be his God, promising to obey him in all things, and none else, to "deny himself of all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present evil world." This is nothing less than a pledge to "be perfect," and no Church dares to pledge her members to do less than this.

Yet, while this pledge is thus solemnly imposed upon all her members, they are required, under sanctions hardly less awful, to believe that this pledge will never be redeemed, and that it is a crime to suppose that it may. All this is done in the face of an acknowledged Divine declaration—"It is better that thou shouldst not vow, than to vow and not pay." Now, why has the Holy Spirit thus constrained the Church to pledge her members in direct opposition to her creed? To open her eyes to the absurdity and ruinous tendency of her creed, in respect to the subject under consideration. Such is my solemn conviction. The Churches of Christ are bound fundamentally to change their covenants, or admit the doctrine under consideration.

XIII. The tendency of this doctrine, as compared with that of its opposite, is another important reason why we should admit it. To place this part of the subject distinctly before the mind, I remark,—

1. That, as it was observed in the preceding discourse, no evil can result from the belief of this doctrine, provided we keep the true standard of holiness distinctly in view. Christ requires us to consecrate to him our entire being. What evil can result from the belief that we may do this, provided we understand what this requirement is? All the evil that has ever arisen, connected with this doctrine, can be demonstrated to have arisen, not from the belief that perfection in holiness is practicable to the Christian, but from a misapprehension of the nature of holiness itself.

2. The belief that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, involves the very principle that is considered necessary to efficient action on every other subject. Who would expect an army to fight with energy under the impression of inevitable defeat? All acknowledge it to be the duty of the Christian to aim at perfection in holiness. How can he do this efficiently with the persuasion that such perfection is impracticable?

3. Every Christian also admits that no one can be saved who does not aim at perfection. Now, to aim at this state with the belief that it is unattainable, is an absolute impossibility. To aim at the accomplishment of an object, is the same thing as to intend to accomplish it. How can a man intend to do that which he regards as impracticable? Let the hunter, for example, if he can, point his weapon at the moon, with the intention of hitting it. He will find the formation of such intention, with his present belief of the power of his weapon, and the distance of the object, an impossibility. Has God required the Christian, upon pain of his eternal displeasure, to aim at perfection in holiness, and then required him to believe a certain fact, the belief of which renders the formation of that intention an impossibility? Who can believe it? The principle before us, no one, I believe, at all acquainted with the laws of mind, will deny. Whatever a man regards as impracticable, or thinks it absolutely certain that he never will perform, the changeless laws of mind render it impossible for him to aim at, or intend to perform it. How can a man throw a stone at the sun, aiming or intending to hit the sun? An individual is shooting at a mark, with the full belief, that no man, whatever his natural powers may be, ever did or ever will hit that mark. It is an absolute impossibility that he ever should, with that belief intend to hit it. For the same reason, while a man regards perfection in. holiness as impracticable; while he believes that no man ever did, or ever will, in this life, attain

to that state, and that it is criminal to suppose the opposite,—to aim at perfection in holiness, or to intend to be perfectly holy, is, then, an absolute impossibility. Now the Church universally affirms, and ministers everywhere preach the same thing, that no one can be a Christian who does not aim at perfection in holiness, or intend to be perfectly holy. The Church and the ministry, then, almost as universally, hold it criminal for any man not to believe a certain fact, to wit, that such perfection is unattainable, the belief of which fact renders the existence of such intention an absolute impossibility. "Thus have ye made void the law of God by your traditions." If a man must aim at perfection in holiness, or he cannot be saved, he must theoretically or practically believe that such perfection is practicable, or he cannot be saved.

XIV. As a final argument, in favor of the truth of the doctrine under consideration, I notice the absurdity of the common supposition, that the Christian is always perfectly sanctified at, or a few minutes before, death, and never at an earlier period. Two considerations will place the absurdity of this supposition in its proper light:—1st, the grace which sanctifies the believer amid the gloom and wreck and distraction of dissolving nature, would, if applied, have sanctified him at an earlier period. 2nd, No other reason can be assigned for this grace being thus withheld, but the supposition that God can be better glorified, and his kingdom better advanced by saints partially, than wholly, consecrated to their sacred calling. Where is the foundation for such an absurdity in the Bible?

Some objections to the interpretation which has been given to the various passages cited in this discourse demand a passing notice.

I. The fact, it is said, that provision is made in the Gospel for the entire sanctification of Christians; that this state is promised to them in the new covenant, on condition of their faith; and that, in view of these provisions and promises, perfect holiness is required of them, proves merely that such a state is attainable, but not that it is actually attained. I reply,—

1. That my object in citing such passages has been, not to show Christians what they are, but what they may become; and thus to lay the foundation for the exercise of that faith by which they may come into the full possession of all the "riches of Christ’s inheritance in the saints."

2. The manner in which the sacred writers have presented the provisions, promises, and commands of the Gospel, demonstrates the fact that they did expect Christians to "cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God"—an expectation precisely the opposite of what is now commonly entertained upon the same subject.

3. The supposition that such men as Paul, for example, knew that provision was made in the Gospel for their entire sanctification; that it was promised to them in the new covenant, and required of them as Christians; the supposition, I say, that they knew, that by simply trusting Christ for this blessing, they could enjoy it, and yet withheld the faith necessary to its attainment, is absolutely incredible. It is to suppose, that they lived in the habitual and allowed indulgence of known sin. The same remark is equally applicable to real Christians of every age. When they know their privileges they will avail themselves of them. That they may know their privileges, and thus "come out of darkness into God’s marvellous light," is the great object of this work, and of all my prayers and efforts.

II. The prayer of Christ, recorded in John 17:20-23, it is objected, is put up in behalf of all Christians without distinction; and this prayer, in all its fullness, must be answered in the experience of each Christian, or Christ prayed in vain. In other words, according to this objection, the union now existing among Christians, is all that is implied in such language as the following:—"That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee;" that "they may be one in us;" that "they may be made perfect in one;" and the effect produced by this union, is all that is meant by the phrases "that the world may believe," and "that the world may know,"—"That thou hast sent me." In reply, I remark,—

1. That the supposition that the union, or rather the disunion, now existing among Christians, presents a full reflection of all that is implied in the language above referred to, renders the Bible the most unmeaning book that ever was written.

2. The supposition that Christ prayed for any higher union than now exists, involves all the difficulties embraced in the supposition that he prayed for a perfect union. In both instances alike, according to the above objection, he prayed in vain.

3. If Christ did not here pray for a perfect union among Christians, and consequently for their entire sanctification, it is absolutely beyond the power of language to express such a prayer.

4. Christ here prays as the Mediator of the new covenant, and when the Church comes to her Mediator, in faith, for an answer to this prayer (and the day is no doubt near when she will do it), this prayer, in all its blessed fullness, will be answered.

III. It is further objected, that no particular time is specified when the prayer of Christ, and the promises of the new covenant, etc., are to be fulfilled; consequently, they do not prove the attainableness of entire sanctification in this life. I reply,—

1. In some of the promises the time of their fulfilment is definitely specified. For example, 1 Thessalonians 5:23. When can our "whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," if not in this life?

2. If no time were specified, we should involve ourselves in infinite guilt, were we to "limit the Holy One," by fixing a time, at or subsequent to the hour of death. Such a limitation of the promises sanctions those principles of interpretation by which the worst forms of error are sustained from the Bible. Take, for example, the passage," Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." True, says the universalist, and all men will be holy in eternity. Shall we sanction such a principle by our manner of limiting the application of the exceeding great and precious promises of Divine grace?

I close this discourse with a few brief reflections:—

1. We are now prepared for a distinct survey of the foundation on which the doctrine under consideration rests;—a doctrine upheld by the declared provisions and promises of the Gospel; a doctrine sustained by the prayer of Christ as the Mediator of the new covenant, and by the "prayers of the saints," as dictated by him and by the Spirit of grace; a doctrine which so perfectly corresponds with what God requires of us as Christians, and with all that inspired apostles and prophets taught and wrote upon the subject. Upon what foundation does such a doctrine rest, but upon the "Rock of Ages?"

2. We see the reason of the aspect of living death which the Church now presents to the world. It is simply this: She is in a state of unbelief in respect to the nature and extent of the provisions and promises of Divine grace.

3. We see when it is that the Church will realize, in her own experience, the fulfillment of the promises of the new covenant. 1. When she fully becomes aware of the nature and extent of these promises. 2. When the conditions are fulfilled by her on which the fulfillment of these promises rests, as recorded in Ezekiel 36:37:—"Thus saith the Lord God—I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do this thing for them." When this is done—and the time is near, I believe, when it will be done— there will then exist upon earth "a holy generation, a royal priesthood, and a peculiar people."

4. Christian brother, suppose that in view of all the facts, arguments, and Divine declarations, which have now been spread before you, you should reproach your Redeemer with holy boldness, confidently expecting that his "blood shall cleanse you from all sin"—"that the very God of peace shall sanctify you wholly, and preserve your whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"—would that Redeemer, think you, frown you from his presence, for having asked and expected more than he himself has authorized you to ask and expect? On the other hand, should you refuse to "open your mouth thus wide," would he not charge it to your unbelief, and would he not marvel at that unbelief?

03.03. Objections Answered

DISCOURSE III.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

"Nicodemus answered, and said unto him, How can these things be?

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"—John 3:9-10. THE evidence by which the attainableness of a state of entire sanctification in this life is sustained, is now, to some extent, before the reader's mind, as the subject presents itself to my own. Notwithstanding the abundance and force of the evidence, some may still be disposed to ask, How can these things be? Are there not many passages of Scripture which positively contradict this doctrine? and are there not many fundamental objections against it? To a consideration of such passages and objections, the attention of the reader is now invited.

I. We will first consider the objections drawn from Scripture.

I begin with Romans 7:14-25. (The reader is referred to the Bible, as the passage is too long to be quoted entire.) The bearing of this passage upon the doctrine under consideration, depends upon the question whether the apostle is here describing the state of the Christian under the Gospel, or of the sinner under the law, and acted upon by legal motives only. In favor of the first supposition, two, and only two, considerations deserving notice, have, to my knowledge, been adduced.

1. The present tense is here used, "I am carnal," etc.; showing, it is said, that the apostle is describing his present character as a Christian. In answer to this, I remark,—1st, that it is perfectly common for the sacred writers to use this tense in describing not only past but future events. 2nd, The present tense was demanded in this instance, inasmuch as the design of the apostle is to describe his own, and the state of every other person, under the exclusive action of legal motives, in opposition to their state under the Gospel. Under the former, he says, "I am [and of course every other man is] carnal, sold [a bond slave] under sin." Under the latter, Romans 8:2, "I am free from the law of sin and death." Thus said Whitefield, as a drunkard was reeling before him, "There is George Whitefield, but for the grace of God." Supposing the apostle here to be describing his state as a sinner under the law, the present tense is demanded just as much as if he were describing his state as a Christian.

2. The language used by the apostle in this passage, it is said, is applicable to the Christian only. For example, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." "That which I do I allow not." "What I hate, that I do," etc. To this I answer,— 1st, That language equally strong is applied to the sinner in other parts of the Bible. Ezekiel 33:32,— "And lo! thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not." Isaiah 58:2,—"Yet ye seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of their God; they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God." John 5:35,— "He was a burning and a shining

light; and ye were willing, for a season, to rejoice in his light." Romans 2:17-18,—"Behold thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law." Many other passages of similar import might be cited. With what propriety, I ask, can the language used in Romans 7:1-25. be cited as proof, that the sinner cannot there be referred to, when language equally strong is so frequently applied to him in other parts of the Bible?

2nd, Precisely similar language was at this time in common use among the heathen, and by them applied to men as sinners. "He that sins," says one, "does not what he would; but what he would not, that he does." "I see the good," says another, "and approve it, but follow the bad." "I have forgotten none of the things about which you admonished me; but, although I have a desire to do them, nature struggles against it." "I knew that it was becoming; but, me miserable! I could not do it." Such is the language common with those very heathen converts to whom the apostle was writing, and applied by them to sinners as such. On what principle, I ask, is it asserted, that they would understand this language, in opposition to all previous usage, as applicable to the Christian only?

We will now consider a few of the reasons in favor of the supposition that the sinner under the action of legal influences, and not the Christian under the Gospel, is the subject of the apostle's remarks in this passage:—

1. It was so understood by the entire primitive Church for the first two or three centuries after the epistle was written. This, none, I believe, acquainted with the records of the primitive Church will deny. Did the entire Church, who received the passage directly from the apostle, mistake his meaning?

2. The supposition that the Christian is here referred to, places what the apostle says of himself, as a Christian, in this passage and elsewhere, in palpable and irreconcilable contradiction to each other. In the state here described, the apostle says of himself, "I am carnal, sold under sin," that is, a bond slave under the power of sin, as the slave is under the absolute control of his master. We might here ask, Is this the Christian? Again, "The good that I would," i.e., approve, "I do not, but the evil that I would not," i.e., disapproves "that I do." "I find then a law," an invariable order of sequence—for such only is law—"that when I would do good, evil is present with me." Speaking of himself as a Christian, the apostle says, "I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection." Again, "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Are these states compatible? Are they one and the same? Again, the Christian is represented in the Bible as "overcoming the world." The individual here referred to is invariably overcome by the world. Are these characters identical? Again, in the state here described, the apostle declares himself to be in "captivity to the law of sin and death." In Romans 8:2, he says, that as a Christian he is free from that very law. How can an individual be a captive under a law, and free from that law, at one and the same time? Once more: In the state here referred to, the apostle says, "I am carnal." In Romans 8:9, he declares absolutely, that every real Christian is "not in the flesh," that is, carnal, "but in the spirit." How can these states be identical?

3. If the apostle has described the condition of the Christian under the Gospel, in the passage under consideration, he has defeated his own object, by showing that the Gospel is equally impotent with the law in producing holiness of heart, the opposite of which he designed to show.

The law convicts of sin, and then leaves the subject in bondage under sin. What more does the Gospel, if the Christian, also, is "carnal, sold under sin?"

Well might the Jew ask, in view of such a presentation of the power of the Gospel, What advantage hath the Christian, and what profit is there in faith in Christ, as far as holiness is concerned? Do the motions of sin, which are by the law, work in my members to bring forth fruit unto death?" So is the Christian, by the same influence precisely, "brought into captivity to the law of sin, which is in his members." Am I in the flesh?—The Christian, also, is "carnal." Am I in bondage, under the power of sin?—The Christian, also, is a bond slave, "sold under sin." Do I "approve of the things which are more excellent," and delight to know God and the "ordinances of righteousness," and at the same time remain in a state of disobedience to God? The Christian, also, "delights in the law of the Lord, after the inward man," without obeying that law. "The good that he would he does not; but the evil that he would not, that he does." How could the apostle, by such a train of reasoning as this, convince the Jew, that in depending upon the law for sanctification as well as for justification, he was a sinner leaning upon a broken reed? and that the Gospel alone not only justifies but sanctifies the sinner?

4. The apostle, in the passage before us, declares expressly that he refers to his state as a sinner. "In me, that is, in my flesh," that is, in my carnal, unrenewed state, "dwelleth no good thing."

5. The individual here described is, by the apostle's own showing, totally depraved. Notwithstanding all the opposition which the law of God and the law of his mind make to sin, he invariably practices it, on all occasions and under all circumstances. If such a state does not indicate the entire absence of holiness, nothing can do it. The whole matter is summed up by the apostle in verse 25,—"So then, with the mind, I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." That is, in the language of Professor Stuart,—"While my mind, i.e., my reason and conscience, takes part with the law of God, and approves its sanctions, my carnal part obtains the predominance, and brings me into a state of condemnation and ruin." For a full and complete illustration of the meaning of the entire passage, the reader is referred to the commentary of Professor Stuart.

I conclude, then, that this chapter, as it refers to another subject, has nothing to do with the question whether entire holiness is attainable in this life.

Galatians 5:17,—"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." The apostle here gives the reason for the declaration found in the verse preceding,—"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." The reason assigned is this. The dictates of the flesh and of the Spirit are in contradiction the one to the other. Obedience to one excludes subjection to the other. Hence, if we "Walk in the Spirit," we" cannot do the things that we would," i.e., "fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Strange that an objection to the doctrine of holiness should be drawn from this passage, which, when rightly understood, directly asserts the doctrine; unless the ground is taken that obedience to the command, "Walk in the Spirit," is impracticable. The common explanation of the passage makes the apostle assign the strange reason for the declaration, "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh;" that as the flesh and the Spirit are contrary the one to the other, the Christian cannot do the things that he would, i.e., Cannot walk in the Spirit.

Php 3:12—"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." On this passage I remark,—1st, from a comparison of this passage with the phrase in Php 3:15, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect," it is evident the apostle considered himself in one sense perfect, and in another imperfect. Why, then, is the inference directly drawn that, in Php 3:12, he affirms his imperfection in holiness, when the opposite conclusion is as fully sustained by Php 3:15? But, 2nd, The apostle, as is perfectly evident from the context, is not here speaking of sanctification at all. There are three senses, somewhat differing the one from the other, in which the verb here rendered perfect, as well as the adjective from which it is derived, are used in the Bible,—1. To designate moral perfection, or entire sanctification in holiness, as in Matthew 5:48—"Be ye therefore perfect." 2. Maturity in Christian knowledge and virtue, 1 Corinthians 2:6, "We speak wisdom to them that are perfect." 3. Exaltation to a state of reward or happiness in a future world, in consequence of a life of devotion to the Divine service in the present world. Thus, in Hebrews 2:10, Christ, as the Captain of our salvation, is said to have been made "perfect," that is, advanced to a state of glory through [or on account of] sufferings." "Among the Greeks," says Professor Stuart, speaking upon the passage last referred to, "this verb was employed to designate the condition of those who, having run in the stadium, and proved to be victorious in the contest, were proclaimed as successful combatants, and had the honours and rewards of victory bestowed upon them." Such persons were said to be perfect, or to have been perfected. Now, that the apostle uses the term "perfect" in this last sense exclusively in Php 3:12, is demonstrably evident from the fact that he was writing to Greeks, and uses it with reference to the very custom, in reference to which they had been accustomed to use the term in this one sense only. He represented himself as running in a race; but not as yet being "perfect;" that is, as not having been advanced to a state of glory in consequence of having victoriously finished his course. It is, then, in reference to having finished his course and received the consequent rewards, and not in reference to moral perfection, that the apostle uses the term "perfect" in the passage under consideration. This the apostle himself directly affirms. He uses the phrases, "not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect," and "I count not myself to have apprehended," with express reference, not to present holiness at all, but with exclusive respect to the "resurrection of the dead," and "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," i.e., to the glory and blessedness consequent on having victoriously finished his Christian race. Hence, Professor Robinson, in his Lexicon on the New Testament, thus explains the phrase, "either were already perfect"—"Not as though I had already completed my course, and arrived at the goal, so as to receive the prize." In respect to holiness, an individual who is running the Christian race, is perfect, who puts forth his entire energies in that course. In respect to a state of glory and blessedness, he is perfect, when, and only when, he has finished his course, and received the consequent reward. It is with exclusive reference to the latter, and not to the former, that the apostle affirms, that he had not "attained, and was not perfect." The passage, then, has no reference at all to the question whether perfection in holiness is attainable in this life.

1 John 1:8,—"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." The phrase "have no sin" may relate to our present or to our past chapter. Thus, when a man says, "I am a sinner," he may mean, I am now actually sinning, or I have sinned, and on that account sustain the character of a sinner. In which sense does the apostle here use the phrase, "If we say we have no sin?" Does he refer to our character in view of what we are now doing, or of what we have done in past time? To the latter, I argue, for the following reasons:—1st, The denial here

spoken of stands opposed to the phrase "confessing our sins" in the following verse. Confession relates to past, and not to present sin; it being absolutely impossible for a person to commit a sin, repent of it, and confess it, at one and the same moment; which must be the case if confession relates to sins which we are now committing.

2nd, In 1 John 1:10 the apostle repeats the thought contained in the phrase under consideration, in a manner which leaves no doubt in respect to his meaning,—"If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar." This declaration is added, to give emphasis to the affirmation, "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," and is only another form of stating the same thing.

3rd, The Context plainly shows that the apostle is speaking of another thing, altogether, than the question whether a man ever attains to a state of entire holiness in this life. In the verse preceding, he says, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." He then adds,—"If we say we have no sin," to be cleansed from, to be forgiven, that is, if we deny our need of the redemption of Christ, "we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Now, what class of persons existed at the time, to whom this declaration was applicable? I answer, it was the unconverted Jew, who maintained, that in consequence of his obedience to the law, he was free from all sin, and did not need the redemption of Christ. Such persons the apostle addresses by saying, "If we deny our need of Christ's redemption, by affirming our freedom from sin, we deceive ourselves; and not only so, by saying that "we have not sinned," i.e., affirming that "we have no sin," we also make God a liar. The passage, then, refers exclusively to sinners who deny their need of Christ's redemption, by saying that they "have not sinned," and not to such men as John Wesley and James B. Taylor, who believed, that, by the grace of Christ applied to "cleanse them from all sin," they had "been made perfect in love." To be made thus perfect, is what we are here taught to expect, as the consequence of "walking in the light," and "confessing our sins." The passage, then, instead of contradicting the doctrine under consideration, when rightly explained, altogether favors the doctrine. What else can be the meaning of the declarations,—"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin?" Also, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness?"

James 3:2—"In many things we offend all." Here, it is said, we have the positive testimony of inspiration, that in many respects all Christians sin.

If so, the doctrine under consideration must be given up, of course. But what is the meaning of the above declaration? To answer this, it is necessary to explain the verse preceding,—"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." The term "masters" may mean, simply, religious teachers, or it may mean slanderers, or critics on the manners and morals of others. The Greeks and Romans, as Calvin remarks, in speaking upon the term, "were at that time accustomed to call persons of the class last mentioned, masters, because they set themselves up as masters in morals." In this sense, not only Calvin, but Schleusner explains the term. It is used in the same sense as the term judges is in Matthew 7:1, the same identical sin being prohibited in the phrase "judge not," as in the prohibition, "Be not many masters." That the term masters is to be understood in this passage in this sense, as designating, not religious teachers, but slanderers, or critics on the manners of others, I argue, 1st, From the

fact that the abuse of the tongue is the exclusive subject of discourse in the whole passage with which the term is connected. 2nd, The apostle declares absolutely, that, if we are "masters," we shall receive greater condemnation, which is only conditionally true of religious teachers, that is, if they sin. The apostle, as Calvin observes, forbids "that there should be many masters," because many are everywhere disposed to rush into this business. Understanding the term "masters" here, in this, its true sense, the declaration, "In many things we offend all," may be readily explained. It contains the reason why we "shall," if we are "masters," "receive the greater condemnation." The reason is this: as masters, "we all offend in many things," that is, are great offenders. The term poluv, here rendered "many things," is often used adverbially in the Bible, as explained above, Thus, the apostle says, "I wept much." Again, "He straitly charged them," i.e., earnestly. "And he besought him much." "I greatly desired him to come to you." In all these passages, the term rendered "many things" in the passage under consideration, is used. Now, when the apostle says that "we all offend greatly," or are aggravated offenders, he does not affirm this of us all as Christians, but as masters; just as in the phrase, "we shall receive greater condemnation," he affirms that as masters, and not as Christians, we shall be thus condemned. If we are masters, we are to receive greater condemnation; because we then are aggravated offenders, the only reason conceivable why we should be thus condemned. The common explanation of the passage makes the apostle render the strangest reason conceivable for the fact that masters "will receive the greater condemnation," to wit, that all men sin in many things. How does the fact, that all men sin in many things, prove, that those who are guilty of particular sins shall receive severer punishment than others? Or that religious teachers, even, if they sin, will be thus punished? Suppose a person should reason in a similar manner in respect to any other crime—murder, for example. "All men sin in many things; therefore, the murderer shall receive the greater condemnation." This would be just as reasonable as in reference to the sin of evil speaking, or the sins of religious teachers.

Further, according to the common explanation of the passage, "masters" are to be punished more than they deserve. Two men, we will suppose, commit to-day the same sin. One immediately dies without repentance. The other subsequently becomes a "master," or slanderer. The former, according to the Bible, will be punished for that sin, all that it deserves. The latter, according to the present explanation of the passage, is, for that identical sin, to receive still "greater condemnation," i.e., to receive greater punishment than the sin deserves. The meaning of the passage, together with the context, it may be thus expressed: Do not multitudes of you, my brethren, be "masters" or slanderers. If we are, we shall receive greater condemnation; because, in that case, we all offend in many things, that is, are aggravated offenders. On the other hand, "if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." The object of the apostle is, to contrast our character and prospects as "masters," with our state when our tongue is subject to the law of life. In the former case we are to "receive greater condemnation," because we are then all of us great offenders. In the latter, we are perfect. Nothing, then, was farther from the intention of the sacred writer, than the design of denying the doctrine of holiness, as maintained in these discourses.

Matthew 6:12,—"And forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors." From the fact, that this petition is found in the Lord’s prayer, it is argued, that Christians will always have sins to confess, or will never arrive at a state of perfect holiness in this life. This principle, if admitted, would prove that the kingdom of God will never come, and that the Christian will never be in a state in this life in which he will not be subject to injuries from others. The time will arrive, when the kingdom of God

will have come, and when "they will not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain." At that time the above petitions will be inappropriate; because the prayers of all the saints in this respect will have been fully answered. So of the petition under consideration. The Saviour says, "After this MANNER pray ye;" that is, if ye have, among other things, sins to confess, confess them in this manner. It was no part of his design to affirm or deny that we shall ever be in a state in which our "heart will not condemn us."

Hebrews 12:6,—"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," From the fact, that all Christians are chastened of God, it is inferred that they never become perfect in holiness in this life; because they would not then need chastisement. I reply, that the case of the earthly parent, cited by the apostle to illustrate his meaning, proves precisely the opposite to what the objection supposes. An earthly parent induces obedience in his child by the rod; but the rod, properly applied, brings the child into a state in which the rod is no more needed. So of the rod in the hand of our heavenly Father. Its object is to render us "partakers of his holiness." Till this end is accomplished the rod will be used. When this end is accomplished it will no longer be needed. That the Christian will never come into this state in this life, it was no part of the apostle's abject to affirm.

These are all the passages that I have met with from the New Testament, which have been supposed to deny the doctrine under consideration. A very few passing remarks are called for, upon certain passages in the Old Testament, which are commonly adduced for the same object as the passages noticed above. Two preliminary observations are deemed requisite to a correct understanding of these passages, in respect to the subject before us.

1. Whatever is said of the character of saints, under the old dispensation, cannot be applied to Christians under the new, unless such application was manifestly intended by the sacred writer, The ancient saints, we are told, "received not the promises, God having reserved some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

2. When the sacred writers would express a fact which is true of the majority of men, though not of every individual, they make use, in most instances, of universal terms.

One example will illustrate both of the above principles. Jeremiah 9:4,—"Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders." Who supposes that this passage is applicable to all Christians, or even to real saints at the time the prophet wrote—to the prophet himself, for example? Now, in the light of this example, let us contemplate two similar passages. Ecclesiastes 7:20-21, "For there is not a just man on earth, that doeth good and sinneth not." On this passage I remark,—1. If it is to be understood in an unlimited sense, no reason can be assigned why it should be applied to Christians in the full possession of the blessings of the new covenant. It was made with reference to men in the state then present, and not with reference to their condition under an entirely different dispensation. 2. The context shows that it is only in a general, and not in an unlimited sense, that this passage is to be understood. In the verse preceding the writer says,—"Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men that are in the city." We are here exhorted to use prudence in our transactions with men. The reason is then assigned—"There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not;" i.e., in all your transactions with men, act upon the prudential maxim, that no man can be trusted. As a prudential maxim, the declaration under

consideration is true,—true not in a universal, but general sense; just as the declaration of the prophet, above cited, is true in a similar sense. In this sense only each of the writers under consideration evidently designed to be understood.

Again, Proverbs 20:9—"Who can say, I have made my heart clean; I am pure from my sin?" The first remark upon the passage last cited is equally applicable to this. The true meaning of this passage, however, is, in my judgment, generally overlooked. The, design of the sacred writer, as I suppose, is this: to ask the question,—"Who, in looking over his past life, can deny the fact that he is a sinner, and is clear from all the sin charged upon him?" When an individual, in the language of the Bible, would affirm his innocency of any crime, or sin, he was accustomed to affirm that he "had cleansed his hands," or "washed them in innocency;" i.e., had kept himself pure. So of the sacred writer in the passage before us—"Who can say, I have made my heart clean; I am pure from my sin?" i.e., Who can say, I have preserved my heart free from all sin, and my hands from all the iniquity that may be laid to my charge? This question is asked with reference to the entire past life, and not with reference to the fact whether any individual does, at any period of life, attain to a state of entire sanctification.

Job 9:20,—"If I say, I am perfect, that also will prove me perverse." How does this declaration, which Job applies to himself, and to no other person, prove that all other saints, and Christians even, are imperfect, any more than the confession of David proves that all are guilty of adultery? The inference is just as legitimate in one case as in the other.

1 Kings 8:46,—"If they sin against thee (for there is no man that sinneth not)." This passage, if rightly translated, simply affirms, that all men do, at some period of their lives, sin, and not that no man, at any period, arrives at a state of entire holiness. The former, and not the latter, is the thought that would naturally suggest itself to the speaker, under the circumstances in which he was then placed. The following note, from the Comprehensive Bible, shows clearly, to my mind, that a different rendering should have been given to the passage:—"The second clause of this verse, as it is here translated, renders this supposition, in the first clause, entirely nugatory; for if there be no man that sinneth not, it is useless to say, If they sin; but this contradiction is removed by rendering the original,—'If they shall sin against thee (for there is no man that may not sin;)' i.e., there is no man impeccable, or infallible; none that is not liable to sin." In the conjugation in which the word is here found, this is its appropriate meaning. The imperfection of good men, whose lives are recorded in Scripture, is also adduced to prove that perfection in holiness is impracticable in this life. In reply, I remark, that all that is recorded, is the simple fact, that such men were, at particular times, guilty of particular sins. How does this prove that, subsequently, they did not attain to perfection in holiness? How, for example, does the fact, that Paul disputed with Barnabas, the only sin—if it be a sin—of Paul's Christian life, I believe, on record,— how does this fact, I say, prove, that, when Paul afterwards said, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God," he was not in a state of entire sanctification?

Having noticed all the objections derived from Scripture to the doctrine under consideration, it remains to notice some others arising from the supposed tendencies of the doctrine itself.

I. This doctrine, it is said, is, or in its legitimate tendencies, leads to, Perfectionism.*

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*[A form of error which arose, before the institution at Oberlin was founded, in two theological seminaries of the United States— one in Troy, New York, under the care of Dr. Beman and the Rev. E. Kirk; the other in Newhaven, Connecticut. A species of absolute Antinomianism, the extravagance and evil of which is sufficiently obvious, and which, it will be clearly seen, has no relation to the form of Christian truth and experience presented in these discourses, except that of contrariety and counteraction.]

If any individual will point out anything intrinsic, in the doctrine here maintained, at all allied to that error, I, for one, will be among the first to abandon the position which I am now endeavouring to sustain. Perfectionism, technically so called, is, in my judgment, in the nature and necessary tendencies of its principles, worse than the worst form of infidelity. The doctrine of holiness, now under consideration, in all its essential features and elements, stands in direct opposition to Perfectionism. It has absolutely nothing in common with it, but a few terms derived from the Bible.

1. Perfectionism, for example, in its fundamental principles, is the abrogation of all law. The doctrine of holiness, as here maintained, is perfect obedience to the precepts of the law. It is the "righteousness of the law fulfilled in us."

2. In abrogating the moral law, as a rule of duty, Perfectionism abrogates all obligation of every kind, and to all beings. The doctrine of holiness, as here maintained, contemplates the Christian as a "debtor to all men," to the full extent of his capacities, and consists in a perfect discharge of all these obligations,—of every obligation to God and man.

3. Perfectionism is a "rest" which suspends all efforts and prayer, even, for the salvation of the world. The doctrine of holiness, as here maintained, consists in such a sympathy with the love of Christ, as constrains the subject to consecrate his entire being to the glory of Christ, in the salvation of men.

4. Perfectionism substitutes the direct teaching of the Spirit, falsely called, in the place of the "word." This expects such teachings only in the diligent study of the Word, and tries every doctrine by the "law and the testimony,"—"the law and the testimony," expounded in conformity with the legitimate laws of interpretation.

5. Perfectionism surrenders up the soul to blind impulse, assuming, that every existing desire or impulse is caused by the direct agency of the Spirit, and therefore to be gratified. The doctrine of holiness, as here maintained, consists in the subjection of all our powers and propensities to the revealed will of God.

6. Perfectionism abrogates the Sabbath, and all the ordinances of the Gospel, and, in its legitimate tendencies, even marriage itself. The doctrine of holiness, as here maintained, is a state of perfect moral purity, induced and perpetuated by a careful observance of all these ordinances, together with subjection to other influences of the Gospel, received by faith.

7. Perfectionism renders, in its fundamental principles, all perfection an impossibility. If, as this system maintains, the Christian is freed from all obligation, is bound by no law,—in short, if there is no standard with which to compare his actions (and there is none), if the moral law, as a rule of action, is abrogated,—moral perfection can no more be predicated of the Christian than of the horse, the ox, or the ass. The doctrine of holiness, on the other hand, as here maintained,

contemplates the moral law as the only rule and standard of the moral conduct, and consists in perfect conformity to the precepts of this law.

Perfectionism, in short, in its essential elements, is the perfection of licentiousness. The doctrine of holiness, as here maintained, is the perfect and perpetual harmony of the soul, with "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest," "just," "pure," "lovely," and of "good report," "and if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," with these things also.

What agreement, then, has the doctrine of holiness, as here maintained, with Perfectionism? The same that light has with darkness. A man might, with the same propriety, affirm that I am a Unitarian, because I believe in one God, while I hang my whole eternity upon the doctrine of the Trinity, as to affirm that I am a Perfectionist, because I hold the doctrine of holiness as now presented.

II. This doctrine, it is said, will lead to spiritual pride. I answer,—1. An individual holding the sentiment under consideration, who has the true standard of holiness before his mind, and is conscious of coming "short of the glory of God," will be weighed down in deep humiliation and self-abasement, under the conviction that he not only is not what he ought to be, but what he might become. On the other hand, the man holding the common views will be greatly comforted, under a consciousness of moral imperfection, with the thought that he, in common with holy Paul, and David, and Isaiah, and all the purest saints that ever lived, through the "law in his members warring against the law of his mind, is in captivity unto the law of sin and death." 2. If an individual should attain to a state of entire consecration to Christ, spiritual pride would, of course, be wholly excluded. I shall recur to this subject again in a subsequent discourse.

III. It is further objected, that the belief of this doctrine will lead individuals to suppose themselves perfect, when they are not, and thus leave them in delusions fearfully dangerous. I answer,—1. This will not be the case, if as remarked in a former discourse, the true standard of holiness be kept before the mind.

2. If no doctrine is to be proclaimed which hypocrites will abuse, we must certainly find some other doctrine than this that none are entirely sanctified in this life.

IV. I have never yet seen any person that was perfect. I answer,—1. The reason may be, and I have no doubt is, the unbelief of the Church in respect to the nature and extent of the provisions and promises of Divine grace. 2. If, brother, your confidence in the provisions and promises of Divine grace is at all weakened, or your judgment of their nature and extent is at all influenced by the actual attainments of Christians at the present time, you ought to know that your faith rests upon "things seen," and not upon the Word of God. Where is the authority for determining the meaning of God’s declarations by the attainments of those who, by their unbelief, perhaps, are "making void the law of God?" 3. The objection under consideration lies with equal force against the Divine declaration, that the "earth shall yet be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." No such event has ever yet taken place. What should we think of the Christian, who, for this reason, should affirm that such an event never will take place? The question before us is, not what Christians have attained, but what God has promised.

REMARKS.

1. The reader is now prepared to determine the fact, where the weight of evidence lies, in respect to the momentous question, Is perfection in holiness attainable in this life? On the one hand, we have a long array of Devine declarations in respect to the provisions of the Gospel and the design of the redemption of Christ. We have also a similar array of "exceeding great and precious promises," the meaning of which cannot easily be misapprehended by the honest inquirer after truth. In addition to all these, we have the express commands of Scripture addressed to us as Christians, together with the prayer of Christ, and of inspired men, who spake and prayed as they were "moved by the Holy Ghost," all bearing upon this one point. On the other hand, we have a small number of passages, a careful analysis of which clearly shows to have no relevancy to the subject whatever—passages the most important of which (such, for example, as Romans 7:1-25, Galatians 5:17, Php 3:12, and 1 John 1:8) have long since been given up as proof texts upon this subject, by many, who deny the doctrine maintained in these discourses. Under such circumstances, how is it possible for us to doubt, not only where the weight of evidence, but where the truth lies?

2. Here, also, I may be permitted to allude to the manifest carelessness with which the Church generally has made up her judgment upon the doctrine under consideration, and to the necessity of a careful and prayerful re-examination of the whole subject. In reading the works of the ablest divines upon this subject, I have been forcibly struck with their manner of treating it, as indicating the fact, that their opinions were formed, and their proof texts selected, almost at random, without reference to fundamental principles. How else can we account, for example, for the strange phenomenon that a declaration, which Job made with exclusive reference to himself, has been so universally cited as proof that the man who embraces the views maintained in these discourses is not only deceived, but shows himself, by the sentiment which he has embraced, to be perverse. How else can we account for the general adoption of the maxim, as if it were a revealed truth, that, if a man should become entirely sanctified, he would be taken directly to heaven, and not be permitted to live on earth a moment? Sin, or at least some degree of it, is regarded as an essential element of Christian character, as a life-preserver, notwithstanding the Divine declaration, that, "he that would love life, and see good days, must refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile," and that implicit obedience to all God’s commandments is the only surety for long life.

3. Permit me, in conclusion, to allude to the state of mind necessary to a correct investigation of this subject. It is a supreme and ardent desire after holiness, and a knowledge of the means of attaining it. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Without this state of mind, we are unprepared, not only for this, but for every inquiry in respect to the Scriptures.

Reader, is this your state? Is the inquiry after the way of holiness the great and absorbing inquiry of your heart? "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

03.04. The New Covenant

DISCOURSE IV. THE NEW COVENANT.

" Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old."— Hebrews 8:8-13.

" And to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant."— Hebrews 12:24. THE great difficulty, which a vast majority of Christians feel, in respect to holy living, is the want of the constant presence and influence of a filial, affectionate, confiding, and obedient spirit towards God,—a spirit which perpetually cries, Abba, Father, and consists in the spontaneous flow of the heart’s purest and best affections towards Christ. If the mind could always be in this state, how easy it would be to avoid all sin, and perfectly to obey all the Divine requisitions! This spirit Christians often resolve to cherish. They find their resolutions, however, wholly inefficient to move the heart. To remedy the difficulty, they resort to their Bibles and to prayer, and renew their resolutions with increasing earnestness. Still the heart remains comparatively unmoved; and whatever effect is produced by such means, very soon passes away, "like the morning cloud," leaving in the heart the same "aching void" as before. Now, while the Christian is thus "resolving, and re-resolving," and constantly sliding back to the cheerless state from which he started, while, in spite of his efforts, he is perpetually sinking deeper and deeper in the "mire and deep waters," suppose the Divine Redeemer should pass along, and say to his weary and desponding disciple, If you will at once cease from all these vain efforts, and yield yourself up to my control, relying with implicit confidence in my ability and faithfulness, I will enter into a covenant with you, that I will, myself, shed abroad in your heart that "perfect love which casteth out all fear,"—that filial and affectionate spirit which you have vainly endeavoured to induce in your own mind. I will so present the truth to your apprehension, that your heart’s purest and best affections shall constantly and spontaneously flow out toward me. I will secure you in a state of perfect and perpetual obedience to every command of God, and in the full and constant fruition of his presence and love. All this I will do in perfect consistency with the full, and free, and uninterrupted exercise of your own voluntary agency. Such a message would be to the believer, "afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted," as life from the dead. This, Christian, is precisely what the Lord Jesus Christ offers to do for you, as the Mediator of the new Covenant. With the Psalmist you can say, " I will run in the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart." Christ is now ready thus to enlarge your heart, that, under the spontaneous flow of pure and perfect love, you may do the whole will of

God. Till your faith is fastened upon Christ, as the life and light of the soul, as the "quickening spirit," who alone is able to breathe into your heart the breath of spiritual life, all your efforts after holiness will be vain. My object, in the present discourse, is to present to your contemplation and faith this new covenant, and Christ as the Mediator of this covenant. In illustrating this subject, the attention of the reader is invited to a consideration of the following propositions:—

I. The nature of the new covenant, as distinguished from the first, or the old covenant.

II. The relation of these two covenants.

III. The object of Christ in the provisions of Divine grace.

IV. The conditions on which he will fulfil in us what he has promised as the Mediator of the new covenant.

I. The nature of the new covenant, as distinguished from the first or the old covenant. The old covenant, as was shown in a preceding discourse, is the moral law, the covenant originally made with Adam, re-announced at Mount Sinai, and which now exists between God and all unfallen spirits. The new covenant, on the other hand, is the covenant of grace, obscurely disclosed to our first parents, in the promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head," more distinctly unfolded in the promise to Abraham, and brought out in all its fulness in the new dispensation. As the Mediator of this covenant, Christ, as shown in the text, and in a preceding discourse, promises to believers, on condition of their faith in him, the following blessings:—I. A confirmed state of pure and perfect holiness, such as is required by the moral law. 2. The full pardon of all sin, or entire justification. 3. The perpetual fruition of the Divine presence and favour. 4. The consequent universal prevalence of the Gospel. Such are the "riches of the glory of Christ’s inheritance in the saints." Such is the "completeness of the saints in him," as the Mediator of the new covenant. We will now,

II.* Consider the relation of these two covenants. This subject was alluded to in a preceding discourse. My object now is to present the whole subject with greater distinctness and fulness than I then could do for the want of space. I remark,—

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* Most of the distinctions here made between the two covenants were suggested to my mind by my beloved associate, the Rev. C. G. Finney.

I. As then observed, the same standard of character, perfect holiness, is common to each of these covenants.

2. In the first covenant, holiness is required of the creature. In the new covenant, the same thing is promised to the believer.

3. The condition on which the blessings promised under the first covenant are secured is, Do and live. "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man that doeth these things shall live by them." The condition of the new covenant is, Believe and live. "Now, the just shall live by faith." "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise: Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) or, Who shall descend

into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach. That, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

4. The "surety" of the first covenant is the creature himself. The "surety" of the new covenant is Christ. In other words, the salvation of a creature under the former depends upon the faithfulness of the creature himself. The salvation of a creature under the latter depends upon the faithfulness of Christ. Hence Christ is said, Hebrews 7:22, to have been "made a surety of a better testament" [covenant]. In Hebrews 8:6, as the Mediator of the new covenant, Christ is also declared to be the "Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."

5. The first covenant is adapted to the condition of creatures only who have never sinned. The new covenant is adapted, by infinite wisdom and love, to the condition of sinners involved in infinite guilt, and hopelessly lost, as far as any efforts of their own are concerned, under the power of sin.

6. The exclusive influence of the first covenant upon sinners is to increase their guilt and aggravate their depravity. The new covenant redeems these very sinners from the curse of the law, and "delivers them from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Hence the first covenant is said to "gender to bondage;" i.e., sinners under its influence are left in hopeless bondage, under the power of sin; while all who are under the full influence of the new covenant, are free, i.e., are delivered from the power of sin, and introduced into a state of purity and blessedness. Galatians 4:25-26,—For these are the two covenants; the one from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all."

7. The first covenant is a dispensation of justice. The new is a dispensation of mercy, under the influence of which the sinner is brought to the "blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." The former influences the subject by commands and prohibitions, rewards and penalties; the latter subdues and melts the heart of the rebel by the power of love.

8. Finally, whatever the old covenant, or the moral law, requires of the creature, the new covenant, as shown in a former discourse, promises to the believer. The first covenant, for example, requires of the creature perfect and perpetual holiness. The new covenant promises to the believer perfect and perpetual holiness. I will first cite a few of the passages quoted in that discourse, to sustain the above declaration, and will then offer some general remarks to show that the construction there put upon them is correct. Jeremiah 32:39-40,—"And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me." Ezekiel 36:25,—"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart, also, will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Deuteronomy 30:6,—"And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to

love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." Jeremiah 50:20,—"In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none, and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24,—"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." That Christ, as the Mediator of the new covenant, does, in these and kindred passages, promise to the believer all that the law requires of him, will appear perfectly evident from the following considerations:—

I. This sentiment is in accordance with the most direct and obvious import of the phraseology employed in such passages,—that meaning I refer to, which most naturally suggests itself to plain and unlettered men, reading the sacred text without note or comment, and with their judgments unbiassed by preconceived opinions. For such minds the Bible was written; and its import to them, in the state referred to, is in accordance with the "mind of the Spirit."

2. This is the construction which would, by all mankind, be put upon the same language, if found in any other book but the Bible.

3. Let any minister, in any congregation in the land, use this identical language in the same full and unqualified manner in which the sacred writers use it, and their hearers will, with one voice, charge him with holding the doctrine of Christian Perfection, as maintained in these discourses; so obvious is the import of such phraseology, when presented without qualification.

4. All Christians admit that entire justification is promised in the new covenant, that the Bible teaches that heaven is a place of perfect holiness, and that Christ was free from all sin while on earth. Now, the same identical principles of interpretation, by which either of the above doctrines can be proved from the language of the Bible, demand the admission of the doctrine under consideration, in all its fulness. If the language employed in the above passages does not sustain this doctrine, neither of the above doctrines can be sustained by the language of inspiration. Every candid reader of the Bible, who will carefully study the sacred volume, with his eye upon the phraseology there employed, in reference to all these doctrines, will find the above affirmations fully sustained.

5. The principles of interpretation by which it can be shown that the phraseology of the passages before us does not sustain the doctrine under consideration, would be equally conclusive against any other phraseology which the sacred writers could have employed, when from such phraseology this doctrine should be inferred.

6. This is the very sentiment which is invariably impressed by the Spirit of God upon the young convert in the warmth of his early love. The language and sentiment of every such heart is—

"Lord, I make a full surrender; Every thought and power be thine— Thine entirely— Through eternal ages thine." With the young convert, this is not a poetical hyperbole, but the real sentiment and conviction of the heart. Now, present to such a mind, in the unsophisticated warmth of its "first love," the exceeding great and precious promises of the new covenant, and how would he interpret them? Who can doubt that he would understand them in conformity with the pure sentiments and convictions impressed upon his mind by the Spirit of God, in his conversion? Such are the promises of the new covenant, of which Christ is the Mediator. In looking to Christ for the

fulfilment of these promises, would he not charge upon us the sin of unbelief, should we expect less from him than that he should "redeem us from all iniquity," and render us "perfect and complete in all the will of God?" We come now to consider,—

III. The object of Christ in the provisions of Divine grace. It is, to lay the foundation and provide the means for the fulfilment, in believers, of all that is promised in the new covenant; to wit, the full and entire pardon of all their sins, their redemption from all iniquity, their perfection in holiness, and their perfect and perpetual blessedness, in an eternal fruition of the Divine presence and favour. 1 Peter 2:24,—"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." Ephesians 5:25-27,—"Even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Titus 2:14,—"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works:" John 3:16-17,—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through him might be saved." Romans 8:3,—"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." 1 John 3:5,—"And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin."

Such is the design of Christ, in all the provisions of Divine grace. It is to lay a broad foundation for the fulfilment, on his part, as the Mediator of the new covenant, of all the blessings promised in that covenant. This was the work which Christ undertook to accomplish, as the incarnate, atoning Saviour; and, blessed be God, the work which he assumed in our behalf he finished. "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." "When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

Having finished this work, he now presents himself to us, as "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us." We are permitted, by faith, to "behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." "And of his fulness we may all receive, and grace for grace." Listen, hearer, to the "gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth," as our high priest and intercessor, as the "Mediator of the new covenant." "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." "I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." We will now consider,—

IV. The conditions on which Christ will fulfil in us what he has promised, as the Mediator of the new covenant. These conditions are distinctly stated in Ezekiel 36:37,—"Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet, for this, be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." The things promised, permit me to remind the reader, are these:—the unlimited pardon of all sin—entire redemption from the

power of sin—the perfect and perpetual subjection of all our powers to the "whole will of God"—and the full and eternal fruition of the Divine presence and favour. The condition, on which all this is promised, is, that God be "inquired of," through Christ, as the Mediator of the new covenant, "to do it for us." Now, inquiring of Christ for those blessings, implies,—

I. A consciousness of our need of Divine grace—of our infinite guilt and hopeless bondage under sin—of the absolute hopelessness of our securing either of these blessings, through any unaided efforts of our own.

2. Confidence unshaken in Christ's ability and willingness to do all this for us. Suppose Christ should address you as he did one of old, in respect to another subject,—"Believest thou that I am able to do this?" "Do you believe that I am now standing at the door, and knocking, and that, if you will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with you, and you with me," and confer upon you this full and finished redemption? What would be your answer? Could your soul settle down immovably upon the affirmation, "Lord, I believe?"

3. A preference of these blessings above all objects in existence. Suppose God should call upon you to lift your heart to his throne, and ask of him what blessing you pleased. Would your mind fasten upon a heart perfectly pure, together with its consequences, as the "pearl of great price," as the treasure in comparison with which all other objects are, in your estimation, "but loss?" If this is your state of mind, there is but one thing more to be done, which is this—

4. An actual reception of Christ, and reliance upon him for all these blessings, in all their fulness—a surrender of your whole being to him, that he may accomplish in you all the "exceeding great and precious promises" of the new covenant. When this is done—when there is that full and implicit reliance upon Christ, for the entire fulfilment of all that he has promised—he becomes directly responsible for our full and complete redemption. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." To us his word stands pledged to "put the laws of God in our minds, and write them in our hearts;" to "circumcise our heart and the heart of our seed, to love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul;" to "sprinkle clean water upon us, so that we shall be clean;" to "give us one heart and one way, that we may fear God for ever; to make an everlasting covenant with us, that he will not turn away from us to do us good, but that he will put the fear of God in our hearts, that we may not depart from him; finally, to "sanctify us wholly, and preserve our whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Reader, "Believest thou this?" Can you open your mouth thus wide? Dare you ask, or expect, from your Redeemer, less than this? Methinks I hear that Redeemer asking you the question, "Do you now believe?" "According to thy faith, be it unto thee." Reader, let me ask you again, Do you desire to be imbued with a filial, confiding, and obedient spirit towards God, to be brought into such a state, that your heart's purest and best affections shall spontaneously flow out towards Christ, and the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus?" Christ is now present in your heart, and ready to confer all this purity and blessedness upon you, if you can believe that he is able and willing to do it for you, and will cast your entire being upon his faithfulness. To you he says, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Come to the fountain, reader, and "wash your garments and make them white in the blood of the Lamb." "Christ bore your sins in his own body on the tree, that you, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness."

Why should you any longer bear the burden of those sins? especially when Christ, in view of the provisions of his grace, calls upon you to "reckon yourself dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ your Lord."

REMARKS.

I. We may now understand the reason why Christ himself prayed, and taught his Church to pray, and why the Holy Spirit constantly influences inspired men to pray, for this one specific blessing—entire perfection in holiness; also why this is required of us, as Christians, and such rewards are held before us to induce us thus to consecrate ourselves to Christ. Such prayers, commands, and motives, are all based upon the provisions and promises of Divine grace, which secure to the believer, on condition of his faith, this very blessing; and are designed to raise the Church to a comprehension of the "fulness that she has in Christ," that she may take possession of her purchased and promised inheritance. We are taught to pray for this blessing, and such a state is required of us, because provision is made, in the Gospel, for God to answer such prayers, when we "ask in faith, nothing wavering," and for us to attain to that state, by casting ourselves, in the exercise of simple faith, upon the power and faithfulness of Christ.

II. We learn how to understand and apply such declarations of Scripture as the following:—"Wash you, make you clean;" "Make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit;" "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," &c. The common impression seems to be, that men are required to do all this, in the exercise of their own unaided powers; and because the sinner fails to comply, grace comes in, and supplies the condition in the case of Christians. Now, I suppose that all such commands are based upon the provisions of Divine grace. The sinner is not required to "make himself clean," or to "make to himself a new heart," in the exercise of his unaided powers, but by application to the blood of Christ, "which cleanseth from all sin." The grace which purifieth the heart is provided; the fountain, whose waters cleanse from sin, is set open. To this fountain the creature is brought, and because he may descend into it, and there "wash his garments and make them white," he is met with the command, "Wash you, make you clean," "make to yourself a new heart and a new spirit," and "cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." The sinner is able to make to himself a "new heart and a new spirit," because he can instantly avail himself of proffered grace. He does literally "make to himself a new heart and a new spirit," when he yields himself up to the influence of that grace. The power to cleanse from sin lies in the blood and grace of Christ; and hence, when the sinner "purifies himself by obeying the truth through the spirit," the glory of his salvation belongs, not to him, but to Christ.

Herein also lies the ability of the creature to obey the commands of God, addressed to us as redeemed sinners. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me." These declarations are literally and unqualifiedly true. We can "abide in Christ," and thus bring forth the fruit required of us. If by unbelief we separate ourselves from Christ, we of necessity descend, under the weight of our own guilt and depravity, down the sides of the pit, into the eternal sepulchre.

III. In view of the provision of Divine grace for our full redemption, and of the promises of Christ, as the Mediator of the new covenant, to that effect, I would remark, that a state of entire sanctification is, and appears to be, the most natural and simple form of Christian experience—the form which

we ought to expect to find most common in the Church. If Christ has made provision for our entire sanctification, and promised thus to sanctify us, on condition of faith in him on our part—that any sincere Christian, who is aware of his privileges, should ask for, or expect less from him, is the most unnatural form of Christian experience conceivable, and one whose occurrence, we should think, would be regarded as a strange anomaly among the disciples of such a Saviour. So I have no doubt it will be regarded, when Christians come to a full understanding of their "completeness" in Christ.

IV. We are now prepared to contemplate the relation between the views maintained in these discourses, and those very commonly held by Christians upon the same subject. In reference to the standard of moral obligation, there is a perfect agreement. The only existing difference respects the extent of the provisions and promises of Divine grace, in respect to Christians in this life.

V. We are also prepared to estimate the difficulties in which the common theory is involved. I will specify a few of them.

I. The advocates of the common theory maintain, that the sacred writers designed to teach the doctrine, that no individual ever attains to a state of entire sanctification in this life; while it was their object to teach the fact, that Christ was free from all sin, that all Christians are perfectly justified here, and will be perfectly sanctified in a future state, and that perfect holiness is required of us in this life. Now, if the above positions are true, how can we account for the strange fact, that the same identical principles of interpretation, by which either of the doctrines last mentioned can be proved from the phraseology of the sacred writers, demand, when applied to the phraseology which they employed in expressing the nature and extent of the provisions and promises of Divine grace, the admission of the principle, that entire holiness is attainable in this life?—a principle precisely opposite to the one which, it is maintained, they intended to teach. Again, how can we account for the fact, in consistency with the common theory, that the sacred writers employed a phraseology which, if found in any other book, or if now used by individuals in the same unqualified manner as used by them, would be universally understood to affirm the doctrine maintained in these discourses? Would the sacred writers have employed such a singular phraseology as this, had it been their object—as the advocates of the common theory affirm—to impress their readers with the conviction, that perfect holiness is, in this life, unattainable? Again, no phraseology conceivable is more perfectly adapted to convey the sentiment maintained in these discourses, than that employed by the sacred writers. To draw any other doctrine from it, it must be narrowed down, and regarded as altogether hyperbolical. Now, how can we account for the strange anomaly, that inspired men adopted a phraseology adapted to convey one sentiment, and that only when, as the common theory affirms, their definite object was, to convey precisely the opposite sentiment? These are some of the difficulties in which the common theory is inextricably involved, as far as the laws of interpretation are concerned.

2. That Christ prayed, and taught his Church to pray, and that the Holy Spirit inspired and influenced the apostles and primitive Christians to pray, continually and fervently, for this one specific object—the entire sanctification of believers in this life—all admit. According to the common theory, it was a prime object of the sacred writers to impress their readers and hearers with the conviction, that such prayers will never be answered by the bestowment of the blessing

desired. How can we account for such prayers, in consistency with such an object? Above all, how shall we account for the fact, that Christ and inspired men prayed for one specific blessing—the entire sanctification of believers in this life—when their intention was, to impress us with the conviction, that such a blessing will not be conferred; while they did not pray for another blessing—the partial holiness of the Christian—when their design was to impress us with the conviction, that this blessing is agreeable to the will of God?

3. All admit that the richest blessings are promised to us on the specific condition of perfect holiness. According to the common theory, the sacred writers designed to impress their readers with the conviction that this is a condition with which they will never in this life comply. How, as asked in a former discourse, can such a fact be accounted for, in consistency with the sincerity and love of God?

4. According to the common theory, God requires as, in the most solemn manner conceivable, to be perfectly holy, and then, in a manner equally solemn, requires us to believe, that with such commands we shall not comply. How can such a fact be explained?

5. Certain maxims, which have been almost universally regarded as of fundamental importance to efficient action, not only in religion, but other subjects, present difficulties equally inexplicable in consistency with the common theory. For example, "What ought to be done, may be done," i.e., we should expect to do. "God bestows upon every one as much holiness and peace as he sincerely desires and prays for." Suppose, that with these maxims before me, I am met by the command,—"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Suppose, that in view of this command, I lift my heart in honest and fervent sincerity to God, for grace to keep that command. Now, under such circumstances, the advocates of the common theory must either give up the above maxims altogether, or admit the attainableness of entire sanctification in this life.

6. According to the common theory, we are required to aim at perfection in holiness, and, at the same time, as shown in a former discourse, to believe that such a state is unattainable—a belief which renders the formation of the intention required an impossibility.

7. The advocates of the common theory generally admit, that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life; but at the same time maintain, that it is never attained, and that it is a great error to suppose that it is attained. Now, what evidence can we have, that such state is unattainable, higher than this, that all Christians, in all past ages, have honestly and prayerfully aimed, and all will continue, to the end of time, thus to aim at this state—a fact which all admit—with the absolute certainty of not attaining to it? Should it be said, that such efforts are not made with sufficient vigour; the answer is, that, to put forth efforts with the adequate vigour, is the very thing at which all are aiming. On the supposition above referred to, how can the position be sustained, that the state under consideration is attainable? The sinner, it is said, in illustration of the position that perfection in holiness is attainable, but never attained, is able to repent, in the absence of special grace, though he never will do it. To make the cases parallel, let us suppose, that all sinners, in the absence of such grace, are honestly and prayerfully striving after holiness; with the absolute certainty of not, in the circumstances supposed, attaining it. With what propriety, I ask, could it, then, be said, that holiness is practicable to the sinner, in the absence of special grace? What is here supposed of the sinner, is actually true of every sincere Christian. Paul, for example, for the space of thirty or forty years, aimed steadily and prayerfully at this one definite state, and that,

according to the sentiment under consideration, with the absolute certainty of falling short of his object. The same experiment, and with the same result, every Christian has repeated, and every true Christian will continue to repeat, to the end of time. Yet, it is said, to attain to that state, is to every individual, at every moment, perfectly practicable. What conceivable meaning do such persons attach to the terms " attainable " and "practicable," when so used? The advocates of the common theory are sacredly bound to take the ground, that the state under consideration is not attainable, in any appropriate sense of the term.

VI. We are now prepared to understand the nature and character of the Antinomian, legal, and evangelical spirit. The Antinomian spirit relies upon Christ for justification, in the absence of personal holiness, or sanctification. It looks to him to be saved in and not from sin. The legal spirit assumes two forms,—I. It expects justification and sanctification both through deeds of the law. This is the spirit of the ancient Pharisee and modern moralist. 2. It expects justification from Christ, and sanctification from personal effort. Under the influence of this spirit, an individual will be perpetually and vainly struggling, by dint of resolutions, against the resistless current of carnal propensities. In this hopeless bondage he cries out,—"Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The evangelical spirit looks to Christ alike for justification and sanctification both, and, by implicit faith in him, obtains a blissful victory over "the world, the flesh, and the devil." It is the "spirit of adoption" which cries, "Abba, Father," and in that cry, seeks and obtains deliverance from the "bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." The Antinomian spirit is the stagnation of the moral powers in a state of spiritual death. The evangelical spirit is their full, and free, and perpetual action, in a state of life and peace. While the legal spirit, in its hopeless struggle with the flesh, cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" the evangelical spirit, in the triumph of faith, exclaims, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The legal spirit crying, "Where is the blessedness I knew, When first I saw the Lord?" looks back to its first love, as the brightest spot in its whole experience, for it was then joined with another spirit than itself. The evangelical spirit, with its eye steadily fixed upon the "bright and morning star," moves peacefully and perpetually onward, in a path which "shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day." The legal spirit, "vainly puffed up," notwithstanding its perpetual short-comings, "with its fleshly mind," in view of a few fancied attainments, made by dint of resolution, exclaims to the stander-by, "Stand by thyself; I am holier than thou." The evangelical spirit, overwhelmed with a sense of the grace of God in its redemption, exclaims, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" "Not for works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, hath he saved us."

"Infinite grace to vileness given, The sons of earth, made heirs of heaven." In short, the Antinomian spirit is the spirit of spiritual death. The legal spirit is the "spirit of bondage." The evangelical spirit is the "glorious liberty of the children of God."

VII. We are now prepared for a distinct contemplation of the grand mistake, into which the great mass of Christians appear to have fallen, in respect to the Gospel of Christ. It is this: Expecting to obtain justification, and not, at the same time, and to the same extent, sanctification, by faith in Christ. Where is the Christian who can say from experience, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith?" When do we hear the convert, for example, directed to faith in Christ, as the certain means of subduing his temper, subjecting his appetites, crucifying his sinful propensities, overcoming the great enemy, "fulfilling the righteousness of the law," and enjoying

perpetual and perfect peace and blessedness in God? An almost entire new leaf will be turned over in Christian experience when the Church knows Christ as such a Saviour. The consequence of the mistake under consideration, is what might be expected. The great mass of the Church are slumbering in Antinomian death; or struggling in legal bondage, with barely enough of the evangelical spirit to keep the pulse of spiritual life faintly beating. When will the Church arise from this state of gloom, and death, and barrenness, to an apprehension and enjoyment of her privileges in Christ, as the Mediator of the new covenant?

VIII. We are also prepared to account for a melancholy fact which characterises different stages of the experience of the great mass of Christians. From the evangelical simplicity of their first love, they pass into a state of legal bondage, and after a fruitless struggle of vain resolutions with the "world, the flesh, and the devil," they appear to descend into a kind of Antinomian death. The reason why Christian experience takes such a course, I suppose to be this: The young convert, in the first instance, is turned away from Christ, to his own resolutions, &c., as the means of continuance in the path of life, and this with the assurance that his carnal propensities will never be fully crucified, till death shall release the captive. Thus, he is very soon conducted into the region of legalism, with the atmosphere around him already charged, to no small extent, with the cheerless, deadening vapours of Antinomianism. Here, after a vain struggle of longer or shorter continuance, with sin and sinful propensities, the spirit of Antinomian slumber prevails, and death, and not a present Christ, is looked for, as the great deliverer from bondage. This direction Christian experience will unchangeably take, till Christians fully understand the import of the question, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ?"

IX. We are now fully prepared to understand the design of Paul in the 7th and 8th chapters of Romans. The whole epistle is mainly directed against two fundamental errors of the Jews, to wit, that justification and sanctification are both to be obtained by deeds of law. The first error he explodes in the preceding chapters, showing the hopeless condemnation of all men under the law, and their entire justification through faith in Christ. In chapters vii. and viii., he pursues a course in regard to sanctification, precisely similar to what he had done in the chapters preceding, in regard to justification. His object is, to contrast the hopeless bondage and fruitless struggle of the creature after holiness, under the old covenant, or moral law, with his perfect liberty, blessedness, and safety, under the new covenant. As the apostle had himself fully tested the influence of both covenants upon men as sinners, he gives us his own experience; first, as a Pharisee under the old; and secondly, as a Christian under the new, covenant. Under the former, he says, notwithstanding the law is good, and I delight in it "after the inward man," and often resolve to keep its pure requisitions, still "I am carnal, sold under sin." "The good that I would, I do not, but the evil that I would not, that I do." Under the new covenant, on the other hand, I am "free from the law of sin and death," breathe the "spirit of adoption," am free from all condemnation, possess a hope sure and stedfast, and am an "heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ." In short, in chapter vii. he gives us a view of the bondage of the legal spirit, in its fruitless struggle against the current of carnal propensities. In the eighth, he gives us the triumph and freedom of the evangelical spirit, through faith in Christ, as the " Mediator of the new covenant."

X. We now see the reason why most professors of religion find their own experience portrayed in the seventh, instead of the eighth, chapter of Romans. One of two reasons must be assigned for this melancholy fact. Either they have never known any other than the legal spirit, or else, "having

begun in the spirit," they are engaged in a vain struggle to be "made perfect in the flesh." In other words, they are now in legal bondage. To Christ, as a sanctifying Saviour, as the "Mediator of the new covenant," they are, comparatively speaking, strangers. When they thus know Christ, they will find their experience portrayed in another and different chapter than the one now under consideration.

XI. Finally, we may now contemplate the reason why, to most Christians, the idea of arriving at a state of entire sanctification in this life, appears so chimerical. With the views commonly entertained of the power of the Gospel, and of the means of holiness, the thought of arriving at such a state is one of the most chimerical ideas that ever entered the human mind. If there is no other means of coming into that state, but by forcing my way, by dint of personal effort, through the dead sea of my carnal propensities, I may as well give over the struggle first as last. Whatever my natural powers may be, a victory I shall never obtain in this manner. But if, on the other hand, I am permitted to hear the voice of Christ saying, Look to me, and I will enter into a covenant with you, that I will myself "circumcise thy heart to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul," that I will "redeem you from all iniquity," and cause you to stand "perfect and complete in all the will of God," then I find myself standing in an entirely different relation to the state under consideration. The condition on which this blessedness is promised I can perform. I can as easily look to Christ for perfect as for partial holiness; and when my faith hangs upon his for a fulfilment of all that he has promised, he has mercifully assumed the responsibility of doing for me according to the faith which his own spirit has induced me to exercise.

Christian, "you have not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken unto them any more. For they could not endure that which was commanded. And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart; and so terrible was the sight, that even Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake. But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in Heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect; and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." To this "blood of sprinkling," let us come and "wash our garments, and make them white," and then lift our hearts to heaven and exclaim, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

03.05. Full Redemption

DISCOURSE V.

FULL REDEMPTION IN CHRIST.

"Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."— Hebrews 7:25.

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."— John 4:14. IN remarking upon these passages, the attention of the reader is invited to a consideration of the following propositions, which it will be my object to illustrate and establish.

I. Christ presents himself to us as a Saviour in this sense, that he is both able and willing to meet fully every real demand of our being; in other words, perfectly to supply all our real necessities.

II. We will notice some of the demands of our nature which Christ pledges himself to meet.

III. Illustrate the nature of faith in Christ as such a Saviour.

IV. I will endeavour to show that the object of Christ, in all his dispensations towards his people, is to induce in them the exercise of this implicit faith towards him.

V. That it is only when this implicit faith is exercised towards Christ, that he can accomplish in us all that he has promised.

VI. That Christians honour Christ most highly, when, and only when, they rely upon him for an entire fulfilment in them of all that he has promised.

I. Christ presents himself to us as a Saviour, in this sense, that he is both able and willing to meet fully every real demand of our being; in other words, perfectly to supply all our real necessities. The truth of this proposition I argue,—

I. From the fact that it is positively promised in the text, and elsewhere in the Bible. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." "Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst;" i. e., all his real necessities shall be perfectly supplied. Php 4:19,—"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Psalms 84:11,—For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly," Romans 8:32,—He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

2. On this condition only can Christ claim to be unto us the object of supreme regard. If there is any real demand of our nature, which he is unable or unwilling to meet, for the supply of that demand, we should look to some other source.

3. Christ is infinite in power and love, and therefore must be both able and willing thus to "supply our need."

II. We will now consider some of the demands of our being, which Christ pledges himself to meet. All the real demands of our nature are comprehended in these two—a state of perfect moral purity and blessedness. That these may be possessed in all their fulness, the following special demands must be met:—

I. As sinners, we need pardon. Till we are conscious that God has forgiven our sins, and fully restored us to his favour, a state of well-being is with us an absolute impossibility. To meet this demand, Christ presents himself to us as our "Advocate with the Father," and as the "propitiation for our sins." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

2. Another demand of our nature is, entire deliverance from the power of sin, into a state of conscious perfect moral rectitude. In every condition, actual and conceivable, this is a changeless demand of our being. Until it is met, and perfectly met, the want of it will, of necessity, render our minds "like the troubled sea." To meet this demand, Christ presents himself as able and willing to "redeem us from all iniquity," and render us "perfect and complete in all the will of God."

3. Another demand of our nature is, conscious security against all the temptations to sin, from the "world, the flesh, and the devil." To meet this demand, the Saviour pledges himself that "he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it." He presents us with the armour of righteousness, assuring us that, if we will "put on the whole armour of God," we shall be "able to stand against all the wiles of the devil."

4. Another fundamental demand of our being is, a love of knowledge. In view of this demand, Christ holds before our minds the declaration of eternal love—"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus, whom he hath sent"—and then presents himself to us as able and willing, through his Spirit, to communicate this knowledge to us.

5. To a state of perfect well-being, the friendship and favour of other minds is an indispensable requisite. To supply this want of our being, he holds before us the Divine declaration,—"I will dwell in them and walk in them;" "and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." He then lifts our contemplation to the eternal throne, and pledges himself to introduce to us an endless and blissful association with the pure spirits that are congregated there.

6. We have also certain demands through our physical constitution, which need to be met. To meet these, Christ stands ready to do for us the following things:—I. To render us perfectly contented with our circumstances, whatever they may be. 2. To render us in the highest sense blessed, in what infinite love actually confers upon us. The saint who could sit down to her meal, which consisted barely of a cup of water and a few dry crusts of bread, and lift her heart to heaven with the exclamation, "All this, Lord, and Jesus too," hardly needed another ingredient to her cup of blessedness, to cause it to overflow. 3. To bestow upon us all that will be to us, in our circumstances, a real blessing. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all

these things shall be added unto you." 4. To cause "all things to work together for our good."

7. I notice but one other demand of our nature which is met in Christ, which is this—an assured hope of a peaceful death and a glorious immortality. To meet this demand, he spreads before us the following assurance:—"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." With what infinite sweetness can we pillow our heads upon such a pledge as this!

Such, Christian, is the fulness that dwells in Christ for you. Such, also, is your completeness in him. In view of this fulness, this perfect completeness, he claims to be the sun and centre of your soul. "To whom shall we go," blessed Jesus, but unto thee? "Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure, that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

III. We are now prepared for our third inquiry, which is, The nature of faith in Christ as such a Saviour. It implies,—I. A consciousness of infinite guilt, poverty, and helplessness in ourselves. 2. The apprehension of Christ as a present Saviour, able and willing to meet all the demands of our being, as described above. 3. The actual reception of him, and cordial and voluntary surrender of our whole being to his control, that he may accomplish in us all that He has promised to those "who come unto God by him." The individual that knows and believes the "love that the Father hath unto us"—that relies with implicit confidence upon the absolute truth and rectitude of all that Christ has affirmed, and casts all his powers and interests upon his faithfulness, with the peaceful expectation of realising, in his own experience, a blessed fulfilment of all that he has promised,—such an individual exercises that faith, by which we are told "the just shall live." This leads me to remark,—

IV. That the object of Christ, in his dispensations and teachings, is, to induce in us the exercise of this implicit faith in himself. A bare allusion to a few circumstances in the life of our Saviour will afford a sufficient illustration of this part of our subject. For example,—I. The promptness with which he invariably granted the requests of those who cast themselves with implicit faith upon his power and faithfulness, together with the commendation which he always bestowed upon such acts of confidence. 2. The fact that he always required such confidence, as a condition of extending relief, by the exertion of miraculous power. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." 3. His perpetual reference to the unbelief of his disciples, as the cause of their failure to perform miracles, of their fear in the tempest, and of their carefulness in respect to the supply of their temporal necessities. 4. The repeated assurance that he gave them, that, if they would only exercise this implicit faith in him, "nothing should be impossible to them." 5. The manner in which he sent them forth to preach, and then asking them, at the close of his ministry, whether, in going out under his protection, "as sheep in the midst of wolves," without any provision at all for their wants, they had lacked anything. One object is perfectly visible in all these instances, which was, to break their hold of every other object, and to lead them to hang their entire being, with implicit trust, upon his power and faithfulness. Such was the single object of his entire course of treatment, in respect to his disciples and hearers while on earth. The same object, Christian, he is now pursuing towards you. When unbelief has disappeared from your heart; when you will "credit all that he has said;" when you shall calmly and peacefully repose all your powers and interests upon his faithful word—then his object, in respect to you, is accomplished. Then he will

open the fountains of eternal love, and let its life-giving waters flow in upon you for ever. He then can and will accomplish in you all that infinite love desires. "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?"

V. I am now to show, that it is only when this implicit confidence is exercised towards Christ, as a Saviour able and willing to meet all our necessities, that he can accomplish in us all that he has promised. How else, for example, can he preserve us, free from all care, and "keep us in perfect peace?" While the mind reposes with unwavering trust in his ability and faithfulness to meet all its necessities, the necessary result is a state of perfect quietude. Distrust, on the other hand, as necessarily throws the mind into a state of agitation. The little child could be preserved in a state of perfect peace, in the midst of the wildest fury of the hurricane, by the thought that his father held the helm, so long, and so long only, as he reposed implicit confidence in that father's ability and faithfulness to guide the vessel through the storm. So of the Christian: Christ will "keep those in perfect peace" whose minds are stayed on him, because they trust in him. To keep the mind thus, while in a state of distrust, is an absolute impossibility. For the same reason, it is impossible for Christ to be unto us an object of supreme love and delight, until we are brought to confide in him as being such a Saviour as he represents himself to be. Then, and then only, can he stir up the deep fountains of feeling within us, and cause the tide of love and blessedness to roll on for ever.

How, it may further be asked, is it possible for Christ to bring us into a state of perfect obedience to his will, until we are induced to exercise implicit confidence in the absolute wisdom and rectitude of his requisitions? Whatever Christ does for us as a Saviour, he does and must do, on one condition only—that confidence implicit is reposed in his ability and faithfulness to meet and supply our necessities. The experience of every individual will present a perfect verification of his declarations,—"I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." On the other hand, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

VI. Lastly, I am to show, that Christians honour Christ the most highly, when, and only when, they rely upon him for an entire fulfilment in them of all that he has promised, i.e., to supply all their real necessities. The more enlarged and confiding their expectations, the higher the honour they confer upon him. This is evident from the following considerations:—

I. They then, and then only, give him full and perfect credit for veracity in the testimony which he has given respecting himself. Such a Saviour he represents himself to be. When we trust him with full and perfect confidence as such a Saviour, we honour him as a "faithful and true witness." Unbelief, a want of this implicit confidence, casts the highest possible dishonour upon Christ, because it practically affirms, that he is not what he has declared himself to be.

2. In the exercise of this full and implicit confidence in Christ as a perfect Saviour, we honour, in the highest possible degree, his benevolence, his mercy, his love. To expect less from Christ than a full supply of all our necessities, is to affirm, that his love is not infinite.

3. In the exercise of this confidence only, we give him credit for being a perfect Saviour. If there is a solitary demand of our being, which he is not able and willing to meet, he is so far, as a Saviour, imperfect. Do you wish, Christian, to put the highest possible honour upon Christ? "Open your mouth wide," with the joyful confidence that he "will fill it." Cast all your cares upon him. Believe

that in him you are "complete," and seek and expect from him the most perfect fulness. When you expect from him less than this, you cast reproach upon his character for veracity and faithfulness, as possessed of infinite love—as an all-powerful and perfect Saviour. You affirm, that "in him all fulness" does not dwell. You wound his heart of love. You "grieve his Holy Spirit." You put out the light of your own soul.

REMARKS.

I. We may now understand the distinction between perfect and imperfect faith. They are not distinguished, I suppose, by this, that in reference to the same object and the same feature of Christ's character, the mind may be in a state of trust and distrust at one and the same moment. Our faith may be imperfect for two reasons:—I. We may repose confidence in one, and not in every feature of Christ's character as a Saviour. For example, the mind, in consequence of ignorance of the perfect fulness of Christ's redemption in all respects, may repose full confidence in Christ as a justifying, but not as a sanctifying Saviour. 2. For the same reason, the mind may repose confidence in Christ, for sustaining grace, in one condition in life, and not in another. We may, for example, expect Christ to bless us in our closets, but not in the midst of our business transactions. The faith of all such persons is imperfect. Perfect faith, on the other hand, is a full and unshaken confidence in Christ, as in all respects, at all times, and in every condition, a full and perfect Saviour—a Saviour able and willing to meet every possible demand of our being.

II. We also see how it was, that Satan effected the ruin of our first parents. It was by persuading them, that there was one fundamental demand of their being—a love of knowledge—which God did not design to meet; and by inducing them to attempt to supply that demand by transgressing the Divine prohibition. In this state of distrust of God's power or willingness to meet and supply all their necessities, all mankind now are by nature; and this distrust is the sole cause of every act of disobedience on earth.

III. We may now understand one fundamental design of the plan of redemption. It is to restore in man the full, implicit, and universal confidence in the power, wisdom, and love of God, which was exercised by our first parents before the fall, and is now exercised by all holy beings in existence. What God said to Abraham, he says to all the sons of men, who will hearken to his voice, as Abraham did,—"I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." When God is chosen by the soul as its eternal portion, in whom every demand of its being is perfectly met, then the work of redemption is accomplished in man, as far as his restoration to the love and favour of God is concerned.

IV. We also see when it is that an individual is brought into a state of entire and permanent holiness—when he is settled into a state of full and perpetual consciousness, that in Christ every demand of his being is met, and when all his powers are sweetly yielded up to his control, that he may thus supply our wants, and accomplish, in and through us, all the good pleasure of his goodness. Of such a person, in such a state, it may truly be said," There is none occasion of stumbling in him." Nor will there ever be to all eternity. Into this blissful state, Christian, Christ is both able and willing to bring you. Into this state he will bring you, as soon as you will credit his testimony to his own ability and willingness, and will accordingly surrender yourself to his sweet control.

V. We are now presented with another inexplicable difficulty in the way of the theory, that perfection in holiness is unattainable in this life. The advocates of that theory are bound to take the ground, that, in our condition in this life, such perfection—i.e., a state of perfect moral rectitude—would not be, on the whole, a blessing to us, for the glory of God, and the good of the universe; or admit that Christ is able and willing to confer this perfection upon us. If it is a good, Christ stands pledged to confer it upon us. For God has said, that "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Further, if such perfection would be a good to us, and Christ did not present himself to us as able and willing to meet this perpetual and changeless demand of our being, he would be to us an imperfect Saviour.

Again, if such perfection is not in this life a good, for the glory of God, or the well-being of the universe, we are under obligations infinite not to pray for it, or to aim to attain it. To make the present possession of that which, we believe, would not now be a good, the object of prayer and effort, must undeniably be in a high degree criminal. But is not the fact, that a state of moral rectitude would be a good to us, for the glory of God, and the good of the universe, a self-evident truth? Is it not demonstrably evident that it is a good, from the fact that it is required of us in the Bible; that Christ prayed for it in behalf of all Christians, and taught them to pray for it; and that such motives are held before us in the Bible, to induce in us this perfect obedience to God?

Now, which of the above alternatives shall we take? Shall we say, that perfection in holiness is not in this life a good, and, for this reason, as we are bound to do, if the supposition before us is correct, cease to aim at it, or pray for it? Or shall we say, that such perfection is a good, and that Christ, though able, is unwilling to confer it upon us, and thus impeach his benevolence, his character as a perfect Saviour? Or, finally, shall we affirm, that a state of perfect moral rectitude is in this life a good, and that Christ is both able and willing to confer it upon us, and thus proclaim his absolute perfection as a Saviour? One, and only one, of the above alternatives we must take. Which is most honourable to Christ? Which is most conformable to the teachings of inspiration? Which does it become us, as the pupils of the Bible and Spirit of God, as the disciples of such a Saviour, to assume?

VI. We see, also, how it is, and by what means that Satan is endeavouring to draw Christians away from Christ. It is by tempting them to believe, that some one or more of the demands of their being are not met in Christ, and thus to draw off their hearts from him to some other object. In every instance in which a Christian falls into sin, he does it under the influence of some such temptation as this. For the time being, he is led practically to distrust the power or willingness of Christ to answer some of the demands of his nature. To meet this demand, the individual trespasses the command of Christ.

VII. We see, also, that the sentiment, that Christ is not both able and willing to render us, in this life, perfect in holiness, and thus meet this great, this fundamental demand of our nature, is directly and most perfectly adapted to induce distrust in him, and throw the mind under the power of the great enemy. No sentiment can be conceived of, which is more perfectly adapted to secure this object, than the one under consideration.

VIII. We may now understand the full meaning of the passage, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The meaning of the passage I suppose to be

this—Christ accomplishes in and for the believer all that the law would have done, had he always perfectly obeyed its requisitions. For example, perfect obedience to the law secures to the subject a full exemption from all condemnation, and a sure title to the protection and favour of God. This the Christian enjoys through faith in Christ. Entire obedience to the law would have rendered his moral character absolutely perfect, and infinitively lovely and excellent in the estimation of God, and of all intelligent beings. A character, equally perfect, lovely, and excellent, the believer receives through implicit faith in Christ. Further, obedience to the law would have rendered the believer perfectly blessed in the love and favour of God. A blessedness equally perfect descends to the believer through faith in Christ. Again, obedience to the law would have secured to the believer a full and perfect supply of every necessity. Every demand of our being is met with equal fulness in Christ. All that the law would have done for the believer, had he perfectly obeyed its requisitions, Christ does for him, and infinitely more.

IX. We are also prepared to answer an objection, which is sometimes brought to the doctrine maintained in these discourses, to wit, that it tends to dishonour the law, by lowering the standard of moral obligation. When I hear this objection, I am often reminded of a declaration made to Paul by a fellow apostle—"Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are that believe; and they are all zealous of the law." Whenever the thought is presented, that perfect conformity to the Divine requisitions is not only required, but expected, of us in this life, a great zeal is instantly manifested for the law, as if some fearful sacrilege was done to it by the above supposition. The standard of moral obligation, it is said, will be let down, and Antinomianism, and errors fearfully dangerous, will be introduced. But how a law is honoured, by maintaining that the subject will never obey it, is more than I can understand. And what is gained by elevating the standard of theoretical, and lowering that of practical attainment, is equally inexplicable to my mind. Christians should also understand, that, in their zeal to elevate the law, they may limit the grace of God. To place the law far above the provisions and promises of Christ’s redemption, confers honour neither upon the law nor Christ. On the other hand, "Christ magnifies the law and makes it honourable," in the highest sense possible, when, as the Mediator of the new covenant, he "puts the law in the minds, and writes it in the hearts," of his people, and brings all the powers of their being into sweet subjection to its requisitions.

X. In the light of this subject, you see, Christian, the real cause of every sin you commit; of all your "care and trouble about the many things" of this life; of your want of perpetual peace in God, and of the "aching void" in your heart in its stead; and of the absence of that state of perfect content which arises from the consciousness that all your wants are met in Christ. All this has its origin in one principle exclusively—unbelief—a want of confidence in Christ as a full and perfect Saviour. Until you become fully sensible of this fact; until you are led to refer all your particular sins, all your carefulness and anxiety about your worldly interest, your want of perfect peace, and every improper feeling that arises in your mind, to one source—unbelief—you will never feel as you ought the "exceeding sinfulness of sin."

XI. We may understand the origin and cause of the profound insensibility and hardness of heart, in respect to the love of Christ, of which professors of religion so commonly complain. Three facts will sufficiently account for this state of gloom and heartfelt despondency:—I. Christians generally are ignorant of the fulness of that redemption which they have in Christ. Unbelief has taken their Lord away from their hearts, and they know not where it has laid him. The secret of having a heart

always melted with love and tenderness, is an indwelling Christ, from whose fulness our cup of blessedness may perpetually flow. 2. Another cause of the state under consideration is this—the fact that almost every Christian, in uniting with the Church, took upon him the most solemn covenant and vow to live in a state of entire consecration to Christ, not only in the absence of all expectation that such vow would be kept, but with the definite belief that it would not be kept. With such a vow and such a belief lying together upon your conscience, Christian, cease to wonder that your heart has been hardened into the profoundest insensibility and gloom. 3. Another cause of this state of things is, the daily habit of praying definitely for a state of entire sanctification, with the full belief that God will not answer such requests by the bestowment of the blessing prayed for. Let me beseech you, Christian, as you value the presence and favour of God, as you would not fasten a heart of stone as a perpetual mill-stone to your deathless soul, never to put up such a prayer again. "Be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong."

XII. One important aspect of the question at issue between the advocates and opposers of the doctrine of Christian perfection, here presents itself to the contemplation. That Christ is able to render us, in this life, as well as in eternity, "perfect and complete in all the will of God," none, I presume, will deny. The apostle, Ephesians 3:20-21, after having prayed for the entire sanctification and perfect blessedness of Christians, thus exclaims,—"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Surely we are not straitened in Christ, as far as power to save is concerned. The great question is, Is he willing, as well as able, to render us thus perfect? On this question, the advocates and opposers of the doctrine of Christian perfection are really at issue. On the one hand, it is affirmed that, at all times, and under all circumstances, Christ is both able and willing to meet, and to meet perfectly, every demand of our being, and that, as such a Saviour, he is ever present as an object of faith. On the other hand, it is affirmed that there is no moment, during the present life, when he is willing, though able, to meet one changeless demand of our being, to render us "perfect and complete in all the will of God." Which of the above positions is true, you, reader, are called upon here, in the fear of God, to decide.

XIII. We are now prepared for the contemplation of another, and very interesting aspect of the question, Whether perfection in holiness is attainable in this life. That doctrine has the highest possible internal evidence in its favour, which directly and manifestly falls in with the great design of God in the Gospel; while the doctrine which wants this characteristic is equally destitute of all claim to our belief. Now, every one is aware that the great and fundamental design of the Gospel is, to induce in the Christian the exercise of implicit faith in Christ. Which view of the character of Christ is best adapted to increase in us the exercise of such faith in him—that which presents him to our contemplation as able and willing to meet perfectly every demand of our being, or that which presents him as able indeed, but unwilling, during the progress of the present life, to meet one fundamental and changeless demand of our nature, i.e., to "sanctify us wholly," and preserve us in that state to his coming and kingdom? Is not the former view of the character of Christ most perfectly adapted to induce the exercise of perfect faith, and the latter as perfectly adapted to induce the opposite state of mind, that is, unbelief?

XIV. I will here notice a remark which is sometimes made in respect to dwelling upon the doctrine of Christian perfection. It is not in this manner, it is said, that the Christian makes progress in

holiness; but by turning his contemplation directly upon the Divine glory, and thus being changed into the same image from glory to glory, "even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The question is, Does not the doctrine of Christian perfection present one of the essential features of this very glory, upon which we are required to turn our contemplation? What is implied in the general and devout meditation upon this doctrine? It implies three things:

I. Deep and profound meditation upon the pure and perfect law of God, and upon the action of all the powers of our being, in all the circumstances and relations in life, in conformity with that law. By thus meditating upon the Divine statutes, the Psalmist declares that he had become "wiser than his teachers." Who will dare affirm, that such meditations are not in a high degree favourable to holiness? Who will affirm that, in thus meditating upon God’s pure and perfect law, we shall see no bright reflections of that glory, in the beholding of which the Christian is changed into the same image?

2. In another view of the subject, dwelling upon the doctrine of Christian perfection implies a devout contemplation of the character of Christ, as a full and perfect Saviour—a Saviour able and willing to meet all our real necessities. By such contemplations, contemplations in which we are brought to "know and believe the love which God hath to us," we are informed, 1 John 4:16-17, that "our love is made perfect."

3. In yet another view of the subject, dwelling upon the doctrine under consideration implies a frequent and devout contemplation of the provisions of Divine grace for the entire sanctification of believers, and of the designs of God to raise them to this state, whenever they look to him, by faith to do it for them. Such meditations upon God’s "thoughts of good, and not of evil," towards his people, tends, in the most powerful manner conceivable, to melt our hearts in love and tenderness towards God, and to induce in us the most vigorous efforts after that holiness which we are required to perfect. In whatever point of light the doctrine under consideration is contemplated, dwelling upon it has one tendency, and only one,—the assimilation of our entire character to that of Christ.

Finally, brethren, seeing we have such a full and perfect redemption in Christ, "what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" For remaining under the power of sin in any form we have no excuse. To "rejoice in the Lord always" we are under obligation infinite. "The joy of the Lord is our strength." To be free from all care; to be perpetually peaceful and blessed in Christ; to "show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light;" to breathe his spirit, walk in his steps, exemplify his virtues, and have his "joy fulfilled in us,"—is our high privilege and sacred duty. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me."

03.06. Special Redemption

DISCOURSE VI.

SPECIAL REDEMPTION.

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us."— 1 John 4:16.

"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."— Galatians 2:20.

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he, by the grace of God, "should taste death for every man."— Hebrews 2:9.

[The last clause of this passage might more properly have been rendered thus:—"Because that he, by the grace of God, has tasted death for every man."]

"And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."— 1 John 2:2.

THERE are three positions, which have been taken by different classes of Christians, in respect to the nature and extent of the redemption of Christ.

I. Christ died for a part only of the human race—the elect. This is called limited redemption, or atonement. This doctrine, I would simply remark, is positively contradicted by the passages cited above, and stands opposed to the whole aspect of the Gospel, as presented in the Scriptures.

2. Christ died for no individuals of our race in particular, but for all in general. This is called general atonement or redemption. This doctrine embodies one important and fundamental element of the grace of the Gospel—the universality of its provisions. It fails, however, to present one of the most interesting and important features of the provisions of Divine grace, as we shall see, when we contemplate,

3. The third position which has been taken in respect to the subject under consideration, which is this, that Christ, instead of dying for no one in particular, died for every man in particular. This is positively affirmed in the text—"He tasted death for every man;" "He loved me, and gave himself for me." The redemption of Christ had as special a regard to each individual, as if that one individual was alone concerned in it. This is what is called special atonement or redemption. I use the term "redemption" here, not in its strict theological sense, to designate the accomplishment of the provisions of mercy in the actual salvation of the sinner. In this sense of the term, "redemption" is limited by the reception of grace by the sinner. I use the term to designate the full and special provisions which Christ has made for the salvation of every individual of our race. My object in the present discourse is, to present to the contemplation of the reader the special redemption of Christ; to show what is implied in the fact that Christ, as explained above, "has by the grace of God

tasted death for every man." We will then inquire, What is implied in "knowing and believing the love that God hath to us?"

I. What is implied in the fact that Christ has tasted death for every man? It implies,—

I. That, in assuming the work of our redemption, Christ had our entire condition and necessities, as sinners and as creatures, distinctly before his mind. Otherwise he could not, with propriety, be said to have tasted death," specifically, "for every man." The same truth is also implied in the fact, that Christ is omniscient, and must have had his contemplation turned with perfect distinctness upon the entire condition and necessities of every individual, for whose redemption he died.

2. That the object of Christ, in thus tasting death for every man, was, to provide a redemption specifically adapted to the special condition and necessities of each individual for whom he died. For what reason should he taste death particularly for each individual, if this was not his object?

3. That Christ has provided for each individual of our race all the good that infinite wisdom could devise and infinite love desire. In short, he has accomplished a redemption for us, which covers our entire necessities in time and eternity. This he was able to accomplish, when he assumed the work of our redemption, and his infinite love would not permit him to accomplish less than this. This was the work, reader, which Christ undertook for you and me; and having assumed it, he never ceased to travail in the greatness of his strength, till he could say, "It is finished." If you will believe it, such is the "fulness" which you have in Christ.

4. That Christ has rendered the attainment of all this good practicable to us; that is, he has not only provided it for us, but proffered it to us, upon conditions with which we can comply. To suppose that he has offered it upon other conditions, is to accuse him of mocking our misery in the most flagrant manner conceivable, i.e., providing for creatures blessings infinite, and then proffering them upon impracticable conditions. Instead of doing this,. Christ has presented the blessings of his redemption to us upon such conditions, that there is an infallible certainty, " that every one that will ask shall receive, that he that will seek shall find, and that to him that knocketh it shall be opened." The attention of the reader is now invited to a few particular examples, designed still further to illustrate the fulness and specialty of Christ’s redemption.

I. He has made full provision, reader, for the entire pardon of every sin that you ever committed. As your mind ranges over the dark catalogue of past transgressions, remember that those particular sins he "bore in his own body on the tree." For all those sins which rise up in appalling remembrance before you, he was "wounded and bruised," so that by "his stripes you may be healed." He has made such perfect provision for the forgiveness of each and every sin of your entire past existence, that there is no more necessity that you should be excluded from the presence and favour of God, on account of those sins, than there is that the purest spirit before the throne of God should be excluded.

2. Christ has provided means specifically adapted to secure your entire perfection in holiness. He perfectly understood your case when he undertook the work of your redemption. Every obstacle that lies in the way of your perfect sanctification was distinctly before his mind; and he has provided means fully adequate, and specifically adapted, to remedy all the consequences of your sins. However low you may have sunk in sin, he is able to lift you out of the "horrible pit and miry clay." However hard your heart may be, he can take it from you, and give you a heart of flesh in its

stead. However firmly fixed your habits of sin may be, he can break them all up. However strong the power of your carnal inclinations, he can subdue them all, and give you a perfect victory over them. Whatever temptations to sin beset you, from within or around you, he can give you strength to endure them. The means to accomplish all this, and specifically adapted to your particular case, are all provided by his infinite love. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." Why, then, should you remain under the power of sin? Why should you be appalled by the fixedness of your habits of sin, by the strength of your carnal inclinations, or the multiplicity and power of the temptations which beset you? Christ saw all these when he assumed the work of your redemption. For all these he has provided a specific and all-powerful remedy. Go to Christ, and you will find that in him there is redemption in readiness for you, to render you " perfect and complete in all the will of God." Clad in the armour of righteousness, which he has provided for you, you will find yourself able to stand against all the wiles of the wicked one.

3. In the redemption of Christ, there is special consolation provided for all the particular afflictions which come upon you. " In all your afflictions Christ was afflicted." If you will carry your wounded spirit to him, he will bind it up, however deep and multiplied the wounds may be. No one of them was forgotten by your Saviour, when he undertook the work of " bearing your griefs, and carrying your sorrows." Balm specifically adapted to heal all those wounds is in readiness for you. Whatever the particular affliction may be, which falls upon you at any particular time, remember that that affliction, with all its peculiarities, has been specifically provided for by the love of Christ.

4. Whatever the sphere in life may be, in which you may at any time be called to move, for you Christ has provided special wisdom to meet all the exigencies and responsibilities that fall upon you in that sphere. When you lack wisdom, go to him, and he will "give liberally and not upbraid you." The means to do it are all provided.

5. Christ, in short, has made ample provision for every particular necessity which may come upon you in time and eternity. There is not a solitary want of yours, throughout the endless future beyond you, for which a special supply is not made in the redemption of Christ. For you there is provided a seat in heaven, a robe of righteousness, a harp of gold, a crown of glory, and a special place in the centre of God’s heart of eternal love.

Such is the redemption of Christ. I might have illustrated the sentiment of this discourse by referring to other particulars. These are sufficient, however, to present the subject with entire distinctness to the contemplation of the reader. We will now inquire, II. What is implied in our knowing and believing the love that the Father hath to us. This implies three things,—

I. That we apprehend that love as it is, i.e., the infinite love of God in giving his Son to make, by his incarnation and death, such full and special provisions for our necessities.

2. That we credit this love as a reality; in other words, that we give the Lord Jesus Christ full credit for being such a full and special Saviour as he represents himself to be.

3. That we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as such a Saviour, and yield up our whole being to his control, that he may accomplish in us all the purposes of his infinite and special love. And now let me ask you, reader, do you believe with all your heart, that Christ is in reality such a Saviour as he has here been represented? Do you give him full credit for having " loved you and given himself for

you," for the purpose of making such full and special provisions for your entire necessities? Do you believe that for you he tasted the bitter cup of death? In every special exigency of your being, can you look to him with the full assurance that this particular exigency, with all its peculiarities, was remembered and provided for by him, when he was "wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities? "Can you reckon yourself among the number, who can say, "We have known and believed the love that the Father hath unto us?" Do you believe that Christ has provided redemption for you-a redemption so perfectly and specifically adapted to your particular case, that you can now go to him, and be cleansed from all that is impure and unholy, and so transformed into his likeness that your entire character shall hereafter present a pure reflection of his image. Do you believe that you may bring to him your temper, your appetites, your propensities, your entire habits, and have them all brought into sweet subjection to the will of God? Do you believe that, in him, there is a special balm for every wound; relief from every care; consolation for all affliction; a remedy for every ill; and a full supply for every specific necessity of your entire existence? Unless you believe all this, and your heart is all melted into love and tenderness under the influence of that belief, you have yet to learn the breadth, and depth, and length, and height of the love of Christ.

REMARKS.

I. We may now understand the nature of what may be called appropriating faith. It consists in receiving Christ, and relying upon him as our Saviour, in reference to all our particular necessities as individuals. As the creatures of God, as sinners against his holy law, we have our particular duties, spheres of action, temptations, trials, afflictions, and necessities. Now, when Christ is contemplated as having provided a redemption for us, specifically adapted to our special exigencies, and is received as a Saviour to meet these exigencies, then we exercise towards him appropriating faith. Then we appropriate to ourselves the special redemption that he has provided for us.

II. Here I may be permitted to allude to a very common mistake among Christians, in looking to Christ as a Saviour. They appear to look to him as a Saviour in general, without any reference to their particular necessities. How seldom do we meet with a Christian, for example, who carries to Christ his temper, his appetites, his habits, and propensities of every kind, which lead him into sin, to have them all corrected and subdued! Where is the Christian, who is accustomed to go to Christ, to be rendered by him all that he requires him or her to be as a father, a mother, a child, a brother, or sister, or in special reference to the business transactions of life? Now, until our faith fastens upon Christ, with reference to specific objects such as these, the power of his redemption will never be experienced. From our sins Christ does not and cannot save us, unless by faith we thus appropriate the provisions of his redemption.

III. In the light of this subject, we may also learn what Christ requires and expects of us as Christians. To present this part of the subject distinctly before the reader’s mind, I remark,

I. That Christ designs and expects that our religion shall be carried out, and influence us alike in all the scenes and transactions of life; that we shall eat, drink, dress, spend our time, talents, and property, transact our business, and move in every sphere in life, with exclusive reference to the same identical objects for which we pray, worship God on the Sabbath, warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come, or partake of the symbols of the body and blood of our Lord. "Whether,

therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." That you may all do this; that Holiness to the Lord may be inscribed upon all that you have, and all that you are -full provision is made in the redemption of Christ. Hence,

2. He requires and expects that you will believe that special grace to do all this is provided for you, and that you will look to him to be rendered thus " perfect and complete in all the will of God."

3. When you are called in providence to move in any particular sphere, he requires and expects that your first object will be, to understand clearly the particular responsibilities, trials, temptations, &c., incident to you in that particular sphere.

4. He requires and expects that you will believe that he, as your Redeemer, has made full and special provision for all your exigencies in that particular sphere; and that, in the exercise of full and implicit faith, you will look to him for grace to meet those exigencies.

Such are some of the requirements and expectations of Christ from us as Christians. Here let me add, that if we do not look to Christ to be saved by him, in every sphere, and in respect of every transaction in life, our faith does not fix upon him at all as a Saviour from sin. I would also add, that if Christ does not save us by subduing our tempers, controlling our appetites and propensities, by rendering us in our spheres, as husbands and wives, parents and children, in every sphere, and in all the particular transactions of life, what he requires us to be, he does not save us at all. The man who expects to be a Christian in his closet, and upon the Sabbath, and a man of the world behind his counter, in his shop, or on his farm, will find at last that he has failed of the grace of God.

We also learn the nature of unbelief, in its most common form in the Church. It is withholding from Christ implicit confidence, as a Saviour, who has provided special means to do it, and is now able and willing to meet all our particular necessities as individuals.

V. We will now consider some of the most common indications of unbelief. Among these I notice,

I. The impression which individuals have, that there are peculiar difficulties in their case. The redemption of Christ appears fully adequate to the exigencies of every other individual but themselves. Did Christ, reader, in tasting death for you, overlook the special peculiarities of your condition? Or had he, when he cried, "It is finished," failed to make full provision for those peculiarities? Why, then, permit your unbelief to put far from you all the endless provisions of Christ’s redemption? If you withhold confidence from Christ as an ever-present Saviour, able and willing to meet all the peculiarities of your condition, you do it at the peril, yes, to the certain loss, of your eternal interests.

2. I believe, says another, that Christ has provided full redemption for me—a redemption which perfectly covers all my necessities; but I cannot exercise faith in Christ. Christ, then, has purchased full and special redemption for you, but proffered it to you upon conditions with which you cannot comply.

Why let unbelief thus fasten a millstone about that deathless soul of yours?

3. My heart, says another, is so hard and insensible, that nothing in the universe will move or melt it. Did Christ, in tasting death for you, overlook that heart of stone in your bosom? and has he made no special provision to take it out of your flesh, and give in its stead a heart of flesh?

Remember, that if you do not carry this very heart to Christ, that he may take it from you, and if you do not exercise special faith in him to do it, he will be no Saviour to you in any sense whatever.

4. Another individual complains that his natural temper is so ungovernable, and his habits of sin so omnipotent in their influence over him, that it appears to him that there can be no redemption for him, at least in this life. If Christ has not provided a special and adequate remedy for these evils, and if your faith does not fasten upon that particular remedy, then there is no salvation for you. Christ will "save you from your sins," or not at all. Why let that temper, and those habits, drag you down to death, when Christ has made full and special provision for their perfect subdual?

5. Another individual feels that he cannot be preserved in his particular sphere. "How can a person be kept perfectly free from sin," says one, "in the midst of the numberless temptations incident to a residence in a great city?" If this were so, I would say, "Up, get ye out of this place." It is better for thee to "enter into life," from the obscurest and most barren spot on earth, than to descend into the lake of fire, from the most splendid palace or city. But who is it that has promised that he will not " suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but with the temptation will make a way for your escape, that ye may be able to bear it?" Who is the strongest, Christian; "he that is in you," or he "that is in the world?"

"Do you believe," said a mother, "that I can be preserved in a state of perfect peace, in the midst of all the cares and perplexities of this great family?" Christ, according to the suggestions of unbelief in the mind of that individual, had, in the special provisions of his grace for her, overlooked the fact that she was to be the mother of a large family, and had failed to provide a special remedy for all the cares and perplexities incident to her lot in that particular sphere. Sad indeed was her condition, if that were really the case.

6. It does not appear, says another, possible that creatures sunk so low in sin as we are, should be raised to a state of perfect purity. Did you acquire that sentiment, brother, through a full and careful inquiry into the nature and power of the grace of Christ? Did you learn it from a prayerful investigation of the extent of the provisions and promises of Christ’s redemption, and of the power of Christ himself as a Saviour? Is that grace, which has the power to change a rebel into a friend, insufficient, if applied by Christ himself, for the purpose, to change partial into perfect love? What is there to appal us, however deep and settled our habits of sin, if Christ has provided the means, and has undertaken to accomplish a full redemption from all iniquity?

7. If I could only see some one who had attained to a state of entire sanctification, then I would believe the doctrine. It is very doubtful whether, if such a case were actually presented to a person in this state of mind, God would not have occasion to say unto him, "I work a work in your day, which ye will in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Or if he should believe it for that reason, the fact itself would show that his faith rests, as said in a former discourse, upon what he sees, and not upon the Word of God. Which, reader, have you taken " as the only infallible rule of faith and practice," the Word of God or the attainments of men?

8. It does not appear to me, that by simply believing in Christ, says another, I could be saved from all sin. In other words, the declaration of Christ, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," does not appear to be a reality. Such an individual ought to learn another fact—that

he has as yet experienced but very little of the power of faith in his own heart. "Now, the just shall live by faith." "We also believe, and therefore speak."

VI. We may also learn the influence of unbelief. It annihilates wholly the saving influence of the Gospel upon the heart. It places the subject in the same state of absolute hopelessness that he would be in, had no salvation been provided. "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." Whatever necessity presses upon us, that necessity remains for ever unsupplied till faith fastens upon the special redemption of Christ, as an ever-present and all-powerful remedy.

VII. We may now understand the true remedy for spiritual pride. I recollect having once heard a preacher, in a public address, give this as the all-powerful corrective,—"Let a person keep perpetually before his mind the standard of absolute perfection required by the law of God, and let it be his constant aim to ascend to a full discharge of every duty required of him. Now, if, while he is ascending from one degree to another toward the point of perfect holiness, he looks down and reflects upon the attainments he has already made, he will be lifted up with pride. If, on the other hand, in his perpetual ascent, he keeps his eye steadily fixed upon the point above him, he will be kept perpetually humbled in view of constant shortcomings." The remedy was received by the audience with unbounded applause.. This reflection, however, forced itself upon my mind, that if the speaker was in the same state of mind in which Christians generally are, he was not a little elevated in his estimation of himself by the beautiful remedy which he had proposed for spiritual pride. And what a thought is this—that a Christian must not obey the commands, " Search your own hearts," "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves," lest, if he should find that he had attained to any real holiness, he would be lifted with pride, and not exclaim, with adoring gratitude, " By the grace of God I am what I am! "

Now, the apostle has proposed a very different remedy for spiritual pride, from the one under consideration, which is the one commonly proposed, "Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what, law? Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith."

Suppose that an individual becomes fully conscious that, in consequence of his own reckless folly, he has involved himself in infinite guilt and hopeless bondage under sin; that Christ, of his self-moved goodness and mercy, has made full provision to meet all his necessities as a sinner; that, by implicit faith in Christ, he enjoys full redemption from the power and consequences of sin; and that the moment his faith loses its hold of Christ, he falls into the same hopeless guilt and bondage as before. When the man finds himself rising in spiritual attainments, under the influence of such a principle, to whom will he spontaneously ascribe the entire glory of his salvation? "To him that loved us, and washed us from our gins in his own blood." The fact that Christians generally cannot conceive themselves to have ascended in spiritual attainment, at all above the common level, without pride of heart, is to my mind full demonstration of the fact, that they yet need to be taught what are the "first principles" of holy living. "The righteousness which is of faith" excludes all boasting, of every kind.

VIII. You learn, Christian, to what to attribute every act of sin, and all your care, and trouble, and perplexity about the " many things " of this life. All these, together with every wrong feeling which arises in your mind, have their origin in one source exclusively—unbelief—a want of confidence in that special redemption of Christ, which, but for unbelief, would meet every possible exigency of our whole existence.

IX. We see, also, how it is that most Christians lose the presence of Christ under the pressure of business, when on a journey, or when brought into any scenes to which they have not before been accustomed. In such circumstances, they do not look to Christ for the special grace which he has provided to meet such exigencies. O that Christians would take this promise with them everywhere,—"As thy days, so shall thy strength be!" "Then would their peace be like a river, and their righteousness as the waves of the sea."

X. We also understand the secret of always having a heart melted with love and tenderness. It consists in a full sense of our own infinite guilt and vilenessof the boundless love of Christ, in making such full and perfect provision for our entire necessities, and as being ever present in our hearts, to confer upon us the full benefits of this eternal redemption. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!" Such a thought, when it once takes possession of the mind, has omnipotent power to melt the heart, and cause its purest, sweetest, and best affections to roll for ever around one "blissful centre."

XI. We now understand the reason why the Lord Jesus Christ declared "the kingdom of heaven to be like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole were leavened." The thought here presented, in its application to Christians, is this: When the kingdom of heaven is once set up in the heart of an individual, it will lead directly on to an entire subjection of all the powers and principles of his being to its Divine control. The reason is this: For our entire redemption from sin, into a state of perfect moral purity, the Gospel has made full provision. For every sinful habit and propensity, for every incentive to sin, it presents a specific and all-powerful remedy, through faith in Christ. Who that hates sin, and loves holiness supremely, will remain under the power of the former, and destitute of the fulness of the latter, under such circumstances?

XII. We see also the reason of Christ's declaration,—"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent." Suppose, Christian, that you could apprehend the excellence and love of Christ, as fully as your capacities will permit; suppose you could apprehend the fulness of his special love to you, and to every other individual of our race; that you could apprehend him as ever present with you, to meet your entire necessities in time and eternity; suppose you could apprehend him in all his relations to you, as your God and Saviour, and you could be fully assured that, through his love, every attribute of the Godhead stands pledged for your present and eternal well-being: to know Christ in this manner, and to have all the powers of your being moving perpetually under the influence of his infinite love,—this would indeed be life eternal. To be in this state is your high and blessed privilege. To present this love to you in all its fulness, God has given you his Holy Spirit. If you will look to that Spirit to be "strengthened with might in the inner man," for this specific object, " that the love of Christ may dwell richly in your heart by faith," you will then be able to "comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God."

XIII. Finally, we may, in the light of this discourse, understand the secret of the pre-eminent piety of Paul and of primitive Christians. It is all explained in one single expression of the sacred writer - "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." At all times, and under all circumstances, they " knew nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." They literally " counted all things but lass,

for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord." He was their wisdom," their "righteousness," their "sanctification," and "redemption." He was their consolation in every affliction. He was their perfect pattern, their sole leader and guide. He was their certain victory, in every conflict with the "world, the flesh, and the devil." He was their joy, their hope, their inheritance, their shield, and their " exceeding great reward." He was their "bright and morning star," the magnet of their souls, which held all the powers of their being in a blissful fixedness to one changeless Centre.

Now, Christian, if you will believe it, Christ will be to you all that he was to them. " He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" and you may share as fully as they did in the infinite fulness of the love and grace of Christ. If, however, you would enjoy this full redemption, all the powers of your being must be brought under the perpetual influence of this one principle—"Looking to Jesus." Do your sins rise up before you, and fill you with apprehensions of coming retributions," Look to Jesus." Do you desire to be wholly freed from the power of sin, and to have your entire character presented to God, " without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing,"—"Look to Jesus." Are you burdened with care, or do the storms of affliction gather round you,—"Look to Jesus." Is your temper unsubdued, do your appetites and propensities rebel, and call for unhallowed gratification,—"Look to Jesus." Do temptations beset you, from within or around you,—"Look to Jesus." Do you need wisdom and grace for any exigency whatever,—"Look to Jesus." Whatever your condition or necessities may be, hear his gracious voice,—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls."

"Jesus, we come at thy command, With faith, and hope, and humble zeal, Resign our spirits to thy hand, To mould and guide us at thy will."

03.07. The Promises

DISCOURSE VII.

EXCEEDING GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES.

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that, by these, ye might be partakers of the Divine nature; having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."— 2 Peter 1:4. IN the verse preceding, we are informed that God, in giving us a revelation of Jesus Christ, has furnished us with a knowledge of everything which "pertains to life and godliness." In the text, we are informed, that, in the same revelation, he has given unto us "exceeding great and precious promises;" that these promises are conferred upon us for this purpose, that through them, or by embracing them by faith, we may become "partakers of the Divine nature," and escape the "corruption that is in the world through lust." A promise is a pledge of good. In every promise of Divine grace, Christ discloses to us the good which he stands pledged to confer upon us, on condition that we look to him, by faith, for the blessing presented in the promise. Now, the success of all our efforts after holiness depends upon the use we make of the promises. I propose, therefore, in the following discourse, to illustrate the following propositions:

I. I will present to the contemplation of the reader some of the "exceeding great and precious promises" of Divine grace.

II. Show what is implied in our becoming "partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust."

III. Show the manner in which the promises must be used, in order that we may obtain the good which they present to us.

I. I am to present to the contemplation of the reader some of the "exceeding great and precious promises" of Divine grace. As much that I should otherwise say upon this part of our subject has been anticipated in preceding discourses, my remarks under this head will be very brief. In presenting the reader with a slight view of these "exceeding great and precious promises," I would remark in general, that Christ has pledged to us an eternal exemption from all that would be to us, on the whole, a real evil, and the possession of everything, in time and eternity, the possession of which would be to us a real blessing. "Not a hair of your head shall perish." "And nothing shall by any means hurt you." "No good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly." These promises belong alike to all Christians, in all ages and circumstances. For their fulfilment, they are required, with full and humble confidence, to cast themselves upon the power and faithfulness of Christ. But, to be more particular, I remark,—

I. That Christ has promised, to all who will believe in him, an eternal exemption from all the condemnation which they deserve on account of their sins, and which actually will fall upon the wicked. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." "Verily,

verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

2. A sure title to all the blessedness enjoyed by the pure spirits around the throne of God. "Ye are come,"—"to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven." "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." "Who shall separate us from the love of God?"

Suppose, reader, that you were introduced within the veil of eternity, and were permitted to look down into the gulph of death, until you should fully apprehend the infinite wretchedness of a lost spirit, as he wanders on, through ceaseless ages, amid the gloom and despair of the eternal sepulchre; suppose you were then permitted to raise your vision to those infinite heights of purity and blessedness to which redeemed spirits in heaven will ascend, as eternity rolls on its endless years. While these depths of gloom and heights of bliss were distinctly before your mind, suppose Christ should pledge himself to you, that he would free you from all exposure to the former, and give you a sure title to the full possession of the latter. What an "exceeding great and precious promise" that would be! Such is the promise of Christ now before you. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

3. Entire freedom from all sin, and the transformation of our entire character into a likeness to his own. "I," says Christ, "will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you." "And thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." "But we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This is held before us as a promise. Such a change Christ stands pledged to produce in us if we will believe in him.

4. He promises to subdue our lusts and propensities, to guard us against all temptation to sin from within or around us, and to give us a full and perfect victory over "the world, the flesh, and the devil." "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin." "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things have become new." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "Fear not, I have overcome the world." "He is able to succour them that are tempted." "Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

5. Consolation in every affliction. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

6. The constant fruition of the Divine presence and love, and all the blessedness which he himself enjoys, as far as our capacities will permit. "We will come and make our abode with him." "I will dwell in them, and walk in them." "Peace I leave with you, my peace"—i. e., the peace which I

enjoy—"I give unto you." "That they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus."

7. The privilege of going to God, at all times and under all circumstances, in prayer, with the use of Christ's name, and with the certain pledge that whatsoever we thus ask, that will be a good to us, shall be granted. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." "Ask and it shall be given you, that your joy may be full."

8. The constant presence and illumination of the Holy Spirit. "He shall abide with you for ever." "He shall lead you into all truth." "He shall take of mine and show them unto you."

9. Not merely grace to make us holy and keep us from all sin, but an infinite reward for every expression of love that he shall receive from us, and every act of obedience that we shall render to him. "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Such is the infinite and incomprehensible love and grace of Christ. By his grace we are rendered holy, and are then to be rewarded infinitely for being what the grace of Christ has rendered us.

10. Great success in our efforts to advance his cause. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to my Father." Christ has not only promised to render us thus successful, but to bestow an infinite and eternal reward upon us for all that we accomplish for him. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

11. Christ promises to us a peaceful death, and a glorious immortality. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." "I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." "And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."

Such are the promises of Christ to his people. And, reader, are not these promises "exceeding great and precious?" To you they all belong; and Christ invites you to come to him, and receive your purchased and promised inheritance. We will now inquire,

II. What is implied in our being "made partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." This implies two things,—

I. That we become entirely emancipated from the power of sin. No person, not thus emancipated, but still, in any degree, under the power of sin, could be said to have "escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

2. It implies that we, to the full extent of our powers, be rendered partakers of the holiness and blessedness of God. This is the only sense in which any intelligent being can be a partaker of the Divine nature. "But he," says the apostle, "for our profit, that we might be partakers of his

holiness." To be partakers of the Divine holiness, and consequently of the Divine blessedness, is of course the same thing as to be rendered partakers of the Divine nature. That we might thus escape the corruptions that are in the world, and be "made partakers of the Divine nature," is the declared object for which the "exceeding great and precious promises" were given. When we come to Christ by faith for a fulfilment of these promises, his power stands pledged to fulfil in us the glorious object for which they were given. I am now,

III. To show the manner in which we are to use the promises, in order that we may obtain the good which they present to us. As the design of the promises is to free us from the "corruptions that are in the world," and render us "partakers of the Divine nature," they are addressed and adapted to every possible condition in which we may be placed, and as a remedy for every evil, natural and moral, in which we may be involved. They descend to the sinner in the lowest depths of guilt and depravity, for the purpose of lifting him out of the "horrible pit and miry clay," and rendering him a partaker of the "Divine nature." They meet the Christian, in a state of partial holiness, for the purpose of raising him to a state of "perfect love," and then of carrying him upward and onward, from glory to glory, through time and eternity. Now, to use the promises so as to become possessed of the blessings which they proffer to us, four things are necessary,—I. That we know our need. 2. That we apprehend the particular promise of Christ, which was designed to meet that particular necessity. 3. That we repose full confidence in Christ's ability and faithfulness to fulfil the promise which he has spread before us. 4. That we cast our whole being upon him, for the specific purpose of securing a fulfilment of the particular promise before us. For example, the sinner is brought to feel himself to be in a lost condition. Here he is met with the declaration of Christ, "I came to seek and to save that which was lost;" together with the promises, "Look to me and be ye saved;" "Whosoever cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Let the sinner cast himself at once upon Christ, for the definite purpose of securing a fulfilment of those specific promises. Are you in darkness, reader? Go directly to Christ for the fulfilment of the promise, "I will lead the blind by a way which they know not." Is your heart hard and unfeeling? Go to Christ with the definite promise, "I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh," and cast yourself upon his faithfulness for the fulfilment of that promise. Are your appetites, or your propensities the "occasion of stumbling" to you? Carry these particular objects to Christ, and plead the definite promises, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin," and "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new." Do temptations beset you? Go to Christ with the promise, "Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation make a way for your escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Are you about to enter into new and untried scenes, or spheres of action? Go to Christ with the specific promises, "Lo, I am with you always," and "My grace is sufficient for thee." Are you "hungering and thirsting after righteousness?" This promise you may now plead with Christ, "They shall be filled." Does the water of life begin to flow in your heart? This promise now rises before you, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." In short, whatever your condition or state of mind may be, remember that you are addressed by your Saviour with some specific promise, perfectly adapted to your peculiar case. Your life depends upon your casting yourself at once upon the faithfulness of Christ, for a fulfilment of that promise. In so using the "exceeding great and precious promises," you may, with absolute certainty, be rendered a "partaker of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world

through lust."

REMARKS.

I. We will notice the great truth, of which we need to have a full and distinct apprehension, in order that all the promises may rise before our minds as living realities. It is the infinite love of God in the gift of Christ for our redemption. In Christ, "all the promises are yea and amen." "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" For the want of such an apprehension of the love of Christ, the promises are, to the great mass of the Church, almost as a "dead letter."

II. We notice one of the first lessons which should be taught to the young convert. He should first of all use the promises as a sovereign remedy to every ill that may press upon him. Let his eye be directed to these; let him become accustomed to apply to them in every possible exigency, and he will ascend upwards upon them, as upon Jacob’s ladder, from glory to glory, to eternal heights of purity and blessedness.

III. We see how it is that the peace of the young convert is very commonly destroyed, and his growth in grace prevented, by the instructions which he receives from older Christians. When the convert, alarmed at the discovery of inward corruptions, and of the numerous occasions of stumbling, in himself, arising from his temper, his appetites, his habits of sin, as well as the hardness of his heart, comes for counsel to those who ought to be able to point him at once to the remedy, and thus lead him to the "fountain of living waters," there is commonly a direct attempt to comfort him in his present state. He is told that such discoveries of inward corruption are the highest evidence of our conversion, that he must not be alarmed when he "finds the Canaanite in the land," that these foes will never be dislodged from his bosom till his dying day, and that Christ will very soon teach him the "plague of his own heart," by letting him slide down from the warmth and blessedness of his first love, into the valley of spiritual death, misnamed the valley of humiliation. Well might the convert reply to such guides, "Miserable comforters are ye all." If, now, he will turn from all such directions to the "exceeding great and precious promises" of Christ, and with humble confidence cast himself upon his faithfulness, then shall his "righteousness go forth as brightness, and his salvation as a lamp that burneth." Then shall he prove, by blessed experience, the truth of the promise, "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up on wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

IV. We may understand the object which the Christian should have in view, in searching his own heart. It should be the same as the physician has in examining the symptoms of his patient; i. e., to determine the nature of the disease, for the purpose of applying the appropriate remedy. So the Christian should examine himself to determine what he is, and what he needs, for the purpose of looking away to some definite promise as the remedy to that necessity. How profitable seasons of fasting and prayer would be, if spent in this manner with the Physician of souls. The want of this definite object is the great reason, I suppose, why such seasons are so generally almost profitless to Christians.

V. We see why it is that Christians apply to Christ for sanctification, &c., almost without success. Their object is commonly general and undefined, and no thing specific is presented. Let an

individual, on the other hand, who finds his temper, his appetites, his propensities, or worldly pursuits, the occasion of falling, take one or more of these definite objects to Christ, and cast himself, in view of some definite promise, upon his faithfulness, to have that particular cause of sin removed; let him thus bring all his powers and propensities to Christ, and how soon would all his faculties and susceptibilities be so sweetly and perfectly subjected to the will of God, that all occasion of stumbling would be taken away! In all instances, reader, when you go to Christ with some definite object, resting also upon some definite promise, you are sure to be heard.

VI. We see how it is that Satan often destroys the confidence of Christians in the promises, in their application to themselves. It is by directing their attention to some promise that is not applicable to their present state, and pressing them to attempt to believe in that. Said one, I often thought of the promise,—"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted;" and, because I was not in the state upon which that promise was conditioned, I thought there was no other promise in the Bible that belonged to me, or upon which I could lay hold. Before that individual could mourn, it was necessary for her to "look on him whom she had pierced." Quite another promise belonged to her in the state referred to, to wit,—"Look to me and be ye saved." By casting herself upon this, she would soon have been brought into a state to which the promise first referred to was addressed. As long as Satan can keep the mind from the promises addressed to our particular state, and fixed upon others inapplicable, he will hold us, in spite of ourselves, in unbelief.

VII. We see why it is that, to most professors, the thought of being entirely sanctified in this life appears so chimerical. Their minds have ranged, in the darkness of unbelief, amid their own wrongdoings and shortcomings; and not upon the boundless provisions, and "exceeding great and precious promises" of Divine grace, till they have apprehended the riches of the glory of Christ's inheritance in the saints. If Christ has made provision for our entire holiness, and has promised, on the condition of simple faith in his word, that he will himself sanctify us wholly, and preserve our whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless unto his coming and kingdom, how reasonable to expect that his power shall effect what his love has provided and his truth has promised!

VIII. We see, why it appears to most persons so impossible to exercise that faith which would result in a state of entire sanctification. They do not believe that provision is made in the Gospel for the attainment of that state, or that Christ has promised it to us, on condition of our faith in him for that blessing. If Christ has made such provisions, and given such promises, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to account for the existence of that faith in an individual which induces partial and not perfect holiness, when he has those provisions and promises distinctly before his mind.

IX. In what sense all Christians are expected and required to be witnesses for Christ. They are expected and required so to trust Christ in respect to the fulfilment of all his promises, that they can say, from blessed experience, that in all those promises Christ is a faithful and true witness. Take the following promise as an example:—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Now, we are expected and required to "stay ourselves upon God" in such a manner that we can affirm, from experience, that the effect of trusting in God is all that it is here affirmed to be. So of every other promise in the Bible. If we cannot thus testify for God, we are found to be false witnesses for him. It is in giving such testimony that we are chiefly to glorify Christ, and benefit our fellow-men. How melancholy is the fact, that most professors, instead of being able to speak for Christ, as his faithful and true

witnesses, can only give an opinion, that if they should embrace the promises, they would find them true; which is no more than the impenitent can say, and, of course, is no testimony at all.

X. We see that if, as is commonly supposed, God has so arranged the dispensations of his providence and grace, that no one will attain to a state of entire sanctification in this life, he has made such arrangements that he shall never have a witness on earth that can bear full testimony to the truth of his promises. Many of these promises are, as we have seen in a former discourse, conditioned on the existence of this state in the subject. How infinitely absurd is the supposition that God has made definite arrangement, by which he is never to have a witness on earth who can bear full testimony for him! "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." See to it, Christian, that you, by availing yourself of proffered grace, become perfectly qualified to bear full testimony for God. How reasonable is the supposition that God should make full provision for the perfect qualification, i. e., sanctification, of his own witnesses! How perfectly unreasonable the opposite supposition!

XI. We may also perceive the perfect absurdity of the supposition, that if a Christian were entirely sanctified, he would not be permitted longer to live on earth; but would be taken directly to heaven. In other words, if an individual were fully qualified to bear testimony for Christ, he would not allow him to testify at all.

XII. We perceive the infinite obligation resting upon us, to be entirely free from care and perplexity, and to be always, and under all circumstances, in a state of perfect peace and blessedness. We have only to rest down upon the "exceeding great and precious promises," and every care, every perplexity, and every burden is necessarily rolled from our minds. We are led into the "banqueting-house" of the Redeemer, "where his banner over us is love." We are conducted forth "into the green pastures, and beside the still waters." We range along the banks of the river of life, and our peace and blessedness will be like the broad, and deep, and crystal flow of that river.

Reader, what is the character of your religion? Is it a life-giving and a peace-giving religion? Your body, you say, is the "temple of the Holy Spirit." What are the fruits of the spirit that actually dwells in that temple? Are they, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance?" "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

XIII. In the light of this subject, we are also led to contemplate and adore the infinite love of God to us. This love is manifested in the bestowment upon creatures, infinite in guilt and vileness, of the highest blessing that infinite wisdom could conceive, that infinite love could desire, and infinite power confer—the eternal possession of the "Divine nature"—the holiness and blessedness of God. Reader, dwell upon this thought. In it learn to comprehend your own privileges, and the boundless love of God. For the bestowment of this blessing, full provision is made in the Gospel. For its full accomplishment in you, the Son of God is "standing at the door," and the Spirit of grace is now in your heart. If you will open the door, the Son of God will enter in and confer this blessed inheritance upon you.

XIV. Finally, we perceive the infinite obligation that rests upon us, not to remain under the power of any sin; but to have our temper, our appetites, our propensities, habits, and all the powers and susceptibilities of our being, subdued and brought into sweet and perfect subjection to the will of Christ, so that there shall be "none occasion of stumbling in us." For the accomplishment of this, full provision is made in the Gospel of the grace of God, and we have only to cast ourselves upon

Christ for the fulfilment of the "exceeding great and precious promises" which he has given us, and all this blessedness is ours. It is your blissful privilege, reader, in the use of these promises, to be made a "partaker of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Remember what God has said—"Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."

03.08. The Divine Teacher

DISCOURSE VIII. THE DIVINE TEACHER.

"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."— 2 Corinthians 3:17-18. IN the verses preceding, the apostle speaks of the veil that was over the mind of the Jew, in the reading of the Scriptures, and which prevented his understanding their true import. In the text he speaks of the privileges which Christians enjoy through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;" i. e., there is a full and direct aspect of truth, and a full experience of its renovating power. "But we all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Every real Christian can call to mind seasons when he had such views of truth as are here referred to—views which melted his whole soul into love and tenderness, and brought all the powers of his being into sweet subjection to the will of God. Could these visions be rendered perpetual in the mind of the Christian, his heart would never wax cold or unfeeling; nor would there ever be any rival to Christ in his heart, to dispute with him the empire of the soul. In the absence of such views, darkness enters and spreads itself over the mind, and temptations to sin have a sovereign power. Now, to impart these visions of truth, to render them perpetual, and thus preserve the mind under the uninterrupted influence of the love of Christ, and give to that love the highest possible efficacy over the heart, is the appropriate office of the Holy Spirit. This is the part which he now acts in the plan of redemption. Christ is of God made unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." The office of the Holy Spirit is to present Christ to our minds in such a manner that all these objects shall be fully accomplished in us. The attention of the reader is now invited to a few general observations, designed to illustrate the office of the Holy Spirit in the work of redemption, as above presented. To accomplish this object, I remark,—

I. The Holy Spirit enlightens the intellect, and carries on the work of sanctification in the heart, by the presentation of truth to the mind; and the truth presented does not respect himself, but Jesus Christ. "The sword of the Spirit is the word of God." "Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." The Holy Spirit sustains to Christ the same relation that a teacher does to the particular science which he teaches. His object is not to present himself to the pupil, but the science. So the Spirit shows not himself, but Christ, to our minds. We feel and recognise the presence of the Spirit, only as Christ is presented to our minds, and thus the "love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."

II. In thus accomplishing the work of redemption, the Holy Spirit sustains to Christians and sinners entirely different relations. To the latter, he sustains the exclusive relation of a reprover of sin, his object being conviction, for the purpose of leading the sinner, humbled and penitent, to Christ.

"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." To the Christian, on the other hand,—the Christian, I mean, in a state of love and obedience to God,—he sustains the relation of a teacher, a comforter, an indwelling light in which the glory and love of Christ are continually reflected upon the eye of the mind. "He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." "He shall testify of me." "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." "He dwelleth in you, and shall be in you."

III. The Holy Spirit, in the relation last described, is given to Christians after they believe in Christ, and in consequence of their faith in him. Acts 2:38," Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Ephesians 1:13,—"In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Proverbs 1:23,—"Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you; I will make known my words unto you." As these passages respect all Christians alike, they refer, not to the miraculous, but common influences of the Spirit, as an indwelling light in the hearts of God’s people.

IV. The design of God, in the gift of his Spirit, is that he be to Christians, not as a " stranger or a sojourner, that turneth aside to tarry but for a night," but as the perpetual light of their souls, of whose illumination they are never to be destitute. John 14:15-17,—"If ye love me, keep my commandments; and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Hence it is said of Christians, that their "bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost," and that they themselves are "the temples of the living God." As the visible manifestation of the Divine glory never departed from the Holy of Holies in the ancient temple, so God designs that the light of his Spirit shall never depart from the more sacred temple of the heart, and nothing but sin can quench his Divine illuminations there. To enjoy these perpetual Divine illuminations, Christian, to have those full and unceasing visions of the glory of Christ, by which you may be able to "comprehend the breadth, and depth, and length, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," is your high privilege and most sacred duty.

V. We will now consider the state of those who thus enjoy the perpetual illumination of the Holy Spirit.

I. They have all those full, and direct, and perpetual visions of the love of Christ, which are necessary to their highest purity and blessedness. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." "But we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." "He that is spiritual"—i. e., taught by the Spirit—"judgeth all things," has a distinct perception of all truth which it concerns him to understand. "He shall guide you into all truth."

2. All the wisdom that is necessary, that they, as the servants of Christ, may in every sphere and condition in life, glorify him in the most effectual manner. This is implied in the promise,—"he shall lead you into all truth." It is also included in the promise, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth unto men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

3. They have such views of Christ as impart to them full and unfailing consolation in every affliction. In special reference to this part of his office, he is called the "Comforter."

4. Such a full and perpetual fruition of the presence and love of Christ as constitutes the richest foretaste of future blessedness. The gift of the Spirit, for this reason, is called the "earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession."

5. The Spirit is given to such, as Heaven’s signet; as God’s seal to their title to the eternal inheritance which Christ has purchased for them. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." "Ye are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."

Such are your privileges, Christian, in the gift of the Holy Spirit. All truth is perfectly known to him. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Every truth that you need to understand, he is able to present to your mind, in such a manner, that, from it, you shall receive the highest possible influence. He is equally able to present those truths, and those aspects of truth, which are perfectly adapted to your necessities in every condition in life. To you he is given as the last and richest gift of your God and Saviour, to be in you as a perpetually indwelling light, through which you are to be " filled with all the fulness of God." Christ has promised, that "whosoever believeth in him shall not walk in darkness; but shall have the light of life." By availing yourself of the illumination of the Holy Spirit, this promise may be fully accomplished in your own blessed experience. Remember this, also, that without this Divine illumination, you will and you must walk in darkness. Those life-giving aspects of truth, presented to the mind by the Spirit, you can obtain from no other source whatever. "Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." "The natural man," the man that trusts to his own wisdom, without the aid of Divine illumination, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither CAN HE KNOW THEM, because they are spiritually discerned."

VI. We will now consider the conditions on which we can enjoy the perpetual illumination of the Holy Spirit."

I. His perpetual presence and illumination must be sought by prayer and "faith on the Son of God." "How much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him!" 2. Your motives in seeking his illumination must be identical with those of the Spirit as your teacher. His appropriate office is, to " take of the things of Christ and show them unto you;" to impart to you that knowledge which is necessary to your highest holiness, blessedness, and usefulness, as a Christian. When you ask of God for the indwelling light of his Holy Spirit, ask it for this exclusive purpose, that you may know Christ, and fully experience the renovating power of his love upon your heart, that you may " know the things which are freely given you of God," and understand, as the servants of Christ, all the responsibilities devolving upon you, in every relation and condition in life.

3. Seek the illumination of the Holy Spirit, with a full consciousness and acknowledgement of your own blindness and ignorance, and entire dependence upon his teaching. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." "If any man would be wise among you, let him become a fool, that he may be wise;" that is, let him acknowledge his total darkness and ignorance in himself, and seek for Divine illumination as the only source of true wisdom.

4. Seek the illumination of the Spirit in the diligent use of all appropriate means—the study of the Scriptures, attendance upon the instructions and ordinances of God’s house, and in social converse and prayer with such as are themselves spiritually taught. In the use of such means, with such a Spirit and object, your cup will be always full. It will overflow for ever.

REMARKS.

I. In the light of this discourse, a few important passages of Scripture admit of a ready explanation. For example, Luke 10:21,—" In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." "The wise and prudent" are those who proudly depend upon their own wisdom, and are regarded as wise by the world around them. "Babes" are such as acknowledge their blindness and ignorance, and look to Christ as the Divine illumination. How appropriate the joy and gratitude of Christ, that the former were left in darkness, and the latter Divinely illumined John 9:41,—"Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin;" that is, if you would acknowledge your blindness, and come to me for Divine illumination, your sins would be wholly removed from you: but now ye say: "We see; therefore your sin remaineth;" that is, you deny your ignorance and dependence upon me; therefore your character remains unchanged, and your sins rest upon you. 1 Corinthians 2:9,—"But, as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." This passage is very commonly considered as applicable only to the condition of saints in heaven. The context shows, however, that it is applied exclusively to the condition of Christians on earth. "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Such are your privileges now, Christian, through the love of Christ reflected upon your heart by the Holy Spirit, which is given unto you.

II. We may now understand one, at least, of the ways in which the "Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." When, for example, the Christian asks for wisdom from above, or for Divine illumination in respect to any question of truth or duty, and receives from the Spirit an answer to his request; in that answer, the Spirit of God bears witness with his Spirit that he is a child of God. Such is the testimony that he is perpetually bearing in the heart of all who are humble and contrite in spirit, and tremble at God’s word. Reader, do you know what it is to have the witness of the Spirit in your own heart?

III. We are also fully prepared to answer the question, In what consists the grand secret of holy living? It is an indwelling Christ, whose image is perpetually reflected upon the eye of the mind, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Reader, is your piety of such a character as this?

IV. In what sense only is the Holy Spirit a sanctifier? "Christ is of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." The Spirit sanctifies by presenting Christ to the mind in such a manner, that we are transformed into his image. The common error of Christians, in respect to this subject, seems to be this—looking away from Christ to the Holy Spirit for sanctification, instead of looking for the Spirit to render Christ their sanctification.

V. For not having Christ perpetually dwelling in your heart, reader, as your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, you are without excuse. For this special purpose, the Holy Spirit is given to you. In his light it is your blessed privilege perpetually to walk. "How much more shall your

Father which is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" "Ask, and it shall be given you." "For every one that asketh receiveth."

VI. We see, in the light of this subject, the true ground of the expectation, that, in our efforts after holiness, we may attain to a state of entire consecration to Christ. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." Our hope of attaining to this state rests not at all upon a view of our own natural powers as moral agents, but upon the provisions of Divine grace for our "redemption from all iniquity," and our perfect "completeness in all the will of God," together with the Divine aid that is promised to succeed all sincere efforts made in simple faith in Christ, for the attainment of that state. In the redemption of Christ, as we have seen in former discourses, full provision is made for the entire sanctification of every believer. The Holy Spirit is given for the express purpose of so presenting the Lord Jesus Christ to our minds, that we may experience in our hearts the full power of his redemption. The Spirit, it should be remembered, has a perfect understanding of all truth pertaining to our salvation. He has, at all times, direct access to our hearts, and is perfectly able to present the image of Christ to our minds in such a manner, that it shall exert upon us the highest possible transforming power. He is always in us, a perpetually indwelling light, whose highest illuminations we can always enjoy, by opening our hearts with simple faith and prayer to receive it. With such provisions and such a helper, to what state ought we to expect to attain? Who is strongest, Christian, let me put the question again,—"he that is in you, or he that is in the world?" Which has the greatest power, the Spirit of the living God, together with an indwelling Christ, or your fleshly lusts and propensities? Shall the followers of Christ proclaim the fact, that the Spirit and grace of Christ are less strong in their hearts, than the "world, the flesh, and the devil?" that that grace which changed an enemy into a friend, is not adequate to render that friend "perfect and complete in all the will of God?" "Tell it not in Gath! publish it not in the streets of Askelon! lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph!"

VII. We are now prepared, in the light of this and of the preceding discourse, to understand the great and fundamental errors of the Perfectionists, a sect which rose some years ago in the state of New York, and subsequently spread to a small extent over various parts of the country. The following are some of the tenets of this sect:—They maintained, I. That in the Gospel there is a total abrogation of the moral law as a rule of action, and that Christians are for ever freed from all obligation to God, or any other being. 2. That, by one act of faith, the Christian is brought into such a state, that it is absolutely impossible that he should ever afterwards commit sin. 3. That the Spirit now communicates truth to Christians by direct revelation; and hence the study of the Scriptures, the ministry of reconciliation, prayer, the Sabbath, and all the ordinances, and the Church itself, they wholly dispensed with. 4. For the teachings of the Spirit they substituted impressions and impulses, maintaining that every existing desire or impulse is produced by the direct agency of the Spirit, and therefore to be gratified. Hence, 5. Many of them maintained the abrogation of marriage, even, and became the advocates of gross licentiousness from principle, and all this under the profession of absolute perfection in holiness. The reader will at once perceive, that no system could possibly be devised, which placed the subject more perfectly under the power of the great enemy, than this. The sect, containing in itself the principle of disunion and disorganisation, very soon burst asunder, and now lie in scattered fragments in various parts of the country. Its entire history has been the perfect opposite of that union which Christ prayed might exist among

believers, and which perfect love must and will produce. In the rise and subsequent disorganisation of the sect, however, the great enemy has gained one important object. Whenever the true doctrine of holiness is urged upon Christians, and Christ held up as a sanctifying Saviour, he can raise the cry of Perfectionism, and thus prevent many from receiving the substance, because a few have grasped a shadow. If, in this attempt, reader, you permit him to gain an advantage over you; if, because you have turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, you will reject that grace itself,—you foolishly jeopardise your immortal interests.

VIII. The reader will now clearly perceive that the sentiments maintained in these discourses have no alliance whatever with Perfectionism. The two systems, in their essential features and elements, are the direct opposites of each other. An individual holding the sentiments here maintained, cannot become a Perfectionist, without a full and total renunciation of all the principles which he previously held. This every one will perceive who candidly examines the two systems.

IX. There is one error of the Perfectionists, into which Christians not unfrequently fall; against which I wish, in a special manner, to guard the reader. It is this: considering impulses and impressions as the teachings of the Spirit. An individual has upon his mind an undefined impression, that he ought, for example, to speak in meeting, or to pursue some particular course of conduct. In following that impression, he conceives himself to be following the leadings of the Spirit. In refusing to follow it, he supposes him self to grieve or quench the Spirit. Now, the principle that I maintain is this-that such impressions are of no authority whatever. The man who is led by the Spirit, is filled, not with impressions and impulses, but with light. He will always be able to give such reasons for his conduct as will commend themselves to his own and the conscience of every other man. Suppose, reader, that you should come to me for instruction or advice in respect to any question of truth or duty; what you would expect of me would be, that I should present such considerations to your mind, as would enable you to form an intelligent judgment in respect to the question before you. Much more should you expect the same thing, when you pray for Divine teaching. Remember that it is when, and only when, you are led by such considerations, that you are led by the Spirit of God. The individual who turns away from the Spirit, as a teacher and guide, and gives himself up to the control of impulses and impressions, regarding these as the teachings of the Spirit, will very soon find himself in the "snare of the devil."

X. We may also understand, in the light of this discourse, the nature of spiritual-mindedness. It is a mind, all of whose powers and susceptibilities are under the sweet, and perpetual, and all-pervading influence of the "things of the Spirit," the truths revealed and presented by the Spirit. All such persons are " led by the Spirit of God," and " they are the sons of God."

XI. You may now, reader, answer the question, whether you are really spiritually-minded or not. Do you, in your own experience, reap the blissful fruits of the Spirit? "The fruit of the Spirit," remember, "is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." Again, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." Is this the character of your religion? Is this the fruit of the Spirit that dwells in you? "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" and of the Spirit of Christ, these are the appropriate and invariable fruits.

XII. We see when and how it is that Christians "quench" and "grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby they are sealed unto the day of redemption." It is when they turn away from the glory and

love of Christ, upon which the Spirit is endeavouring to fix their supreme affection and regard, and give their hearts to other and inferior objects. When you do this, reader, you not only grieve the Holy Spirit of God, but you put out the light of your own soul.

XIII. Finally. We are now prepared to look once more at the question, whether the great doctrine maintained in these discourses accords with the mind of the Spirit, by whose inspiration the Scriptures were written. Here permit me to present a few considerations, bearing upon this question, in addition to those already presented, and which naturally suggest themselves from the train of thought which we have pursued.

1. The first that I notice is a fact which can hardly have failed to impress the mind of the attentive reader of these discourses. It is this: Whenever I have had occasion to give a full and definite expression of my sentiments upon this subject, no phraseology conceivable has been found to be so perfectly adapted to that object, as the simple, unadorned, and most frequent phraseology of the Holy Spirit, as found in the sacred Scriptures. Can it be, reader, as asked in a former discourse, that the Holy Spirit has dictated a phraseology so perfectly adapted to convey one sentiment, and only one, when his design was to convey precisely the opposite sentiment?

2. It was just as easy for Christ to make such provisions, and to give the Holy Spirit to Christians in such measures, as to render their perfect as practicable as partial holiness. Of what conceivable use can sin be as an element of Christian character, that Christ should have left it as an inseparable element of that character?

3. That Christ should have made provision for the entire sanctification of believers, and given his Spirit in such measure to them as to render that state attainable, best accords with his infinite love, and the absolute perfection of all his other attributes and works. Why should he leave this, the last and greatest of all his works, thus imperfect?

4. This view of the subject best accords with the relations which Christians sustain to Christ and the world around them.

They are Christ’s witnesses, to testify to the world, from their own experience, to the truth of the "exceeding great and precious promises" of Divine grace; promises, many of which are, as we have seen, conditioned upon a state of entire consecration to Christ. How infinitely absurd, as shown in a former discourse, is the supposition that Christ has so arranged the dispensations of his grace and Spirit, that he shall never have a witness upon earth, who can bear full testimony to the truth of his promises!

Christians are also constituted of Christ "the light of the world," by reflecting upon it his image. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." Who can believe that Christ has definitely arranged the dispensations of his grace and Spirit, so that his own image, as reflected through the character of his own people, shall always be presented to the world in a deep and dark eclipse?

Again, Christians are Christ’s representatives—his ambassadors— labourers together with God in the great work of saving lost men. Who can conceive a greater absurdity than this, that God has so arranged his dispensations toward his people, that all who are co-operating with him in this

work, shall be but partially devoted to the duties of their sacred calling.

Once more, Christians are the "members of Christ's body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Reader, can you believe that Christ has made no provision, but that the members of his own body shall be in a state of disease and moral death? Dare you cast such an imputation upon the Lord Jesus Christ?

5. This doctrine leads the soul directly to Christ as a certain remedy for sin, and for a!1 temptations to sin, and tends to induce the most vigorous efforts after pure and perfect holiness. The opposite doctrine tends directly to weaken confidence in Christ as a Saviour from sin, and to paralyze efforts after holiness.

6. This doctrine meets perfectly a changeless demand of our being, a state of perfect moral rectitude, and tends to inspire the mind with life and peace. The opposite doctrine fails to meet that demand, and thereby covers the mind, that is hungering and thirsting after righteousness, with thick gloom. What can be more gloomy to such a mind than the thought that he is to be perpetually wounding his Saviour, in the house of his friends?

7. Finally, this doctrine has all the internal evidence in its favour, that the Bible itself, or any doctrine of the Bible, that can be named, has. What higher internal evidence can be adduced, in favour of any doctrine, than this—that it tends directly to moral virtue, and meets fully the changeless laws of our being; while the tendency of the contrary doctrine is precisely the opposite in both the respects above named? Say the opposers of this doctrine, If it is untrue, its tendency must be bad. The same might, with equal propriety, be said of the Bible, and of every doctrine of the Bible. When we speak of the tendency of a doctrine, we then look away from the question whether it is true or false, to what is intrinsic in the doctrine itself. When we try the doctrine under consideration by this principle, we find it to have all the evidence in its favour, that any Divine truth can have.

No, reader; in embracing this doctrine, we have not "followed cunningly-devised fables." We have followed the plainest teachings of the Spirit and Word of God. In taking our stand upon this doctrine, we are standing upon the "foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone." In looking with humble faith to "the very God of peace," that he may "sanctify us wholly, and preserve our whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," we only look to him for a fulfilment of one of his own "exceeding great and precious promises,"—"Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

Reader, "believest thou this?" And will you now come to Christ, to have this promise, in all its fulness, accomplished in your own blessed experience? "Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." "Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

CONCLUSION. In drawing my remarks to a close, I will, in conformity with the desires of my own mind, and the suggestions of some brethren, in whose judgment I place much confidence, give the reader a short account of the manner in which I was led, by the Spirit of God, as I believe, to adopt

the sentiments maintained in these discourses. In regard to my early experience as a Christian, I would say, that that experience had two prominent characteristics,—a desire, inexpressibly strong, to be freed from all sin in every form, and to be entirely consecrated to the love and service of God, in all the powers and susceptibilities of my being. Nor can any one conceive the gloom and horror that covered my mind, when older Christians assured me, and, as I supposed, with truth, that that was a state to which I should never, in this life, attain; that my lusts would not be perfectly subdued or subjected to the will of Christ, and that one of the brightest evidences of my conversion and growth in grace was new discoveries of the deep and fixed corruptions of my heart,—corruptions from which I was never to be cleansed till death should deliver me from my bondage. Notwithstanding all the impediments thrown in the way of my progress in holiness, I continued to press forward for a succession of years, till I could say, in the language of another,—"I do know that I love holiness for holiness' sake." In this state, I commenced my studies as a student in college. Here I fell, and fell, by not aiming singly at the "prize of the high calling," but at the prize of college honours. I subsequently entered a theological seminary, with the hope of there finding myself in such an atmosphere, that my first love would be revived. In this expectation, I grieve to say, I was most sadly disappointed. I found the piety of my brethren apparently as low as my own. I here say it, with sorrow of heart, that my mind does not recur to a single individual connected with the "school of the prophets," when I was there, who appeared to me to enjoy daily communion and peace with God.

After completing my course under such circumstances, I entered the ministry, proud of my intellectual attainments, and armed, as I supposed, at every point, with the weapons of theological warfare, but with the soul of piety chilled and expiring within me. Blessed be God, the remembrance of what I had been remained, and constantly aroused me to a consciousness of what I was. I looked into myself, and over the Church, and was shocked at what I felt and what I saw. Two facts in the aspect of the Church and the ministry, struck my mind with gloomy interest. Scarcely an individual, within the circle of my knowledge, seemed to know the Gospel as a sanctifying or peace-giving Gospel. In illustration of this remark, let me state a fact which I met with in the year 1831 or 1832. I then met a company of my ministerial brethren, who had come together from one of the most favoured portions of the country. They sat down together, and gave to each other an undisguised disclosure of the state of their hearts; and they all, with one exception—and the experience of that individual I did not hear—acknowledged that they had not daily communion and peace with God. Over these facts they wept, but neither knew how to direct the others out of the thick and impenetrable gloom which covered them; and I was in the same ignorance as my brethren.

I state these facts as a fair example of the state of the Churches, and of the ministry, as far as my observation has extended; and that has been very extensive. I here affirm that the great mass of Christians do not know the Gospel, in their daily experience, as a life-giving and peace-giving Gospel. When my mind became fully conscious of this fact, I was led to compare my own, and the experience of the Church around me, with that of the apostles and primitive Christians, and with the "path of the just," as portrayed in the sacred Scriptures. I found the two in direct contrast with each other. Hence the great inquiry arose in my mind, What is the grand secret of holy living? How shall I attain to that perpetual fulness and peace in Christ, which, for example, Paul enjoyed. Till this secret was fully disclosed to my mind, I felt that I was, and must be, disqualified, in one

fundamental respect, to "feed the flock of God." While the Gospel was not life and peace to me, how could I present it in such a manner that it would be life and peace to others. I must myself be led by the Great Shepherd into the "green pastures and beside the still waters," before I could lead the flock of God into the same blissful regions. For years, this one inquiry pressed upon my thoughts; and often as I have looked over a company of inquiring sinners have I said within myself, I would gladly take my place among those inquirers, if any individual would show me how to come into possession of the "riches of the glory of Christ's inheritance of the saints." But clouds and darkness covered my mind in respect to this, the most momentous of all subjects. In this state of mind, I became connected with the Institution at Oberlin, and continued to press my inquiries with increasing interest upon this one subject, till the fall of 1836. At that time, during a series of religious meetings held in the Institution, a large number of the members of the Church arose and informed us that they were fully convinced that they had been deceived in respect to their character as Christians, and that they were now without hope, and appeared as inquirers, to know " what they should do to be saved." At the same time, the great mass of the remainder disclosed to us the cheerless bondage in which they had long been groaning, and asked us if we could tell them how to obtain deliverance. I now felt myself, as one of the "leaders of the flock of God," pressed with the great inquiry above referred to, with greater interest than ever before. I set my heart, by prayer and supplication to God, to find the light after which I had been so long seeking. In this state I visited one of my associates in the Institution, and disclosed to him the burden which had weighed down my mind for so many years. I asked him if he could tell me the secret of the piety of Paul, and tell me the reason of the strange contrast between the apostle's experience and my own. In labouring for the salvation of men, I observed, that my feelings often remained unmoved and unaffected, while Paul was constantly "constrained" by the love of Christ. Our conversation then turned upon the passage, "The love of Christ constraineth us," &c. While thus employed, my heart leaped up in ecstasy indescribable, with the exclamation, "I have found it." I have now, by the grace of God, discovered the secret after which I have been searching these many years. I understood the secret of the piety of Paul, and knew how to attain to that blissful state myself. Paul's piety all arose from one source exclusively—a sympathy with the heart of Christ in his love for lost man. To attain to that state myself, I had only to acquaint myself with the love of Christ, and yield my whole being up to its sweet control.

Immediately after this, I came before the Church, and disclosed to them what I then saw to be the grand defect in my ministry:—I. Christ had been but as one chapter in my system of theology, when he should have been the sun and centre of the system. 2. When I thought of my guilt, and need of justification, I had looked to Christ exclusively, as I ought to have done; for sanctification, on the other hand, to overcome the "world, the flesh, and the devil," I had depended mainly on my own resolutions. Here was the grand mistake, and the source of all my bondage under sin. I ought to have looked to Christ for sanctification, as much as for justification, and for the same reason. The great object of my being now was to know Christ, and in knowing him to be changed into his image. Here was the "victory which overcometh the world." Here was the "death of the body of sin." Here was "redemption from all iniquity," into the "glorious liberty of the children of God." At this time, the appropriate office of the Holy Spirit presented itself to my mind with a distinctness and interest never understood nor felt before. To know Christ was the life of the soul. To "take of the things of Christ and show them unto us;" to open our hearts to understand the Scriptures; to strengthen us with might in the inner man, that we might comprehend the "breadth and depth, and

length and height, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," and thus be "filled with the fulness of God,"—is the appropriate office of the Spirit. The highway of holiness was now for the first time, rendered perfectly distinct to my mind. The discovery of it was to my mind as "life from the dead." The disclosure of that path had the same effect upon others who had been, like myself, "weary, tossed with tempest, and not comforted." As my supreme attention was thus fixed upon Christ; as it became the great object of my being to know him, and be transformed into his likeness; and as I was perpetually seeking that Divine illumination by which I might apprehend him,—an era occurred in my experience, which I have no doubt will ever be one of the most memorable in my entire past existence. In a moment of deep and solemn thought, the veil seemed to be lifted, and I had a vision of the infinite glory and love of Christ, as manifested in the mysteries of redemption. I will not attempt to describe the effect of that vision upon my mind. All that I would say is, that, in view of it, my heart melted, and flowed out like water. The heart of stone was taken away, and a heart of love and tenderness assumed its place. From that time I have desired to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified." I have literally "esteemed all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord;" and the knowledge of Christ has been eternal life begun in my heart.

Now, when the Lord Jesus Christ was thus held up among us, by myself and others, a brother in the ministry arose in one of our meetings, and remarked that there was one question to which he desired that a definite answer might be given. It is this: "When we look to Christ for sanctification, what degree of sanctification may we expect from him? May we look to him to be sanctified wholly, or not?" I do not recollect that I was ever so shocked and confounded at any question, before or since. I felt, for the moment, that the work of Christ among us would be marred, and the mass of minds around us rush into Perfectionism. Still the question was before us; and to it we were bound, as pupils of the Holy Spirit, to give a scriptural answer. We did not attempt to give a definite answer to it during that time. With that question before us, brother Finney and myself came to New York, and spent most of the winter together in prayer and the study of the Bible. The great inquiry with us was, What degree of holiness may we ourselves expect from Christ, when we exercise faith in him, and in what light shall we present him to others as a Saviour from sin? We looked, for example, at such passages as this—passages of which the Bible is full,—"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God, your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it?" We looked at such passages, I say, and asked ourselves this question — Suppose an honest inquirer after holiness comes to us, and asks of us—What degree of holiness is here promised to the believer? May I expect, in view of this prayer and promise, that God will sanctify me wholly, and preserve me in that state till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ? What answer shall we give him? Shall we tell him that merely partial, and not perfect holiness is here promised, and that the former, and not the latter, he is here authorised to expect? After looking prayerfully at the testimony of Scripture, in respect to the provisions and promises of Divine grace, we were constrained to admit, that but one answer to the above question could be given from the Bible; and the greatest wonder with me is, that I have been so long a "master of Israel, and have never before known these things." Since that time we have never ceased to proclaim the redemption of Christ as a full redemption. Nor do we expect to cease proclaiming it as a full and finished redemption, till Christ shall call us home. For myself, I am willing to proclaim it to the world, that I now look to the very God of peace to sanctify me wholly, and preserve my whole spirit, and soul,

and body, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I put up this prayer with the expectation that the very things prayed for will be granted. Reader, is that confidence misplaced? In expecting that blessing, am I leaning upon a broken reed, or upon the broad promise of God?

There is one circumstance connected with my recent experience, to which I desire to turn the special attention of the reader. I would here say, that I have for ever given up all idea of resisting temptation, subduing any lust, appetite, or propensity, or of acceptably performing any service for Christ, by the mere force of my own resolutions. If my propensities, which lead to sin, are crucified, I know that it must be done by an indwelling Christ. If I overcome the world, this is to be the victory, "even our faith." If the great enemy is to be overcome, it is to be done "by the blood of the Lamb."

Believing, as I now do, that the Lord Jesus Christ has provided special grace for the entire sanctification of every individual, for the subjection of all his propensities, for a perfect victory over every temptation and incentive to sin, and for rendering us, in every sphere and condition of life, all that he requires us to be; the first inquiry with me is, In what particular respects do I need the grace of Christ? What is there, for example, in my temper that needs correcting? Wherein am I in bondage to appetite, or to any of my propensities? What are the particular responsibilities, temptations, &c., incident to each particular sphere and condition in life in which the providence of God has called me to act? What is the temper that I ought there to manifest, so that I may everywhere, and under all circumstances, reflect the image of Christ?

Thus, having discovered my special necessity, in any one of the particulars above referred to, my next object is, to take some promise applicable to the particular exigency before me, and go directly to Christ for the supply of that particular necessity. By having the eye of faith perpetually fixed upon Christ in this manner; by always looking to him for special grace in every special exigency; yes, for "grace to help in every time of need,"—how easy it is to realise in our own blessed experience the truth of all the "exceeding great and precious promises" of Divine grace! How easy it is to have the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, "keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." "Our peace is then as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea." The mind seems to be borne upward and onward, as upon an ocean of light, peace, and blessedness, which knows no bounds.

"O glorious change! ’tis all of grace, By bleeding love bestowed On outcasts of our fallen race, To bring them home to God;

Infinite grace to vileness given, The sons of earth made heirs of heaven." And now, reader, "my heart’s desire and prayer to God" for you is, that you may know this full redemption. If you will cease from all efforts of your own, and bring your sins, and sorrows, and cares, and propensities which lead into sin, to Christ, and cast them all upon him; if, with implicit faith, you will hang your whole being upon him, and make it the great object of life to know him, for the purpose of receiving and reflecting his image—you will find that all the "exceeding great and precious promises" of his Word are, in your own blissful experience, a living reality. The waters that Christ shall give you "shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life." You shall have a perpetual and joyful victory over "the world, the flesh, and the devil." Everywhere, and under all circumstances, your peace in Christ shall be as a "river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea." "O taste and see that the Lord is good." "There is no want to them that fear him." And, reader, when your cup is once filled with the love of Christ, you will then say with truth, "The half has not been told

me." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

04.00. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST. BY Rev. ASA MAHAN, D.D., Author of "The Promise of the Spirit," etc. with a New Preface.

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PREFACE

It is now quite six years since the following treatise has been before the American, and upwards of four since it has been before the English public. During this period it has been read by very many individuals on both sides of the Atlantic, and that, as the author has the best reasons for believing, with much affirmed interest and profit. During this period also the central theme of the treatise, "the Promise of the Spirit," "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost," the promised "Enduement of Power from on High," which became real in the experience of the apostles and their associates at the Pentecost, and had never been vouchsafed to the Church in such forms before, has become throughout Christendom a subject of thought, inquiry, prayer, and waiting expectation, unknown in centuries past. That this treatise has contributed something to bring about this desirable and most propitious and hopeful consummation, is not a matter of doubt. That it may hereafter continue to exert an important influence to prepare the way for the approaching "brightness of the Divine rising," is still an object of hope. The special doctrine of the treatise takes specific form from the following declaration of our Saviour to His disciples;- "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." The Holy Spirit had convinced these disciples of sin, had induced them to believe in Christ, to love Him, and to "keep His commandments." From the hour of their conversion He had been with them, and their bodies had been His temples. During the ten days in which those disciples "tarried in Jerusalem," waiting "the promise of the Father," the same Spirit was with them still, perfecting their obedience, intensifying their aspirations, unifying their "accord," and completing their preparation for the inward enlightenments, "enduements of power," Divine fellowships and fruitions, which were to result from the approaching "baptism." All that preceded the Pentecost was preparatory to this

baptism, but no part of it. The conversion and subsequent preparation were the work of the Spirit, just as much as the baptism, and the former was indispensable to the latter. Had the apostles continued in the preparatory stage of experience, or had they gone forth to their work prior to the reception of "the promise of the Spirit," they would have remained to the end of life as they had been before, "a feeble folk," and the world would never have felt their influence. Waiting, on the other hand, "the promise of the Father," and going forth, as Christ did, "under the power of the Spirit," they soon "turned the world upside down." The same holds true of all believers, the least as well as the greatest, under the present Dispensation, the Dispensation of the Spirit. As with the apostles and their associates, so with every believer in Jesus. After inducing "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," the Spirit abides with and works in him, as He did in them prior to the Pentecost, and for the one purpose, to perfect his love and obedience and inward preparation, that "the Holy Ghost may fall on him as He did on them at the beginning." If the convert stops short of this great consummation, and if he does this especially under the belief that he did receive "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost" in conversion, and that, consequently, nothing remains for him but a gradual increase of what he then received, he will almost inevitably remain through life in the darkness and weakness of the old, instead of going forth to his life work under "the enduements of power," spiritual illuminations, transforming visions of the Divine glory, "fellowships with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," and "assurances of faith," "assurances of hope," and "assurances of understanding," peculiar to the New Dispensation.

Here this great doctrine is met by the counter one, that every newborn soul does receive the promised "Baptism of the Holy Ghost," and all accompanying enlightenments and "enduements of power," at the time of his conversion. In confirmation of this doctrine such passages are adduced as those which affirm that the bodies of all believers "are the temples of the Holy Ghost," "that all have been baptized into one body," and that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." All this, we teach, is true of every convert now, and has been true of every converted person since the fall. The Holy Ghost had given the disciples "repentance unto life," and "was with them" as a sanctifying presence, had made their bodies His temple, and had "baptized them into one body," prior to the Pentecost. They must have had "the Spirit of Christ, or they could not have been His." Yet, in the New Testament sense of the words, "the Holy Ghost was not given," and they were not "baptized with the Holy Ghost," until " the Pentecost had fully come." So of all converts in this dispensation. They "have the Spirit of Christ," "the Spirit is with them," and their bodies, as those of all the holy have ever been, are "His temple." This was true, and must have been true of all the converts in Samaria before Peter and John came there. Yet "the Holy Ghost had not fallen upon one of them." How any person can contemplate the revealed results of "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost," and then affirm, in the presence of palpable facts, that every such convert has received "the enduements of power" included in "the promise of the Spirit," is a mystery of mysteries to us. But while all believers have been "baptized into one body," are we not also told that "there is one baptism?" If the believer was in his conversion, with all others, baptized "by one Spirit into one body," and may afterwards be "baptized with the Holy Ghost," is there not, it is asked, more than one "baptism of the Spirit?" If we are to infer from such language that there is one and only "one baptism," what shall we do with the argument of the Friends, that water baptism should be dispensed with? The apostle does not say that there is "one baptism" of the Spirit; but "one baptism." While he says this, he speaks in another place of "the Doctrine of Baptisms." While baptism in all its forms is "one," just as "he that planteth and he that watereth are one," that is, one

in purpose, spirit, and aim, so baptism may, for aught that appears in such expressions, be as diverse in its forms as are the individualities employed in planting and watering the churches. As there is "one body with many members," and "one faith" in many forms, so there may be "one baptism" in many forms.

According to the doctrine under consideration, two blessings as simultaneously given to every convert at the moment when he believes—the pardon of sin, and "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost," with all its attendant "enduements of power," and this is the doctrine which the apostles intended to teach, and did teach. If this were so, why did Peter and John pray for the converts in Samaria, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, and not that they might receive the forgiveness of their sins? Are we anywhere told in the New Testament that any have "received the Word of the Lord," believed in Jesus, openly confessed His name, and yet have not received the pardon of their sins? We do read of numbers, however, who thus believed, not one of whom had received the Holy Ghost at the time of believing, or after they had believed.

Take another case. Paul did put this question to the twelve believers whom he met at Ephesus; namely, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" or, as some render the original, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" Why did he put this, and not the other question equally pertinent, if this doctrine is true, in each case, to wit: "Have ye received the pardon of your sins since ye believed?" or, "Did ye receive the pardon of your sins when ye believed?" Had he held and taught the dogma that both blessings are always and at the same moment given the instant an individual believes, he would have been just as likely to have asked if one blessing had been received, as whether the other had been, and the inquiry would have been infinitely absurd in either case. The case of these twelve disciples is entirely clear from the reply often made to the argument based upon the revealed fact, that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost was given to the Jews at the Pentecost, to the Samaritans, and to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius, not at the moment of regeneration, but "after they had believed." This was necessary, it is said, to verify for Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles, common rights and privileges in the Church of Christ. After this the Holy Ghost is never given in this form, but always in regeneration. The question of Paul (Acts 19:1-7) was put to these believers many years after the baptisms above referred to, and after the New Dispensation had been established; however, these individuals did receive the Holy Ghost, not only "after they had believed," but after they had, as believers, been baptized (Acts 19:5-6). The case is too plain to require comments.

No, reader: the apostles rightly understood our Saviour, and so taught, to wit, that the condition of pardon is "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," and that the condition on which "He will baptize with the Holy Ghost" is "love and obedience," and "waiting the promise of the Father," after we have believed. Hence they taught that the Holy Ghost is given not with forgiveness, but to "those who obey God." In Ezekiel 36:27 and Ezekiel 36:37, we are absolutely taught that Christ as the Mediator of the new covenant will "put His Spirit within" believers; that is, "baptize them with the Holy Ghost," "when He shall be inquired of by them to do it for them." Language is without meaning, if "the promise of the Spirit" does not await the believer after he has entered into a state of justification, and then in a state of "love and obedience," and supreme consecration to Christ, "tarries" before God until he is "endued with power from on high." Having carefully weighed the contents of this introduction, the reader will be fully prepared to enter into the interior of the work itself.

04.01. Introductory. – The Christian Character

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY. - THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER, AND HOW TO ATTAIN IT.

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"— John 7:37-39.

"What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone." — Romans 9:30-32. When Moses was about to build the Tabernacle, he received from God a solemn and specific admonition to "make all things according to the pattern shown him in the Mount." We are divinely taught and admonished in this requirement that when we attempt to accomplish any specific work which God has assigned us, we must, if we would not have the work fail in its accomplishment, strictly conform to God’s revealed pattern and method of operation. In the Scriptures there is very distinctly revealed a divinely-developed and perfected pattern or model of Christian character, to which every believer is required to conform. God has also therein disclosed, with equal distinctness, the method by which that Christian character may be acquired, and take on the prescribed forms of beauty and perfection. This character is represented by the words "new man," as opposed to "the old man," our previous unrenewed moral and spiritual nature. The latter we are required to "put off," and the former to "take on." If we have failed to realize in our Christian character and experience all that is represented by the words, "new man in Christ Jesus," it must be for one of two reasons, or for both united. Either we have not attempted obedience to the command before us, or we have attempted in ways not conformable to His revealed method.

Two inquiries of vital importance here present themselves, viz., What is this "new man in Christ Jesus?" and, What is the revealed method by which we may "put off the old," and "put on the new man?" To each of these questions we will now proceed to give a concise and specific answer.

GOD’S IDEAL OF A CHRISTIAN. In Old Testament prophecy we have a very distinct revelation of God’s ideal of the New Testament saint. He is a redeemed sinner who, under the provisions and influences of "the new covenant," has been divinely cleansed "from all filthiness and from all his idols," and whose "iniquities shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and his sins, and they shall not be found." In "his feebleness he is as David," and in his strength "as the Lord, as the angel of the Lord before Him." "The sun is no more his light by day, neither for brightness does the moon give light unto him; but the Lord is unto him an everlasting light, and his God his glory. His sun does no more go down, neither does his moon withdraw itself: for the Lord is his everlasting

light, and the days of his mourning are ended." In his experience has been realised, and is being realised, all that was spoken of by the prophet Joel: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy." In the New Testament this "new man" is revealed as "after God created in righteousness and true holiness," and as "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him;" as "beholding with open face the glory of the Lord, and being changed into the same image from glory to glory;" "as comprehending the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and knowing the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and being filled with all the fullness of God;" as "walking in the light, as God is in the light;" as "having been made perfect in love;" and as "having fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." To him "Christ manifests Himself," and is formed within him "the hope of glory." He is "crucified with Christ," and "by the cross is crucified to the world, and the world to him." "He is in the world as Christ was in the world," and "in the name of Christ asks and receives until his joy is full;" and "believing in Christ he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory." "Out of his belly flow rivers of living water." "When weak, he is made strong," and "in tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, death, and life," he is " more than conqueror, through Him that hath loved us." In him "tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope;" and "all things work together for his good." When "troubled on every side, he is not distressed; when perplexed, he is not in despair; when persecuted, he is not forsaken; and when cast down, he is not destroyed." In every condition of existence he finds deep content in the center of the sweet will of God, and verifies in experience the great central fact of the Divine life—that "we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us."

Clad in the panoply of God, "he stands in the evil day," and "quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked." "His faith groweth exceedingly," and his "charity aboundeth;" and he is constantly growing "into the stature of the fullness of Christ." He also "has power with God and with men." "He asks what he will, and it is done unto him." As reflecting the image and glory of Christ, he is "the light of the world" and the "salt of the earth." Such is God’s revealed pattern of the New Testament saint, "the new man" whom we are required to "put on."

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS CHARACTER. No one will question the correctness of the above presentation of God’s revealed pattern of the New Testament saint, or affirm that we have given any unauthorized colouring to that representation. How shall we obey the command requiring us to "put off the old," and to "put on the new man?" Have we a revealed method of attaining this character? In answer to such inquiries, we remark:—

1. That whenever any of the leading characteristics of "the new man" are referred to in the Bible, they are specifically represented as produced by the indwelling presence, special agency, and influence of the Holy Spirit. Do we "behold with open face the glory of the Lord?" and are we thereby "changed into the same image?" It is "by the Spirit of the Lord;" and this "liberty," this cloudless sunlight, we are expressly taught, is enjoyed where, and only "where the Spirit of the Lord is." Do we "have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ?" Does God "dwell in us and walk in us?" and do Christ and the Father "come to us" and "make their abode in us?" All this, we are expressly taught, is the "fellowship of the Spirit;" the fellowship which the Spirit

induces and sustains. Do we enjoy "assurance of hope?" It is because "the Spirit testifies to our spirit that we are the children of God." Have we power in prayer? It is because "the Spirit maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God." Do we call Jesus Lord? It is by the Holy Ghost. Have we no condemnation? It is because we are in Christ Jesus, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Do we bear love, joy, peace? &c. They are said to be "the fruit of the Spirit." Do we "mortify the deeds of the body?" It is "through the Spirit." Do we "comprehend the breadth, and depth, and length, and height, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge?" It is because we have been previously "strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man." Does Christ become to us "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption?" It is because He is made such to us "of God;" that is, by the Spirit of God—the Spirit "revealing Christ in us," and showing us His grace and glory. When Christ promises to every believer that "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," we must bear in mind that "this He spake of the Spirit." If, then, we would "put off the old man with his deeds," and "put on the new man, who after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," it must be through the prior indwelling of the Spirit in our hearts. On no other condition can we, in full conformity to God’s revealed pattern, become New Testament saints.

2. This indwelling presence of the Spirit in our hearts, through which all these revelations of the Divine grace and glory occur, and all these moral and spiritual transformations are effected; through which all these Divine fellowships are possessed, and these assurances, "everlasting consolations and good hope, through grace," and this fullness of joy, are vouchsafed—this indwelling presence of the Spirit in our hearts, we say, is given to us after we have, through His convicting power, "repented of sin, and believed in Christ."

Nothing is or can be more plain than the teachings of inspiration on this subject. "Faith cometh by hearing;" "the sealing and earnest of the Spirit" are received "after we have believed." When Christ "spoke of the Spirit," He spoke of a blessing which "they that believe were afterward to receive." The Spirit "convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," and thus induces "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," but He "comes upon," "falls upon," or "endues with power from on high" only such as have already believed. The inquiry which inspired apostles put to those who were believers was this: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" As soon as individuals were recognized as real believers in the Lord Jesus, special prayer was offered for them that "they might receive the Holy Ghost." No believer can fully realize in experience God’s revealed pattern of the Christian character until he is "endued with power from on high." Then, and not till then, will he comprehend the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of Divine love, and be "filled with all the fulness of God."

3. The indwelling presence and power of the Spirit are to be sought and received by faith in God’s word of promise, on the part of the believer, after he has believed; just as pardon and eternal life are to be sought by the sinner before justification. "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." Between the believer and the baptism of the Spirit lies "the promise of the Father." If this promise is not embraced by faith, the gift will not be vouchsafed.

Hence the apostles, as soon as a sinner was converted, and became a believer in Christ, turned and fixed his eye upon "the promise of the Spirit" as the crowning blessing of Divine grace, as the blessing without which he could not witness with power for the Lord Jesus. Before Christ would

allow His disciples to enter upon their world mission, He commanded them to "tarry in Jerusalem, until they were endued with power from on high." So He requires every believer, before he enters upon his life-work as a Christian, to tarry before God, and pray and wait, and wait and pray, until "the Holy Ghost shall fall upon him," as "He did upon the disciples at the beginning."

Here, then, we have God's revealed method of attaining this ideal of the Christian character—that is, of rendering real, in our experience and life, His divinely-developed and perfected pattern of the New Testament saint. If, in our endeavors to render that model real in our experience, we "make all things according to the pattern shown us in the Mount," and if those endeavors accord with God's inspired plan, our characters and lives will be constantly taking on new and higher forms of radiant beauty and perfection. If, on the other hand, we fail to put forth the necessary endeavors, or if those endeavors shall take a wrong direction, God will utterly reject us as "reprobate silver;" or our spiritual lives will manifest a feeble and sickly growth, and when we should be risen "into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," we shall be as "babes in Christ." A FAILURE IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

"My life is a complete failure," said a very aged man, and the most wealthy that had then lived in the American nation. This term "failure" represents one of the most affectingly melancholy ideas that ever entered human mind. Life may be a failure for various reasons. No effective endeavours may be put forth in any direction. A purposeless, dreamy, effortless life is, of course, a dead failure. A life full of purpose and activity may be a failure, because its direction has been towards worthless or unworthy ends. The ends and aims of the Christian life are the most worthy and important known, even to the infinite and eternal mind. To fail here, is to render existence itself a failure; and we do fail so far as we come short of our available privileges and advantages. Not a few fail totally, because their so-called religious life is void of holy purpose, aim, and activity. Others, with the Jew, "follow after the law of righteousness," without "attaining to the law of righteousness," and that because their activity is self-originated, and void of faith as its central principle. Others still have in reality holy purposes and aims, and their lives take on some forms of real Christian activity. They have, also, a form of saving faith. Their lives, however, are comparative failures, because they live far below their privileges, and never possess or exercise "the power with God and with men," which is divinely offered them to possess and exercise.

Let us for a moment turn our attention to the twelve disciples whom Paul met at Ephesus—who had believed, but not "received the Holy Ghost since they believed." Suppose that for want of better instruction they had continued till death in the same state in which they then were. They might have been saved at last; but their lives as Christians would have been melancholy failures as compared with what they were after the Holy Ghost came upon them." When Apollos first came to Ephesus he was "mighty in the Scriptures," was "instructed in the way of the Lord," was "fervent in spirit," and "taught diligently the way of the Lord." Like the twelve above referred to; however, "he knew only the baptism of John," and as a consequence "had not received the Holy Ghost since he believed." If no one had "expounded to him the way of God more perfectly," he would probably have continued as before. He might have been saved himself, and done some good: but his life would have been in many important respects a vast failure, as compared with what it did become after he was instructed in the "way of God more perfectly."

Christian reader, shall your life, in any form, be a failure? To prevent this, to "teach you the way of God more perfectly," if you do not yet know it, and to insure to you a life of which God shall not be ashamed, is the end for which this treatise has been prepared. In no era of Church history, since the primitive age passed away, has the mission and "promise of the Spirit" occupied so much attention among all classes of believers as now. We regard this as a glorious sign of the times. We pray that the results of this attention may be a Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Ghost upon all churches throughout the Christian world.

There are two distinct forms of instruction upon this subject, which we briefly notice.

According to one, "the promise of the Spirit" as an indwelling Spirit is always fulfilled at the moment of conversion. What is subsequently to be expected is merely a continuation and gradual increase of what was then conferred.

According to the other view, the Spirit first of all induces in the sinner "repentance towards God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Then, "after he has believed," that is, after conversion, "the Holy Ghost comes upon," "falls upon," and is "poured out upon him," and thus "endues him with power from on high" for his life mission and work. In this baptism of power, this "sealing and earnest of the Spirit," "the promise of the Spirit" is fulfilled. This is the view which we shall endeavor to sustain in this volume.

It seems undeniable that if this last is not the correct view, inspired men have fundamentally erred upon this subject. With them conversion was not primâ-facie evidence that the convert had received "the sealing and earnest of the Spirit." Hence the question which they put to converts, viz., "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" The apostles did not deny or depreciate the importance or necessity of the Spirit’s influences in conviction, conversion, and the whole work of justification. Nor would we by any means be supposed to entertain such an error. The Spirit is in the world to "convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," to induce "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," and thus perfect the work of justification. Nor does the Spirit leave the convert when this necessary work is accomplished, but is ever present, preparing him for the promised baptism of Himself which is yet to be received by him.

Repentance and justification, and the Spirit’s influences in producing the same, are necessary prerequisites for this great consummation When the sacred writers employed such terms and phrases as the following: "The Holy Ghost was not yet given," "The Holy Ghost had not fallen upon any of them," "The promise of the Spirit," "The sealing and earnest of the Spirit," "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since believed?" and "Baptized with the Holy Ghost," they referred to the promised baptism of the Spirit, by which we are "endued with power from on high," "after we have believed." As "the promise of the Spirit" awaits the believer after conversion, the apostles did not regard the fact of conversion as certain proof that the convert had "received the Holy Ghost" in His baptismal power. The fact stands recorded, that many individuals were truly converted in Samaria under the preaching of Philip, and that upon not one of them "had the Holy Ghost fallen" when Peter and John first appeared among them. There were many holy men and holy women among the followers of Christ prior to His crucifixion. The Holy Ghost, as promised in the New Testament, however, was not given, as we are positively informed, until after "Jesus was glorified." The New Testament saints were "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" "after they believed," and not when

they were converted. This is sufficient for the present, as the whole subject will be fully elucidated in subsequent pages.

How many thousands there are in the churches who have been converted, but are yet without the baptism of the Holy Ghost! They have been baptized with water, and believed according to the use of that term; but ask their hearts and their lives, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Their doubts and fears, their lukewarmness and selfishness, their bigotry and worldliness, their errings and falls, give the answer.

Those who sustain the sacred relations of pastors and teachers have received a special commission to "feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." This commission is rendered specially sacred by the fact that of this flock "the Holy Ghost has made us overseers." When we come to this blood-bought flock, what direction shall our teachings take upon the subject under consideration? If there is any subject that we need to understand, it is this. If there is any subject on which we should borrow our light from "the sure word of prophecy," and on which our instructions should absolutely accord with that word, it is this. On no subject is wrong instruction more certain to render the religious life a failure.

If "the promise of the Spirit" is fulfilled in conversion, and we teach that "the baptism," "the sealing," and "the earnest of the Spirit" are to be sought and received "after we have believed," then we instruct believers to fix their hearts upon what they are never to find.

If, on the other hand, believers are to "receive the Holy Ghost" as promised, and are "endued with power from on high," not in conversion, but "after they have believed;" and we impress upon their minds the opposite view, then we impart a life-long misdirection to their seekings, prayers, and activities. We send them in the direction of darkness, instead of "marvelous light;" of weakness, instead of strength; of doubt, instead of "full assurance of hope;" of emptiness, instead of the "fulness of God;" and of the "bondage of corruption," instead of "the glorious liberty of the sons of God." Will you not attend us in a careful investigation of this great theme? If we go wrong, will you not expose the error? If we shall speak "the words of truth and soberness," will you not hold up the light before the Church of God?"

Reader, the subject before us is not one of mere speculative interest. It is, on the other hand, one of vital importance relatively to the life of God in your soul. If, when you have read what we hope to write, you do not find yourself nearer to God than you now are; if you do not find yourself in full "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," and if "your joy shall not be full," or you shall not be earnestly moved to "seek with all your heart and with all your soul" until you find this infinite good; then so far we have written, and you have read, in vain.

If you have not "received the Holy Ghost since you believed," you need to know certainly whether there is not in reserve for you "some better thing" than you have yet obtained. Will you not read these pages with the fixed purpose to know, if possible, the truth upon this whole subject, and, if you find the light, to follow it, until you are "filled with all the fulness of God?"

04.02. Experience and Teachings of our Saviour

CHAPTER II.

EXPERIENCE AND TEACHINGS OF OUR SAVIOUR ON THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST.

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"For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."— John 3:34. In Christ there were two forms of manifestation equally conspicuous—viz.: Deity "in the brightness of His glory," and "the express image of His person;" and humanity in absolute beauty and perfection. In the former relation He is "the Lord our righteousness." In the latter, He is our divine-human Exemplar, teaching us not only what we should do and become, but how to do and become all that is required of us.

Here arises a new question, which, to our knowledge, has not been put before. The question is this: Did the development or manifestation of the spiritual life in Christ depend upon the baptism, the indwelling, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, the same in all essential particulars as in us? Did He seek and secure this Divine anointing as the necessary conditions and means of "finishing the work which the Father had given Him to do"—just as we are necessitated to seek and secure the same "enduement of power from on high," as the means and condition of our finishing the work which Christ has given us to do? A reference to prophecy furnishes a definite answer to all such questions: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots, and the Spirit of the Lord shall be upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." Isaiah 11:1-3. Here we are positively taught that the Divine manifestations which shone through Christ were the result of the power of the Spirit which rested upon Him. The same truth is taught in Isaiah 42:1 : "Behold My servant, whom I uphold! Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." In Isaiah 61:1, Christ thus speaks of Himself in the first person: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek, He hath sent Me to bind up the heart-broken, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." The fact that Christ was thus baptized of the Spirit implies that He needed that baptism, and that without it, in the relations in which He then was, He could not have "finished the work which the Father had given Him to do." In seeking, and obtaining, and acting under that baptism, Christ is our Exemplar in respect to the spiritual and divine life which is required of us.

We find the same truth set forth with equal clearness in the New Testament. In John 3:34, we are told, for example, that the reason why Christ spake as He did, and what He did, was owing to the measureless effusion and power of the Spirit which was vouchsafed to Him: "For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." God

does not bestow gifts or influences where and when they are not needed. Christ received this measureless effusion of the Spirit at the beginning and during the progress of His mission, because it was a necessity to Him—just as similar baptisms are a necessity to us in our life mission.

We have here, no doubt, one reason for the fact, that our Saviour spent so much time alone with God and in prayer to Him. Christ teaches us that God gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask, and seek, and knock at the door of mercy for this anointing. In this respect, also, God has made Christ our Exemplar, giving the Spirit to Him when he consciously needed His special Divine influence and sought for it, just as He gives us the Spirit as we consciously need and seek Him at His hands. Not to be misled here, we must carefully distinguish between the state of Christ when, as the eternal Word, He dwelt with the Father, and when, as the same Word, He "was made flesh and dwelt among us." In the former state, He had infinite all-sufficiency in Himself; in the latter, He "was in all respects made like unto His brethren," and had the same need of the baptism of the Spirit that we have, and obtained "power from high" on the conditions on which the same blessing is promised to us.

We now turn to the recorded facts of the public life of our Saviour which bear upon our present inquiries. At the time of His baptism by John, the Spirit descended upon Him in answer to special prayer on His part: "Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him." This was His first special baptism. At the close of the temptation in the wilderness, after Satan had fled discomfited from His presence, and angels had descended and ministered unto Him, the final and great baptism appears to have been given, and "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee." Then under this special Divine influence is thus presented by the sacred historian: "And there went out a fame of Him through all the region round about. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all." But the effect of this baptism is still more manifest in the account which follows of His visit to Nazareth. We give the account in full:

"And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor: He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book, and gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." Our Saviour was here among the people, who had known Him from childhood up. Hitherto He took no part in their worship but what was ordinary. Nor does it seem that His prior reading or discourses had been marked by peculiarities which excited very special observation, much less the envy of any. But now there was a mysterious something even about His reading, which fixed the eyes of all present upon Him. But their surprise and wonder reached their consummation when they listened to "the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." In His intellectual, moral, and spiritual manifestations He stood before them as completely transformed as He was physically to the eyes of the disciples on the

Mount of Transfiguration. Now this wonderful transformation Christ attributes, in fact and form, to the baptism of the Spirit which He had just before received. One of the main objects of reading that passage unquestionably was to explain to that people the cause of that transformation—a transformation so great as to excite their envy. We are in no danger of being misunderstood here. The life and character of our Saviour, prior to that event, were as absolutely pure as now. He was no less then than now, "God manifest in the flesh." Yet He had, through that baptism of love, knowledge, and power, ascended from some forms of perfect human and perfect Divine manifestations, to others far higher and more impressive. The great truth which we would impress upon all minds through this revealed fact is this: If Christ the pure and spotless One, Christ the Eternal Word, was thus transformed through "the baptism of the Holy Ghost," what must be the transformation in believers when they for their life work shall be "endued with power from on high." This is the transformation which Christ is ready to effect in all His people. "He shall baptize you," says John Baptist, "with the Holy Ghost." On another occasion, when John saw Jesus coming unto him he gave utterance to these memorable words: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for He was before me. And I knew Him not: but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him, and I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto Me: Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."

We, then, are to look to Christ for the gift of the Spirit, just as He looked to the Father for the same baptism of power. As Christ spent forty days and forty nights in fasting and prayer preparatory to the reception of a full and final baptism, we should not think it strange if a considerable time should pass before such preparation in us is consummated.

Let this truth, however, be continually in our minds. The power of the Spirit was a necessity even to Christ for the full accomplishment of His life mission. How much more so to us if we would accomplish our life work. Christ would not enter upon His mission until He could "go forth in the power of the Spirit." Would it not be presumption in us to enter upon ours without tarrying before God "until we be endued with power from on high?"

We have now arrived at the main object of the present chapter—viz., what Christ Himself said and taught in regard to the Holy Spirit and His mission. On this part of our subject we would present the following facts and considerations:—

1. He taught expressly that all believers may seek and obtain this unspeakable gift, and upon the same conditions on which He obtained it. In Luke 11:4-13, we have specific instructions on this subject. Read the whole passage: "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. If a son ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent or if he shall ask an egg will he offer him a scorpion? If ye, then, being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children how much more your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him!"

All, then, are without excuse who go forth to the mission of life without doing so under "the power of the Spirit as Christ went out from the wilderness. The heart of God, only in greater strength, is towards us, in respect to this gift, as the parental heart is toward the child in respect to needed food: "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him!"

2. The Holy Spirit, when given and not subsequently grieved or quenched, remains with us, not as a mere divine influence, but as an abiding personal presence. Everywhere our Saviour speaks of the Spirit, not as an influence, but as a Person. As a Person He is sent—comes, speaks, teaches, shows things to the mind, and abides with believers, as Christ "dwelt among us." He requires the ordinance of baptism to be administered in "the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." No such language is applicable to mere influence in any form. The Spirit, also, when He comes to us, comes to abide with us as a permanent personal presence. Christ "came forth from the Father," came into the world, and "dwelt among us" for a little season. Then He "left the world, and returned to the Father." The Spirit comes to the believer to "abide with him forever." As a consequence, "all our work should be wrought in God," and all our activities should be under His immediate control. "I will pray the Father for you, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever." "Ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

3. Another truth of great moment taught by our Saviour on this subject, is this:—The benefits which we may all receive through the Spirit dwelling in us are far greater than His disciples did derive, or could have derived, from Christ’s personal presence, teachings, and influence, when He was upon earth, and Himself under "the power of the Spirit." This we could hardly believe but upon the express testimony of our Saviour Himself. Until after "Christ was glorified," the Holy Ghost could not be given, even to believers. Hence the highest good of His disciples demanded that He should return to the Father, that the abiding presence of the Spirit might be vouchsafed to them: "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." Christ did not undervalue the light and privileges enjoyed by His disciples under His ministrations. On this subject He thus speaks: "And He turned Him unto His disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." But what they thus saw and heard was only preparatory for the higher light and glory and blessedness which they were to receive and enjoy after Christ was glorified and the Holy Ghost was given unto them. Of the present privileges of all believers in common, our Saviour thus speaks: "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." "But this," the apostle adds, "He spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

None, we are taught here, could have had this blessedness consummated in their experience before "Jesus was glorified." No prophet, or king, or disciple ever did enjoy, or could have enjoyed, prior to the time when the Holy Ghost was given, the light, privileges, and blessedness which all believers may now enjoy under the dispensation of the Spirit.

Such are the express teachings of our Saviour upon this subject. According to the equally express teachings of prophecy also, "He that is feeble among you at that day shall be as David, while the

house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before Him." Those things, also, after which "the prophets inquired and searched diligently," were not the sayings or works of our Saviour prior to His crucifixion, but "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow"—follow after "the Holy Ghost was given." The most important utterances of our Saviour were like enigmas, even to the disciples, until after "the Spirit took of the things of Christ and showed them unto them."

4. The special mission of the Spirit, as revealed by our Saviour Himself, next claims our attention. His mission is set forth in such words as the following: "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you;" "He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you;" "He will guide you into all truth;" "He shall testify of Me;" "I by the Spirit will show you plainly of the Father;" "He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment;" "He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come;" "And they shall all be taught of God." The mission of the Spirit, then, is to put the mind in full possession of that "eternal life," which consists in "knowing the only living and true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent." It is one thing to study the Word of God with human helps; it is quite another thing to have in addition to these the Spirit of God, first to strengthen His truth in "the inner man," and then to open it to our vision, especially "the image of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The Church, under the power of the Spirit's indwelling and teaching, is "the light of the world." While the Church is laboring for the salvation of the race, the Spirit is in the world to convince men of sin and lead them to Christ. After they have repented and believed in Him, He sends the Comforter to enlighten, teach, help, guide, and dwell with them forever.

Prior to conversion the Spirit comes to men without being sought, and convinces them of sin, even against their will. After repentance and faith in Christ, believers receive "power from on high," "the power of the Spirit," by asking, seeking, knocking, and waiting for His coming upon them as the disciples did at the Pentecost, and as Christ did in the wilderness and in mountain solitudes. The Spirit in Christ, in the prophets and in the apostles, gives us the whole circle and volume of revealed truth. The Spirit in the world acts as a convicting and persuading power to lead men to Christ. The Spirit in the Church abides in the hearts of all believers who seek and obtain Him, as a transforming, all-illuminating, and personal presence, through which we apprehend the things of Christ, and all truth requisite "to life and godliness," through which, as stated by the apostle, "we behold with open face the glory of God," are "changed into the same image from glory to glory," and "are filled with all the fulness of God." Such is the mission of the Spirit, as set forth by our Saviour Himself.

5. What has Christ authorized us to expect, through the abiding presence and power of the Spirit? This is the question which should next engage our attention. We have already spoken of the forms of Divine illumination promised by our Saviour, and which are to be received through the Spirit.

Let us now contemplate other forms of blessedness, which are pledged to us, and which are to descend to us under His ministration: "And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name: ask and receive, that your joy may be full." "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you. He that hath My commandments, and keepeth

them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. Judas, not Iscariot, saith to Him, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us, and not to the world? Jesus answered and said to him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him."

All this is Spoken with direct reference to the results which were to attend the mission of the Spirit. After speaking of the illumination which believers are to receive under the teachings of the Spirit, our Saviour thus speaks of their blessedness through the Spirit's indwelling presence: "Peace I leave with you, My peace [the peace which I Myself enjoy] I give unto you." In His intercessory prayer, He thus speaks upon the same subject. "And now come I to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves." Again He adds, "And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one. I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." The power of the gospel in the hands of Christians, when they go forth "under the power of the Spirit," our Saviour thus describes: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall He do also; and greater works than these shall he do: because I go unto My Father." The Saviour is not here speaking of His miraculous deeds, but of the power of the gospel under His immediate ministration, as compared with the glory which was to follow His Sufferings, and follow through the agency of believers when under "the power of the Spirit." Of two individuals aiming at the same general results, one may move in a far wider sphere, and may touch a far greater number of minds, and in this sense exert a far greater influence than the other; while the influence of the latter within his narrow sphere may be in itself more efficient than that of the former. This is the great truth set before us in this memorable utterance of Christ. Each believer, the least as well as the greatest, has received from Christ a life mission and work, and has, under the power of the Spirit, an influence in itself more efficient than Christ wielded during His public ministry. The following, then, are some of the high and glorious privileges which Christ has absolutely promised to us, provided we receive the Holy Ghost after we believe:—

1. Not only a perfect union with Him, and with the Father in Him, "the Father in Him, and He in us, and we in Him" but we are to know that this union between us and the adorable Trinity does exist.

2. Not only is the Spirit to "abide with us forever," but Christ and the Father will "come to us and make their abode with us;" "our fellowship," in the language of the Apostle John, "being with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

3. We are to enjoy a similar access to the throne of grace, and have the same power in prayer in our life mission and work, that Christ possessed while prosecuting His mission and work—we "asking in His name," and asking and receiving until "our joy," as His was, "is full."

4. Under the power of the Spirit we are to "bring forth much fruit" to the glory of God, and to the honor of Him that "loved us, and gave Himself for us," and thus to share in full measure the glory which the Father has given to Christ.

5. In the prosecution of our life mission and work, we, abiding and walking in the Spirit, are to be possessed of a full fruition of that peace in God, and fulness of joy, which Christ Himself

possessed, while "finishing the work which the Father had given Him to do." We should not dare to write such thoughts, did not the express words of Christ to that effect lie out in distinct utterances before our minds.

We notice, in the next place, the plan of our Saviour, as far as the agency of the Church is concerned in the work, of saving lost men, and bringing the world back to God. This plan may be thus stated:—

1. To organize the entire membership into one divinely-anointed sacramental host, all of whom, in their individual and social relations, are to labor with supreme devotion for this great end.

2. To impart to each and everyone, through the Spirit, such a full and special baptism of power, as will perfectly qualify for, and adapt him to, the peculiar and special mission and work appointed him. Each individual is to be so "endued with power from on high," and so "filled with all the fulness of God," that there shall not be "a sickly or feeble one in all that host;" "the feeble among them being as David, and the house of David" (the leaders under the Great Captain of our salvation), "as the Lord, as the angel of the Lord before Him."

3. Through the abiding presence of the Spirit, and through Him of Christ and the Father in each heart, there shall exist such a visible unity of spirit, purpose, and mutual love among all the sanctified family, that the world shall believe in the divinity of our Saviour’s mission.

4. To secure in all such peace, assurance, and fullness of joy, that "the Gentiles shall come to the light of the Church, and kings to the brightness of her rising."

Such is the plan, as no one will deny. What did Christ do and teach to render this plan real in the experience of the Church? In His relations as our atoning God and Saviour, He has made full provision for the complete sanctification, adequacy for every good word and work, and fullness of joy in every believer. He has purchased for each and all "the promise of the Spirit," through Whom God can do for everyone "exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think."

He has, by His own example, shown us how we may obtain the "sealing and earnest of the Spirit;" and how we must live and act when we go forth to our life-work under His power. He has said everything that could have been said to induce in us, first of all, supreme consecration to our life-work, and then a waiting upon God, as Christ waited before the Father, for that "enduement of power from on high" which is the immutable condition of accomplishing our divinely-appointed mission. Among His earliest instructions we are absolutely assured of God’s willingness and desire to bestow upon us this anointing when we seek and pray for it as required. We are also assured that when this baptism shall come upon us, "the days of our mourning shall be ended," and we may rejoice evermore.

Then as the time of His departure approached, His last discourse and prayer with His disciples seem to have but one leading end and aim, viz., to prepare their hearts for the reception of the Comforter, and to fix their desires and expectations upon "the glory which was to follow His sufferings." On His first meeting with them after His resurrection, His first act, after His peace salutation, was to breathe upon them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." After being seen of them forty days and speaking to them of the things pertaining to the "kingdom of God," after admonishing them not to "depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father," and

assuring them that they should "be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence," He finally led them out of the city as far as Bethany. There having delivered to them His final commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," and His last command, "But tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high," He "lifted up His hands and blessed them," and then ascended upward and took His place at "the right hand of God," "leading captivity captive, and giving gifts unto men."

Now, reader, from beneath those sacred hands uplifted to bless us as well as them, those never-to-be-forgotten words, "Go," but "Tarry," come directly and personally to you and to me. Eternity is lost to us if we go not as bidden, and barrenness and spiritual blight will rest upon us if we tarry not as required. But the light of God shall attend us, and glory infinite shall encircle us at last if we do go forth as bidden on the one hand, and tarry as required on the other.

04.03. Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost

CHAPTER III.

DOCTRINE OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST EXPLAINED AND ELUCIDATED.

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: 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."— Matthew 3:11-12.

"He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."— Acts 19:2. THE preceding chapters have, we trust, opened the way for an exposition and elucidation of the doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, as set forth in the New Testament. In attending to this we will first of all quote the various passages of Scripture in which this doctrine is clearly set forth, and then suggest the various lessons which they appear to teach. The first passage to which we refer is Acts 19:1-6 : "And it came to pass that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what, then, were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied." This passage teaches several truths of great importance in respect to the subject under consideration.

1. We learn that the gift of the Spirit was not received in but after conversion—"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?"

2. We are taught that in the judgment of inspired men, believers are not fully qualified for their sphere of Christian activity until this baptism is received. The men whom Paul met he distinctly recognized as Christians, but in want of the chief qualifications for Christian usefulness until they had been "endued with power from on high," through this Divine Baptism. Nor was this view peculiar to Paul. It was the view of the other apostles, as we may learn from Acts 8:14-17 : "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for as yet He was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

3. We learn from the passage before us, as well as from others, that when believers do receive this Divine Baptism, they enter at once upon forms of Christian activity and usefulness otherwise

impossible to them. It was so with the twelve individuals referred to, and with the apostles and their associates at the Pentecost, and also with Apollos after he was instructed by Priscilla and Aquila.

4. We learn also that where the Holy Ghost is received such a change is wrought in the subject, that he himself is distinctly conscious of it. This change is also, with equal distinctness, seen by others. The transformation which took place in the believers in Samaria was observed even by Simon the sorcerer. The change produced in the apostles and their associates at the Pentecost, was not only manifest to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but to the multitudes assembled from surrounding nations. The new forms of life and activity which followed the descent of the Spirit upon the believers assembled at the house of Cornelius were at once obvious to Peter and his companions from Joppa. Acts 10:44-47 : "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost, for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" That the change wrought by the gift of the Spirit should be visible to others, as well as to believers, was foreshadowed in prophecy: "The Lord shall rise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee."

5. The gift of the Spirit does not ordinarily come to believers unsought or unexpected, but where and when they are seeking it and waiting for it. We have but one case recorded in the New Testament in which this blessing came when not definitely sought. This is the case presented above—the case in which the Gentiles first received this "unspeakable gift." Here it was thus given for reasons that at once disappeared. To us, the great truth stands plainly revealed, that "the sealing and earnest of the Spirit" will not be given to us, but upon the condition that we seek it and wait for it, as the apostles and primitive Christians sought and waited for it. The second passage to which we call attention is Ephesians 1:13 : "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom, also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Here we have the order of facts as occurring in actual experience, viz., hearing, then believing, then, after believing, "the sealing with that Holy Spirit of promise." All is plain here but the meaning of the term "sealed." Reference is had, in the use of this term, to the final act of parties rendering permanently valid and mutually obligatory written covenants, in putting their hand and seal to the document. When a penitent believes in Christ, "he sets to his seal that God is true;" then God gives His Holy Spirit unto him to seal on his heart, the fact that he is "accepted in the Beloved," and is brought into covenant relations with "the Father of lights." Until this is done he has no witness from God that his sins are blotted out and that his name is written in Heaven. It would evince great presumption in us to call ourselves His renewed and adopted children, without the testimony and sealing of His Holy Spirit. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." A third passage which we find on this subject is in 2 Corinthians 1:22, where we read that God both "seals us and gives the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." In Ephesians 1:14 we read that in the gift of the Spirit we receive not only a seal of our title to sonship with God, but "the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." The term "earnest" implies, in our language as well as in the original, two ideas—a part of the inheritance given in hand, and that as a pledge of an ultimate possession of the whole. The part received being the same in kind as the remainder, puts the

recipient in possession of the same blessedness in kind which he is afterwards to receive in its fullness. This, then, is true of all who receive the "sealing and earnest of the Spirit in their hearts." With them glory is begun below. Heaven itself has dawned upon their inner life. The fourth passage to which we invite attention is Ephesians 3:14-21. The passage is rather long, but will repay a careful consideration, as it throws great light on our present inquires, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." The reader will notice the various stages of Christian experience here presented, and how each is preparatory to that which follows next in order, until the whole culminates in the soul being "filled with all the fulness of God." It will also be observed that this fullness results primarily from one originating cause—the indwelling of the Spirit in our hearts. Let us now contemplate these great central facts of the spiritual life, in the order here presented.

1. When we "receive the Holy Ghost, after we have believed," the first result is an expansion and accumulation of intellectual, moral, and spiritual power. Our faculties of apprehension and comprehension are greatly enlarged. In other words, we are "strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man." We become "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." We are able to think, to pray, to suffer, to submit, to do and to endure as would otherwise be impossible to us.

2. When our bodies thus become "the temples of the Holy Ghost," and we are "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit," Christ then "dwells in our hearts by faith," and is "in us the hope of glory." He and the Father "come to us and make their abode with us," and then "truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." We thus enjoy "the fellowship of the Spirit," and in this Divine fellowship we come to know and believe the love that God hath to us," and by this means our "love is made perfect," our characters take form after the Divine image, and we become "confirmed, settled, and strengthened;" that is, we become "rooted and grounded in love."

3. When thus "walking in the light as God is in the light," "beholding with open face the glory of the Lord," and having "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," we at length attain to "a comprehension of the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." We, then, know by experience what our Saviour meant when He said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

4. As a further result, all our powers and susceptibilities, and activities become pervaded and filled with "the light of God." Our dwellingplace is now in the center of an infinite fullness, where every want is met, where the "effect of righteousness is peace, and the fruit of righteousness is quietness and assurance forever," and where "God is our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning are ended." In other words, we are "filled with all the fulness of God."

5. The inspired caution which follows must not be overlooked in this connection. When our thoughts, desires, and prayers turn towards God, we must never "limit the Holy One." We must never suppose that the measure of grace, which He shall give, will be limited by what we "ask or think."

We are to bear in mind, on the other hand, that the measure of our real necessities, not as seen by ourselves, but as they lie out under the eye of God, is the limit with which He is able to fill us, and which He will confer when we "put our trust in Him." "According to the power"—that is, by means of the power of the Spirit—"that worketh in us," God is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." This is "the way of holiness," along which all are advancing who "receive the Holy Ghost after they have believed," and who do not "grieve" or "quench the Spirit," but "walk in the Spirit." In addition to the above, there are various passages which speak of the power of the Spirit demanding special notice. The Spirit, as imparted to Christ, is called "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." Jesus commanded His disciples to "tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high." Again, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

"Through the power of the Holy Ghost" we are "filled with all joy and peace in believing," and "abound in hope." Through the power of the Spirit the truth of God has an all-transforming influence over our whole moral and spiritual being and character. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The Spirit also has absolute control of all the elements of moral and spiritual power within us. He can purify our emotions and affections, quicken into immortal life and vigor our intellectual and executive activities, transform character and consolidate virtue, and thus render us "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" for all purposes of thought, action, and endurance. But more of this in another chapter.

Let us now turn our attention to the memorable utterance of our Saviour, found in John 7:38-39 : "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The following important truths, undeniably revealed in this passage, deserve particular attention:

1. The Spirit, with all that shall follow His reception, is here promised absolutely to every believer to the end of time. "If any man thirst," says Christ, in the verse preceding, "let him come unto Me, and drink." "He that believeth on Me"—that is, every individual that shall believe "as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." No promise can be more universal.

2. The Spirit, as here promised, was given to no believer until after Jesus was glorified, and never at that time in conversion, but only and exclusively after he had believed to the saving of his soul.

3. Let us now think of the moral and spiritual state, "the everlasting consolations," the assurances of hope, the immortal fellowships, and fullness of joy, represented by such language as this, "Rivers of living water." "Whosoever," says our Saviour again, "drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." All that such language imports becomes real in the experience of every believer who "receives the Holy Ghost" after he has believed. On no other condition can

such a form of life and blessedness become real in the experience of any individual. "But this He spake of the Spirit." You may possess all this, reader, because you may "be filled with the Spirit," and may "walk in the Spirit." You must possess all this, or your Christian life, in its essential particulars, will be a melancholy failure. The object for which the Spirit is given is also specified in the New Testament. 1 Corinthians 12:7 : "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal;" that is, to render him efficiently useful as a member of the sanctified family. "To one," we are told, 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, "is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will."

All who receive this baptism, we are taught (1 Corinthians 12:13), "by one Spirit are baptized into one body," and "made to drink into one Spirit." All have not imparted to them the same gifts; but each receives, in connection with what is common to all, special gifts and influences, which adapt him to his particular place as "a member of the body of Christ." The specific object of the entire chapter before us is to elucidate this one truth. The spirit of prophecy which attends this baptism requires special attention. Acts 2:18 : "And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out, in those days, of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy." Acts 21:9 : "And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy." The particular meaning of the term "prophesy," in the New Testament, is not to foretell future events, but, as we are informed, 1 Corinthians 14:3-4, to utter Divine truth under the illumination of the Spirit, so as to edify those that hear—the Church especially: "But he that prophesieth, speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth, edifieth the Church." The effect upon worldly minds of the spirit of prophecy in the Church is set forth in 1 Corinthians 14:23-24 : "If therefore the whole Church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." This prophetic power, the power of utterance for the edification of the Church and the conversion of sinners, is in all such passages and in other Scriptures represented as the common privilege of all believers. Let any worldly person enter a circle whose hearts are full of the Holy Ghost, and he will at once recognize himself as encompassed with the light of God, and will be impressed with the fact that the kingdom of God has come nigh unto him. When any one speaks there will be an unction about his utterance, which all will recognize as Divine.

Another portion of the New Testament, which has an important bearing upon our present inquiries, is the first baptism of the Spirit after "Jesus was glorified;" that which occurred at the Pentecost. A full account of this event is given in Acts 1:1-26 and Acts 2:1-47. The following facts in this account deserve attention:—

1. The apostles and their associates, knowing well that the promise of the Holy Spirit was about to be fulfilled, made every possible arrangement to receive Him; such as completing the required number of apostles, and the preparation of their hearts for His glorious entrance.

Having done this, they met together in perfect unity of prayer and expectation to receive "the promise of the Father." "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." Here is a revelation to us of the spiritual state in which we may expect this Divine baptism—viz., a state of total consecration to Christ, and a waiting and praying for it with all our hearts.

2. We notice also the signs which immediately preceded the baptism itself. First of all, the place was shaken as by a mighty rushing wind; then appeared the cloven tongues; and lastly, the internal manifestation, when all in common "were filled with the Holy Ghost." We have, we believe, but three instances in which the bestowment of this blessing was preceded by external manifestations—the anointing of Christ, the case before us, and the one after the release of Peter and John, recorded in Acts 4:31 : "And when they had prayed the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness." In all other instances the manifestation was wholly internal.

3. We notice, again, the special and the common effects of this baptism—the speaking with tongues and prophesying, or the utterance of Divine truth under Divine influence. The former was a miraculous power granted to the few; the latter, a special gift granted to all in common. Few spake with tongues; all uttered "the wonderful works of God," and "spoke the Word of God with boldness."

4. We notice, finally, in this connection, the universality of "the promise of the Spirit." This is manifest in the condition on which this gift of God was promised to those addressed by Peter on this occasion. Acts 2:38 : "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Here we are taught that all who repent and believe in Christ, and openly confess Him, become, for this reason, graciously entitled to this promise. So the apostle positively affirms in the next verse, "For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call." Here we have universality in its strictest and most absolute form.

One and only one other aspect of this great theme demands our notice in this connection; we refer to the doctrine of the Spirit as an abiding presence in the Church, and in all the membership of the same. On this subject the teachings of our Saviour are very specific. John 16:16 : "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever." The visible presence of Christ with His disciples was temporary: that of the Spirit was to be perpetual: and the blessings received through the presence of the Spirit were to be much greater than those received through the personal presence of Christ. John 16:7 : "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."

Such is the doctrine of the Spirit, as presented in the Scriptures of truth. Let us now attend to certain general suggestions tending to elucidate still further this great subject.

We will consider:—

I. THE NATURE OF THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT.

1. The Spirit, as the crowning glory and promise of the New Dispensation, is not, although supernatural, any form of miraculous power. As a miracle-working power, He had been in the Church ever since the fall, and had been imparted as such to the disciples prior to the death of Christ; yet as promised by our Saviour, and foretold by the prophets, He was not given until after "Christ was glorified." The baptism at the Pentecost was the beginning of the fulfillment of this promise.

2. The Spirit sustains one relation to the world and quite another to the Church. To the former He was a convicting and converting power; to the latter He is an all-illuminating, all sanctifying, and all-strengthening presence, through whom we are continuously transformed into the Divine image "from glory to glory," brought into "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," have a continuous earnest of eternal fruition, and are "filled with all the fulness of God."

3. The promise of the Spirit does not pertain merely to the apostles, the Primitive Church, or a favored few in subsequent ages. It is, on the other hand, the common gift to all who believe in Christ, the least as well as the greatest, and that to the end of time. Nothing can be more specific than the teachings of the Scriptures on this subject. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children;" "The promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call;" "He that believeth on Me (as the Scriptures have said), out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this He spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive."

4. While all who believe become thereby entitled to this promise, its fulfillment is to be sought by faith after we have believed in Jesus; just as pardon is sought in conversion. The promise is as absolute in one case as in the other. There is nothing which God so desires to bestow upon sinners as pardon, and with it eternal life. Neither is there any gift He is more willing to bestow upon believers than this Divine Baptism. Here all who ask receive, and all who seek find. Nothing but unbelief can prevent pardon; and nothing but a want of faith in the promise of God can prevent an "enduement of power from on high."

5. There is no natural, or intellectual, or educational, or moral, or ecclesiastical gift which can be a substitute for this. It is the all-essential and absolutely supreme gift of God in this dispensation. As the sun in the solar system, and life in the human body are the highest good, and nothing can supersede them; so this baptism is the noblest blessing of Christianity, and no other can fill its place.

II. SOME OF THE EFFECTS OF THIS BAPTISM. In reference to the effects of this baptism, we would remark in general, that permanence and power are the leading characteristics. Without this, feebleness characterizes the strongest among us; with it, "he that is feeble among us is as David, and the house of David, as the Lord, as the angel of the Lord before him." In the former state, "our souls can neither fly nor go;" in the latter, "we mount up on wings as eagles, we run and are not weary, and walk and are not faint." In the former state "we walk in darkness," in the latter "God is our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning are ended." In the former state we are weary, "tossed with tempests, and not comforted;" in the latter, "our peace is as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea." In the former state doubts and fears prevail, in the latter we walk in the cloudless sunlight of "the full assurance of hope." In the one state we groan and sigh, and "weep for sorrow of heart," in the other "we sing for joy of heart," returning and coming

"to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon our heads." To be more particular, we remark—1. In this state all our natural powers are quickened and developed into unwonted activity and energy. When in the presence of great minds, great thoughts, deep emotions, and vast energies of action, all our mental powers take on forms of activity otherwise impossible to us. What, then, must be the effect upon our mental faculties when they are all brought consciously under the influence of the infinite and eternal mind, and move and act under the power of God's thoughts, emotions, and activities?

These statements are all sustained by universal observation and experience. Whenever anyone receives this baptism, a radical change is immediately observed in the forms which his actions assume. Thought is expanded, emotion deepened, and activity energized as never before.

2. Especially is there an increase of moral and spiritual power to endure and accomplish all things according to the Divine will. Without this baptism the mind remains in servitude to the natural propensities, faints under chastisements, is overcome when tempted, and rendered despondent through broken resolutions. Under this baptism we have a sovereign control over our spirit, we endure when tried, overcome when tempted, and when weak in ourselves find everlasting strength in God.

Power with God and with men is an invariable result of this anointing. After Luther received it, his enemies were accustomed to say that he could obtain anything from God for which he asked. After Knox received it, Mary Queen of Scots was accustomed to say that she feared the prayers of that one man more than she did the fleets and armies of Elizabeth. So it was with the apostles and first Christians after the Pentecost. Who among men could "resist the wisdom and the spirit with which they spake?" The same is true of the weakest in the churches when thus baptized with the Holy Ghost.

3. Soul-transforming apprehensions of truth is another marked result of this baptism. Void of this anointing, the Bible, in its spiritual teachings, seems to be a sealed book, or a dead letter. With it, every truth has an all-vitalizing power to quicken and enlarge thought, to deepen spiritual emotion, to quicken the mental faculties, and to transform the whole moral and spiritual being and character. We walk in the light of God, which, shining upon the sacred page, gives to its truth a cleansing, illuminating, elevating, and energizing effect upon our souls. We realize the force of what Paul teaches as the result of receiving the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 2:9-16.

4. Absolute assurance of hope is another equally marked result of this baptism. This assurance is represented by such forms of expression as these: "We know that we are of God," "we know that we have passed from death unto life," "we know in whom we have believed," and "truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." "Now we have received, not the spirit which is of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God." After the believer has received the witness of the Spirit, he can no more doubt his adoption than he can doubt his own being. There is nothing of which he does or can enjoy a more absolute assurance.

5. Another result of this baptism is conscious "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." Before the believer has received the Holy Ghost, Christ is to his apprehension far off in Heaven, and God is at an infinite remove. After this baptism, the soul becomes a temple of the

Triune Deity. God then "walks in us and dwells in us." The Father and the Son "come to us and make their abode with us," and we are thus "filled with all the fulness of God." Christ is in us the hope of glory, and dwells in our hearts by faith. In prayer, we speak to Him as a personal presence, and inwardly "see His face." God "shines in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." We know then, and only then, what Christ means when He says, "I will come to you," "I will manifest Myself to him," and "I will come unto him and sup with him, and he with Me," and "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

6. We mention as another result, deep and permanent spiritual blessedness. This blessedness is set forth by such Divine expressions as "joy in God," "joy in tribulation," "rejoice evermore," "pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake," "everlasting consolations and good hope through grace," joy unspeakable, and full of glory," "the peace of God, which passeth understanding, keeps our minds and hearts through Christ Jesus," peace as a river, and righteousness as the waves of the sea," and "the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended." In short, when we have received the Holy Ghost after we have believed, our interior life will fully correspond with Christian experience, as foreseen by the ancient prophets and as described in the New Testament.

7. Christian unity and love is another result which will follow this baptism. We shall "have fellowship" not only "with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," but also "one with another;" and the prayer of the Saviour in behalf of His people will be fully answered: "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;" "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me."

It is vain to look for such a condition of unity and concord as here prayed for only as the glorious fruits of a baptism of the Holy Ghost. Any other spirit than this will produce division and strife; but this running through every member will bring the whole as a body to the Head, fitly joined together and compacted, so that there shall be no schism in the body.

III. CONDITIONS ON WHICH THIS BAPTISM MAY BE OBTAINED. In the expositions above given, the conditions on which this Divine baptism may be obtained have been rendered so plain, that only a few particulars need be specified under this division of our subject. It may be stated as a general principle of the Divine administration, and especially in connection with the gift of the Spirit, that no such blessing is conferred until its value is appreciated, until there is faith in the provisions and promises of grace in respect to it, and until it is specifically sought as a supreme good. What, then, are the conditions on which we may receive this all-owning gift of Divine grace? They are, among others, the following:—

1. It must be clearly separated in thought from all miraculous endowments, and from that form of Divine influence which issues in conversion and justification. What if the disciples, when told to "tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high," had replied, "Lord we have the Spirit already, we have His miraculous gifts, and His converting influence has never left us." Would they have obtained the Pentecostal baptism? Assuredly not. Having such a state of mind, would any of the individuals subsequently addressed by the apostles upon this subject have been

filled with the Spirit? So with us at the present time. God has so clearly distinguished and separated this from all other gifts of grace and forms of Divine manifestation that, until we have distinctly recognized and credited what He has revealed upon the subject, we are not prepared to receive the blessing, and have no reason to expect it.

2. We must distinctly recognize ourselves, on account of our having exercised "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," as formally entitled to plead "the promise of the Spirit," with the absolute certainty of receiving it. This is the distinctly revealed birthright of every believer.

3. In a state of supreme consecration to Christ, we must plead this promise before God, and watch for it and wait for it, as the disciples did at Jerusalem, until the baptism comes upon us. Here, all reap who faint not. Reader, "the highway of holiness" is now open before you. Will you walk in it? Will you tarry before God until you, for your life-mission and work, are "endued with power from on high?"

4. If as churches or as a body of believers we seek this baptism of the Holy Ghost, we must each meet the conditions above-named, so that we may appear before God for this blessing as the apostles and their associates—viz., "all continue with one accord in prayer and supplication." "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." Thus must we wait, pray, supplicate, and believe until the promise of the Father fall upon us as upon them at the beginning. And thus waiting, it will not be "many days" ere the Heavenly Gift come down, and we shall all be "filled with the Holy Ghost."

04.04. Baptism of the Spirit Under the Old

CHAPTER IV.

BAPTISMS OF THE SPIRIT UNDER THE OLD AND NEW DISPENSATIONS COMPARED.

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: "And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."— Joel 2:28-29.

"But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

John 7:39. AT "sundry times" of the Old Testament Dispensation, we have accounts of baptisms of the Spirit analogous to those which occurred after "Christ was glorified." Yet we are told that until after this event "the Holy Ghost was not yet given." There must be something very peculiar about this last baptism. To show the nature of this peculiarity is the object of this chapter. In doing so, we will first of all give the historic facts as they occur in the Scriptures. Of Enoch we read that for three hundred years he "walked with God." To have done this he must have enjoyed certain forms and degrees of "the communion and fellowship of the Spirit." When Abraham (Genesis 15:7) was made distinctly conscious that God was "his shield and exceeding great reward," he must have entered into a new form of spiritual life in God. This was to him a special baptism of the Spirit; and he had others equally memorable during the progress of his natural life.

Jacob also received a baptism of the Spirit, such as was given under the Old Testament Dispensation. During his sojourn at Bethel, he obtained a baptism which gave an entirely new direction to his inward experience and outward conduct. It was through this baptism that afterwards, "as a Prince, he had power with God and with man, and prevailed."

One of the most memorable instances of an Old Testament baptism of the Spirit is recorded of Moses in Exodus 33:1-23 and Exodus 34:1-35. After informing us that "The Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend," we have the following remarkable statements:—"And Moses said unto the Lord, See, Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me. Yet Thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in My sight. Now therefore, I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight: and consider that this nation is Thy people. And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto Him, If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not in that Thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name. And he said, I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory. And he said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee,

and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And He said, Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and Thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by; and I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts; but My face shall not be seen."

Here, then, we have the waiting and supplication of Moses, with the express promise of Jehovah to him. Let us now see the baptism itself, in which the Divine promise was fulfilled (Exodus 34:1-35):—"And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. And Moses made haste, and bowed his head towards the earth, and worshipped." From that moment onward Moses was a new man. He felt, spoke, and acted as it was impossible for him to have done before. Prior to this he had known God as the Creator and universal Lawgiver, and had received from Him the power of working miracles, together with the Spirit of revelation. Yet he had never, in the true and proper sense, "known God" or "understood His way;" and more especially was he ignorant of what constituted the essential glory of the Divine character. Thenceforth the glory of God was the everlasting light of his soul.

We would now direct attention to Numbers 11:24-30, where we have an account of the baptism given to the seventy elders, who were selected to aid Moses in ruling and teaching the people. The prophetic spirit here vouchsafed was not that of foretelling future events, but of speaking Divine truth under special Divine influences. Let us read the passage attentively:—"And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the Lord, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle. And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the Spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp. And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them! And Moses gat him into the camp, he and the elders of Israel."

We learn from this passage that none do or can prophesy, as God's servants, who have not this baptism, and that all who do receive it are so filled with Divine truth and power that they must speak forth "the wondrous works of God," and "magnify the Lord." Truth apprehended through the illumination of the Spirit is "as a fire shut up in the bones." All such must speak of their views and feelings of God, of the love of Christ, and of the glories of redemption. The next case to which we would call attention is the baptism given to Saul, after Samuel had anointed him king (1 Samuel 10:9-13):— "And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him

another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day. And when they came hither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? And one of the same place answered and said, But who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets? And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place." The new heart given to Saul was not, we suppose, a holy but kingly state of mind, by which he was fully qualified for his new office. The prophetic Spirit, of which he became at the time possessed, was the common result of a temporary or permanent baptism of the Spirit. One great truth is presented in this passage in regard to the Divine anointing. It always imparts special qualifications for specific spheres of usefulness. In 1 Samuel 19:18-23, we have a striking instance in which temporary baptisms come upon wicked men:— "So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah. And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also. Then went he also to Ramah, and came to a great well that is in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And one said, Behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah. And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah." A similar spirit, we are told, came upon Balaam, under which he uttered, for the time, just such truths as God dictated. In 2 Kings 2:9-15 we have an account of the special baptism which Elisha received, and by which he was prepared for the prophetic office:—"And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into Heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan; and he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? And when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over. And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him." From the moment the spirit of Elijah fell upon Elisha his prophetic life commenced. Under the baptism then received, and which was perpetuated, he became the most wonderful man of his age and country. The preceding account is of considerable importance, as indicating the state of mind in which this baptism is obtained. Elisha was fully impressed with the conviction that he was to succeed Elijah as the prophet of the Lord. Hence his firm determination not to be separated from him until through him he had received the requisite "enduement of power

from on high." So when we regard ourselves as "called of God to be saints," and as such also called to fill some sphere of usefulness in "God's kingdom," then under a deep impression that "we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is of God," we resolvedly fix our hearts, as Elisha did, upon "the promise of the Spirit, the baptism of fire is near at hand."

Let us now glance at those instances of special baptisms of the Spirit which are recorded in the New Testament, and which occurred before the time when Christ was glorified. In Luke 1:67-79, after the circumcision of John, we have the following account of the baptism received by his father Zacharias:—"And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; the oath which He sware to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, though the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." The following (Luke 1:39-55) is an account of the baptism and its results which came upon Elizabeth and Mary when they met in the house of the former:—"And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done to me great things: and holy is His name. And His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation. He hath showed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away. He hath holpen His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy; as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever."

How similar are the results stated in the above cases to those which followed the gift of the Holy Spirit after "Christ was glorified"! "They heard them speak with tongues and magnify God." "And they spake with tongues, and prophesied." "And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost." "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters." Also the leading idea included in the term "prophesy," as that term is used in both Testaments, is brought out in the passages above quoted. It is not revealing future events, though this often attended this baptism, but an uttering

divine truths under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit, and, as Paul says, speaking unto men to "edification, and exhortation, and comfort." (1 Corinthians 14:3) Neither does this gift necessarily include any miraculous endowment, though this has sometimes accompanied it; but it is that inward divine illumination and manifestation in which "God becomes our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning are ended." But while "the baptisms of the Spirit" under the two dispensations were thus similar, we shall find an essential difference between them if we consider what is said upon the subject in the New Testament. The following is Peter's statement:—"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven, which things the angels desire to look into." (1 Peter 1:10-12)

Paul informs us that God has reserved better things for us than the ancient saints enjoyed, and that it was only by anticipating and believing in what we have received that they were rendered perfect:— "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." (Hebrews 11:39-40)

John, in his gospel (John 7:39), teaches us that the Holy Ghost, as promised under the New, was not given under the Old Dispensation.

We may now glance definitely at the difference between these two forms of baptism, and show in what sense the Holy Ghost was not given until after Christ was glorified. As preparatory to this, let us read that special prophecy, of the fulfillment of which the baptism at the Pentecost was the commencement.

Acts 2:14-18 :—"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy."

These two forms of baptism differ essentially from each other in the following particulars:—

1. In extent. Under the Old Dispensation such special anointings were granted only to a few individuals; but under the New this gift is universal as a privilege to be enjoyed by all Christ's people. What Moses desired might be universal then becomes universal now; "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would pour His Spirit upon them." "The promise of the Spirit" now hangs over "all flesh." All God's people under the gospel are privileged, and require to become "the Lord's prophets;" and being all in common "filled with the Spirit," to "speak unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." In this important form the Holy Ghost had never before been promised or given.

2. There is another distinction equally important. We refer to that of permanency. Under the Old Dispensation the prophetic baptisms were "like angels' visits, few and far between." For long periods, we are informed, the Church had no prophets and "no teaching priests." Under the New Dispensation the Spirit is to be in the Church as a perpetually abiding presence to the end of time; "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever." The essential design of God, in this dispensation, is that the prophetic office, as we have defined it, shall never cease, and that it shall be as extensive as the real membership of the church. What an important difference we have here between these two dispensations!

3. But the great peculiarity which distinguishes these two dispensations is the relative power of the Spirit's manifestations in each.

Under the Old Dispensation, the glory of God was only partially revealed. Hence the power which the Spirit could use for these ends was comparatively feeble. Under the present Dispensation, through the revelation of "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," all of God that can be revealed to creatures in our circumstances has been made manifest: "Life and immortality have been brought to light through the gospel." "No man hath seen God at any time." "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

When, therefore, "the Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us," so that we "behold, with open face, the glory of the Lord;" when He brings us into "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," and God and Christ, through the Spirit, come to us, and make their abode with us;" when He unveils to our vision "the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven;" when He enables us to comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," and "fills us with all the fulness of God"—then the communion and fellowship," "the sealing and earnest," and all "the manifestations of the Spirit," are so new, so removed from, and so infinitely superior to anything known in the Church before, that it may truly and properly be said, that until after Christ was glorified, "the Holy Ghost had not yet been given." After this event we have a New Dispensation, and, as a consequence, a new mission of the Spirit.

We now clearly see why it is that many Christians magnify the privileges of Old Testament saints, and especially those of the apostles prior to the death of Christ, and speak of these as even more highly privileged than we now are. The former were witnesses of wondrous miracles, listened to the prophets, and sometimes even to angels; while the latter heard Christ Himself, and were eyewitnesses of His mighty works. No wonder that they were "holy men of God." No Christian who "has received the Holy Ghost since he believed" ever entertained such a thought as that. The means of sanctification, consolation, and "fulness of joy" within the sphere of our faith and use, were wholly unknown to them; nor had the chiefest apostle, after Christ was glorified, any advantage in these respects beyond the least of all the saints now. The high and holy blessings of this Dispensation are not obtained and enjoyed through "mighty signs and wonders," talking with prophets, or through "angels' visits," but "by the power of the Holy Ghost;" and this all-sanctifying power God is ready to pour out upon us, in all the fullness that He did upon the apostles. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

We may now judge of the degree of spiritual power which was expected under the Old, and is expected under the New Dispensation. The lowest that may now be expected is equal to the

highest then; while the highest may make us like the sons of God before the throne. "He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before Him."

What, then, is the main cause of the present feebleness of our churches? It is because this great truth is not sufficiently recognized and believed, and still more, because its experience is so little sought, and much less enjoyed. What meaning do most Christians now attach to the question: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Almost as little as if they "had never heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

We notice, also, the difference between the experience of the primitive and the modern Church, and the cause of that difference. The leading theme of the former was the doctrine we are now considering. Hence the disciples were then "filled with joy and the Holy Ghost." Now this doctrine has gone into a deep and dark eclipse. As a consequence, many believers "walk in dark and have no light," sigh after their first love, weep in sorrowful widowhood under the bondage of sin, and know almost nothing of the hidden life in the soul, but "an aching void." When the primitive Church was scattered abroad, all its members "went everywhere preaching the Word;" now, when our members emigrate to another land, or even change the locality of their residence in their own country, many of them leave not only their religion, but their profession behind them—some of them carrying not the love of Christ, but of gold, in their hearts. This state of things will continue until this glorious doctrine of the Spirit is everywhere understood, preached, and realized in the Church. But this condition of the Church shall not continue. In answer to the waiting, the praying; and the believing of His faithful people, God will baptize His Church with the Holy Ghost, and she will make in these last days rapid strides towards the millennium. Then shall the glory of the Lord cover the nations. "Conceive," says Mr. Barnes, "of the brightest form of experience known to the best Christian in his best hours now. Conceive of this state as increased to the full extent of the soul’s capacities, and then conceive of this as the common and perpetual experience of all the Church, and then you may have some feeble conception of the coining millennium." We will only add, "Even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen."

We add but one thought more. We refer to "the power of the Spirit," for sanctification, consolation, and fullness of joy, now, and in apostolic times. That power, instead of being less, is much greater now than it was then. All that they had, we have, together with all of "our God and His Christ" that has been made manifest through the word and providence of God since that time. The power of the Spirit, as represented in prophecy, is a perpetually accumulating power. This, great central truth of the present dispensation is specifically set forth in the 47th chapter of Ezekiel by means of the emblem of "a pure river of the water of life," issuing from the threshold of the house of God; a river flowing eastward, with perpetual accumulations, filled with life and food for man, fertilizing the whole country through which it flows, and healing even the waters of the Dead Sea. We cite a few verses from this wonderful chapter:—

"Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under, from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the outer gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the

right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." "The golden age" of the Church is not in the past, but in the future. There should be no sickly nor imbecile believers now. Everyone should be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might—should be able to do all things through Christ who strengtheneth him. May this all-empowering baptism come down upon every believer in the Lord Jesus!

04.05. Baptism of the Spirit Under the New

CHAPTER V.

BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT UNDER THE NEW DISPENSATION.

"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:" — 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

"God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."—Hebrews 11:40. In the last chapter some light, we hope, was thrown upon the forms and degrees in which the baptism of the Spirit was and is given under the Old and New Dispensations. But so much superior is this gift under the latter, that the apostle's statement is proper and significant—viz., "the Holy Ghost was not given until after Jesus was glorified." This superiority is a leading theme of the inspirations of the prophets and of the apostles. This baptism, with its results in the Church and upon the world, is "the glory which was to follow the sufferings of Christ." These are "the better things that God hath reserved for us." They comprise the glory of this Christian age. "What sort of persons ought we to be," upon whom and to whom this glory has descended? That far more is expected and justly required of us than was possible to the saints under the Old Dispensation we argue from the following considerations:—

1. We live in a dispensation of far greater light and knowledge than they did. They had the Old Testament only. We have the Old and the New combined. The former differs from the latter, as the first glimmer of dawn differs from the light of cloudless noon. They knew nothing of Christ but what was obscurely hinted through types and shadows, and prophetic revelations, which the prophets themselves did not fully comprehend. "We behold, with open face, the glory of the Lord." The way of holiness was to them very obscure and intricate. We walk in the King's highway, in which a "wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err." With them, midday light was but a feeble twilight. With us, even "at evening time there is light." Our moon far outshines their sun. "Life and immortality are brought to light through the Gospel."

2. The law of duty is revealed to us in far clearer and more attractive and impressive forms than it was to them. To them it was revealed almost exclusively in the preceptive form, "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little." That same law comes to us not merely in the form of command and prohibition, but also as exemplified in all its applications, through the pure and spotless example of Christ. They were taught what to do. We are taught not only what to do, but how to do it.

3. The forms of truth, hidden from them and revealed to us, have a quickening and transforming power which they did not possess as revealed and believed under the Old Dispensation. Through the greater light now shed upon them, they are far more effective in this age than they were in the times of the patriarchs and the prophets. The Apostle John, in comparing the present with the former Dispensation, tells us that "the darkness has passed, and the true light now shineth." Peter

tells us that the prophets, who stood amidst the clearest light then vouchsafed, "inquired and searched diligently, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow. Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven, which things the angels desire to look into." (1 Peter 1:10-11)

How impressive is the contrast which Paul draws between these dispensations: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words." "But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in Heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh; for if they escaped not that refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from Heaven." (Hebrews 12:18-25) The Scriptures everywhere represent the gospel as not only shedding new light upon questions pertaining to God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, duty, sin, holiness, redemption, and immortality, but as revealing forms of truth which have power before unknown, for conversion, sanctification, consolation, and fullness of joy.

One prophet speaks of these new revelations as "a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." Others speak of the gospel as "a new covenant," in the fulfillment of which God is to cleanse His people "from all their filthiness, and from all their idols;" and so completely to sanctify them, that when "their iniquity shall be sought for, there shall be none," and their sins, and they shall not be found." In the New Testament, Christ is affirmed to be "the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth," and that "the weapons of our warfare are mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds."

Now the special mission of the Spirit is to take truth, in all its forms, as revealed in both Testaments, and to render it most effective for the sanctification and edification of the Church, and the salvation of men. The Spirit knows absolutely what we need for these high ends, and what forms of truth to present for the realization of them, and how to present these truths for the most perfect accomplishment of these benign purposes. Surely we ought to rise as far above Old Testament saints as the New Testament towers above the Old. Of this fact we shall be still more deeply impressed when we have considered— some of the historic results of the Baptism under this dispensation. The case of the apostles. If we take the apostles as examples, and contrast their intellectual, moral, and spiritual states before and after the Pentecost, we shall probably acknowledge that such transformations of character had never occurred in the history of the world. All along, up to the crucifixion, how dull were their apprehensions, how limited and obscure their visions of truth, how feeble their faith, what cowards they were; how worldly their affections; how weak their mutual love; and how like ropes of sand were their most sacred fixed resolutions! But how opposite in all these respects were they "after that the Holy Ghost came upon them." "In a moment," as it were, "in the twinkling of an eye," "they were crucified to the world, and the world to them;" and their characters took forms of glorious beauty and perfection, which rendered them "a

spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men." Their visions of truth seemed to be as cloudless as the kingdom of light. Their speech and their preaching brought the world on its knees before God. Peter, in faith, courage, and strength, became a rock. James and John vindicated their right to be called "sons of thunder." "They were all conquerors, and more than conquerors, through Him that loved them."

Power was one of the most striking characteristics of this baptism. All who received it "were endued with power from on high." Such was the power which they wielded, that the world stood in awe before them, devils fled from their presence; rulers, priests, and kings, were overcome by them. They planted the gospel in all nations. Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. They were called, "The men that turned the world upside down."

Unity of spirit was another distinctive characteristic of this baptism. Before its descent, ambition, jealousy, and disputation among themselves about who should be greatest, and even anger towards one another, often divided their hearts. Now they were all "one in Christ Jesus," and nothing could interrupt their mutual love, fellowship, and co-operation.

Boldness and courage were marked effects of this baptism. No power in Heaven or earth could induce them to "deny the Lord that bought them." They witnessed for the Lord Jesus everywhere. Their peace in God, their "assurance of hope," their "everlasting consolations," their triumphs of faith and "fulness of joy," nothing could interrupt or diminish. "They walked in the light, as God is in the light."

If we turn from the apostles and their immediate associates and converts to the Primitive Church, we shall find among countless thousands of its membership examples in whom the results of this baptism were equally conspicuous and striking. For the first three or four centuries of the Christian era, the doctrine of the gift of the Spirit, after conversion and believing in Christ, was a great leading theme of thought and teaching. Hence there was a very general experience of this baptism during these periods. This was the martyr age of the Church, the era, also, of her power, of her glory, and of her "victory through the blood of the Lamb and the word of His testimony." Such persecutions and fiery trials, such patience and endurance, such brotherly love, such charity to the poor and goodwill to men, such faith in Christ, such meek submission to the Divine will, such "assurance of hope," such deathless zeal, such courage, such peace in God, such "everlasting consolations" and "fulness of joy," the world never witnessed until after "Jesus was glorified," and "the Holy Ghost was given." "The light of the Church had come," and "the glory of the Lord had risen upon her." As a consequence, "the Gentiles came to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising." "Her righteousness went forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth." No amount of suffering and torture, threatened or inflicted, could induce a denial of the faith, or draw from the sufferers any sentiments but those of goodwill towards even their judges and tormentors. "The holy martyrs of Christ," says Cyprian, "evidently show us that during this sad hour of suffering they were strangers to their own bodies; or, rather, that our Lord Himself stood by them, and familiarly conversed with them; and that, being made partakers of His grace, they made light of these temporal torments, and by one short your delivered themselves from eternal miseries.

Take a single fact illustrative of the Spirit and manner in which believers then "endured even unto the end." At Sebastia, in Armenia, in a cold and frosty night in the depth of winter, forty martyrs,

stripped of all their clothing, were placed together in a lake. As death came on, they thus conversed together: "Is the weather sharp? but Paradise is comfortable and delightful. Is the frost cold and bitter? the rest that remains is sweet and pleasant. Let us but hold out a little, and Abraham's bosom will refresh us; we shall exchange this one night for an eternal age of happiness. It is but the flesh that suffers; let us not spare it. Since we must die, let us die that we may live!"

"By reason of our strange and wonderful courage and strength" says Lactantius, "new additions are made to us; for when people see men torn to pieces with infinite variety of torments, and yet maintain a patience unconquerable, and able to tire out their tormentors, they begin to think (what the truth is) that the consent of so many, and the perseverance of dying persons, cannot be in vain; nor that patience itself, were it not from God, could hold out under such racks and tortures. Thieves and men of robust bodies are not able to bear such tearing to pieces; they groan and cry out, and are overcome with pain, because not endued with divine patience; but our very children and women (to say nothing of men) do with silence conquer their tormentors; nor can the hottest fire force the least groan from them." So manifest did the fact become, that the places where the Christians were tortured were the holy places where the greatest numbers of converts were made, that the Roman Emperors at length prohibited all public executions of the saints of God. Had this Divine baptism continued in the Church, long before the first thousand years of the Christian era had passed away "the kingdoms of this world would have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." If we leave this era of light and power, and pass through the dark ages that followed, in which this and all other vital truths of the gospel were allowed to sink into a deep eclipse, we shall find that even then God did not leave Himself without witnesses. Men and women, "full of faith and the Holy Ghost," arose in all Christian nations as "burning and shining lights," bearing their testimony to the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost. These attained to the full "liberty of the sons of God," "walked in the light of God," and had "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

Such individuals as Thomas a Kempis, Catharine Adorna, and many others, were not only Christians, but believers who had a knowledge of the mysteries of the higher life, and who through all coming time will shine as stars of the first magnitude in the firmament of the Church. In their inward experiences, holy walk, and "power with God and with men," they had few if any superiors in preceding eras of Church history. "The unction of the Spirit" was as manifest in them as in the apostles and primitive believers. They also made their attainments in the Christian life under distinct apprehensions of the doctrines of the Spirit, as set forth in these chapters.

Look now at the state of the Church since the Reformation. Among Roman Catholics there have been a few, and among Protestants many, who have fully known this baptism. It is a singular fact, that while the fundamental doctrine of Protestantism was "justification by faith," the equally essential doctrine of "sanctification by faith" was first, in modern times, distinctly announced and taught within the circle of the Roman Church by such individuals as Madame Guyon and Archbishop Fenelon. It is equally true that in all the churches of every name the men and women who have been most distinguished for "power with God and with men," are the individuals who did receive the "sealing and earnest of the Spirit" after they believed. Luther, for example, Knox and his associates, "the Scotch worthies," who, with him, brought Scotland out from under the power of the "man of sin," and rendered it, for a long period, the crowning glory of Christendom, received

this Divine baptism in this form, and "here was the hiding of their power."

Let us first consider the case of Luther. Subsequently to his conversion he had many and hard struggles after the "higher life." While studying the Epistle to the Romans, these words, "The just shall live by faith," sent new light through his soul. On a subsequent occasion, when clouds and darkness hung over his mind in regard to the subject of personal holiness, the same words, "The just shall live by faith," came again to him with new force, and filled him with the light of Heaven.

"The Pentecost" with him, however, was not yet fully come. He had heard that all who, upon their knees, would climb Pilate’s staircase at Rome, would thereby attain to full salvation. While painfully creeping up from stone to stone that ascent, he suddenly heard in the depth of his soul a voice as of thunder, "The just shall live by faith." In a moment he leaped on his feet, the free man of the Lord. "Then," he says, "I felt myself born again as a new man, and I entered by an open door into the very paradise of God. From that hour I saw the precious and holy Scriptures with new eyes. I went through the whole Bible. I collected a multitude of passages, which taught me what the work of God was. Truly this text of St. Paul was to me the very gate of Heaven." Here we have the secret of Luther’s subsequent courage and power. Here, too, we have one special form in which "the baptism of the Spirit" is commonly received: the opening, in new and divine forms, of some special truth of God upon the mind, and that in connection with some particular passage of the Divine Word.

"The memoirs of the Scotch Worthies" disclose three central facts in their spiritual history: their conversion, followed by the common forms of Christian experience; a subsequent heart-searching, breaking up of the fountains of the great deep of the soul, and a baptism, in which they were filled with "the light of God;" and, finally, forms of the Divine life so new, and so far transcending anything before experienced, that they were utterly at loss in regard to the nature and character of their first conversion.

It was after this great change that they became the mighty men of God, who revolutionized that kingdom. It was no uncommon event then for one, two, and sometimes as many as five hundred souls to be converted under single discourses delivered by these men, who evinced, by their subsequent lives, that they belonged to "the people of whom God is not ashamed to be called their God." It was the eclipse of this glory that left the Scotch Church the comparatively "dead letter" which it now is. Who is not aware that no one ever led a more laborious and comparatively fruitless life than did Mr. Wesley before his enduement with power by this Divine baptism, and that very few ever led a more laborious and fruitful life than he did after he received the gift of the Holy Ghost? The time of his barrenness ended, and of his amazing fruitfulness commenced, at the same moment. The same is true of his associates. The experience of these men of God should be a solemn admonition to all believers, never to go forth to their life mission and work but under "the power of the Spirit." It were as impossible to account for the marvelous results of the labors of Wesley and his coadjutors without this baptism as to account for the extraordinary accomplishments of the apostles without it. The Tenants—William especially—were the wonder of the age in which they lived. The secret of the influence of God that everywhere encircled them, and of their wonderful power as "ministers of the word," was the fact that "after they believed they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." On one occasion, during the interval of worship on the Sabbath, Mr. William Tenant retired to a grove near by for private meditation and prayer. When

the congregation re-assembled, and their pastor did not appear, several individuals went to the grove to find him. They found him lying helpless upon the ground, under the visions of God which had there opened upon his mind. In their arms they carried him to the pulpit, where he lifted up a prayer that God would veil His power and love a little, so that he might tell the people of the "glory manifested to him." The prayer was answered, and "no man" not thus illumined "ever spake as did this man" on that occasion. Such manifestations were of common occurrence in the experience of these men, and they ever spoke and acted under their influence.

John Fletcher, of Madeley. Could any other gift of God have made him such a holy saint of the Lord Jesus; such a faithful minister of the gospel; such an effective writer in the things of salvation, whose life was so profuse with Divine influences, whose death was so magnificent, and whose posthumous power will live through all ages?

President Edwards thus describes the baptism which rendered his subsequent life so holy and powerful for good. "One day, when walking for Divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view, that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and His wonderful, great, full, pure, and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace, that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens, the Person of Christ appeared also ineffably excellent, with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception, which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour, which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears, weeping aloud. I had an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated, to lie in the dust and to be filled with Christ alone, to love Him with a holy and pure love, to trust in Him, to live upon Him, and to be perfectly sanctified, and made pure with a divine and heavenly purity." Of the lady who afterwards became his wife, and who, during her married life, often had visions of the Divine glory and love, under the power of which she would lie helpless for hours, President Edwards thus writes:—

"They say there is a young lady in, who is beloved of that great Being who moves and rules the world, and there are certain seasons in which this great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her, and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delights, and that she hardly ever cares for anything, except to meditate on Him; that she expects after a while to be received up where He is, to be raised up out of this world and caught up into Heaven, being assured that He loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from Him always. There she is to dwell with Him, and to be ravished with His love and delight forever. Therefore, if you present all the world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards it, and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her conduct, and you could not persuade her to do anything wrong or sinful if you would give her all the world, lest she should offend this great Being. She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness, and benevolence of mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place, singing devoutly, and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure, and no one knows for what. She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have some one invisible always conversing with her."

All are aware that the savor of the writings of Merle D’Aubigne has been, throughout Christendom, "as ointment poured forth." What was the cause of this? Several years after his conversion, when at Kiel, in company with Rev. F. Monod, of Paris, Rev. C. Riell, of Jutland, and Klenker, Biblical

Professor of the University there, in the course of their conversation upon the Scriptures, the aged Professor refused to enter into any detailed solution of difficulties presented, saying that the first step was to be "firmly settled in the grace of Christ," and that "the light which proceeds from Him will disperse all darkness." "We were studying," says D'Aubigne, "The Epistle to the Ephesians, and had got to the end of the third chapter. When we read the last two verses, 'Now unto Him that can do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,' &c., this expression fell upon my soul as a revelation from God. He can do, by His power, I said to myself, above all that we ask, above all, even, that we think, nay, exceeding abundantly above all. A full trust in Christ for the work to be done in my poor heart now filled my soul."

They then all knelt together in prayer. "When I arose," he adds, "I felt as if my wings had been 'renewed, as the wings of eagles.' All my doubts were removed, my anguish was quelled, and the Lord extended peace to me as a river. Then I could 'comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and depth, and length, and height, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.' Then was I able to say, 'Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.'"

About thirty or forty years ago, there died, in the city of Newark, N. J., a man of God, named Carpenter. At his funeral in the First Presbyterian Church in that city, it was publicly stated by one of the ministers present, that from the most careful estimate, it was fully believed that the deceased had been directly instrumental in the conversion of more than ten thousand souls. This man was a layman of very limited common-school education, and was very simple and ungrammatical in his conversation and public addresses. Before the time of his anointing, he had a mere "name to live" in the Church. As soon as he received that anointing, "as a prince he had power with God and with men." At one time, for example he with another Christian friend entered the coach to pass from Newark to New York. They found seven other individuals, all impenitent, with them in the vehicle. While on the way, or very soon after, all those seven individuals were hopefully converted, and that through the influence exerted during the journey. Such was the influence everywhere exerted by this "holy man of God." To a very intimate friend, a little time before his death, he made these statements: that for the previous ten years he had walked continuously under the cloudless light of the Sun of Righteousness; that the doctrine of Entire Sanctification was true; that he had been in that state during the period referred to; and that the truth would, ere long, be a leading theme in the churches. The extraordinary power which attended the preaching of President Finney, during the early years of his ministry, was chiefly owing to a special baptism of the Spirit, which he received not long after his conversion. Hence it was that when through him "the violated law spoke out its thunders" it did seem as if we had in truth "come unto the mount that might be touched and that burned with fire, and unto blackness and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words." But when he spoke of Christ then indeed did his "doctrine drop as the rain, and his speech distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the mown grass." The reason, also, why he is bringing forth such wondrous "fruit in his old age" is, that while his whole ministry has been under "the power of the Spirit," his former baptisms have been renewed with increasing power and frequency during a few years past.

Many more instances similar to the above might be averted to, but they are sufficient to illustrate the point we had in view. In drawing this chapter to a close, we would refer to:— some of the

peculiarities which distinguish, and have distinguished, Christians in all churches, who have received "the baptism of the Holy Ghost."

1. One of these is a peculiar and special savor about their lives and utterances, which is recognized by others as unearthly and divine. When the light comes, the glory will be seen by the Church and the world. The prophet Elisha had made but a few calls at the house of the Shunamite before she knew him as "a holy man of God." A very bigoted Irish Roman Catholic had occasion to board for a time in the family of a friend of ours, whose wife had for years "walked in the light of God." This man had from childhood been taught, and had believed, that "out of the Mother Church salvation is impossible." His attention, however, was soon arrested by the peculiar spirit and sanctified conversation of that woman. He would frequently stop after meals, and continue conversations with her upon Christ, purity, and Heaven. At the close of such a conversation one day, he said, "Madam, you will get to Heaven before you die." That man was as profane and wicked as he was bigoted; yet such a character as hers could not lift its benign form before his mind without his recognizing it as unearthly and divine, and as advancing Heavenward.

Here is a divine something which must be possessed in order to be manifested. A preacher, for example, who is a stranger to this anointing, may be very able, exciting, and even instructive, in his discourses. But the peculiar influence which attends the unction of the Spirit only accompanies the utterances of those who "have received the Holy Ghost since they believed," and those who have received this anointing "cannot be hid." Logic, education, oratory, eloquence, physical force, all excellent in themselves, cannot take the place of the influence of the Spirit. These may have power with the understanding, but not with the conscience and the heart. This is mighty to the pulling down of strongholds which defy all other powers of men and angels.

2. All such Christians have a peace, quietude, assurance, and fullness of joy in God, which not only lift them above all worldly vicissitudes, but remain with them alike in all circumstances. "Their sun does not go down, neither does their moon withdraw itself. The Lord is their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning are ended." In the storm and the tempest, when "they go up by the mountains," they are consciously going nearer and nearer to Heaven, and when "they go down by the valleys," they are as consciously going down deeper and deeper into the bosom of God. "They have learned, in whatsoever state they are, therewith to be content." "They can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth them."

Madame Guyon, for proclaiming the doctrine of sanctification by faith, spent some fourteen years, as a culprit, in the prisons of France, and a large portion of these in the Bastille, with "the Man in the Iron Mask" passing daily the door of her cell. But prison walls could not shut out from her heart the light or the peace of God. In such words as the following she shadows forth her blessed experience:

"A little bird I am, Shut out from fields of air, And in my cage I sit and sing To Him who placed me there;

Well pleased a prisoner to be, Because my God, it pleaseth Thee.

"Nought have I else to do;

I sing the whole day long; And He whom most I love to please Doth listen to my song;

He caught and bound my wandering wing, But still He bends to hear me sing.

"Oh! it is good to soar, These bolts and bars above, To Him whose purpose I adore, Whose providence I love; And in Thy mighty will to find The joy, the freedom of the mind."

O, when will believers generally get so near to God that "the sun shall be no more their light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto them: but the Lord shall be unto them an everlasting light, and their God their glory?"

3. A peculiar and special form of self-control and balance of spirit attend all who receive this baptism. We refer to that self-mastery and divine equanimity of temper described in such statements and forms of expression as the following: "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure it; and being defamed, we entreat;" "none of these things move me;" "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong;" and "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." As the infant Jesus lay in His mother's arms, so with similar quietude, self-composure, self-control, and hopeful trust, does the soul, when filled with the Spirit, lie in the center of the sweet will of God.

"President Mahan," said a clerical friend, years ago, "I wish you could see my mother. To give you some idea of what a monument of grace she is, I would state, that in early life she was spoiled by training. She had one of the worst and most ungovernable tempers I ever knew. For years past she has been wholly confined to her bed from nervous prostration. During the early part of this period, it did seem that nobody could take care of her, or endure her continued manifestations of irritability, impatience, fretfulness, and furious anger. Right there, she became fully convinced that through grace and the baptism of the Spirit, she could have perfect rest, quietude, and self-control. She set her whole heart upon attaining that state. Such was her fervency of spirit, and earnestness in prayer, that her friends thought she would become deranged, and urged her to cease seeking and prayer. 'I die in the effort,' was her reply, 'or I obtain what I know to be in reserve for me.' At length the baptism of power came gently upon her. From that hour there has not been the slightest indication of even the remains of that temper. Her quietude and assurance have been absolute, and her sweetness of spirit 'as ointment poured forth.' It is no trouble to anyone now, but a privilege to all, to care for her. Many come, even from long distances, to listen to her divine discourse."

Years passed on, and again we met. "What of your mother?" we asked. "Does her faith hold out?" "She is gone," was the reply. But from the hour of that baptism to that of her death that quietude and assurance remained, and that ineffable sweetness of temper was never for a moment interrupted. I witnessed the closing scene. She died of cholera, and in the greatest conceivable agony. Yet such patience, serenity of hope, and such quiet waiting for the coming of the Lord, I hardly before deemed possible. 'My son,' she would say, 'nature has had a hard struggle; but it will be soon over, and I shall enter into the rest that remains for the people of God.'"

"This," reader, "is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." The feeblest among us may be "more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us." Even "at evening time there shall be light" to all who "walk in the light of God." By the grace of Christ and "the power of the Spirit" we can "rule our own spirits." "We can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us."

Yes; there is no temper, appetite, passion, or circumstance, but this baptism can subdue into calmness, sobriety, peace, and love. All things can be done, within the will of God, by this strength of Israel resting upon us.

4. A peculiar and special degree of moral and spiritual power, with God and with men, is the only other characteristic which we would present, as distinguishing those who receive this baptism. The form of power possessed by each is in certain respects unlike that possessed by others. Yet in all it has this one common tendency—an almost resistless influence to draw others toward God, purity, and Heaven. Some are "sons of thunder;" others are "sons of consolation." Some have special wisdom as teachers of truth; others are endued with the special power of exhortation. Some have peculiar forms of courage and faith, by which they have special power to "strengthen weak hands, and confirm feeble knees;" others have equally special forms of power in ministering to the necessities of the sick and afflicted. Others still have special power in exciting in believers the spirit of hunger and thirst for the bread and waters of life. "What do you think of Mr. —?" said one Christian to another? "I have not heard him?" The clergyman referred to was a man "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." "Well," replied the other, "if you will hear this man a few times, and not feel such a hungering and thirsting after righteousness as you never felt before, your experience will differ from mine." Others have special power in drawing sinners to repentance.

Power to prophesy—that is, to "speak unto men for consolation, for exhortation, and edification"—this is universal among all who receive this anointing. When one or more individuals in a given Church have this baptism, there will be a constant Divine influence drawing the whole body Heavenward. When the Church generally shall be endued with this power, "Gentiles will come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising." If, then, we would "serve God and our generation" according to His will in Christ Jesus our Lord, we must, one and all of us, tarry in the place of prayer, and struggle here with "strong crying and tears," until we are "endued with power from on high."

04.06. The Preparation for the Baptism of the Spirit

CHAPTER VI. THE PREPARATION FOR THE BAPTISMS OF THE SPIRIT.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:"— John 16:7-8.

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Luke 11:13. When our Saviour came to His disciples and breathed upon them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," He did so, not because there was any virtue in that breath, or in the mere words spoken, or because the "gift of the Spirit" was then conferred as He had promised. A considerable period intervened between the time of the events here recorded, and that of the Pentecostal baptism. These events occurred (See John 20:22) at the first meeting of Christ with His disciples after His resurrection; whereas the baptism of the Pentecost was quite forty days afterwards. What, then, was the object of our Saviour in what He then did and said? It was evidently this, to induce in their hearts that state of waiting expectation and inward preparation which are the necessary prerequisites to the reception of this all-crowning gift of God. The same object our Saviour had in view in His last promise and admonition to His disciples, "And behold I send the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." "And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them." What was said and done here, and on the occasions above referred to, created the heart preparation, described by the words, "They were all with one accord in one place." To secure the same mental and spiritual preparation for the gift to be received, was the exclusive object of the apostles in the "laying of hands" upon those who sought this blessing at Ephesus. Had this ceremony not secured a preparatory state in the recipients, it would have been dead and useless. This baptism was then frequently received, in connection with the ordinances of water baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and special prayer. Hence the Church, in her departures from the living God, retained her belief that saving efficacy was in these and kindred ordinances, irrespective of the spiritual state of the administrator or subject. From this we see the origin of formalism. When the Church regains her primitive faith, we have no doubt that the same Divine influence will attend the ordinances as attended them at first. When we use the religious ordinances appointed by God, in which He promises to meet His people with His special presence, with the required inward preparedness, they should be to us means of receiving the baptism of this heavenly gift. But if our faith, go no farther than the ordinances, a blight will come over our spirits in the very place where we should be "filled with the Holy Ghost." The ordinances, however, are not our present theme, but that peculiar preparation of mind and heart which is necessary to the reception of this baptism.

If we carefully examine the cases in which this anointing has been given, we shall find this important fact, that prior to its bestowment the recipient was brought into a state of fervent desire,

earnest seeking, importunate prayer, and waiting expectancy. The mind realizes a deep inward want, "an aching void," a soul-necessity, which must be met. At the same time it is assured of an available fullness in Christ to meet this great necessity of the soul. As a consequence, there arise an intense desire and a fixed purpose of heart to seek, to pray, and to wait until the promised blessing is vouchsafed. Our Methodist brethren formerly called this state "being convicted for sanctification." O that all the membership of all the churches were thus convicted! Then would Zion "arise and shine, her light being come, and the glory of the Lord being risen upon her." In cases in which this baptism was received without being specifically expected, this prerequisite state was induced. Cornelius, for example, after his conversion, became possessed with the deep consciousness of inward necessities which God only could meet. He had also the inward persuasion that through faith in God and prayer to Him, his necessities would be met from the Divine fullness. Hence his continuous fasting and prayer. The angel of God now appeared, and gave to the suppliant these directions:—"And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter; he lodgeth with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside; he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." How adapted this message was to excite within him the intense desire and waiting expectation for the approaching blessing! The interval was consequently spent in heart and outward preparation for the coming of the Lord. When Peter arrived, this preparedness is thus announced by Cornelius:—"Now, therefore, are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." It is no matter of wonder that the discourse of Peter was so soon interrupted by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the listeners, there being such an inward preparedness in his congregation for the reception of this heavenly gift. Let us now consider some facts illustrative of the subject before us.

Take the case of Moses. We have already alluded to the special baptism which he received after Israel had sinned in the matter of the golden calf. We allude to that circumstance again for the purpose of disclosing the preparatory state of mind in which he was found when the new baptism of power was received. Having secured for the people deliverance from judgments impending over them on account of their great sin; having obtained the promise that God would continue with the people as their God; having received a special communication that he was to be their leader, ruler and revelator; and being deeply impressed with the consciousness of his own inadequacy for such responsibilities, his whole being became fixed and centered in one supreme desire to obtain from God a baptism of knowledge, wisdom, and power to the full measure of his necessities. We can now read with understanding and profit the following memorable statements: "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp; but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle. And Moses said unto the Lord, See, Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people; and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now, therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight, and consider that this nation is Thy people. And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto Him, If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not in that Thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name. And he said, I beseech Thee show me Thy

glory." One addition to this intense desire and earnest prayer was needed—a state of waiting expectation and full preparation, such as our Saviour secured in His disciples prior to the scene of the Pentecost. This state was induced by the promise and direction which followed. The promise, among other things, contained these words, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee." Moses was then directed to hew out two tables of stone, like unto the first, "and when these were finished, to come up in the morning, unto Mount Sinai, to present himself there to God in the top of the mount." How all this tended to intensify desire, to bring the mind into a state of waiting expectation and interest, and to insure all inward and even outward preparation for the promised Divine manifestation! When that preparation was perfected, the power of the Spirit came upon him. Here we have the real meaning of the Divine declaration, "Ye shall seek Me and find Me when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." Those who do not value "the gift of the Spirit" enough thus to seek for it, will never receive, and those who know their privileges, and do not avail themselves of them, may well fear a final rejection as "reprobate silver.'

We are here reminded of the case of a little child, in the era of the great revivals in the days of President Edwards and the Tenants, a child so young, that none expected that she would be converted. Two facts in her appearance and conduct attracted, at length, the attention of her mother the fact that she spent most of her time alone in her bedroom, and the deep sadness upon her countenance whenever she came from that place. "What is it, my daughter," the mother inquired, "that makes you appear so sad?" "Why, mother," the child replied, "God won't come to me. I call to Him, and He won't come to me." A little time after the precious one came from her room, and with unspeakable joy upon her countenance exclaimed, "Mother, God has come. He comes to me now when I pray to Him." From that moment onward that child was "the wonder of many." In prayer especially, she had a freedom and power of utterance which old disciples could hardly equal. Nor did this distinct consciousness of the presence and light of God ever leave her, nor did the consequent savor of God cease to encircle her, until death, which occurred when she was upwards of sixty years of age, removed her within the veil. Reader, if God is not thus consciously present to you when you call upon Him, it is because you have not called to Him as that child did. The case of Elisha presents an appropriate illustration of the subject before us. From the moment he became aware of the fact that he was to occupy the responsible place of being Israel's leading prophet, as successor to Elijah, he was most deeply impressed that without a full measure of the power of the Spirit that rested upon his predecessor, he would be wholly disqualified for his sacred mission. As a consequence, the reception of this baptism became to him the object of increasing intensity of desire. He was also impressed with the conviction that this anointing, if received at all, must be secured before Elijah was taken away from him. Hence his fixed determination not to be separated from him until the blessing was obtained. As the time "when the Lord would take up Elijah to Heaven by a whirlwind" drew on, the faith, and desire, and purpose of Elisha were put to the severest possible test. In three successive instances, Elijah said to him, "Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me" to such a place. To each entreaty the same answer was returned, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." Then they came to Jordan, where the last miracle of Elijah occurred. As they passed over, or rather through, the divided river, the following memorable scene took place: "And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion (a full measure) of thy spirit be

upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." (2 Kings 2:1-25) This last condition secured the intensity of desire, the waiting expectation, and heart preparedness which were necessary prerequisites for the baptism of power which Elisha sought. Had his faith wavered, had his purpose faltered, had the intensity of desire slackened, or had the required waiting expectation and watchfulness relaxed at all, "the spirit of Elijah would not have rested on Elisha." Are you thus waiting, reader, for "the sealing and earnest of the Spirit?" In due time "you will reap, if you faint not." But if you draw back, God will "have no pleasure in you." An aged minister. Several years since we met a very aged and venerable clergyman, who asked, on our first introduction, if we did not recognize him. On receiving a negative answer, he replied that years before, while we were at Oberlin, he, being then a ruling elder in a Presbyterian Church, heard of the work of God among us there. After reading for a time the Oberlin Evangelist, he determined to visit us, and know for himself what was the character of the work of which he heard so much. After conversing with Brother Finney, myself, and others, he became fully convinced that God was with us of a truth, and that the baptism which we had received was in reserve for him. He accordingly set his whole soul upon the attainment of that Divine anointing, with the determination never to cease seeking and praying until he was really and truly "endued with power from on high." After searching his heart, consecrating himself to Christ, and waiting in earnest prayer, and "strong crying and tears," for the promised blessing, he entered his closet one day, under the full assurance that then and there he might "receive the Holy Ghost." He accordingly determined never to leave that place until he should receive the gift of God, after which he was seeking. He had been in the place but a little time when he seemed to himself to be sinking down into infinite depths, into the bosom of God. Here the waters of life began to rise and overflow in his heart, and to the full extent of his capabilities he knew himself to be "filled with all the fulness of God." The glory, the love of Christ, and the infinite riches of His grace now occupied his whole being. He began to tell others of the good hand of God that was upon him, "of the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in believers, the hope of glory;" and such power everywhere attended his testimony, that he was urged to take out a license to preach. As he could not do so in his own church, he obtained one from another in his vicinity. As the results of a few years' labor, more than one thousand souls were gathered into the fold of Christ. So the Lord continued to bless his labors, until his voice and strength failed. As a consequence, he was then quietly waiting the time when his Divine Master should call him to the kingdom of light. The baptism which he had at first received was often renewed, and never had been diminished, as a life-imparting power. The same anointing, reader, is for you. If you would obtain it, however, you must appreciate its value, and "seek it with all your heart, and with all your soul," and never rest, and give God no rest, until the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. The circumstances in which Paul received, if not his first, yet a very special and abiding baptism of the Spirit, is given by himself, 2 Corinthians 12:7-12. After he had commenced his ministry, he found himself greatly embarrassed in his work by some visible natural infirmity, which operated as a hindrance, and a reproach from his enemies. That such a hindrance might be removed, he sought God in prayer, thrice "beseeching Him that it might depart from him." In each instance he received the same answer: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." As this answer was repeated, the truth sounded in the depths of his soul, that what he needed was not the removal of natural infirmities, but the grace and strength of Christ to rest upon him. From that moment the fullness of Divine grace and

strength became the central life of his soul, and natural infirmities and external obstacles became objects of joy and triumph to him: for whenever these were to be encountered, then and there would the grace and power of God be vouchsafed to him in superabundant measure. "Most gladly, therefore," he exclaims, "will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong." From that moment not only did the inward experience of Paul take a new and more triumphant direction, but his ministry took on forms of power which it did not possess before. In all his tribulations he not only himself received "everlasting consolation and good hope through grace," but was able to impart similar refreshings to all believers in all "the fiery trials" which came upon them. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." 2 Corinthians 1:1-24.

It was under the influence of this specific baptism that he learned the wondrous lesson to which he refers in Php 4:11-13; "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." We may learn two important lessons from the experience of Paul as it thus lies before us.

1. The manner in which the baptism of the Spirit is often given—viz., by the presentation of some great and essential truth of the gospel to the mind, in such form and vividness, as ever after becomes, an all-vitalizing principle in the soul, and a great central light, which renders all other forms of revealed truth equally luminous and self-imparting.

Luther tells us, for example, that from the hour when the truth embodied in the words, "The just shall live by faith," came home with such life-giving power to his mind, he "saw the precious and holy Scriptures with new eyes."

2. We may also learn from this experience of Paul to carry all difficulties which we meet with in the divine life directly to Christ. In that case they will be taken from us, or we shall receive such a revelation of the fullness of the Divine grace and strength of Christ, that with Paul we shall "most gladly glory in our infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon us."

We have before referred to Mr. Carpenter, the individual who exerted such wonderful power for the sanctification of believers and the conversion of sinners. We refer to his case again for the purpose of disclosing the state of mind in which he received such a baptism of power. He had become deeply impressed with the consciousness of moral and spiritual impotency, and of the absence of any assured hope, or settled confidence, or trust in God. He, consequently, set his whole heart upon attaining, through grace and the power of the Spirit, a permanent and settled faith, and assurance of hope, such as Abraham possessed. This became the fixed and continued theme of his thought, reading, desire, and importunate prayer. For a considerable time he gave himself and God "no rest, day nor night." At length he was drawn out into a distinct and conscious dedication of himself and family, and all his interests, to Christ. Then the baptism of power came upon him, the reason being that the conditional preparation was complied with. From that time his faith wavered not, the light of Heaven encircled him, and "he had power with God and with men."

The memory of J. B. Taylor, to all who knew him, and his memoir, to all who have read it, have been "as a sweet savor from God." No memoir published during the progress of the present century has been more extensively read, or has made a deeper impression upon the Church than his. His early Christian experience had the same characteristics as those of most converts—sinning and repenting, resolving and resolving, and making little or no progress. Arriving at length to the full conviction that "God has reserved some better things for us," he set his whole heart upon attaining to the "full liberty of the sons of God." The struggle and the victory which ensued he thus describes in a letter to a friend: "For some days I have been desirous to visit some friends who are distinguished for fervor of piety, and remarkable for the happiness which they enjoy in religion. It was my hope that, by associating with them, and through the help of their prayers, I might find the Lord more graciously near to my poor soul.

"My desire was that the Lord would visit me, and 'baptize me with the Holy Spirit;' my cry to Him was 'Seal my soul forever Thine;' I lifted up my heart in prayer that the blessing might descend. I felt I needed something which I did not possess. There was a void within which must be filled, or I could not be happy. My earnest desire then was, as it has been ever since I professed religion six years before—that all love of the world might be destroyed, all selfishness should be extirpated; pride banished, unbelief removed, all idols dethroned, everything hostile to holiness and opposed to the Divine will crucified: that holiness to the Lord might be engraven in my heart, and for evermore characterize my conversation.

"My mind was led to reflect on what would be my future situation. It occurred to me, I am to be hereafter a minister of the gospel. But how shall I be able to preach in my present state of mind? I cannot— never, no, never shall I be able to do it with profit, without great overturnings in my soul. I felt that I needed that for which I was then, and for a long time had been hungering and thirsting. I desired it not for my benefit only, but for that of the Church and the world."

Such was his ardency of desire for the baptism of the Spirit, and for consequent perfect moral and spiritual purification. In another letter to an aged Christian sister, who enjoyed all the light and privileges of the higher life, he thus writes about this time: "O my friend! I feel tired of living by the halves. God says, 'Son, give Me thine heart.' I respond, 'Oh, for an entire surrender!' Of late my soul has panted more for complete deliverance from remaining corruption than ever before. Oh, for perfect love! Oh, for complete sanctification in soul, body, and spirit! I beg your earnest prayers. I believe it attainable, and my soul thirsts for it; and until I possess these qualifications, I feel I shall not be fit to be a minister of Jesus Christ." Such was his mental state of intense desire, earnest seeking, and fervent prayer.

Let us hear the result as detailed in the letter from which the first extract was taken. "At this juncture," he says, "I was most delightfully conscious of giving up all to God. I was enabled to say, Here, Lord, take me—take my whole soul, and seal me Thine—Thine now, and Thine forever! 'If Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean.' Then there ensued such emotions as I never before experienced; all was calm and tranquil, and a solemn heaven of love possessed my whole soul. I had a witness of God's love to me, and of mine to Him. Shortly after I was dissolved in tears of love and gratitude to our blessed Lord. The name of Jesus was precious to me. 'Twas music to the ear.' 'He came as King, and took full possession of my heart,' and I was enabled to say, 'I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'" On a subsequent

occasion he thus speaks of the new form of life which resulted from this baptism: "People may call this blessing what they please—faith of assurance, holiness, perfect love, sanctification; it makes no difference to me whether they give it a name or no name, it continues a blessed reality, and thanks to my heavenly Father it is my privilege to enjoy it. It is yours also, and the privilege of all." How true are the words of the prophet, "Then shall ye seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart!" The case of the Rev. A. Mahan. When "the hands of the Presbytery" had been laid upon me, and I found myself under a charge to "feed the flock of God," I soon felt myself pressed down under the consciousness of many great deficiencies, especially in respect to the sacred function of "building up believers in the most holy faith."

Under my ministry many, very many sinners were convicted, converted, and "led quite to Christ," in the matter of justification. But how after this to induce in the convert that form of the Divine life which I knew to be portrayed in the New Testament and foretold in the Old—here I felt myself "weighed in the balance and found wanting." The reason I knew to be the want of that life perfected in my own experience. Hence the subject of personal holiness became with me the great central object of thought, inquiry, reading, and prayer. When alone with God one day in a deep forest, for example, I said distinctly and definitely to my heavenly Father that there was one thing that I desired above all else—the consciousness that my heart was pure in his sight; that if he would grant me this one blessing, I would accept of any providences that might attend me. This I said "with strong crying and tears." In this state I came to Oberlin, as the President of that College. I had been there but a short time, when a general inquiry arose in the church after the Divine secret of holy living, and a direct appeal was made to Brother Finney and myself for specific instruction upon the subject, which induced in me an intensity of desire indescribable after that secret. Just as my whole being became centered in that one desire, the cloud lifted, and I stood in the clear sunlight of the face of God. The secret was all plain to me now, and I knew also how to lead inquirers into the King’s highway.

Since that good hour "my sun has not gone down, neither has my moon withdrawn itself." Christ, reader, will never "write upon you His own new name," and give you "that new white stone, which no man knoweth but him that receiveth it," until you come to value above all price the possession of His moral image and likeness, and until you seek that image and likeness with immutable fixedness of desire and purpose. "Then shall ye seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." The memoirs of the Wesleys, Madame Guyon, and indeed all recorded cases of the baptism of the Spirit, present most impressive illustrations of the necessity of heart-preparation before this unspeakable gift is vouchsafed. How intense were "the hungerings and thirstings of the Wesleys after righteousness," how fervent their prayers for Divine illumination, and how teachable their spirit before "the Lord rose upon them, and His glory was seen upon them," and how did their righteousness and salvation shine forth after "the brightness of their rising!" For a considerable period prior to her baptism, Madame Guyon was deeply impressed with the conviction that God intended for her some specific and special mission. With continuous fasting and prayer, reading and meditation, she sought to know what that mission was, and to receive "power from on high" for its fulfillment. At length the nature of that mission opened upon her mind with such distinctness and vividness, that she uttered the words aloud, "Sanctification by faith." From that moment not a doubt rested upon her mind that to elucidate, exemplify, and proclaim this doctrine was her Heaven-given mission. That revelation also was attended with a

baptism of such "power from on high," that only a few years passed before Europe felt the influence of her godly example, spiritual utterances, and holy writings.

We must recur here to a case which came under our observation years ago, "among the annals of the poor." A woman in poor health, poor in this world's goods, pressed down with the care of a large family, with the merest "name to live" in the Church, when moving about amid her domestic cares, had these specific reflections one day pass with wonderful impressiveness through her mind: "I shall die soon and stand in the presence of God. I do not desire to meet my God there on a short or slight acquaintance. I desire to know Him fully before that time. From this moment it shall be my supreme object 'to know God, understand His way, and find grace in His sight.'"

Without relaxation of fidelity in family duty, she set her whole heart upon knowing and walking with God. When about her daily cares, she would have her Bible open upon a shelf, so that as she passed around she could stop a moment and read a passage, and then make it the subject of meditation and prayer. With the same diligence she read the most spiritual works that she could obtain. In prayer her importunity would admit of no denial. In a short time the baptism came, and visions of God filled her whole soul. She beheld "with open face the glory of the Lord," and truly her "fellowship was with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." As a consequence, her character became mildly and gloriously radiant through that whole community. Even infidels, and there were numbers of them in the place, confessed that there was Christian character in its genuineness and perfection of beauty. In the revival of religion which followed, none had such power with the people as she. The sisters of the Church came together and did her fall and winter sewing, that she might visit from house to house. All the cavils of infidels, Universalists, and worldlings were silenced under the power of her appeals and the Divine radiance of her character. Her pastor, who was a man of superior education, talents, and piety, said to us, that whenever he came into the presence of that woman, he felt that he, and not she, was the learner. At the same time he never saw an individual more humble and teachable than she was. In everything which pertains to "the life of God in the soul of man," he was conscious that her vision and experience far transcended his. Our object in giving the above illustrations has been to impress this fact on the reader, that all who receive this Divine baptism do so in consequence of a previous compliance with the conditions on which God had promised the blessing; and that without it none can fulfill his life-mission, or be duly prepared for the kingdom of glory.

Speaking of this very gift, God says that "He will yet for this be inquired of by believers, to do it for them." If we do not thus inquire, and "search for God with all the heart, and with all the soul," we shall never find Him, or receive from Him "the gift of the Holy Ghost." "If the vision tarry," and we do not "wait for it," it will never come to us.

If Christ with the Father comes to us, manifests Himself to us, and makes His abode with us, it will be because we keep His Word, prepare His way before Him in our hearts, and wait and watch for His coming as "those who watch for the morning." If our "bodies become the temples of the Holy Ghost," if God shall "dwell in us and walk in us," and care for and bless us as His "sons and daughters," it will be because His indwelling presence has with us a priceless value, and is sought as the soul's supreme portion.

Some are strangers to this baptism, because they never seek it at all. Others seek, but not "with all the heart and with all the soul." Others begin right, run well for a time, and then relinquish the

pursuit. Others, still, dedicate themselves fully to Christ, as they suppose, pray for the Spirit, and then wait to experience the effect. "If the vision then tarries," they become impatient, unbelieving, despondent, and give over further seeking and effort. This is a very common and fatal error. We are to wait in earnest seeking and prayer, until the promised baptism descends upon us. Look not backward, but forward, until you "behold with open face the glory of the Lord." "In due time you will reap, if you faint not."

04.07. Miscellaneous Suggestions in Regard

CHAPTER VII.

MISCELLANEOUS SUGGESTIONS IN REGARD TO THIS DOCTRINE.

"And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."— Acts 15:8-9.

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."— Ephesians 4:30.

CAUTIONS TO THOSE WHO ARE SEEKING THIS BAPTISM.

Individuals who set their hearts upon obtaining this anointing, not infrequently find themselves perplexed with certain difficulties and temptations, which beset their inquiries and prayers, arising from their inward, experiences. and from doubts brought to their mind from without. Permit us to give certain cautions to such as are in this state.

1. Avoid forming any conceptions of the manner in which this baptism will come upon you, or of the peculiar experiences which you might have under its influence. Christ told His disciples that they should "receive power" after that "the Holy Ghost came upon them" and to "tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high;" but of the manner in which the Spirit should be given, and of the special forms of their inward experiences and outward lives after they should be "filled with the Holy Ghost," He left them in total ignorance. Had they, instead of spending their time in preparing their hearts, dedicating their lives, and waiting in prayer and supplication for the fulfillment of the promise, perplexed their minds with inquiries, How will the Spirit be given, and what will be the effects? we doubt whether the promise would ever have been realized in their experience. Let no such thoughts have place in your minds; but seek, and search, and watch, and pray, until the "Comforter is sent unto you." Then, as you "read the precious Scriptures with new eyes," as you "behold with open face the glory of the Lord," as your faith in Christ fills you "with joy unspeakable and full of glory," and as "your fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," then, and not till then, will or can you know the effect of His incoming to your souls.

2. Our second caution and admonition is this, Do not be perplexed or alarmed at your inward experiences and your emotions, especially while seeking this baptism. Individuals are often amazed and discouraged by the disclosure to their minds of internal corruption, "secret faults," and evil tendencies and habits, the existence of which they had hardly suspected. They are frequently led to doubt their conversion, and almost despair of ever being delivered from the condition of unworthiness in which they see themselves to be placed. No such experiences should create alarm or irresolution. God is preparing His own way within you, and the glory of His manifestation will be proportioned to the thoroughness with which "the fountains of the great deep" of the soul have been previously broken up. The inward state of the soul during the preparatory process is

often like the appearance of a house at the time of the annual or semi-annual cleansing. All is confusion, disorder, and dustiness, but the prudent housewife is not alarmed or perplexed at the appearance of things around her. She foresees universal order and cleanliness as the final result, and knows that everything is tending to that desired end. For the same reason none of the experiences to which we have referred should disturb the soul seeking "the renewal of the Holy Ghost." Only let your heart be fixed on the "mark set before you." Put away sin as it appears, dedicate all to Christ, and seek, and watch, and pray until God shall come and make "your bodies temples of the Holy Ghost."

3. Our last caution is this: Do not be discouraged at the time occupied in this preparatory process. The apostles and their associates waited more than forty days for "the promise of the Father." Do not give up if you have to wait through even a longer period. God in this way may prove and try you, to see whether you will or will not "seek Him with all your heart, and with all your soul," and with all "patience and perseverance." He will fulfill His promise in you, if You do not "become weary and faint in your minds" while seeking Him.

COUNSELS AND ADMONITIONS

1. Settle definitely and fully in your own minds "whether there be any Holy Ghost," any special baptism, "sealing and earnest of the Spirit," any special "enduement of power from on high," to be expected and sought by believers, and assured to them by Divine promise, after "they have believed in Christ." If God has given no such promise, it is presumption and vain in us to plead it at the throne of grace.

If God has given such a promise, and we are not fully assured of the fact, we shall seek for the blessing in a hesitating, doubting, and double-minded state, which will prevent our receiving anything of the Lord." First of all, then, "be fully persuaded in your own minds" whether God has, in fact and form, given such a promise. When you find that He has done so—and you will thus find if you carefully and prayerfully "search the Scriptures whether these things are so," then take hold of the promise with the firm hand of faith, and plead it in earnest prayer as the unchangeable Word of God.

2. While you, in fixed purpose of heart, separate yourselves from all sin, and unreservedly dedicate yourselves to Christ, never for a moment after that entertain a doubt of your acceptance with God, or of your title to all the privileges of the sons of God, until you are conscious of taking that consecration back. Our faith in the promise, and our interest in it, will be weak and unsteady if we doubt of our sonship. When we thus give up sin, and accept of Christ, we have the assurance from His Word that we are, and shall be, "accepted in the Beloved." When you are conscious of thus giving up your sins, and dedicating yourselves to Christ, reckon yourselves as children of God, and as having a direct and personal interest in all the promises. Never suffer your mind to doubt or halt on this question.

3. From that moment contemplate your title to the gift of the Spirit as absolute, by virtue of your faith in Christ, and sonship with God. "The promise is to you." Hold it up before your own heart, and before the throne of grace, as such. Never permit your assurance here to waver for a moment; you are in covenant relations with Christ, and Christ is bound to you by covenant, to "send you he Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost."

4. Finally, while you thus place yourselves as sinners, "saved by grace" within the circle of "the everlasting covenant," continue to search and inquire, and wait and pray, and pray and wait, until "the Holy Ghost shall fall upon you." Continuing thus "in prayer and supplication," "God will do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think." You "will be filled with the Spirit," and God will become "the everlasting light of your souls." Only be steadfast in faith, enduring in patience, and persevering and instant in prayer, and ere long "your light will go forth as brightness, and your salvation as a lamp that burneth." THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SPIRIT

Individuals who receive "the sealing and earnest of the Spirit" sometimes find their inward experience not to accord, in certain important respects, with their prior anticipations. They fail to keep in mind that God is "leading them in a way which they know not," and that the Spirit cannot do for them all that they need, unless He leads them through various forms of external and internal experience. The present is preparatory to an endless future. That this preparation may be fully consummated, the Christian virtues in all their diversified forms, must be fully developed and perfected.

Each virtue takes form only under specially adapted circumstances and influences. That character may be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing," "patience must have her perfect work." Patience is the outgrowth of endurance under the pressure of heavy responsibilities, "fiery trials," and "great tribulations." It would not be wisdom or love on the part of the Spirit to free us from those "trials of faith" requisite to our perfection in the highest forms of Christian virtue.

"Everlasting consolations and good hope through grace" can come to the soul only when it is burdened with some great sorrow. The Spirit will not spare us the latter, when we must be led through it to reach the former. Victory, "through the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony," implies prior conflict with temptation. To prepare us for "a crown of glory which fadeth not away," and that we may stand revealed to eternity as having been "more than conquerors through Him that loved us," He will lead us to "fight the good fight of faith," to "stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." In short, we are to expect, under the teachings and discipline of the Spirit, just those forms of external and internal trial necessary to the development and perfection in us of all forms of Christian experience and character. The believer is not only being fitted for immortality under the leadings of the Spirit, but is also to be employed in this life for special work in the edification of the Church and the good of the ungodly, and is constantly being prepared for the exigencies of his high and holy calling. No one can be qualified for such a work without being led through many and diverse forms of experience, both joyful and afflictive.

Paul had great perplexity and trouble through "the thorn in the flesh." That trouble, however, resulted not only in immortal benefits to him personally, but in incalculable good to the Church and the world. By means of the discipline through which he then passed he was fitted for a higher sphere of influence and usefulness than was otherwise possible to him; and by means of the Divine consolation which he received in all this discipline, he was rendered "able to comfort them who were in trouble, by means of the comfort wherewith he was comforted of God."

Every trial of faith, patiently endured, not only increases and establishes our graces, but enlarges our capacities for every good word or work. In all the different forms of discipline to which we are subjected, the Spirit leads us on to higher and higher degrees of Divine life, and into special ways of usefulness; and He will lead us through every phase of experience requisite to bring us to these

ends.

We need to keep all these facts before us. Otherwise we may not only fail to "walk in the Spirit," but may quench Him also, and thus put out the Light of our souls. When we open our hearts to receive the Spirit, we give ourselves wholly up to Him, to be molded, guided and disciplined by Him, not according to our ideas, but according to His infallible knowledge of our various necessities, and according to the diverse exigencies of our sacred calling. But while our experiences under the guidance of the Spirit may and will be, in the respects referred to, endlessly diversified, in certain other respects they will be fixed and permanent. In every "trial of faith" "patience will have her perfect work," because "as our day is so shall our strength be." In every conflict with the world, the flesh, and the powers of darkness we shall be "more than conquerors." In every furnace of affliction we shall "learn obedience from the things which we suffer." When "troubled on every side," we shall "not be distressed;" when "perplexed," we shall "not be in despair;" when "persecuted," we shall "not be forsaken;" when "cast down," we shall "not be destroyed;" when "weak, we shall be strong;" and even when "bearing about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus," "the life also of Jesus will be made manifest in our bodies." Nor will the light of God ever go out in our hearts while this baptism remains in us: Our peace in Him, our conscious sonship with Him, our acquiescence in His will, our resignation under every allotment of Providence, our quietness and assurance, our "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" will never be interrupted. We shall "serve God without fear, in righteousness and holiness before Him all the days of our lives." Nor will our experiences be without their raptures. In seasons, not few nor far between, there will be "the shoutings of a king" in the center of our hearts. "Visions will come and go." This side of the celestial city, "the glory of God will shine" in our hearts, and "the Lamb be the light thereof." "Our joy will be full." Remember, reader, "all things are possible to him that believeth." "Have faith in God," and "you shall be established."

TEMPTATIONS AND ERRORS The Christian life as well as the worldly has its peculiar and special inward temptations, and its peculiar and special liabilities to attack from human and Satanic influences from without. Every advance into the Divine life, from the nature and circumstances of the case, subjects the mind to forms of temptation and trial not incident to the same life in its lower developments. When the soul receives "the sealing and earnest of the Spirit," it has new and higher power than it had before, for every form and exigency of the Christian life and warfare; but is still subject to its own peculiar forms of trial and temptation. To be prepared to meet such trials and temptations, we need to understand our state and relations when we have received the Holy Ghost. In this state, for example, we are not free from all liability to sin; nor are we released from the necessity of watchfulness and prayer against temptation to sin. We may quench and "grieve the Holy Spirit, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption." All warnings and admonitions of the New Testament indicate the truth of these statements. Nor are we free from liability to error on subjects not essential to the purity and perfection of the Christian life. Paul and Barnabas were both "good men, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." Yet they differed in judgment in respect to Mark, and separated in their mission on account of that difference. Both were honest, but Paul was in the wrong, and afterwards in his epistles did full justice to Mark. When on his last journey to Jerusalem, he met with disciples who admonished him, "through the Spirit," that "he should not go to Jerusalem." Yet he went, "bound in the Spirit, to Jerusalem." Nor did they, in what they said, nor he, in what he did, grieve or quench the Holy Spirit. On such

subjects the Spirit does not impart infallible guidance. On a very few questions in moral philosophy and theology, Brother Finney and myself have arrived at opposite conclusions. Yet each has the same assurance as before, that the other is "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," and never were our mutual love and esteem stronger than now. We differ just where minds under the influence of the purest integrity and the highest form of Divine illumination are liable to differ.

We may be "full of the Holy Ghost," and pressed beyond measure to utter the truths which are burning within, "as a fire shut up in our bones," and yet have need of circumspection, and be liable to error in regard to the times and seasons when we shall prophesy. To this liability the apostle refers when he gives directions how those who are under Divine illumination must conduct themselves in the Church assemblies, affirming that "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets;" that "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace;" and that "all things must be done decently, and in order." Nor does the gift of the Spirit supersede the necessity of education and careful study. Timothy had received this gift; yet Paul exhorts even him to "give attendance to reading," to "meditate upon these things," and to "study to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." What, then, are some of the errors and temptations incident to this higher life? They are, evidently, among others, the following:—

1. Temptation to Spiritual Pride.

Every believer who receives the gift of the Spirit becomes a new Christian, renewed in the essential elements of the inner and outer life, and has a form of life which will attract the attention of the Church and world. "His righteousness will go forth as brightness, and his salvation as a lamp that burneth." Hence the danger of making self the object of thought and conversation, and of thinking and speaking of self in the spirit of self-glorification. It is proper, and a duty, to tell others what the Lord has done for us, provided the supreme motive is not to glorify self, but to magnify the grace, and love, and saving power of Christ. When the mind begins to revolve about self as its center, it ceases, to the same extent, to revolve about Christ; and when it glories in self, it ceases to glory in the cross of Christ, and will soon be the object of Divine reprobation.

2. Spiritual Presumption. When the power of the Spirit comes upon us, we walk forth in "the liberty of the sons of God," and have a sovereign control over all our propensities, and all forms of temptation. In such liberty, we are liable to forget "wherein our great strength lieth," to relax in our watchfulness and prayer, and thus our hearts are exposed to "the fiery darts of the evil one." When in this liberty we must ever keep in mind that "we stand by faith," and must "not be highminded, but fear." We must gird ourselves with the whole panoply of God, and "watch unto prayer," if we would "stand in the evil day."

3. Mistaking the true and proper sphere of Divine teaching and illuminating. When the Spirit is given, and we begin to "read the precious Scriptures with new eyes," we may be tempted to undervalue all other forms of knowledge, and to neglect study, and all proper use and cultivation of our own powers. In the whole process of the spiritual life we are "laborers together with God." Divine teaching does not supersede study and research in us, any more than our own proper activity supersedes Divine teaching.

We have known individuals who have attained to the highest forms of the higher life afterwards "make shipwreck of the faith," by assuming that they were infallibly taught all forms of revealed truth, and then bitterly denouncing as unspiritual, worldly, sensual, and devilish, all who questioned any of their nudest absurdities. We have known individuals, once deeply spiritual, by imperiously placing themselves above all need of human teaching, under the claim that they were taught of God, manifest the most proud, boastful, fanatical, and hateful spirit and character of which we can conceive.

We have known ministers of bright promise, and who were once "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," become empty and void in their own hearts, and utterly powerless with the Church and world, and that because they relied upon Divine teaching to the neglect of study, inquiry, watching unto prayer, and the diligent use and cultivation of their own faculties. The best and safest state possible to us is to "receive the Spirit," and "walk in the Spirit." The worst and darkest state into which we can fall is to have the light of God kindled in our hearts, and then to quench it.

If you, reader, shall "receive the Spirit," and "walk in the light, as God is in the light," you will continuously "behold with open face the glory of the Lord, and be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord;" you will, as "the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty," "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God;" every virtue, in its purest and divinest developments, will take form in your character. "Giving all diligence," you will "add to your faith, virtue; to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity;" and after you have finished your work of fruitfulness, goodness, and duty, "an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." But if at any time you shall lack these things, it will be because you have become "blind, and cannot see afar off, and have forgotten that you were cleansed from your old sins." If you continue thus blind and forgetful, "God will have no pleasure in you," and Christ will "take your part out of the Book of Life."

4. Pride of Character, which manifests itself in an unwillingness to confess error, or sin when actually committed, is another form of temptation, against which all who attain to this higher life should be specially on their guard. With the Spirit in our hearts, we need not sin, but we may sin. We may even "grieve" and "quench the Holy Spirit of God." Should we sin, there is but one way to escape the consequences, and recover what we have lost—"repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Yet the reputation which we possess, and the profession we make, will present a strong temptation to cover, instead of confessing, our sins.

Let the strictest integrity always be manifested right here, and God, if we have sinned, will "restore to us the joy of His salvation, and uphold us by His free Spirit," and never "take the Holy Spirit from us." So, when we err in judgment—and the Spirit does not render us infallible—let our meek humility always manifest itself in a prompt and ingenuous confession of the fact. We shall, in such a case, never fail to "serve God unto all pleasing."

CONCLUSION As far as the discussion and elucidation of doctrine are concerned, we here draw this treatise to a close. Other topics of great importance connected with the whole subject will be presented in subsequent pages. If the reader has derived as much benefit in the perusal of these chapters thus far, and from the great truth which they are designed to teach, as the author has in

their preparation, he and yourself, no doubt, will have cause of mutual thanksgiving for an eternity to come. The eclipse of this great doctrine to the Church ever has been and ever will be an eclipse of her faith on the one hand, and of her vision of "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" on the other. But the unveiling of this doctrine to the faith and experience of the Church will be to her "the brightness of her rising," to which Gentiles, and kings, and the ends of the earth shall be drawn. The movement of the sacramental host has been, hitherto with glorious exceptions, very much that of a dead march or a funeral procession. Our favorite hymns have breathed notes of sorrow and sadness, rather than notes of gladness and joy. We have made a virtue of speaking and singing of our burdens under the heavy yoke of sinful propensities, of "aching voids within"—induced by the remembrance of "peaceful hours" once enjoyed, but long since passed away, and sighings after the "blessedness we knew when first we saw the Lord." The remembrance of that early blessedness seems to present the highest Christian joy of which the mass of believers now have a conception.

Ever since that good hour when the writer "beheld with open face the glory of the Lord," he has had no form of experience answering at all to that just referred to. "The days of our mourning are ended." So will yours be, reader, when through the baptism of the Spirit you shall comprehend, as is your privilege, "what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Nor is the day distant, we trust, when all Christians "will cease their mourning," and "the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

We all, reader, shall enter into that blessedness as soon as the way of the Lord is prepared in our hearts. If you "have not received the Holy Ghost since you believed," and have read this treatise without the conviction that such a blessing is yours by promise, then an impenetrable veil hangs between you and all the blessedness of the higher life. If the reading of this treatise has induced in your mind the conviction that you may be "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," and you go on your way without making the attainment of this crowning blessing of the Christian life your fixed and immutable purpose, you will, for less than "one morsel of meat," part with your birthright to "the glorious liberty of the sons of God." If, on the other hand, you have found that "these things are so," and from this moment onward shall watch, and wait, and pray, until Christ shall "send the promise of the Father upon you," then will you also "comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fullness of God." You shall rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; prove all things; hold fast that which is good; and the very God of peace shall sanctify you wholly, and your whole spirit, and soul, and body shall be preserved blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-23.

04.08. The Fellowship of the Spirit

CHAPTER VIII. THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SPIRIT

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."— Ephesians 3:19.

"If any fellowship of the Spirit"— Php 2:1.

"The communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."— 2 Corinthians 13:14.

"And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."— 1 John 1:3. The Apostle John is the only Scripture writer whose writings have an avowed reference to his own personal observation and experience. Of Christ he speaks so far only as he hath himself "seen, and heard, and handled, of the Word of life." Of no forms of truth does he speak but of those only which he has personally "known and believed." He speaks of no degree or form of spiritual attainment or experience but such as have been fully realized in the interior of his own mind: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." The range over which the experience of the apostle conducts us is a very wide one. It commences with that simple form of faith which results from "seeing, hearing, and handling" Christ, as "God manifest in the flesh," and terminating in that anointing of the Spirit in which "love is made perfect," "fear is cast out," "joy is full," and "the soul's fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." In laying before us his own experience as a believer in Christ, the apostle had in view a fourfold end—(1) that we may have, and "know that we have, eternal life;" (2) that our love, with his, "may be made perfect;" (3) that with him we may "walk in the light, as God is in the light;" and (4) that, as a final consequence, "our joy may be full." This fullness of joy all flows out of the state towards which real Christian experience, in all its forms, is tending, and in which it finds its ultimate consummation, viz., "friendship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." By sin man has lost this infinite good, and the object of the whole plan of redemption is to recover fallen humanity to this one relation to the infinite and eternal mind; and this plan is fully consummated only when God thus becomes the everlasting light of the soul. This brings us to the special object of the present chapter, which is to elucidate the great truth represented by the words, "Fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," together with the kindred topics which circle round it.

We inquire, in the first place, what is the idea represented by the term "Fellowship?" Evidently, a far higher meaning is intended than mere companionship, the existence of two or more minds in the same locality, or the interchange of thought between such minds; or partnership, that is, co-operation for the promotion of common ends, and the participation of common interests, or, indeed, any form of mere external connection. All this, and far more, is signified by this term. Two minds may be connected in the most endearing external relations, as husband and wife, for example; they may often interchange thoughts with each other; they may even co-operate together for common ends, and mutually partake of common interests. Yet they may never, in the true and proper sense of the term, have fellowship one with the other. While thus related, there

may be principles of opposition between them which may render each to the other the object of inward aversion.

Two minds, we will suppose, are brought together in the same locality, are associated in the pursuit of common ends, and become mutual partakers of common interests. As they interchange thoughts, each finds in the other a character, spirit, and sentiment, fully agreeable to his own. In their inter-communication there is a consequent sympathetic blending of thought with thought, feeling with feeling, and purpose with purpose; an intercommunion in which each becomes to the other, as it were, another self, making the other the beloved depository of his own mental treasures, and becoming a full participant of the other's joys and sorrows. This deep and sympathetic intercommunion of mind with mind is represented by the term "fellowship." In this relation, minds are said to "make their abode" one with the other, each finding its happy dwellingplace in the heart of the other.

Notice the conditions in which two minds can enter into fellowship. There must be, in the first place, as a medium of fellowship, a unity of knowledge, feelings, and sentiments, in respect to some common objects of mutual interest and regard. We meet, for instance, with an individual, and find that no such medium exists between us. However genial to each other our characters and mental states may be, while this medium is wanting there can be no fellowship, no blending of mind with mind between us. Suppose this medium to be established, and that, as we come to know each other, it is found that we have no objects of common interest and regard, and no common sympathies on any subject. Real fellowship in such a case is absolutely impossible. If, on the other hand, the objects which one regards with supreme interest, the other regards with aversion, such minds will naturally repel each other, and no blending of heart with heart can occur. But if, on a mutual acquaintanceship, it is found that there is a union of views and sympathies in regard to leading objects of thought, and each approves of the other's relations and character, their minds naturally blend in the most loving intercommunion and fellowship; and this is the idea represented by the term under consideration.

We may now state the extent and limits within which such fellowship is possible. So far as minds have common thoughts, sympathies, and experiences, so far they can have fellowship one with another. If the knowledge and experience of one extend into a sphere which the other has not entered or traversed, so far all fellowship is barred, however mutually genial their characters and experiences in other respects may be. In such cases, the fellowship of the latter may be constantly taking on new and more endearing forms, as the wider visions and experiences of the former open and expand upon his mind. In "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," the soul will be eternally advancing, deeper and deeper, into "the fulness of God," as His thoughts, His emotions, His plans, and His purposes of love shall expand upon its beatific vision.

EFFECTS OF FELLOWSHIP

There is no form of blessedness so full and complete as that which results from the fellowship of pure and kindred minds, in respect to objects of spiritual and happifying mutual interest. Such a state is a primary demand of our social nature. Such is the strength of this principle within us that we can scarcely enjoy any form of good when separated from other minds. Happiness departs, and leaves us desolate and sad, when we have no kindred minds with which to sympathize. Such fellowship not only intensifies our joys, but has sovereign power to turn our deepest sorrows into

the most perfect and abiding forms of gladness. Minds in fellowship become possessed to the full extent of their capacities, each of the blessedness that dwells in the heart of the other. "In fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," the human spirit will, to the fullest extent of its ever-growing capacities, he filled with the blessedness that dwells in the divine mind. The most marked peculiarity, perhaps, of such fellowship is the perpetual assimilation of character which thereby arises between kindred souls. When two minds are in such endearing intercommunion, the virtues and excellences of each are perpetually taking form and embodiment in the character of the other. A mind of lower, in fellowship with one of a higher order, is being perpetually raised to the conscious possession of the superior excellences of the latter. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise." God, by bringing sanctified spirits into fellowship with Himself, will be eternally elevating them to higher and higher resemblances to His own infinite excellences, and to higher and higher fruitions of His own infinite blessedness. If we would be God-like in our character, we must seek and attain to that state in which "our fellowship shall be with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

Here the question might arise, Is such fellowship possible? Can the finite enter the fellowship with the infinite? "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are not God’s ways higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts?" How then can we enter into communion with God’s ways and God’s thoughts? "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." In the text at the head of this chapter this very fellowship stands revealed as an accomplished fact: "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." With Moses God "spake face to face, as a man speaketh with his friend." For "three hundred years Enoch walked with God." In Christ "God was manifest in the flesh," and "dwelt amongst us." God, who knows perfectly the relations between the finite and the infinite, affirms that He does thus dwell with "the humble and contrite in spirit," and that He "will dwell and walk" in such. "If a man love Me," says Christ, "he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." To consummate this fellowship, the Spirit is in the world, and is promised to all believers. That we may possess and enjoy this fellowship, He can and will "strengthen us with might in the inner man," and so reveal and manifest Christ and the Father unto us, that we shall enter into real and ecstatic communion with God’s thoughts, purposes, and love. In elevating the creature into this Divine fellowship, God does not oppress him with the full weight of His own infinity. "No man can see the face of God and live." The Spirit knows how to bring, and He does bring, the soul into fellowship with those forms of Divine manifestation which it can comprehend and commune with—a fellowship which may become real in the experience of every believer, the child as well as the man.

Let us now turn our attention to the wonderful form of speech before us: "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." We read of a strange form of love conferred upon believers, by which "we are called the sons of God." We read, also, of a brotherhood with Christ, of a co-heirship with Him, and of our being "heirs of God." Such forms of speech, however, represent merely the common privileges of all the saints in all stages of their experience. The passage before us refers to a still higher and nearer relation to God, which the believer attains when, and only when, he has "received the Holy Ghost after he has believed;" when, by means of that Divine baptism, he has been "cleansed from all unrighteousness," has "been made perfect in love," and "walks in the light as God is in the light." Then he comes into that relation with God properly

represented by the term "fellowship."

You will observe that it is not said that "our fellowship is with the Father, with the Son, and with the Holy Ghost," but "with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." It is not with the Spirit that the soul has direct intercommunion; but, through the Spirit, with the Father and with Christ. The Spirit, when received, does not "speak of Himself," but "takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us," and "shows us plainly of the Father." "Where the Spirit of the Lord is," "we behold with open face," not the Spirit, but "the glory of the Lord," "the love of Christ," and "the fulness of God." When we have received the Holy Ghost after we have believed," we comprehend what the Saviour meant when He said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent;" what God means when He says, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them;" and what the apostle means when He says, "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." You have read, reader, of "the communion of the Holy Ghost." Here it is: "Christ in you, the hope of glory;" "We will come to him, and make our abode with him;" "walking with God;" "God dwelling in us, and we in Him;" and "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

Let us see if we cannot form some apprehension, more or less distinct, of this peculiar state of Christian privilege. It will be our aim to tell all we know about it; all, we mean, that can be told in a few sentences. The work of the Spirit, as we have said, is to bring the soul into direct and immediate fellowship with God. To believe that God exists, to apprehend His attributes, and to be assured that we are the objects of His love and favor, and at the same time to contemplate Him as a Being afar off, dwelling alone in His infinity, is a state of experience beyond which thousands of Christians have not gone. To be directly conscious of Him as an immediate personal presence, encircling us with His love, "showing us His glory," and opening upon our vision an immediate apprehension of His thoughts, emotions, and purposes of grace in respect to us, and of His deep sympathy with all our joys and sorrows, cares and interests; to be conscious when we pray that we are "speaking to God face to face, as a man speaketh with his friend," and that His ear is bent tenderly towards us in all our confessions, giving of thanks, and petitions; and that all things within and around us are full of God, and that we have our dwelling-place in the very center of the Divine fullness—this, certainly, is a very different relation between us and God from that above described; and all this is real in our experience when "our fellowship is with the Father." So, also, to know that Christ died for us, and that "we have redemption in His blood, even the forgiveness of our sins;" but to apprehend Him as far off, "at the right hand of God" in Heaven, and never very nigh to us, and "formed within us, the hope of glory," is the only relation to Christ in which most believers find themselves for the greater part of their lives. How much more blessed is that in which we sensibly and consciously realize a present Christ meeting and satisfying directly every susceptibility and want of our immortal natures; in which we "behold with open face His glory, and are changed into the same image from glory to glory;" in which "we comprehend the breadth, and depth, and length, and height, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge;" in which Christ "comes to us, and manifests Himself unto us," reigns in us the Sovereign of all our affections and activities, and communes with us as an elder brother, strengthens us in our weaknesses, succors us in our temptations, confirms our faith, perfects our love, and teaches us the Divine lesson of deep content in every allotment of Providence. This is fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ. Oh, how very different is this from that realized in the first, and also in the too common developments of the

Christian life!

Herein, dear reader, is "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." This is "walking with God," and "dwelling in God," and having God "walking in us, and dwelling in us." Here we blessedly know what our Saviour meant when He said, "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one;" and "I will come in unto him, and sup with him, and he with Me." In this Divine fellowship the mind is not free from temptation. In Christ, however, it realizes "the victory which overcometh the world." Nor is the believer free from external affliction. But in the fire and in the flood "patience has her perfect work." This end being consummated, there comes to the mind at one time a revelation of Christ in the exercise of this one virtue, patient endurance and meek submission to the will of the Father. One desire now possesses the whole being—to endure as Christ endured, and with Him, if need he, to be "made perfect through suffering." Again there opens upon the mind a vision of the eternal future: "These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Now the mind "glories in tribulation," while "the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us."

Nor, we add again, is the mind in this state wholly, and at all periods, free from real heart sorrow. At times, if need he, it may be in heaviness through manifold temptations," or "fiery trials." God, for wise reasons, may now and then sound the depths of the soul with some great sorrow. In such a state the mind, first of all, adjusts itself fully and perfectly to the Divine will, losing self in the heart of God, and in sweet and unreserved acquiescence consenting to do, and to endure, and to suffer all that God wills. "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." "The cup which My Father giveth Me, shall I not drink it?" When "patience here has had her perfect work," the Spirit at one time pens upon the mental and spiritual vision distinct and melting apprehensions of Christ as a sufferer in Gethsemane, when climbing Calvary’s mournful mountain, and upon the cross "bearing the sins of many, and making intercession for the transgressors." Here the mind forgets and loses its own sorrow in its sympathy and love for Christ in His atoning sufferings and death. To sorrow now, to "fill out the measure of Christ’s sufferings," seems a privilege. At another time, in the depth of some great distress, there comes to the mind a deep assurance and sense of God’s presence and love, and of the absolute security of all its interests under the divine protection; and all this with a distinct and soul-melting consciousness of the deep and present sympathy of every Person of the Godhead with every form and degree of grief with which the heart is burdened. "Everlasting consolations, and good hope through grace," now fill and occupy the entire capacities of the soul, and "sorrow and sighing flee away." At times, the way in which the mind is being led seems dark and gloomy. Here, the Spirit brings blessedly home to the heart such a thought as this—

"Christ leads me through no darker rooms Than He went through before." This thought dawns in with such sweet and mellow light upon the soul, that earth’s most shady places appear now as peaceful and hallowed precincts of Heaven itself. How often have you dwelt in thought upon such words as these—

"Jesus can make a dying bed Feel soft as downy pillows are, While on His breast I lean my head, And breathe my life out sweetly there."

Yes, reader, and Jesus can make a living bed, although a bed of thorns, feel equally soft and downy. Have you never, when weary with labor and care, when weighed down with the crushing

burdens of vast duties, responsibilities, and perplexities, or when overshadowed with some great sorrow, had such a form of experience as this?—Jesus seemed to approach you, and to drop such words as these down into your heart, "Child, you are weary, very weary, and sorrowful. Lean your head upon My bosom, and rest there." And as you lean your head upon the bosom of His love, His rest enters into your heart. This, you say, is the beginning of that "rest that remains for the people of God." If the earnest is so peaceful, what must Heaven be?—in which "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto fountains of living waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." With a mind in fellowship with God, there are periods of triumph when the fountains of the great deep of the soul are broken up, and when it "rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory." At other times, the whole spiritual being rests in perfect quietude and assurance, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeping the heart and mind through Christ Jesus." Then, in a state of "heaviness through manifold temptations," the soul appears "like patience on a monument smiling at grief." Again, under the baptism of "power from on high," it goes forth "strong in God, and in the power of His might," strong to do and to endure; or upon its knees in prayer, and under the outpouring of "the Spirit of grace and of supplication," "as a prince it has power with God and with men." In every state alike God is its fixed and changeless center, God its dwelling-place, and God its everlasting light, while "the days of its mourning are ended." We do not think that we have overdrawn the experience of any soul whose "fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." In making a due improvement of this subject, we would direct attention, in the first place, to an important declaration found in 1 John 1:7,—viz., "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." Among worldly minds there is very little real fellowship. Selfishness is incompatible with such relations, especially in their higher and more sympathetic forms. A selfish mind sees very little in its own image, when reflected from the heart of another, to approve or delight in, or in its own mental states with which to have fellowship, such as pride, ambition, envy, covetousness, devotion to vanity, and the lusts of the flesh. Hence among such minds there is very little that can properly be called friendship.

Also among Christians who have not "received the Holy Ghost since they believed," "fellowship one with another" can obtain but in a very limited degree. In all such minds there is so much intermingling of the had with the good, and of darkness with the light; such obscure reflections of the Divine image and glory, together with the beauties of holiness; and such meager manifestations of the Divine love; and at the same time thoughts of God and of things unseen and eternal have so seldom and unillumined a dwelling-place in the heart and the mind, that it is only occasionally, and that within a very limited sphere, that there can be such sympathetic blending of thought with thought, emotion with emotion, and heart with heart, as can properly be called "fellowship." This is the exclusive reason why Christian fellowship has such a limited and feeble existence in our churches. There is among them "envying, strife, and divisions," because, for the most part, they "are carnal, and walk as men," in other words, are "mere babes in Christ." There is very little fellowship, because the basis for such experience is wanting. When a company of believers, however, "have received the Holy Ghost since they believed," and each, under this all-renovating and all-purifying baptism, "walks in the light, as God is in the light," then, verily, they "have fellowship one with another." The reason is obvious. While perfect love banishes discord, each manifests a character that all approve and delight in, each reflects upon the others "the image and glory of Christ." Each, also has a rich inward experience, into which the hearts of the others naturally blend in sympathizing and ecstatic intercommunion. Brotherly character

manifested is the exclusive object of brotherly love. Where the former is wanting, the latter, but in forms of general goodwill, cannot exist.

What should we think of ourselves, reader, if "our fellowship is not with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ?" This we reply: Such must be the state of our hearts, that moral purity cannot approach them. "The pure in heart see God," and "with the pure in heart God dwells." If God does not dwell with you, there can he but one reason for this melancholy fact. Internal impurity shuts Him out. "God never draws nigh to me when I pray to Him," said a professing Christian to us years ago. "As soon as I kneel in prayer, He seems to remove Himself to an unapproachable distance from me." "Friend," we replied, "there must be reasons of infinite weight for such relations between you and your 'Father in Heaven.' We exhort you, as you value your soul's eternity, to find out those reasons, and to put them away." A similar admonition would we present to you, reader, if God is not consciously very nigh to you when you call upon Him, if your fellowship is not "with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." To understand fully the First Epistle of John, we must recognize the two classes of believers to whom the apostle in fact, though not in form, refers, viz., those who had, and those who had not, received "the unction of the Spirit;" those who had, and those who had not, been "made perfect in love;" and, consequently, those who did, and those who did not, have "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." Of the one class he speaks as having a full knowledge, by means of their anointing, of the fullness of joy to which he refers, and as having "no need" that "anyone should teach them" upon the subject. His object in respect to the other class was to draw them into the light of God in which he was walking: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us." "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." This last is our exclusive object relative to you, reader, if you have not yet received "the anointing."

We may now understand the limits of practicable Christian attainment in this life. They extend from the beginning to a full fellowship with the apostle, in perfect love, freedom from fear and heart condemnation, and in that fullness of joy which he possessed when "walking in the light as God is in the light," and when his "fellowship was with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." Nothing but unbelief in us can prevent our advancing onward and upward into the cloudless sunlight before us. The apostle has not only revealed to us the goal to which we may attain, but has made us know the way: "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us"—the love of God in giving His Son to die for us," and also in giving "the anointing" by which we know, too, "the things that are freely given us of God." "Herein is our love made perfect." To receive, with simple trust and assurance, God's testimony to His own love to us, and to seek, "with all the heart, and with all the soul," "the unction of the Spirit," through whose illuminations and sanctifying power we may walk in the light, as God is in the light"—this is the way to that Beulah of perfect love and fullness of joy, where "God is our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning are ended." Reader, the way is before us. Let us walk in it.

04.09. The Unity of the Spirit

CHAPTER IX. THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."— Acts 4:31.

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."— Ephesians 4:3. By the phrase, "unity of the Spirit," we are to understand that form of Divine oneness which the Holy Spirit produces among those individuals in whose heart He dwells—that form of oneness to which our Saviour refers in those wonderful words, "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." This unity is effected when Christ, by the Spirit, is enthroned and reigns supreme in the heart of each individual. The fact that we are required to endeavor to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," implies two things: First, that without our endeavor this unity will not be preserved; and, secondly, that this unity may exist for a certain time, and not be perpetuated. Sameness of spirit among any number of minds is one thing; this unity "in the bond of peace" is quite another. Many suppose that if the former obtains, the latter will result, as a matter of course, if not of necessity. This is by no means true universally. The oneness of heart and character which the Spirit creates tends to foster bonds of peace among the brotherhood; but, in some instances, it may, for a time at least, fail of that result from differences of opinion on important subjects—differences arising from a limitation of the human faculties, even in sanctified minds. Paul and Barnabas, for example, had both in common, as we have formerly said, "received the Holy Ghost since they had believed," and were by a special revelation from the Spirit separated to the work which for a long period they had jointly prosecuted; but a temporary separation, if not alienation, obtained between them, in consequence of a difference of opinion in respect to a question regarded in common as involving an essential principle of our holy religion. Paul judged, that if they received Mark a second time to a companionship in the work, they would fellowship one who, by his former conduct, had proved himself untrustworthy. Barnabas judged, that in rejecting him they would deny fellowship with one who may have had good reason for the act of which Paul accused him, who was called of God to the work of the ministry, who had special qualifications for the work before them, and had been "endued with power from on high" for its prosecution. Here was a conscientious difference of opinion, and we have no reason to suppose that either quenched the Spirit in the separation which occurred between them. In the controversy, Paul was wrong, that is, misjudged, as his subsequent testimony in regard to Mark clearly evinces: "Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable unto me for the ministry." This error in judgment, and the consequent disastrous separation from an eminent servant of Christ, was, no doubt, of great use to Paul during his subsequent life, and was unquestionably the only error of the kind that he ever fell into. To it we may refer the many exhortations to Christian forbearance with which his epistles abound, especially the exhortations in the text, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." If two inspired men, each of whom had received the Holy Ghost after believing, did differ in judgment, and did separate the one from the other, and thereby injure the cause of Christ both in and outside of the Church; and if, as Christ affirms, visible unity in the

bonds of peace among the brotherhood is the condition on which the world will believe in Him, of what infinite moment is it that all the brotherhood in the Church should endeavor each to be one with and in Christ through the Spirit, and to be at peace among themselves. The object of the present chapter is to elucidate the great doctrine of "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," and to impress upon all believers a conviction of the duty and importance of making it their study and prayerful endeavor to induce and preserve this oneness. This unity of the Spirit of which we speak does not imply that form of sameness which excludes all peculiarities of individual character. Who would desire to find in our forests and parks, or on our prairies and in our gardens, an absolute likeness in every tree, plant, and flower to every other? Or would desire to see a similar sameness among all human forms and countenances? Equally unwise would it be in God to produce a similar unity in the realm of mind and Spirit. Thought would stagnate, and all mental activity come to a dead standstill in a universe thus constituted. The Divine Spirit, when He dwells in a diversity of hearts, does effect a unity in all essential particulars. This unity, however, will be like that which His creative and sustaining energy produces in the external universe—a unity in which each mind differs from the other, just as one star differs from another star in glory. Nor does the unity of the Spirit imply, among individuals in whom He dwells, an absolute sameness of thought, feeling, and judgment, on all subjects mutually deemed important. Paul and Barnabas, as we have seen, had in common received the Holy Spirit since believing, and both in common were filled with the Spirit; yet they came to opposite conclusions on a subject mutually deemed important. Here we have unity of spirit and opposition of views in an important sphere of thought and judgment. What did obtain in this case may obtain in multitudes of other cases, and thus render necessary special endeavors "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace." All who have the Spirit are in fundamental particulars "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Other departments of thought and activity, however, God has left to the discretion of individuals. In the former relations unity, and in the latter diversity of thought and judgment, are to be anticipated.

What, then, is this unity of which we are speaking? In general, let us say that it implies that expression of oneness of thought, feeling, and sentiment on moral and spiritual subjects, which produces the highest possible forms of moral and spiritual excellence in the individual, and in the social relations of life. Character adorns itself with the loftiest attributes of beauty and perfection, when, amid a great diversity of minds, each exercises, to the fullest extent, the prerogatives of independent thought and action; at the same time all having a supreme respect for the judgment of God, and regarding it as a small matter to be judged by man’s judgment, even that of the brotherhood; and meanwhile, on subjects of essential importance, all are perfectly "joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment," no diversity or opposition obtaining, but in respect to things non-essential, and this diversity and opposition creating no discord. Now this is the Divine unity which the Spirit always effects when His influence gains complete ascendancy. To be somewhat particular, this unity of the Spirit implies:—

1. A common and readily understood likeness of spirit and character to those of Christ. "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image." Converse with any number of believers you please who "have received the Holy Ghost since they believed," and however diverse their circumstances, capacities, natural dispositions, and attainments, you will easily notice in all an essential and predominant unity in one important

point—a spirit and temper, views and aims, altogether Christ-like. In all there will appear the same meekness and gentleness, the same patient endurance of wrong and afflictive providences, the same spirit of condescension and universal philanthropy, the same love to God and love of truth, the same purity of life and uncompromising opposition to sin in all its forms, the same unconditional subjection to the will of God, and the same implicit obedience to the law of duty, that dwelt in Christ, and beautified His life and character. In these respects there will be in all a fundamental unity or likeness, because that each takes his nature and form from a common origin and pattern which is all-powerful to conform every honest mind that submits to it as it is, to its own resemblance. Everyone who has received the Holy Ghost possesses and exhibits that Spirit in such measure and degree as to show Him to be the leading and all-controlling power of his life and character. Here we have "the unity of the Spirit" in its most important characteristics and manifestations—a common oneness with Christ, and likeness to Him.

2. Another peculiarity of this "unity of the Spirit" of which we speak is found in the supreme affection and regard that all have for Christ. All have in Christ one and the same common center, about which their thoughts, affections, and activities perpetually revolve in similar supreme love and devotion. Through Him all have a crucifixion to the world, and the world to them. In Him all have common hopes and joys, which never "make ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us." They alike lean upon their Beloved. The voice of each is to Him, "Draw us, and we will run after Thee; my Beloved is mine, and I am His." Ritual names, all that is human and earthly, are lost sight of in Him.

"Names, and sects, and parties fall, And Christ, our Lord, is all in all."

3. A third feature of this "unity of the Spirit" is, all have in common "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ:" "Christ in you, the hope of glory;" "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and be their God, and they shall be My people;" "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one;" "We will come unto Him, and make our abode with Him." What a divine and blessed unity must be induced in kindred minds, all of whom have such identical inward experiences and fellowships as these!

4. The last element and characteristic of "the unity of the Spirit" to which we would refer, is this: a common and superlative regard for the image and Spirit of Christ in whomsoever it may exist, and from whomsoever it may be reflected. That, in character, which a truly sanctified mind esteems and values above all other things, is the image and Spirit of Christ, the beauty of holiness manifested and reflected in the inward experience and outward life. "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother and sister, and mother." This was the Spirit of Christ, and this is the ruling spirit and leading sentiment of all in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells. It is this spirit of impartial regard for moral purity in character that lays the foundation for that Divine form of Christian practice and experience denominated Christian fellowship, or brotherly love.

We have dwelt sufficiently upon the doctrine of the unity of the Spirit to show what it is. The next thought which demands attention is that form of oneness represented by the words, "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Peace exists where harmony prevails to the exclusion of discord, and the bitterness of strife and division. "Bond of peace" implies a form of unity which not only excludes strife and discord, but

resists and overcomes the strongest temptations to division and separation. Friendship is strong when neither absence nor the tongue of slander, diversity of opinion, nor seeming opposition of interest, can sunder or weaken the ties which unite loving hearts together. Take, for example, the friendship of David and Jonathan. Absence could not cool the ardor of their mutual love; nor could the tongue of envy, or rivalry of interest, sunder the bonds of peace by which their hearts were united. Christian unity and brotherly love imply friendship in the strongest form in which kindred minds can, by any possibility, be brought together. It is love, the same in kind as that which unites in one the ever blessed Persons of the sacred Trinity: "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee; that they may be one in us;" "That they may be one, as we are one." Worldly minds may be at peace one with the other, and may be united by ties of friendship apparently tender and strong. Such bonds, however, will stand but a feeble test. Slight cues of discord will sunder completely and forever such minds one from the other. The same holds true of that form of friendship which has its basis and source in the domestic affections. Fraternal love here will seldom endure even a division of a parental estate. But brotherly love, which has its basis and source in the "unity of the Spirit," is a bond of peace that endures to eternity, and which can by no possibility be sundered but by one of two causes, or both united a loss of Christian virtue, or an eclipse of Christian character—in which, from misunderstanding, or other reasons, sanctified minds for a time appear to each other as they are not. "The unity of the Spirit" not only induces peace among the brotherhood, but "bonds of peace." "The unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" is kept when sanctified minds maintain their oneness with Christ, and have "fellowship one with another."

There is one peculiarity which distinguishes this unity from worldly friendship in all its forms. The broken ties of the latter form of love are seldom or never reunited. A friend once cooled repels all attempts at a reunion. Not so with Christian fellowship or brotherly love. Broken ties, rejoined, live when the causes of separation are fully removed, and reunited bonds of peace remain stronger than they ever existed before. The duty enjoined next claims our attention—viz., to make it our constant endeavor—

"TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE"

Obedience to this principle implies two things: that it be our constant aim and endeavor to preserve in our own hearts, and in all sanctified minds around us, "the unity of the Spirit," or the oneness with the Spirit," or the oneness with Christ before described, unalloyed and untarnished, and to perpetuate among such this unity in the bond of peace: that is, to preserve Christian character wherever it exists untarnished, and to blend and keep all Christian minds in the one accord of Christian fellowship or brotherly love. Conceive of a certain number of associated minds and hearts, each "walking in the light as God is in the light," and all "having fellowship one with another;" while it is the steady endeavor of each and all to perpetuate and cement more and more this oneness with Christ on the one hand, and this mutual fellowship on the other, while all are watchfully guarding against all causes of corruption and discord from within and without this sanctified circle. We have here the identical state intended by the apostle when he penned the words of the text. That each believer should make it his steady and prayerful endeavor to induce and perpetuate among all the members of the household of faith "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," will appear evident from the following considerations:—

1. It is, in itself, the highest, the most perfect, and the most blessed state in which rational beings can exist and act. In this state, such minds not only have fellowship "one with another," but they all in common "walk with God, their fellowship being with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." There is no other state conceivable so exalted, so perfect, or so blessed as that. Now, if we ought to aim to induce in ourselves, and among the household of faith, the most perfect forms of virtue and the highest blessedness attainable, it should be our fixed and prayerful endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" among believers in all churches of the Redeemer.

2. The importance which Christ attaches to this state should impel every believer to use his constant and best endeavors to induce and perpetuate it. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one toward another." "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also that 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. And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." Who, in the presence of such melting revelations, would sow discord in the household of faith? Who can avoid making it his constant endeavor to cherish and perpetuate a state, for the existence and continuance of which Christ thus intercedes with "His Father and our Father, and with His God and our God?" especially when, according to the judgment of Christ, the destiny of the world is suspended upon the existence and action of such unity among believers.

3. The revealed example of God Himself should be to us an all-constraining motive to influence us to the most earnest, constant, and prayerful endeavor to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." "Be ye, therefore, followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savor." "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." When a duty lies before us, upon the object of which the interests of the world are suspended, and obedience to which is urged upon us by such motives and by such an example, we surely should be prompt and tireless in its performance.

4. We urge, as another reason for the duty before us, the fact that without our watchful endeavor "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" will not be kept among the brotherhood of the household of faith. Unless believers "watch unto prayer," "the serpent who beguiled Eve will corrupt their minds from the simplicity of Christ." So without their prayerful endeavor to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," "that old serpent the devil," will create misunderstandings, and strife, and discord in the family of Christ. A purposeless life never was, and never will be, a loving or a peaceful one. Let it, then, be our fixed and prayerful endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

"Blest be the tie that binds Our hearts in Christian love," And palsied be the tongue or the hand that shall sow discord and strife among the children of God.

5. We remark, finally, we should endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," because that when we cease to walk in the light, so as to have fellowship one with another, we lose all proper evidence of Christian character. "We know that we have passed from death unto

life, because we love the brethren." "If any man love not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." "He that hateth his brother is a murderer, and we know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Here, then, we have a fundamental test of Christian character. "Love is of God, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him." "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." In the conscious exercise of brotherly love, we have the witness of the Spirit that "we are the children of God." In the absence of such love, we lose all proper evidence that we are of God. In the opposite state, we have absolute proof that we have not eternal life abiding in us. How important, then, that we endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

1. In conclusion, we perceive clearly, in the light of our subject, that the duty imposed in the text has a far wider application than is commonly supposed. The words "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" imply "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" in the first case, and "fellowship one with another" in the next. Universal unity in both these respects is, according to the text, to be the object of our constant endeavor. Brotherly love merely is commonly understood as referred to in this passage. The keynote of Christian fellowship or unity is a common oneness with and in Christ: "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one."

2. We see, also, how discord in the household of faith should be regarded. It is in itself the root and consummation of all evil, and should be so considered, and that for two reasons. It tends to break up fellowship with God in the first case, and in the next, eclipses the glory of the gospel of Christ before the world.

3. We are now prepared to state definitely the true and proper conditions of Christian fellowship. It is not a mere profession of Christian character, but the presentation of valid evidence of the possession of genuine Christian virtue, or oneness with God. Sin is to be tolerated nowhere, and especially not within the Church of Christ. If an individual professes Christianity, and yet "walks disorderly," we are absolutely commanded to disfellowship him. If, on the other hand, an individual gives valid evidence that he has "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," we must receive him into cordial fellowship, whatever his peculiarities in other respects may be; or we are in peril of parting company with God.

04.10. Witness, Demonstration, and Power of the Spirit

CHAPTER X.

WITNESS, DEMONSTRATION, AND POWER OF THE SPIRIT.

"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."— Acts 10:38.

"And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."

1 John 5:6.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:"— Romans 8:16.

"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:"— 1 Corinthians 2:4.

There are certain peculiar and special forms of speech employed by the sacred writers to represent the relations of the mind to the truth of God when under the illumination of the Spirit. The word know is most commonly employed for such purposes. We give the following passages as examples:—"We know that we are of God." "And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him." "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God: that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you."

Assurance is another form of utterance by which the same relations are expressed: "And shall assure our hearts before Him." So also the sacred writers speak of "the full assurance of hope," "the full assurance of faith," and of the "full assurance of understanding." In the last text at the head of this chapter the apostle speaks of "the demonstration of the Spirit." Demonstration produces conviction which absolutely excludes doubt. No term more emphatic and powerfully expressive could possibly be employed to represent the mental results to the Christian of the inward illumination of the Spirit.

Those who are thus Divinely taught are denominated spiritual— "He that is spiritual judgeth all things: yet He Himself is judged of no man." This Divinely-imparted knowledge has in it what no other has —the elements of life everlasting: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Let us endeavor to attain an apprehension of the forms of knowledge under consideration.

There are different forms and degrees of conviction which the mind may have in regard to a given truth. At one time a proposition may appear as possibly, and at another as probably, true. Here conviction takes on the form of belief or opinion. In other cases conviction takes on forms still higher and more positive—those of certainty, which excludes doubt. We here find ourselves within the circle of knowledge proper, and begin to affirm that we know that this and that proposition is true or false. Knowledge, in its absolute forms, is intuitive or demonstrative. Of the former kind is

that in which we have a direct and immediate perception or knowledge of a given object—such as the consciousness which we have of our own existence and mental states, and of objects of direct and immediate perception in the world around us. Knowledge is demonstrative when we perceive that a given proposition not only is, but must be, true.

Here we attain to an apprehension of the character of all convictions induced by the illuminations of the Spirit. In all such cases there is a direct and inward beholding of Divine truth, followed by convictions which arise even above ordinary demonstration. In such beholdings doubt has no place. Nothing remains but absolute certainty. We "know the things which are freely given us of God." "Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Let us now contemplate a few facts and illustrations of the various forms of Divine teaching and illumination. You have, no doubt, reader, been subject to experiences like the following:—A given truth of God has for years, it may be, laid in the outer circle of thought. Doubt, and even unbelief, may at times have had place in your mind in regard to it; nor was it possible to render it the object of impressive apprehension. It lay, as a dead letter, at an infinite remove from the heart. All at once, and in a manner not at all understood, that truth makes an advance from the circle and sphere of doubt and disbelief into an open and impressive view, and we now know it as a Divine verity. It is a matter of inexpressible wonder now that we ever could for a moment have had a solitary doubt in respect to it, or could have regarded it with indifference. Disbelief, doubt, and indifference, on the other hand, appear infinitely absurd and criminal. No other forms of intuitive knowledge, and no demonstration, can induce such absolute and impressive conviction. The wife of a friend of mine was passing away through the gradual advance of consumption. From childhood death had been to her mind "the king of terrors." During her sickness, also, she had been greatly alarmed with the idea of dying. As her husband entered the room one day, she exclaimed, with an unearthly glow upon her countenance, "My dear husband, there is nothing fearful about dying. Death has no terrors. The idea of dying is sweet to me now." From that moment she adjusted her spirit for the approaching change with all the sweet equanimity with which she had before adorned herself for the bridal hour. Indeed, the embrace of death was to her mind the bridal hour of her immortal spirit. Here we have one illustration of the effects of Divine illumination. All truth, as apprehended through the Spirit, passes from those outer spheres of thought and apprehension where disbelief and gloomy doubts prevail, and where vision is dim and unimpressive, into the inner circle of open and all-impressive vision, and of absolute knowledge. "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee."

We have special examples and illustrations of the form of illumination in the experience of converted men—that of infidels, Universalists,, and moralists, especially—when under the convicting power of the Spirit. When walking in carnal security, amid the deep midnight of unbelief, impregnably fortified, as they supposed, in their opinions and beliefs, and doubly armed against all the arguments and weapons of "the truth as it is in Jesus," in a moment of deep and solemn thought, such as from time to time comes over all minds in common, the cloud is lifted, and they find themselves in the clear sunlight of truth itself. Their arguments, reasonings, and objections to the gospel appear lighter than "airy nothing"—as only so many absurdities. The evidences in favor of Christianity, on the other hand, stand out before the mind as immovable as the everlasting

mountains. Such individuals cannot themselves tell how this sunlight came to them. But when it did come they found themselves at once within the sphere of absolute knowledge, the circle where doubt forever disappears. A very intelligent gentleman in Boston, years ago, requested me to visit him. During our interview he made this statement:— "For fifty years of my life up to a few weeks since, I was a confirmed atheist. I had no idea that my belief could be shaken. As I lay upon my bed from a slight indisposition, the following reflections passed through my mind. There are in the Bible a vast number of predictions which no human foresight could have divined. Every one of these, when the time specified arrived, was fulfilled to the letter. The same Book foretells for the soul a future state of eternal retribution. These last predictions will come to pass just as all the others have done. All this came before my mind with such distinctness and force as to render doubt impossible; and I am here, a believer in Jesus." A distinguished moralist, who had long and openly gloried in the all-sufficiency of his own self-originated righteousness, determined at one time, in conformity to a suggestion which he had heard from an evangelical pulpit, to take a careful survey of his life, write down his good deeds in one column and his bad ones in another, and then strike the balance between them. He sat down with the most undoubting assurance of finding the result immensely in his own favor. With much self-congratulation he wrote out a long catalogue of meritorious acts. But when he commenced putting down his acts of sin, one and another suggested itself, until this last catalogue far outnumbered the first. Still his sins, in appalling succession, came rushing in upon his memory. Their number appeared to be infinite. I must have forgotten many of my good deeds, he said to himself. I will run over the record of these, that others may thereby be suggested. As his eye rested upon the first set down to his own credit, that act, he said again to himself, is sinful. The motive which prompted it was wrong. So of every other of the same class, until his whole life stood out before his mind as "evil, and only evil, continually." Truth, under the searching power of the Spirit, having become "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," the man apprehended not only his general sinfulness, but his absolute totality in sin. At the same time he perceived, with equal distinctness, the infinite criminality of such a life. Now he knew his need of Christ, and was soon found a trembling, trusting, hoping, and believing penitent, at the foot of the cross. Throughout the whole process there was, instead of former darkness and unbelief, absolute conviction, which totally excluded doubt. Similar results obtain in the experience of all impenitent persons when under the convicting power of the Spirit. They know, as by direct and absolute intuition, their sin and ill desert, their ruin in sin, and need of the redemption of Christ. The effects of Divine illumination, however, become still more manifest in the experience of the believer when "the Holy Ghost comes upon him." A real Christian may, for example, continue in long and painful doubt in respect to the genuineness of his conversion, and the question of his acceptance with God. Inquiry, and even prayer, tend but to dim vision and intensify doubt upon the subject. All at once he emerges from all this chilling fog into a bright spot, where more than sunlight shines upon the question about which his mind has so long hung in the agony of doubt and uncertainty. He knows that he is accepted in the Beloved," and without fear hangs his eternity upon that assurance. Were he asked the question, how and why he knows this, he might be at a loss for an answer. Of the fact of his adoption, however, he has an assurance as absolute as he has of his own existence. "Behold," he exclaims, "God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid. For the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song. He also has become my salvation." The believer reads upon the sacred page such passages as the following: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love. Therefore, with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." "As the Father hath loved Me,

so have I loved you." "The hairs of your head are all numbered." "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Such passages, as everyone knows, represent a form of love "which passeth knowledge." Yet to the unillumined mind that love not real. God seems to be afar off. He does seem to love Christ, and angels. and glorified spirits. It appears, however, as if He had forgotten and forsaken me. I cannot make it real that His ear is bent toward me when I pray to Him. All at once the veil is lifted from the face of God, and with open vision we behold His glory. Nothing seems so real now as God's love to us and His care for us. God is love; and our dwelling-place is in the fullness of that love. All that the sacred writers affirm of "the fellowship of the Spirit," of "God's dwelling in us, and we in Him," of "Christ in you, the hope of glory," of His manifesting Himself unto us, and with the Father "making His abode in us," of "the Father in Him, and He in us," and of the Father loving us even as He loves the Son, all is consciously real to the mind now. We "comprehend the length, and breadth, and depth, and height," and "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." We "know and believe the love that God hath to us. The same holds true of Divine illumination in all its forms. When the Spirit comes, He "takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us," and "shows us plainly of the Father." Christ, with the Father, is to us a real and manifested personal presence, and "with open face" we "behold His glory." We receive from Christ "eye-salve, that we may see." "We read the precious Scriptures with new eyes;" and have a direct immediate and open vision of their great revelations. When we speak of these things, "what we have seen and heard," of these we give testimony.

We are now prepared to apprehend what is meant by the witness of the Spirit to the truth. There are two revealed objects to which His testimony pertains: to the truth as revealed in the Sacred Word, and to individuals in regard to the fact of their Divine adoption. That first designated is the form of testimony of which we are now to speak. "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth," trustworthy, giving testimony only to what is true. There are various forms in which this testimony is given. The Spirit is the Author of the Bible. "The holy men of old" who wrote it "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." In giving us this revelation, we have His testimony to its truth. Doubting what is written, we "make God a liar." We have similar testimony in the stupendous Spirit-wrought miracles, and in the numberless Spirit-inspired prophecies which encircle the Sacred Word and affirm its Divine origin. In the nature of the production itself, the Spirit has also given a form of testimony to the truth equally absolute and impressive. It would be no more absurd to affirm that man originated the solar system, than is the dogma that the Bible is a mere human production. "The footprints of the Creator" are as manifest here as in the organization of the universe. Through the work produced, the Spirit has given absolute testimony to the truth. The form of testimony of all others the most impressive, however, is that which is constantly being witnessed in the interior of the mind itself when under the special influence and illumination of the Spirit. We call a physician, who prescribes a certain medicine, and at the same time designates certain specific effects which will follow its administration. In the experience of those identical results, we have proof of that physician's knowledge and integrity. The Scriptures map out beforehand endlessly diversified forms of experience and character, as resulting from our believing and obeying the gospel. As these experiences follow our faith and obedience—call in exact accordance with "what is written"—and as these results do and can follow under no other influences, we know, and cannot but know, that "the Spirit is truth." As these results are Divine in their nature, we also know that the truth which induces them must, through the Spirit, "come down from the Father of lights." The "everlasting consolations," the immortal hopes the Divine

fellowships, the moral virtues, and the fullness of joy all consciously received through a superhuman and Divine influence, are so many witnesses within, that we are being led, and taught, and filled by "the Spirit of the living God." "We have the witness in ourselves."

"The Spirit," we are also told, "beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." How is this testimony borne? Of this we are, in one particular, informed in the context. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." The apostle then adds: "The Spirit beareth witness with "that is, in connection with or through—"our spirit"—the spirit of adoption which He induces in us—"that we are the children of God." In the exercise of the spirit of adoption, we recognize God as our Father, and ourselves as His children. In effecting this spirit within us, the Holy Ghost super-adds His testimony to the fact that we are God’s sons and daughters. If we were not such, the Holy Ghost would not create the spirit of sonship in our hearts. The believer, as he advances onward "in the light of God"—and we always walk in that light when we have the Spirit—receives at length an absolute inward assurance of His Divine adoption. From that moment "he knows that he is of God," and can no more doubt it than he can cease to be conscious of his own being. In giving us that assurance, the Spirit gives us with it His testimony that "we are children of God," and we distinctly recognize His testimony to that fact. The believer often passes through a form of experience in which "patience has her perfect work," and in which "tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." When the Spirit thus "sheds abroad" that love, He gives with it His absolute testimony to the fact that "we are the children of God." In conducting us through such hallowed experiences, He testifies to and with our spirit that God is dealing with us "as with sons," disciplining us "for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness."

So, when "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities," we, "not knowing what we should pray for as we ought," "He maketh intercession for us according to the will of God;" and thus influenced and directed, we "ask and receive" "until our joy is full." In inducing these filial and parental relations between us and God, the Spirit, in the most absolute form conceivable, "testifies with our spirit that we are the children of God." During the era of deadly persecution in Scotland, when "the baptism of the Spirit" was the common experience of believers, and the myrmidons of the persecuting power were marauding the whole country to murder the saints and breakup the religious assemblies, a young woman, on her way to such a meeting, was met by a company of cavalry, and required to give her destination. She could not "deny the faith," and would not reveal the place of meeting. At that moment this promise presented itself to her mind: "It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak." She lifted a secret prayer that God would then give her what she should speak. Instantly these words presented themselves, and she uttered them as presented: "I am going to my Father’s house. My elder Brother has died. His will is to be read today, and I have an interest in it." The commander bid her go on her way. "I hope," he added, "you will find a rich portion left to yourself." Could the Spirit have given that young saint any more absolute testimony that she was a child of God? At that same era, two brethren were helping their loved pastor, who was crippled with rheumatism, on to such a meeting. On their way, they discovered a troop of those murderers approaching. As they could not in time carry their pastor to a place of safety, he entreated them to leave him, and save themselves. They replied that they should stay and die with

him. As they would not be persuaded, he lifted a prayer that God would interpose, and conceal them from their persecutors. Instantly a thick cloud came over the top of the mountain, and covered them, so their murderers passed close by their victims without seeing them at all. Did those individuals need from the Spirit any other testimony that they were "the children of God?" Every answer we receive to prayer is a testimony of the same kind.

We remark once more, when the Spirit brings us into conscious "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ;" when He enables us to "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," and "fills us with all the fulness of God:" when we "behold with open face the glory of the Lord," and are "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord;" and when, by His indwelling presence and illumination, "God becomes our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning are ended"—in all this we have the absolute testimony of the Spirit to our adoption. We need, as Mr. Wesley says, no voice without, and no words within, to know that we have this witness. What we do need is, "full assurance of hope," "full assurance of faith," and "full assurance of understanding." These the Spirit gives us; and in these we have His testimony that "we are the children of God."

Truth in all its forms, when apprehended through the Spirit, has not only an all-illuminating and all-convincing, but equally an all-vitalizing power—a power to quicken into the highest possible activity every faculty and susceptibility of our nature. Every truth of God, and at the same time all that we are capable of being and becoming through Divine influence, lie out with perfect distinctness under the eye of the Spirit. At each successive moment, therefore, He is able, we co-working with Him, to produce in us those specific apprehensions, desires, and purposes, which will render our activity the most perfect, our blessedness the most full, and our virtues the most divine. Nothing possible to our natures lies beyond His power to induce in us, and to enable us to accomplish. He knows us as we do not and cannot know ourselves; and not what we know of ourselves, but what He knows us as capable of being, becoming, doing, and enjoying, is the limit and measure of His power to do in and through us. As "laborers together with God" for His kingdom and glory, the Spirit knows how to produce in us just those apprehensions of God, Christ, life, death, duty, redemption, eternity, and retribution, just those emotions, desires, purposes, forms of utterance, and modes of action, which will render our agency the most efficient for the purposes of our "high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Yes, reader, God by His Spirit is "able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work." Girded by the power of the Spirit, the weakest among us may do valiant service "for the great Captain of our salvation." The same Almighty power which the Spirit "wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at the right hand of God in the heavenly places, far above all "principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come," we are absolutely assured, is equally mighty to usward in reference to all our spiritual necessities and exigencies; yes, equally mighty to do in and for us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Nothing can exceed the impressiveness of the language of the apostle upon this subject, viz.,

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of

His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

There are two distinct and opposite states and relations in which the believer in Jesus may be contemplated. In the one state he has repented of sin, "believed to the saving of his soul," entertains sincere purposes of obedience, and is not utterly barren of good works. In the other state he has all these, with "the power of the Spirit" superadded. As a necessary consequence, a fundamental difference arises in the forms which Christian experience and action take on. In the former state the leading characteristics of such experience are imbecility, inward emptiness, and want; doing what we would not, and not doing what we would; a perpetual "laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works to serve the living God;" intervals of light, with longer continued periods of darkness and gloom; periods of hope and assurance, but more of doubt and fear; occasional joys, "but much of sorrow, much of woe;" much of crying after God, but very little, if any "communion of the Spirit;" and many fightings, but very few "victories by the blood of the Lamb and the word of His testimony." In the latter state the equally marked characteristics of that experience are courage and strength; "everlasting consolations and good hope through grace;" "victories by the blood of the Lamb and the word of His testimony;" "the light of God, and with it full assurance of faith," "full assurance of hope," and "full assurance of understanding;" "all-sufficiency in all things," and thereby "abounding unto every good work;" immortal fellowships and "fulness of joy;" and God as our "everlasting light," while "the days of our mourning are ended."

"The Church of the living God" should ever be in that state in which "he that is feeble among us is as David, and the house of David as God, as the angel of the Lord before Him," On what conditions can we be girded with this everlasting strength? We must, in the first place, fully appreciate our own weaknesses and insufficiency in ourselves, and utterly and forever renounce and repudiate the principle of self-sufficiency and dependence. "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves." This truth must be omnipresent in our mind. In the next place, we must as fully appreciate the available strength which exists for us in God. "Our sufficiency is of God," and in Him we have "all-sufficiency for all things." We "can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth us." In our assurance of available "strength in the Lord, and in the power of His might," we must never waver. Lastly, our hope and our trust must be, "not in ourselves, but in God." "If we will not believe, we shall not be established." If we do believe, our "light will go forth as brightness, and our salvation as a lamp that shineth." At all times and in every exigency "the grace of Christ will be sufficient for us." Here lies the grand secret of holy living. "Have faith in God." We believe, and therefore speak." "If thou canst believe: all things are possible to him that believeth." Self-distrust and "faith in God." Here is the Divine secret, which "none of the wicked," and too few believers "understand;" but which the "wise do understand." May you, reader, know this Divine secret! As far as "the full assurance of faith," "the full assurance of hope," "the full assurance of understanding," and that form of fear which is "cast out by perfect love," are concerned, fear should have no place whatever in Christian experience. All in common should "serve God without

fear, in righteousness and holiness before Him, all the days of their lives." Yet there are certain possibilities and perils attendant on the Christian life which should induce that sober vigilance and wakeful circumspection and watchfulness, represented by the words "godly fear" and "fear and trembling." Notwithstanding the availability, the all-sufficiency of Divine grace, and "the power of the Spirit," we may "cast away our confidence," "sell our birthright," "quench the Spirit," and be "corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." The immutable condition of final salvation with us is, that we "hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast, even unto the end." For the want of proper diligence in "stirring the gift of God which is in us," the gift of the Spirit, we may fail to glorify God by "bearing much fruit." We must "keep our bodies under, and bring them into subjection," or ourselves be "castaways." In every department of the Christian life and work, we are "laborers together with God," and encircled with adversaries ever wakeful, watchful, and of mighty power. Such considerations, while they should not dim our hopes, weaken our assurances, or lessen our fullness of joy, should render us "sober-minded" and "watchful unto prayer." "There is no time for trifling here," for anything but sober-minded circumspection. If we will be thus "sober and vigilant," Christ through the Spirit will "make all grace abound toward us," so that we shall "always have all-sufficiency in all things." But "if we will not watch, Christ will come upon us as a thief," and "remove our candlestick out of its place."

04.11. The Fountain Opened for Sin

CHAPTER XI. THE FOUNTAIN OPENED FOR SIN AND FOR UNCLEANNESS, OR THE CLEANSING POWER OF THE SPIRIT.

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."— 1 Corinthians 1:30.

"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."— Zechariah 13:1.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."— Titus 3:5. In Palestine and surrounding countries, the people, in ages past, were sometimes in great peril from want of water, occasioned by either of two circumstances—drought, or the besieging of cities, when the usual supply was cut off by encircling foes. Hence it was that the greatest pains were then taken by the inhabitants exposed to such evils, to provide against them. The method generally adopted was to dig out in the solid rock beneath the surface on which such cities were built, vast reservoirs, which, in periods of rain, were filled with water and then sealed up, so as to be preserved pure until times of extremity should come. Then they were opened to quench thirst, and for external cleansing. In searching amid the ruins of such cities, vast rows of such fountains or reservoirs have been found. Some of these fountains are from one to three hundred feet deep, and as many in diameter. We seen a city was well furnished with such sealed fountains, they would be to all the inhabitants a source of great blessedness, because they would see in them abundant security against evils which were certain to impend at some time. When the ordinary supply of water was cut off for either of the reasons assigned, then all minds would be turned with intense desire to the sealed fountains within the city, and the opening of the same would be the object of one common, all-pervading prayer to the public authorities, to whose control such fountains were subject. While the keeping of those fountains closed at such times would be the occasion of general sorrow and regret, the opening of them would be as the first note of the trump of jubilee to the people. Such an event brought deliverance from two forms of death—thirst within, and uncleanness breeding pestilence, without.

Sometimes, when the fountains were opened, it would be found, to the amazement and horror of the expectant multitude, that through some fissures in the rocks the waters had escaped, and the fountains were dry. These were the "broken cisterns," or fountains "that could hold no water." Hence it is that these fountains afford some of the most beautiful and impressive figures found in the Scriptures. When, for example, a person was to an individual a source and cause of great serenity, peace, and consolation, and at the same time the object of most endeared affection, the former would be said to be to the latter "a fountain sealed;" "a fountain sealed is My beloved unto Me." When individuals were subject, from any cause, to very great joy and triumph, or to great deliverances from impending dangers, the cause of such joy and deliverance was compared to a fountain opened during the straits of drought or of siege, "Thou wilt open unto him the fountains of

life." As in the land of oppressive heat, the water, cool and fresh, welling up from the heart of the earth, was, in itself, more refreshing than the rainwater drawn from the hewn-rock fountains, invaluable as the latter was in times of extremity, so when an object was to the mind the source and cause of the greatest conceivable good, it was compared to "a fountain of living water." On the other hand, when an object had been the source and cause of the highest hope, and had flagrantly wrecked and disappointed that hope, it was compared to a "broken cistern," a fountain opened in time of pressing necessity, and to the horror of the expectant multitude found empty. When an individual was seen abandoning that which would be to him the source of the greatest good, and pursuing with eager haste that which would be to him the cause of certain ruin and death, he was compared to one who "forsakes a fountain of living water, and hews out to himself a broken cistern that can hold no water;" as if a man should refuse to taste of living water welling up from a perennial spring near him, and was seen laboriously striving to hew out for himself, in a visibly shelly and split rock, a cistern, to receive the rainwater that might run into it from the clouds above.

We may now apply the impressive figure in which the redemption of Christ is set before us in the text, together with the attitude of the heart of the Church in respect to that redemption, as the latter-day glory dawns in. The text, you will bear in mind, sets before us, in one and the same figure, the salvation of Christ, in what may be called its objective and subjective relations—that is, salvation as it is in itself, and the state of the heart relatively to it, when Christ becomes "the power of God and the wisdom of God unto the believer." In itself, whether men avail themselves of it or not, that salvation is "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." It contains and reveals provisions, full and complete, for all the moral and spiritual necessities of the soul. These provisions, however, only become efficacious to this end when the soul, supremely desirous to be wholly free from the condemnation, power, and inbeing of sin, sees in Christ a sovereign remedy for this death-plague, and comes to Him, and trusts in the virtue of His blood as the "fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness."

Think of the inhabitants of an Eastern city in a time of extreme droughts, when the living fountains and wells within and around are completely dried; or in the straitness of a siege, when all watercourses are stopped, or turned aside by the encircling foe. In this state, everyone is perishing with a burning thirst, and terror-stricken with the apprehension of the all-pervading presence of the death-plague from uncleanness. In the sealed fountains within the city is the only sovereign remedy for both these forms of impending death. One desire now pervades all minds, and one prayer goes up to the ruling authorities. It is, that these fountains may be opened to save the people from these terrible calamities. When the fountains are opened, what a universal rush there is to them, to obtain those waters of life! and with what eagerness are they applied to quench the burning thirst, and cleanse away the external impurity!

Such is the state of the heart relatively to the provisions of saving grace in Christ, when they become efficacious for the pardon of sin, and for moral and spiritual purification. When the mind is divided by the attractions of things seen and temporal, and drawn by "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," away from God, and holiness, and Heaven; when self-righteousness or unbelief closes the avenues of the heart to Christ and the Spirit of grace—then these provisions in Christ have no more efficacy for the salvation of the soul than if they had no existence at all. Christ is then to the soul, not a "fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness," but a fountain closed. When preached by the Holy Ghost, Christ was "to the Jew a

stumblingblock, and to the Greek foolishness," because the "Jew sought for a sign, and the Greek for wisdom." That is, each held in supreme regard something incompatible with the outgoing of the heart in a supreme desire and choice towards Christ and His salvation. But to everyone that believeth, He was, and He is, "the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation," because all such appreciate the infinite value of His grace, and seek it in Him with all the heart and with all the soul. Such is the salvation of Christ in its subjective and objective relations, as it is in itself closed, and as it is unsealed to the believing heart "a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness." When Christ is formed within the soul, the hope of glory, and with perfect quietness and assurance reposes in Him for all future necessities, receiving everlasting consolation and peace through His grace, then He is to such a "fountain of living waters." When one predominant desire possesses the mind, to be wholly free from the condemnation and power of sin, and in perfect purity to be "filled with all the fulness of God;" and when in Christ it apprehends a present and perfect sufficiency to meet all its desires and necessities, then Christ is to the soul "a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." The soul realizes the blessings of a present Christ immediately, fully, and specifically flowing into every susceptibility and want of its immortal nature.

It is to a state of hunger and thirst for righteousness, to an inward panting and crying out of the whole inner being for God and the light of His countenance, that the "exceeding great and precious promises" are addressed, by which we become "partakers of the Divine nature." When all the powers of the soul are preoccupied and filled with worldly attachments incompatible with the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; when worldly pride, the spirit of self-righteousness and unbelief, repel the approach of the doctrine of Christ crucified for our redemption; the individual who reasons with him upon righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come, and commends to him the full salvation in Christ "for sin and for uncleanness," is to him as a mocker or one that bring strange things to his ears. In our cities are various reservoirs, the contents of which are in reserve in case of fire. What if the authorities should open these, and invite the people to use them for quenching their thirst and for external purification. You would regard your rulers as demented. Your wells and your cisterns are filled with living or pure cloud water. You have no liking for the filthy water in the reservoirs referred to and you would condemn as an insult an invitation to partake of them With somewhat similar feelings do men who think they have all and abound, regard the provisions of grace for their redemption They esteem it quite meritorious if for once a week when convenience serves, they attend upon the services of the sanctuary where these provisions are urged upon their acceptance while the majority of men contemn even so much regard for sacred things as that. But suppose God should send a drought in which all moisture should be burnt out of the earth beneath and the atmosphere above and around you. Your wells and cisterns and rivers are dried up and your lakes even have become stagnant pools of death-poison. One want presses upon the people—water. Even the street water in your reservoirs would then be regarded as of priceless value. But suppose that the public authorities should now open sealed fountains, filled with the pure liquid which the clouds and dews of Heaven had rained down among you How would you then regard the cry, "Ho! everyone that thirsteth come ye to the waters!" With similar feelings do men regard the provisions of life in Christ when they become conscious of their real condition as sinners, and it is, we repeat, to this poverty of spirit, this inward cry for the waters of life in Christ, that the invitations and promises of Christ are addressed.

We now advance to a very important inquiry—viz., what are we to understand by the declaration, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness?" The text implies that the time is coming when the Church is to attain to a new form of experience in Christ, not common, and by no means general in any preceding age. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened." There is great meaning in these memorable words "that day."

Let us inquire for the meaning of this prophecy. Christ in Himself, and in the fullness, completeness, and efficacy of the provisions of grace in Him for all the wants of the soul, "is the same yesterday, and today, and forever." "Ye are complete in Him," will hold equally true of the Church, as far as Christ's power to save is concerned, at any one moment from the beginning to the end of time, as at any other. In consequence of a change of relations of the heart of the Church, however, He may be to her in degree and in fullness a Saviour such as He had never before been.

Such a change did occur in the experience of the disciples and Primitive Christians at the Pentecost, and such a change does, in fact, occur in the experience of all believers when they "have received the Holy Ghost after they have believed." Prior to this consummation, the vision of truth is dim, and the faith of the soul takes but a feeble hold of things unseen and eternal. As a consequence, the evidence of justification is obscure, and but small degrees of virtue proceed from Christ for moral and spiritual purification. To do, or to endure, the soul has but very little strength; and with feeble and oft-slipping footsteps, it treads its weary way in the paths of obedience and of life. In such a twilight of Divine illumination the is hope; but doubt oftener predominates than assurance. There are, also, joys and consolations; but not "peace as a river, and righteousness as the waves of the sea." There is rather more of doubt than of hope, of fear than of assurance, and "an aching void within the soul," rather than "joy unspeakable and full of glory." But when the Holy Ghost falls upon the believer, and his soul is "filled with the Spirit," in that baptism of fire, of love, of light, and joy in God, there is a cloudless apprehension of truth, and every truth apprehended has a transforming power upon the heart and character. The face of God, the love of Christ "the glory of God and of the Lamb," are unveiled to the open vision of the mind. Hope dispels doubt, and assurance banishes fear. Weakness gives place to strength in God to do and to endure "all the good pleasure of His goodness, even the work of faith with power."

Instead of an aching void within, an infinite fullness of "living water springs up into everlasting life." In other words, there is in that day "a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."

Now it is to this higher form of experience, this outpouring of the Spirit promised to the Church in these latter days, that special reference is had in the text. You will observe that it is to "the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem—"that is, for believers within, and not for sinners without, the circle of the Church, that the fountain here referred to is to be opened. In the context we read, that the time of the fulfillment of this prophecy is to be a period of great moral and spiritual power in the Church: "He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them." It is also to be a time of total moral and spiritual purification: "In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord." Prior to that event, the instances of such high attainments would be few

and far between. Then, this is to become the common experience of the Church universal. This era of universal and total purification in the Church, this era of mighty power for the subjection of the world to the reign of Christ, is the theme of all the prophets, "when they testify beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and of the glory that was to follow." St. John calls its introduction, "The marriage of the Lamb." "Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honor to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted to be clothed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." Referring to this era of Divine illumination, God, through the prophet Isaiah, thus addresses the Church: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

What a contrast in the state of the Church, as it has been in ages past, as it now is, and as it is to be in that day of light, and glory, and blessedness! Now, whatever of Divine glory she possesses is hardly recognized by the world, so feebly does her light shine. Then, that glory is to become visible and all-impressive to the world—so visible, and so impressive, that the race shall be drawn from the gross darkness with which they are encircled, to the light which is radiated from the face and throne of God upon the Church; just as the people were drawn from the darkness of Egypt to the light which illumined the Land of Goshen. And then this era of illumination is never to be eclipsed. "The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." In that day, according to the word of God through the prophet Jeremiah, God is to make a new covenant with His Church, and this is to be that covenant: "I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;" that is, sanctify them permanently and wholly. "Then," says God through the prophet Ezekiel, "will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." Of the degree of sanctification referred to in all these prophecies, we are distinctly informed in Jeremiah 50:20 : "In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall he sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." The prophet Joel refers to the same state of moral purification under the representation of a universal diffusion of the Holy Spirit upon the entire body of believers: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh" [upon the entire company of believers], "and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy." No careful reader of the Scriptures can fail to perceive that the fountain referred to in the text is to be opened within the Church, and to and for believers as such; that they all, having "washed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," may be, in Christ, "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." When the Church has thus attained, then will she become, in deed and in truth, a power in the world for its redemption. Ignorance and unbelief have hitherto kept the mass of believers straying in the wilderness with the flocks of Christ’s foes. There their "follies have filled them with weeping." In all ages, there have been a few who "have known and have believed the love of God to them," and thus knowing and believing, "their love has been made perfect." To the entire mass of believers, however, Christ is then to be "a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." In that day and at that time the love of all in common will be made perfect. WHEN IS CHRIST SUCH A FOUNTAIN TO BELIEVERS? The most important inquiry suggested by the text here presents

itself—viz., By what means and under what circumstances will believers find in Christ this opened fountain? In other words, on what conditions does the grace of Christ, and the revelation of His glory and love, act upon the soul as an all-renovating power, emancipating it from "the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God?"

We all know on what conditions and under what circumstances Christ becomes a fountain opened to the sinner for the pardon of sin. Through the power of the Spirit in connection with external and internal influences, he is led to think on his ways. In thus thinking, he distinctly apprehends the fact of his sin and of his hopeless ruin in sin. One want now presses upon him, and centers in itself the supreme desire of his soul—viz., pardon and acceptance with God. In this state he opens the Scriptures, and reads of Christ as the sinner's friend, the sinner's hope; or he meets with a Christian friend who points him to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The Spirit now so presents Christ to his sin-burdened soul that it apprehends in Him a present, immediate, and all-sufficient fullness for the overwhelming want with which it is burdened. Christ is now to that mind a fountain opened for sin; that is, for pardon, full and free. This convert meets some other sinner, and tells him of Christ as a Saviour from condemnation and the fear of death. That sinner, convinced of his own sin, and ruin in sin, beholds in Christ the needed redemption. Christ becomes to him, as in the former, a fountain opened for sin. Whenever the soul apprehends in Christ a present fullness for any pressing necessity, then He is to that mind "a fountain opened" for that want. Now, when the soul has found in Christ "a fountain opened" for the forgiveness of sin, and when the joy and peace of its first love have passed away, it begins to feel the pressure of another want, more agonizing, if possible, than the first. It experiences an inward hunger and thirst for another blessing, more important even than pardon and the peace which the assurance of reconciliation with God can bring to the mind. It wants deliverance from "the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." It wants to be "pure in heart," that it may "see God." It wants to find in Christ, and in the gospel of His grace, a power not only for pardon, but for moral and spiritual renovation.

It reads in the Scriptures of an "eye-salve" by which we may see, and of an "anointing" by which we "know the things which are freely given us of God." It reads still further of Christ in the soul, "the hope of glory," and of God dwelling in us and walking in us, and thus becoming "our everlasting light," while the "days of our mourning are ended." It reads of a baptism of the Spirit—a baptism by which and in which "we all, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory," and are enabled to "comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," and thus be "filled with all the fulness of God." In the midst of such revelations, and in the presence of such "exceeding great and precious promises," one desire possesses the whole powers of the soul—the desire to realize in its experience the fullness thus revealed to its faith and hope. Its one inquiry in great earnestness is, how and where can this fullness be obtained? To receive an answer to this question, the individual sets about a most diligent and prayerful research. He makes inquiry of the most spiritual believers in the ministry and out of it, and reads the memoirs of such men as Brainerd and Payson. But all in vain. The Bible is a sealed book. In it he finds no present Christ addressed to the one present want of his whole being. "With strong crying and tears" he asks this single blessing of the Father in Heaven—that he "may know Him, and understand His way, and find grace in His sight;" that he may possess and be filled with the righteousness after

which he now so inexpressibly hungers and thirsts, and be "endued with the power from on high," for which he is now waiting with such intense expectancy.

While thus praying, waiting, searching, hoping, and trusting, there is, through the Spirit, a direct manifestation of the glory, the love, the grace, and the fullness of Christ to his mind. In Christ he apprehends a present available and infinite fullness for every want of his immortal nature. The faith of his soul takes such a hold of the strength and fullness of Christ, as to become at once "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," to do, to endure, to think, to feel, and to act for Christ. "All things have become new." Hope becomes changed into absolute assurance, and faith almost into a vision of things unseen and eternal. The veil is taken away from the Word of God. Its varied revelations of truths well out in "rivers of living water." Every truth realized has a quickening, vitalizing, and renovating power upon the mind. In other words, the believer, by a way which he knows not, now finds in Christ and in the gospel of His grace "a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness."

Now this individual, thus, without learning, teaching, or external help, led to Christ, begins to speak to others of "the riches of the glory of this mystery," "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." He speaks of Divine manifestations, of a "witness of the Spirit," of "a shedding abroad of the love of God in the heart," of a Divine indwelling in the soul, of a "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," of "everlasting consolations and good hope through grace," and of "joy unspeakable and full of glory," to all of which they are comparative strangers. Yet he speaks in a manner which renders them sensible of the fact, that "what he hath seen and heard, that he testifies." The hearing of such an experience awakens in them a thirst for these waters of life, and Christ, in this one mind, becomes to them "a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." God shines into one heart, and thus gives to all around "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." So also when the membership of any one church becomes thus washed and purified, and made white "in the blood of the Lamb," Christ, in that church, becomes to all the churches and the world around, "a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." Thus streamlet intermingles with streamlet, till the waters of life, issuing from multitudes of sanctified hearts, become, in accordance with Ezekiel’s vision, a mighty river that cannot "be passed over," and "the redeemed of the Lord return and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing flee away."

You may now see, dear reader, when it is that you may regard yourself as standing upon the very banks of the river of life, where God is about to become the everlasting light of your soul. It is when, and only when, you have such a quenchless thirst for God, for holiness, and for the indwelling of the presence of Christ in your heart, that nothing else will satisfy you, or divert your thoughts or desire from this one infinite good, and when your whole being is centered in the immutable purpose to attain it. When the disciples were "all with one accord in one place," the set time had come when they were to be "endued with power from on high." Are you, reader, in a similar state? "Then lift up your head: your redemption draweth nigh!" But if you have no such purpose or desire, remember that you have no lot or part in this matter.

You also perceive when and how it is that Christ, in and through one individual, becomes to others "a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." It is not in the holding or the public advocacy of a form of doctrine or system of faith which accords with the truth that anyone occupies this Divine

relation. It is, on the other hand, the holding and the advocacy of "the truth as it is in Jesus," and an inward experience and an outward life which accords with that truth. Were we an inquirer after the higher life in Christ, one of the last individuals that we would go to for light upon the subject, would be one who holds and advocates the doctrine of full redemption, and yet knows nothing of that truth as an all-vitalizing and renovating power. The most injurious influence that can exist in any church and community goes out from that person who zealously advocates that vital truth, and yet connects such advocacy with an unholy and corrupt life. The brightest jewel in Christ's crown of glory in any church, on the other hand, is the individual who holds and advocates that truth, and who has "received the Holy Ghost since he has believed." In him God dwells and walks, and Christ abides as an all-purifying, quickening, and life-imparting presence; and through him Christ and the provisions of His grace are perpetually revealed to the Church and the world around, as "a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness"—the Divinest mission ever fulfilled by men or angels.

We also understand when it is that in any particular church Christ is revealed to other churches and the world around, as the fountain opened, of which we are speaking. That revelation is not made in and through the creed, or through the ministrations of the Church, however accordant both may be with the truth of God. There is no more unvitalizing power on earth than resides in a dead orthodoxy. To the sinner pressing the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" There is no spot where he is less likely to find the truth he seeks than in that place where the truth, and nothing—but the truth, is held, advocated, and preached, and where that truth is belied and neutralized by a dead faith in the ministry and membership. To the inquirer after the higher life, there is no spot to him more dark than he finds in a church, and under a ministry, where this soul-renovating and heart-vitalizing truth is held, advocated, and preached, but where it exists in no hearts as "a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." The very truth itself then becomes to such a mind a mass of darkness, and nothing else, being presented as having no efficacy for moral and spiritual renovation. To the revelation under consideration; in and through any given church, two condition must e fulfilled. The truth as it is in Jesus, in the first place, must be internally credited and openly advocated. It is "by the foolishness of preaching" that God saves those that believe. "Faith cometh by hearing." In the next place, the power, and renovating efficacy, and peace-giving and joy-imparting influence of the gospel, must be fully manifested in the inward experience and visible example of that church. Then, indeed, will that church be "a light in the world," and "have power with God and with men." Then, in and through such church, will Christ be to all encircling churches and to the world around, "a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." And when the churches of our God in general shall be similarly illuminated, "washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb," and all her membership are filled with the Spirit, and together "walk in the light of God," then will the Gentiles come to her light, and kings to the "brightness of their rising." In all the world, the spot where one such church is located will be the brightest, and, "to all who look for salvation in Israel," the most attractive, because that there the glory of Christ is revealed in this one Divine relation.

We may now clearly perceive what will hereafter constitute the glory or the shame of Methodism. The central article of her creed is the great central truth of the gospel, to wit: full and free redemption in Jesus Christ. In the holding and advocacy of that truth, her ministry and membership glory before the world. In her early founders and favorite memoirs, Christ and the promises of His grace are fully and distinctly revealed to all her membership and to all the world as "a fountain

opened for sin and for uncleanness." Now, if this denomination shall remain true to her Heaven-descended mission, by continuing to hold and advocate this great truth, and by a living faith shall exemplify its all-purifying influence both before the Church and the world, this will be "her wisdom and her understanding," in the judgment of all nations, who shall hear of this great salvation. But if she should renounce faith in this great truth, or cease to advocate it, and above all, should hold it as a dead faith, instead of an all-vitalizing power, this would be her shame before God and the world. When in all the churches, in the sense explained, "there shall be a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness" then is the millennium near, even at the door.

04.12. The Consolation of the Spirit, or the Uses

CHAPTER XII. THE CONSOLATION OF THE SPIRIT, OR THE USES OF AFFLICTIVE PROVIDENCES.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."— Matthew 11:29.

"I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."— Isaiah 48:19. THE FIGURE EXPLAINED. This one principle universally obtains in respect to the refinement of metals, that the severity of the process requisite to their purification is proportionate to their preciousness. No metal can be brought to a state of purity but by a trial of fire. Those of the least value can be melted and purified by comparatively small degrees of heat. Those of the highest value can be refined but by being placed in the central fires of the glowing furnace when heated to the greatest intensity. Silver may be placed in the furnace, but the heat of the common crucible is all that is requisite for its highest purification. The meaning of the text, then, is obvious. God says to the sanctified believer, this class being especially here addressed: "I have refined thee, but not with silver." "The virtues which I have purposed to develop in you being of all others the most precious and valuable in My estimation, I have subjected you to the action of the central fires of the furnace of affliction. Because I loved you, and saw in you a capacity to become possessed of the brightest and the best graces that adorn My kingdom, I placed you, for this purpose, in those central fires; and because you there lost all your tin and dross, and became the thing I desired, I chose you, when you were in that furnace, as My own peculiar treasure, and you shall 'be Mine in that day when I make up My jewels.'" There are some virtues which bloom up to maturity in circumstances of almost continued prosperity, and freedom from the pressure of strong temptation. Others, of a nobler birth, are matured and consolidated under the weight of great trusts and responsibilities. But those which take on the brightest possible forms of beauty and perfection are those which are refined and purified amid the glowing and melting heat of the furnace of affliction.

It is an immutable principle of the Divine government that all forms of real excellence shall be the result of endurance which severely tests and taxes the human faculties. A mind, for instance, stands before you, "with Atlanteon shoulders, fit to bear the weight of mightiest monarchies." How did that mind attain to such preeminence of power? It early began to think, to think strongly, and by long habit to the endurance of the weight of great thoughts, it towered up to its present overshadowing greatness. Endurance which brings such visible rewards men subject themselves to from choice. They delight to continue in it, because their nature is adapted to it, on the one hand, and on account of the "great recompense of reward" resulting from it on the other. The opposite in all respects obtains in regard to afflictive providences. They are objects of fear, and not of desire. They always come unsought, and descend upon the mind suddenly, as crushing avalanches from the heights above us. And what is still more peculiar in respect to them, is the fact that they are in themselves grievous burdens, with no visible or apparent benefits attending or

issuing from them. Yet no events appear to come so directly from God as these. They seem to drop down upon us immediately from His hand, crushing our fondly-cherished hopes, smiting our persons till all our sensibilities quiver with excruciating agony, smiting also those most dear to us, and causing our hearts to bleed for sufferings we cannot relieve, and then taking from us even "the desire of our eyes with a stroke." These providences also most frequently, perhaps, strike that department of our nature most susceptible to suffering. How often do we hear individuals exclaim, "Anything but this! Why did God smite me in this one spot?" Yet, judging from appearance, God thus smites for no good reasons. What apparent good, for example, is there in that terrible bereavement by which the orphan is left, homeless and penniless, to the charity of this cold world? But, reader, it is amid the central fires of just such furnaces as these that the divinest virtues known in the universe of God are refined and perfected; and those who are "made perfect through suffering" are the individuals who stand nearest the eternal throne in the kingdom of light. This brings us to the subject of the present chapter—viz., the Divine uses of afflictive providences, acting, as they do, as disciplinary fires for the purification and perfection of the saints of God.

Before we proceed to a direct consideration of this subject, there is one thought to which very special attention is invited. Afflictive providences are in themselves, as above seen, crushing evils coming upon us for no visible reasons, and apparently tending to no good results. To appearance they are death-strokes falling upon our sensitive natures. Whether they shall issue in life or death to us, depends wholly upon the moral state in which they are received and endured. If, while we are in the crucible or in the furnace, "patience has her perfect work," we then become "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." If, in the same circumstances, the mind loses its spiritual balance, becomes chafed and fretted, restless and despondent; above all, if it loses hope and faith in God, then it loses its reward, and Satan takes its crown. In the history of the prophet Ezekiel we have a conspicuous example of a trial of faith successfully endured. God, through the prophet, desired to foreshadow to the nation the calamities which were impending calamities so terrible, that even domestic bereavements, under their influence, would become matters of utter indifference; and God took this strange means to secure the result—to take suddenly from the prophet the wife of his youth, requiring him at the same time to move among the people as if no affliction had befallen him.

"Also the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, behold I take away from thee the desire of thy eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thy head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men. So I spoke to the people in the morning: and at evening my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded." In every afflictive providence that befalls us, we are always distinctly addressed by duty in some specific form—more specific than in almost any other circumstances. Now it is when we do the specific thing then and there required of us, that we gain the virtues that ensure to us the crown of life. When racked with torturing pain, or smitten with domestic bereavement, we always hear in the depth of the soul the voice of God saying to us, "I have done this. Trust My will now, fully and distinctly; consent to suffer and endure, till I choose to remove the pain, or cease to bereave;" and we must "do as we are commanded." If loss of temporal good befalls, or temporal perplexities encircle us; if disappointments drop down upon us, or "hope deferred makes the heart sick"—then God again speaks within, saying to us, "Let your spirit now lie down and be still. Let no

sentiment of discontent have place in your heart." Here, also, we must "do as we are commanded." When revilings, and falsehoods, and persecutions for righteousness' sake, encircle and descend upon us, the same voice within calls us from strife to prayer, from cursing to blessing, and from wrath to love. When reviled, we must bless; when defamed, we must entreat; and when persecuted, we must endure it, doing and enduring as we are commanded: "Hold fast till I come, and I will give thee a crown of life." Such is the command of the great Captain of our salvation. Holding fast, as required, we ensure the crown of life. Failing in this, we miss that crown.

We will now suppose that a believer has thus endured. What will be the uses of such Divine providence's in his experience? This is the question to which a specific answer will now be attempted.

1. Afflictions render things unseen and eternal real to the mind. One of the most important of all these uses is the direct and immediate contact into which the mind is then brought with God, duty, redemption, and immortality. Continued prosperity, abounding wealth, and freedom from pain and afflictive bereavements too often induce, not only a forgetfulness of God and of things unseen and eternal, but a proud denial of our accountability and dependence. When, on the other hand, afflictive providences come upon us, thought is suddenly arrested and fixed upon these objects of infinite concern. Under no other circumstances do they come so near, and give the mind such impressive opportunities and motives to adjust itself fully and rightly in respect to them. Philip of Macedon desired never to forget, in the midst of his superabounding prosperity, the fact of his own mortality. Hence he appointed a herald, whose exclusive mission was to repeat in the hearing of his sovereign, every time the latter left his palace, the words: "Philip, thou art mortal." Now, afflictive providences are divine monitors, speaking to us with voices as from God out of Heaven, reminding us of God, duty, death, eternity, redemption, and retribution; and calling upon us to adjust the present, and future of our lives to these eternal verities. When mind has thus adjusted itself then these truths have a power over the thoughts, feelings, mental and moral activities, such as they could not otherwise acquire. As a consequence, they have corresponding power to refine, purify, and bless the soul, and fully prepare it to receive those "everlasting consolations" and immortal hopes with which God is ready to fill the utmost capacities of our inner being, whenever the heart is prepared to receive them. How many individuals have occasion to say with the psalmist, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted: for before I was afflicted I went astray. But now I have learned to keep Thy precepts." Thus it is that even in our afflictions "God dealeth with us a with sons," first teaching us the lesson of obedience, and then drawing us close, very close, to the bosom of His love.

2. They discipline the human into subjection to the Divine will. We are all aware, also, that the highest purity and blessedness of the soul depend mainly upon the right adjustment of the will of the creature relatively to the will of God. Now, afflictive providences bring the human into a more direct, immediate, and impressive contact with the Divine will, than any other. Here let the creature learn obedience, here "let patience have her perfect work," and he "becomes perfect and entire, wanting nothing." He that walks with God amid the consuming heat of the glowing furnace, and there fully consents to endure and to suffer all the will of God: he that finds amid these central fires deep content, as his spirit lies down in the center of God's will, and is still—attains to a disciplined consolidation in Christian virtue, which renders his acquiescence in the Divine will, in all other relations, absolute. The soul now is permanently at peace with God, and, as a consequence, is

fully prepared to be kept as permanently by "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding." Christian brethren, have you never had such a hallowed form of experience as this? A dark and impenetrable cloud came over you and completely shut you in. You could not penetrate to the brightness which radiated from the upper surface of the cloud where all is turned towards the face of God. In the midst of the deep midnight around you, you dropped down into the center of the Divine will. Let me suffer now your heart exclaims, let me suffer here, and anywhere, till God is fully satisfied. In this stillness of deep acquiescence, the first thought that begins to make melody in the depths of the soul, perhaps, is this: a moving apprehension of the sweet will of God. The sweet will of God, you begin to repeat, the sweet will of God. Let all my allotments be as God wills. Then there comes gently over you a sense of infinite security in God. The darkness around you is "but the shadow of His wing," beneath which you feel yourself to be "almost sacred." God is "covering you with His feathers," while beneath His wing you are fixing your trust, and resting there with perfect "quietness and assurance forever." You know now, as you otherwise could not have known, that under the all-shadowing protection of your God, "no evil can befall you; neither can any plague come nigh your dwelling." Light begins to penetrate through the cloud above you, till the deep midnight around becomes itself "all light, and its essence love." The cloud above has become all luminous. Through it you seem to see the face of God smiling with love ineffable into the depths of your soul. You know now why God afflicted you; your perfection in virtue, and your consequent entrance into the hallowed precincts of that rest which "remains for the people of God." Such are the unvarying issues of afflicted providences when, under their pressure, we "do as we are commanded."

3. They strengthen and confirm Christian virtue. These providences, also, tend very peculiarly to strengthen and confirm the faith and hopeful trust of the soul in God. When our own power and resources visibly fail us, we naturally turn from self to power out of and above ourselves. When finite confidences fall from under us, we are almost irresistibly impelled to lean upon the infinite. Now, afflictive providences are those Divine jostlings of the soul by which it is continually reminded of the power above, where our strength and safety lie concealed. As a consequence, they pre-eminently tend to induce the fixed habit of trust and hope in God. Did days of darkness never come, fullness of bread might induce forgetfulness of the Giver, and of dependence upon Him. Conscious weakness and want, however, center and fix the faith and hope of the soul in the power and fullness of God, and the frequent exercise of those virtues confirm, settle, and strengthen the mind in the same, till faith and hope in God become continuously habitual in the inward experience. Now mark the result. Leaning upon the Infinite, the soul becomes "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." Trusting in the Divine fullness, it receives of that fullness to the full measure of its conscious necessities. Hoping in God, hope deferred does not make the heart sick, and that "because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." As hope and trust in Christ become the fixed habit of the soul, in all our necessities the angel of His presence strengthens us, as the angel of God strengthened Him in the hour of His extremity. Everywhere, and under all circumstances, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

4. They impart assurance of hope. When the mind is put into the furnace of affliction, and learns obedience there, it attains, we remark, not only to a Divine purity and acceptance with God, but also, in the next place, to a more distinct assurance of its own gracious state, that it can hardly

obtain in any other circumstances. Under no other circumstances, as we have seen is the will of the creature brought into such direct and distinct contact with the will of God. Nowhere else, as a consequence, can the mind be so distinctly conscious of absolute acquiescence in the Divine will, and subjection to it, as here: "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" The character of such hallowed mental exercises as these cannot be misapprehended. Hence it is that, in the exercise of the same the mind has an absolute consciousness of its own gracious state, and of its consequent acceptance with God. Now this absolute assurance of the genuineness of our faith necessarily issues in corresponding assurance of hope: "And when tribulation has worked patience [confirmation in Christian virtue]: and patience, experience [assurance of our own gracious state]; and experience, hope," God never fails to lift upon the soul "the light of His countenance." "Hope," we repeat, "maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." That state of meek, mild, and quiet submission which the patient endurance of suffering induces, fully prepares the mind to receive and appreciate God’s manifested sympathy and love. The Holy Spirit now makes the soul distinctly conscious that "in all our afflictions God is afflicted, while the angel of His presence saves us," and we know, as we otherwise could not have known, how deeply God sympathizes with us and loves us. The light of God in which we now live and walk, sanctifies even the furnace through which we have been conducted, into this state of perpetual quietness and assurance, where "the days of our mourning are ended."

5. They impart blessed visions of the eternal future. There are also certain visions of the eternal future and of other kindred truths which nothing but the patient endurance of afflictive providences can prepare the mind to receive, and which the Holy Spirit never fails to impart when "patience has had her perfect work." Take the following as examples:

"These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." "All things work together for good to them that love God." "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto fountains of living waters." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord." It is only as the mind passes through great tribulation, and becomes refined and purified in the midst of the same, that it can fully apprehend and appreciate the truths contained in such revelations as these; revelations which, when received, impart a fullness of joy otherwise impossible to us. Whatever our condition may be, let the Holy Spirit but open upon the mind such visions of the soul’s eternal future, and render them conscious realities to its apprehension, and "the days of its mourning are ended." It is thus in genuine Christian experience that our most enduring joys well out from our deepest sorrows, and our most abiding consolations descend to us in the midst of our greatest tribulations, while the brightest hopes that gladden our hearts are "born, like the rainbow, in tears."

6. They impart soul-satisfying visions of Christ. As your heart has been pressed down under the weight of some great sorrow, did the Holy Spirit never open upon your spiritual vision an apprehension of Christ as a world-sufferer, of Christ in Gethsemane, in the judgment-hall, or upon the cross? In the presence of such a revelation, suffering and sorrow lose all power to distract the mind. On the other hand, they become sanctified in the mind's apprehension, and to "fill out the measure of Christ's sufferings" seems a privilege; and when sorrow for Christ's sake becomes a hallowed thing in the mind's regard, how infinite does the joy of the soul in Christ become! Thus, as in our deepest humiliation we find ourselves furthest within the precincts of Heaven, so in our greatest sufferings and sorrows do we behold most distinctly the face of God. In the furnace—strange kind of life that!—"we walk in the light of God."

7. They develop the divinest virtues in their divinest forms. We must not fail here to refer to the character of the divine virtues which are refined and perfected in the furnace of affliction. Nowhere else in the universe of God do we find such things of beauty as they. That meek submission, that subdued quietude of heart, that sweet and prompt turning of the soul to every indication of the Divine will, that tender sympathy with suffering in others, and readiness "to heal the broken-hearted," that deep and fixed trust in God, that serenity of hope, that crucifixion to the world, that mild purity of thought and life, and, above all, that fixed devotion to Christ; all these, blended in unison, render character a thing of beauty and perfection that even God loves to look at. Now, when the mind comes into this state it is then fully prepared to receive that fullness of joy for which God has been refining and perfecting it. In entering into this state the leading sentiment which pervades its whole inner being is what seems to be a feeling of infinite quietude and assurance. Then thoughts of ineffable consolation begin to drop down into the soul. Soon "visions of glory infinite come and go." At length the Sun of Righteousness rises upon the soul "with healing in His wings." In the everlasting light of that Sun, which continuously comes nearer and nearer to the soul, it moves onward, wondering with unutterable wonder that God should thus deign to shine upon a worm of the dust. God comes to dwell in the soul, and to walk in it, and make His abode there.

8. They teach the soul what sorrow and affliction mean. In such experiences the soul comes to learn, at length, what sorrow and affliction mean. They even become things of beauty to the mind. "We glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

9. They impart power for good to the Christian. Nor are the Divine uses of afflictive providences confined to the subject who suffers. They fit him, as he otherwise could not be, to comfort them who are in any trouble, by the "comfort wherewith he is comforted of God." And never has the religion of Christ such power over worldly minds as when it is seen turning earth-born sorrows into Heaven-born joys. Do you ask me, reader, when it is that you may regard patience as having had its perfect work in your experience? We answer, when you are deeply conscious that your will is so perfectly identified with the will of God, that you have no wish to possess any more of earthly good than God has appointed you, nor to diminish one jot or tittle of the full amount of affliction which He has allotted you. For myself, I should regard it as greatly criminal in me to entertain for a moment the wish that one throb of pain, one disappointed hope, a single bereavement, a single external affliction, that God appointed me, should fail to become real in my future of life, or to

accomplish its divine mission in my experience.

We now understand the light in which we should regard ourselves when causes of great sorrow fall upon us. First of all, we should carefully inquire whether these providences have come down from God out of Heaven, as judgments for wrongdoing, or as merely disciplinary trials of faith, and seek unto God accordingly. In neither case should we lose heart, or hope, or faith in God. We should conclude, at once, on the other hand, whatever the immediate cause or occasion of our sufferings may be, that God sees in us something which He desires to refine and perfect into a thing of beauty and perfection, for His own glory and ours, too; that He sees in us undeveloped capacities for good—capacities which He desires to perfect for the reception of those great and eternally enduring joys which He has prepared for us. Why should we be afraid of causes of sorrow, when, if we hold fast our integrity and faith in God, they are only the birth-throes of everlasting consolations, and deep and ever-enduring joys otherwise impossible to us.

We also now understand how a truly sanctified mind—one fully disciplined in "the furnace of affliction"—comes at length to regard such providences. To such minds they are "clouds of glory, coming from God who is our home"—clouds of glory, tinged all around their surfaces with light ineffable, and spreading over us the shadow of God’s wing, beneath which, as we have said, we feel ourselves almost sacred. As light breaks through the cloud, and sweet and melting thoughts begin to gladden the heart, and heavenly consolations one after another drop down into the depths of the inner being; as the light of the Divine countenance is lifted up, and the sympathizing, loving smile of God becomes the feast of the soul—it exclaims, "Lord, it is good to be here!" and if God should so will, it would build its tabernacle and make its abode in this consecrated spot.

Perhaps some of my readers may be inclined to think that in the present chapter the picture has been overdrawn; that what has been presented never has been, and never can be, realized in actual experience. To test the question, let us go back, for a few moments, some eighteen hundred years, and speak with Paul upon the subject. You see him yonder, as he sits resting for an hour. He sits there in his chain, by the side of the soldier who keeps him. Let us approach him. How pale, and wan, and weary he looks! and yet what a halo of deep and abiding joy beams from his countenance and encircles his brow! Permit me to address him in your behalf. "Paul, we have heard much of that wonderful life and experience of yours, and have come to converse personally with you upon the subject. Will you impart to us the information we desire?" "With all my heart. But where shall I begin?" "Tell us first about your sufferings." "Well, I think that God hath set forth us, the apostles, last, as it were "appointed unto death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and unto men. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place. We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. But among the many who, in common with our Divine Lord, have been made perfect through suffering, I have been in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in death oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things which are without, that which cometh upon me daily—the care of all the

churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not?" "But, Paul, what has been your state of mind in the midst of these sufferings?" "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things. I have learned, in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

"But when you see that 'the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests,' and in common with your Divine Master, you 'have not where to lay your head;' when you see other men dwelling in princely mansions, clad in costly array, and faring sumptuously every day; do you not sometimes, to say the least, envy their better lot, and feel dissatisfied with your own?" "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel." "But when you go abroad with the distinct apprehension 'that bonds and afflictions abide you,' does not your sensitive nature sometimes shrink from the vision of the sufferings in prospect?" "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Please answer this question also: "How do you now regard suffering for Christ's sake?" "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake; for 'when I am weak then am I strong.'" "How did you attain to this blessed state?" "By simple faith in God. 'We believe, and therefore speak.'" "'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.'"

Tell us this also, Paul. "May we thus attain?" "Most assuredly. 'He is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.'" "Paul, you appear very weak and exhausted; would to God we could come to you, and let you rest your weary head upon our bosom!" "I have just had a season of deep repose upon the bosom of Christ. As I sat here a few hours ago, He came to me in spirit, and said, 'You are weary, very weary. Lay your head upon My bosom, and rest there.' That season of deep intercommunion and fellowship 'with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ,' has left me in a strait betwixt two; and what I shall choose, I wot not, 'having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for my brethren. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with them all for their furtherance and joy of faith.' I am refreshed now, and must attend to the multitude of converts and inquirers whom you see yonder coming to me for instruction. Farewell."

This, reader, is the glorious gospel of the blessed God. This is what that gospel did for Paul, what it has done for me, and what it is able to do for you. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

Suffering and sorrow have no place in the kingdom of light. In Heaven there is no more pain, sorrow, sighing, sickness, or death; no disappointed hopes, nor any form of heart-sickness from hope deferred. The conception of suffering and sorrow, however, and the remembrance of the same, constitute one of the central elements of the blessedness and glory of that kingdom. All the saints there wear upon their heads and carry in their hands crowns and palms of victory—victory through the blood of the Lamb, and in "great fights of affliction." Separate from that state the remembrance of afflictive providences, and from Christ the idea of a suffering God for human

redemption, and you deprive Heaven itself of more than one-half of its light. The vision of glory which intensifies the rapture of the celestial hosts is that of Christ manifested through the emblem of a "Lamb slain from the foundations of the earth." We would request the reader to consider carefully the following passage, as an illustration of the truth before us:—

"And I beheld, and lo! in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne. And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beast and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four-and-twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth forever and ever."

ADMONITION

Hereafter, when days of darkness come, when pain afflicts, when bereavements melt and adversity chastens our hearts, when the floods purify and the furnace refines our spirits, and the weight of great sorrow presses us down upon the bosom of God, let the fixed language of our souls be, "Welcome, Cross of Christ! welcome everlasting life."

S. Brotherly Love

ARTICLE I.

BROTHERLY LOVE. BY PRES. MAHAN. from THE OBERLIN QUARTERLY REVIEW

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DUTY, in all its varied forms and applications, is, as far as the principle of moral obligation is concerned, one and the same. Yet the forms of duty which bind us are endlessly diversified, every varying as the relations in which, from moment to moment, we find ourselves existing, vary. We find ourselves also, at each moment of our existence, sustaining a diversity of relations to beings around us, relations on account of which a corresponding diversity of forms of obligation are continuously devolved upon us. At the same time that we are bound to the exercise of love, gratitude, and obedience towards God, a diversity of forms of obligation, growing out of the domestic, social, and civil relations, in which we find ourselves existing, bind us, in respect to our fellow men. Of the various forms of duty thus devolved upon us, some are presented in the scriptures as of paramount importance, such, for example, as "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." Among this class, that which we have selected as the subject of the present article, stands conspicuous, to wit, "brotherly love." That our readers may have distinctly before their minds the light in which this form of Christian virtue is presented in the scriptures, we will here cite, without not or comment, a few passages in which this subject is referred to. "Behold, how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments."-- Psalms 133:1-2. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."-- John 13:34-35. "This is my commandment, That ye love one another."-- John 15:12. "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 has sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one."-- John 17:20 - Song of Solomon "For this is the message that ye have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren, He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we out to lay down our lives for the brethren."-- 1 John 3:11 - Nehemiah "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own

belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."-- Romans 16:17-18. "Let brotherly love continue." -- Hebrews 13:1. Not only a paramount importance, but an ineffable beauty attaches to this last precept, when contemplated in the connection in which it stands. While the command is given, "Let brotherly love continue," it is immediately added, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers," and "Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them." The two utmost extremes of humanity are here presented to our contemplation, none being so near those as those who with us belong to the "household of faith," and none naturally so remote from us, as "strangers," and those "that are in bonds." These precepts, then, are given as the extreme links of that golden chain which binds us to universal humanity, and as, consequently, comprehending ever form of duty designated by the term philanthropy, when understood in its wildest sense. He that, in the sanctuary of his heart, sanctifies "his brother," on the one hand, and "the stranger," and "them that are in bonds," on the other, will fail in no form of duty to those who occupy the intermediate relations.

Without further introduction, we shall now proceed to the elucidation of the subject before us, assuming, as the basis of our remarks, the precept above cited, "Let brotherly love continue." The question which we first raise in respect to this subject is, What is the true basis of the "new commandment? To this question but one answer can be given, to wit, actual membership of the "household of faith." On what basis do the rights of brotherhood in the domestic relations rest? On one basis exclusively, a common parentage. The same holds true of the precept under consideration. To those, and those only, who have mutually been "born of God," does this precept pertain. No other reasons do or can exist for it but this one. Take away the fact that there is on earth a "holy nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people," "children of a heavenly birth," a people who have been really and truly "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God," a people purified from the grossness of sensuality, selfishness, and sin, and actually graced with the beauties of holiness, take away this one great fact, we say, and no basis whatever remains for the precept, "Let brotherly love continue." No relations of kindred or country, no natural or acquired perfections, mental or physical, aside from the possession of moral purity, no external relations in church or state, constitute any part of the basis of this form of Christian virtue. For other reasons we may be, as we in fact are, required to love individuals as men, as fellow citizens, and as connect with us by domestic ties; but for one reason only can the command bind us exercise towards individuals or classes of individuals: "brotherly love," the single fact that they have be "born of God," in other words, that with us, they have a common parentage that is really and truly divine.

All other relations existing among men, on the other hand, in the absence of moral virtue, constitute so many reasons against the exercise of the form of love under consideration. Two individuals, we will suppose, have a common standing in the visible church. One of them stands revealed to the other, as in all respects, the opposite of what he professes to be. What claims has he upon the other for the exercise of brotherly love? that is, to be esteemed and treated as the opposite of what he really is? The existence of the relation supposed, in connection with a violation of all the duties which that relation imposes, constitutes the highest possible reasons against the exercise of this peculiar form of love towards the subject. The same holds true in all other instances. The faithful discharge of the various duties growing out of the diversified relations of life, constitutes the only possible basis for the duty of "brotherly love." A violation of these duties, on

the other had, destroys wholly all reasons and grounds for its exercise. To those destitute of moral virtue, we owe other duties of the most sacred character. To be esteemed and treated, however, as morally pure, that is, to be objects of the peculiar form of love under consideration, they have and can have no claims whatever. Not being holy, whatever other relations they may sustain to us, the can have no claim to that peculiar regard due only and exclusively to the "pure in heart."

II The next inquiry which we raise pertains to the nature of the peculiar form of love under consideration. We are naturally so constituted, that when we contemplate any form of excellence which we very highly esteem and value, an affection of corresponding strength and intensity is thereby generated towards the subject, an affection rendering him to us, personally, an object of strong attachment and delight. In the estimation of all the "pure in heart," holiness, or moral virtue, is a form of excellence which overshadows all others, actual and conceivable, and consequently constitutes a basis for a form of mutual regard, more strong and endearing, than any other, or even than all other relations combined. Brotherly love is that form of affection for moral agents, which respect for moral purity generates in the hearts of the morally pure, towards those who are really and truly "pure in heart." In principle this form of virtue is one and the same with all other forms, having its basis in internal respect for objects as they are in themselves. As distinguished from other forms of virtue, its nature and character are determined by the peculiar character of the object towards which it is exercised. The meaning of the precept, "Let brotherly love continue," is this. Let that form of mutual good will, attachment and delight, which respect for moral purity generates in the hearts of the morally pure towards the subjects of such purity, be perpetuated and perfected in its exercise, among those who have really and truly been born of God, one toward another. Thus a divine brotherhood is created unlike all others, and as superior to them as that which, in its nature, is unchangeable and eternal, is to that which is mutable and transitory, a divine brotherhood, very properly denominated in the scriptures, "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," Thus, too, a form of virtue is manifested to the world, more benign and attractive, and more indicative of its divine origin, than any other of which the human mind has ever conceived. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one toward another."

III. The next inquiry which arises is, the conditions on which we are required to exercise this peculiar form of love towards any individual classes of men. As the precept requiring its exercise has its basis in one fact exclusively, the actual existence of moral purity, so this precept binds us to its exercise relatively to particular individuals or classes of men, when and only when the actual existence of such purity in them has been manifested to us in their visible conduct. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Holiness manifested is the exclusive condition of obligation to exercise brotherly love towards any persons whatever. However holy and pure an individual may be, no obligation rests upon us to esteem and treat him as such, till we have the means of knowing his character as it is. A profession of religion is, in many cases, strong presumptive evidence in favor of such heart purity in the subject. In others, it may be no evidence at all; and in some it may even be a strong presumptive evidence to the contrary, as, for example, a standing in a church known to be fundamentally erroneous in doctrine and practice both. However this may be, a mere visible profession of holiness is nowhere presented in the scriptures, as the condition of the obligation to exercise towards the subject "brotherly love," holiness manifested, in whatever circumstances it exists, being its exclusive object. Judas was, in Christ’s regard, none the less a devil, because he

had a standing as a disciple. It is the real "brotherhood" towards whom we are required to exercise "brotherly love," and not those who "have a name to live and are dead." On the other hand, we are required to beware of "ravening wolves," who come to us "in sheep's clothing," to "mark" and "avoid all who cause divisions and offences" in the church, "contrary to the doctrine" of Christ. We are positively prohibited keeping company, "if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner: with such an one no not to eat." As holiness manifested is the exclusive object of the peculiar form of affection and regard of which we are speaking, and the only condition of obligation to its exercise, so nothing whatever in the subject, which may co-exist with such holiness, is to be any barrier whatever to the exercise of this love. No external relationships civil or ecclesiastical, the presence or absence of no ties of kindred or natural friendship, no agreement or diversity of opinion or practice, religious or political, which consist with manifested heart purity and integrity, have any influence whatever to create or annihilate, vary or modify, our obligations to exercise "brotherly love," when this one exclusive condition of obligation to its exercise has been fulfilled.

Among the morally pure holiness exists in connection with intellectual powers not only limited in their nature, but in endlessly diversified degrees of development. Hence, in every such individual, to whatever degree sanctified, there is a continued liability to erroneous judgment. Among the masses also, constituting the "household of faith," there is an equally liability to a wide diversity of opinion and forms of action, in respect to all subjects perfect agreement in regard to which is not essential to the existence of holiness itself. Each one will contemplate almost all objects of thought from a stand-point peculiar to himself, and that stand-point will occasion a corresponding peculiarity in many important respects, of opinions and sentiments in respect to it. Individuals, each and all alike under the exclusive influence of the most perfect integrity, may investigate the same subject, and no two of them perfectly agree, and many of them come to directly opposite conclusions in respect to it. Now such differences are to constitute the least barrier to the exercise of brotherly love, while the heart integrity stands revealed as co-existing with them. We will put an extreme case in elucidation of this principle. We will suppose that an individual, from no malicious intention, as we have evidence to believe, but in the honest use of the best light within his reach, has come to this conclusion, that we are "wolves in sheep's clothing;" while we are fully conscious to ourselves that we are approved of God as members of his church, and ministers of the everlasting gospel. Cases like this have actually occurred among Christians. How shall we regard such an individual? With the same confidence, esteem, affection, and delight, as if his judgment were ever so favorable in respect to us. Liability to error in judgment, in connection with even the most perfect goodness and integrity, pertains to character, our own not excepted, as well as to other subjects. Such error in no sense or degree diminishes or modifies the intrinsic beauty or value of the virtues with which it co-exists; nor should it diminish our respect for that virtue, or the individual who is the subject of it, when such virtue is manifested to us. From what has been said, it will readily be perceived, that between individuals who are fully approved in the sight of God the exercise of "brotherly love" may for a time, wholly cease, and that without crime, on the part of either. The character of each may be presented to the other under the veil which hides his brother's character from his view, a false profession lies concealed. Each, under such circumstances, will be to each other the object of benevolent regard, but not of "brotherly love," the exclusive object of which, being, as we have said, moral purity manifested. It is in itself a very painful thought, that individuals who have been rally and truly born of God, and who are still the

objects of his full approbation and delight, should nevertheless be to each other as strangers and foreigners. Such things, however, owing to the necessary limitations of the human faculties, may happen, and that without crime.

IV. The inquiry which next presses upon us is, how may the exercise of "brotherly love" be continued among the members of the "household of faith?" In the scriptures, independent thought in its highest and best sense, is required of each member of this household. Every one, as he becomes a member of it, is addressed with the solemn command, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." An evil, if it can be called an evil, incidental to a community thus organized, is a wide diversity, and even opposition, of thought, speech, and action, in respect to many important subjects. In full view of all such necessary attendants of moral virtue, in the only form in which it can exist in connection with limited intellectual faculties, we are addressed by the divine precept, "Let brotherly love continue." How can the exercise of this virtue be perpetuated among those who are "sanctified by the faith of Christ?"

1. Let each carefully cherish a respect for the overshadowing claims which moral purity and all who are revealed to us as the subjects of it, have upon our esteem, affection, and endearing fellowship. We should ever bear in mind, with full and perfect distinctness, that when moral purity ceases to attract us towards and attach us to individuals above all other qualities and excellencies combined, we ourselves cease to be pure in heart. On the other hand, let all who are themselves morally pure, continuously entertain and manifest this regard for moral purity and for every one who stands revealed as possessing it, and "brotherly love" will "continue" among those who are the proper objects of it, one toward the other.

2. As a necessary means of the continuance of "brotherly love" the sentiment should be carefully and distinctly entertained by all the members of the "household of faith," that while the subjects in respect to which there is a perfect unity of views and conviction, among all truly pure minds, are of infinitely greater importance than those in respect to which they differ, the union is permanent, the difference is transitory, and will soon disappear altogether, as the increasing light of the future dawns upon their minds. In respect to ultimate aims, and all forms of doctrine the belief of which is essential to the existence of moral virtue, there is among all such minds, an absolute unity. They differ only in respect to the means by which these common ends shall be realized, and in respect to forms of belief not essential, and relative to which a perfect harmony of views will ere long, with perfect certainty obtain. Let all minds, who are conscious of being internally pure themselves, entertain such sentiments in respect to all others of the same character, and especially when particular cases of disagreement arise among them, and the spirit of discord will have no place in the family of Christ. Within that sanctified circle, brotherly love will continue. A forgetfulness of this great fact is one of the chief causes of all the discord which ever obtains there.

3. As a necessary means of the continuance of the form of virtue of which we are speaking, the sentiment should be an omnipresent reality to all sanctified minds, that no forms of practice, no errors in doctrine, and no diversity or opposition of views on any subject whatever, the existence of which do not imply the absence of heart purity and integrity are, in the least degree, to weaken or modify our respect, esteem, and affection for individuals as "brethren be loved," nor to prevent our treating them as such before the world. We cannot will that our brethren should cease to prove all things for themselves, that is to be independent thinkers, without willing that they should cease to

be really and truly pure in heart. They can not think, and act according to their own internal sacred convictions, without differing from us in many important particulars, in thought and action. Whenever such differences co-exist with, and result from heart integrity, it is virtue in them thus to differ from us. They can not harmonize with us, without ceasing to be "pure in heart." For us to cease to esteem and love them as brethren, for such differences, is to cease to render them the objects of "brotherly love," for the only reason on account of which they are or can be entitled to such love from us. Christian union should always be formed with the definite expectation, that a diversity of views will obtain among believers, and with the conviction deeply penetrating all minds, that no diversity or opposition not implying moral guilt shall, in the least degree, disturb that union and harmony. Under no other circumstances can "brotherly love" continue.

4. The frequent intercommunion of mind with mind, in respect to those subjects about which there is a perfect agreement among all the pure in heart, is also an indispensable requisite to the continuance of "brotherly love." When such individuals cease to meet in the circle of prayer, when their social intercourse turns mainly upon worldly objects, they will, as spiritual men, become as strangers to one another. When, on the other hand, "they that fear the Lord, speak often one to another," and especially when their conversation turns mainly upon those high ends and aims, and "deep things of God" in respect to which all such minds perfectly harmonize, they will hardly fail to know each other, and "to love as brethren."

5. When such intercommunion, as that above referred to is accompanied with active self-denying co-operation in the direct promotion of the great ends of benevolence, in their varied forms, then the secret movements of sanctified hearts become most distinctly revealed, and "brotherly love" is called into the most vigorous exercise among minds thus associated. Its exercise can hardly fail to continue. Merely meeting together in the same house of worship from sabbath to sabbath, and putting contributions into the same box as it passes round, is not the form of co-operation to which we refer. All this may exist in connection with the widest remove, on the part of all concerned, form the spirit of benevolence, and consequently from the form of benevolent co-operation, demanded, as the basis for the mutual exercise of "brotherly love." On the other hand, when many hearts are separated, in spirit, from all selfish ends and aims, and with full devotion, are consecrated to God, and the temporal and eternal weal of humanity, and when, for the promotion of such ends, they have combined their energies and resources for the accomplishment of some specific purposes of absorbing interest, there arises a form of benevolent co-operation which will not and can not fail to be sanctified by the mutual exercise of "brotherly love," on the part of all concerned. Under such circumstances the benevolent intentions of benevolent minds become manifest to all, and an intercommunion of kindred hearts results, presenting the most perfect reflection that earth ever witnesses, of that intercommunion which is perfected above. "Brotherly love" can have no place anywhere, while this form of co-operating is wanting. Permit us here to ask, whether the want of this co-operation is not the main cause of the absence of an impressive manifestations of heart unity in the churches at the present time? "All seek their own and not the things of Jesus Christ." The general professedly sanctified heart, has enlarged itself, not to a "comprehension of the breadth and depth, and length and height," not to "know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," that it may thereby be "filled with all the fullness of God," but to the love of wealth, to the spirit of pride, and to worldly sensual delights. How vain it is to exhort individuals, in such a state, "to love one another."

6. Mutual confessions, when wrong may have been done, is another necessary means of promoting the exercise of "brotherly love." Indeed, when it has ceased to exist, through a visible departure from duty, it can be reintroduced by no other means. Confession may be demanded for two reasons--acts of mutual wrong--and acts indicating a want of wisdom, which may yet consist with right intentions. The spirit of mutual confession, to whichever of the forms of action above named it may refer, tends more powerfully than almost anything else, to cement sanctified hearts together. The reason is obvious. Heart purity and rectitude is thereby most distinctly manifested.

7. We mention one and only one other means of the "continuance of brotherly love," the most important and indispensable of any, yes, more important than all others to which we have referred. The appropriate and exclusive object of this form of regard is, as we have seen, moral purity manifested." In its absence, "brotherly love" can, by no possibility, exist, and ought not to exist, if it could. The great obligation then resting upon us in respect to its existence and continuance, is to be in ourselves the appropriate objects of this divine virtue, that is, to posses, at all times and relatively to all subjects, moral virtue ourselves, and to exhibit it, in all its appropriate manifestations, before the world. Then, when located among individuals "like minded," we shall not fail to exercise "brotherly love" ourselves, or under ordinary circumstances to be the objects of it on the part of others. None will then be straitened in us. If straitened at all, it will be in their own bowels. Nor will this long continue among those who are really and truly "pure in heart."

V. The last inquiry which claims our attention is, the things which which impede or wholly suspend the exercise of "brotherly love" among the members of the "household of faith," one towards the other.

1. That which first of all demands notice, as the chief cause of such evil, is the cessation or absence of that which is the exclusive basis of obligation to exercise "brotherly love," to wit, moral purity manifested in all appropriate forms of benevolent activity. It is a contradiction in terms, to suppose, that "brotherly love" can co-exist with the absence of spiritual mindedness, as much so, as the supposition that individuals remaining totally selfish, may yet act benevolently towards each other. When believers, too, have departed form the "way of holiness," repentance must with them, precede the exercise of "brotherly love."

Another very common and fruitful sources of the evil under consideration; is the imputing of differences or opposition of opinion and action in respect to subjects in reference to which honest minds may differ, to a state of heart morally wrong. When we impeach the motives of an individual, whether rightly or wrongly, in any transaction, he becomes to us of necessity "a stranger and foreigner," till he manifests repentance. In whatever light we may regard him in other respects, he can not be to us an object of "brotherly love." To exercise it toward him becomes impossible. If he becomes aware of the attitude of our minds towards him, and is conscious of integrity in the matter referred to, he will be strongly tempted to regard himself the object not only of error in judgment, but of injustice. Hence we shall cease to be to him the objects of "brotherly love." Thus hearts have been sundered, each of whom may have preserved its integrity. We should ever bear in mind the fact, that because a subject most manifestly presents itself in a given light to us, it by no means follows that others will judge of it as we do. In consequence of viewing it from a standpoint the reverse of ours, their honest convictions in respect to it may be in direct opposition to our own. But when a subject appears very plain to us, how strongly tempted we are to assume, that all honest

minds must view it as we do, and consequently that all judgments the opposite of ours must proceed from a want of internal rectitude. In consequence of such unauthorized assumptions, individuals cease to love each other as brethren, who are as dear to Him to whom the secrets of the heart are visible, as the apple of his eye. There is almost no department of Christian obligation in respect to which the church needs more careful instruction than this.

3. The exercise of discipline in the church for forms of belief and practice which do not, as all acknowledge, imply moral guilt, but may consist with moral virtue and integrity, is another cause and fruitful source of discord, and consequent extinguishment of "brotherly love" in the church of God. A church rightly instructed would as soon "touch the apple of God's eye," as to lay the rod of discipline upon the back of one whom she acknowledges to be an honest man, and for any acts or forms of belief in respect to which she believes him to have acted from heart integrity. The rod was never put into her hands for any such purpose. Rulers in church and state were "never appointed of God, to be a "terror to good works, but to evil." No man was ever the subject of discipline for any form of belief or practice, in respect to which he is conscious of having acted in "the fear of God" and is acknowledged to have done so by others, who did not regard himself as the object of oppression, if not of persecution for "righteousness sake." Many in the church also will, with almost absolute certainty, sympathize with him in such impressions. The majority also, will have the secret consciousness of having acted without authority from the head of the church. The result will be division and every evil work.

4. The habit, so common, of passing judgment upon men in view of what they believe and do, and not in view of reasons why they thus judge and act, is another quite common and fruitful source of discord in the church. When we have clearly ascertained that a given form of belief or practice is in itself erroneous, or accordant with truth, it by no means follows from such a fact, that all who do not symbolize with us, are guilty of moral wrong. If we make our own knowledge instead of theirs the standard of judgment in respect to their character in the case referred to, however approved they may be in the divine estimation, we shall not esteem or love them "as brethren." "Brotherly love" relatively to all individuals whom we have thus judged, will have no place in our hearts, however deserving of it they may be. "The unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace" can never be preserved, in any association where such a standard of judgment is adopted. Whatever a man holds from internal respect to truth, whatever he does from similar respect to the law of duty, after having honestly used the best means in his power to know what truth and duty are, it is moral virtue in him to believe and practice. The character of each moral agent depends upon his conformity or non-conformity to the light actually granted to him; and not the higher dimmer light conferred upon others. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin."

5. Whenever a majority in the church make the subject of discipline, any forms of belief or practice, the believing or performance of which, honest minds do not regard as involving moral guilt, or when measures are carried, or attempted to be carried by discipline, which such minds sincerely regard as, in themselves, inexpedient or wrong, an almost insuperable barrier is thereby raised, to the exercise of "brotherly love." All the ends of discipline are not only defeated, when it is thus employed, but parties are formed, among whom the spirit of distrust and opposition is generated, rendering future harmonious co-operation almost impossible. All such measures appear to all who do not advocate them as oppression, and not as dictated by a regard to truth, justice, and the ends of benevolence. We would lay down as a universal principle, that nothing should be made, in the

household of faith, a subject of discipline, which honest minds do not unite in regarding as involving moral guilt. Any departure in any direction from this principle, tends to "make schisms in the body of Christ," and never to the promotion of "brotherly love."

6. On the other hand, the refusal or neglect to apply the rod or excinding power of discipline, to the correction of gross offences, "known and read of all men," as existing in the church, tends to precisely the same result. When by common consent, individuals unite in doing wrong, or in neglecting to do what the law of duty manifestly requires to be done, as is true in the case supposed, they mutually, though in many instances almost unconsciously, cease to respect one another, as morally virtuous. Thus in the common neglect of manifest duty, the exercise of "brotherly love" has totally ceased in many of our churches.

7. Practically treating individuals of known and acknowledged piety as "heathen men and publicans," is another too common a cause of the extinction of "brotherly love," in the church of Christ. We refer to acts of withdrawment or of withholding ecclesiastical or church fellowship from individuals confessed to be "good men, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," on the ground of mere imputed errors in doctrine or practice, errors not regarded as involving moral character. All who unite in such acts, of necessity, though they may not be aware of it themselves, cease to respect one another, as actuated in such conduct by respect to the most sacred of all rights, the rights of character. They will, of course, cease to be among themselves even the objects, the one towards the other, of "brotherly love." When men unite in the doing of unauthorized acts, even in the midst of their apparent union they become to each other the objects of mutual distrust. It can not be otherwise. Much less can the bonds of fellowship continue to unite our hearts to those whom we treat in opposition to our sacred convictions of their real deserts. The acknowledged fact that "God has received" an individual, must be to us an all authoritative reason for "receiving him" ourselves, or he will cease to be to us the object of "brotherly love."

8. We mention but one other impediment to the exercise or continuance of "brotherly love." We refer to a want of respect for the rights of others to judge, according to the best light they have, of our character, and to express, on all proper occasions, their honest convictions whether favorable or unfavorable, in respect to it. Character, our own not expected, is public property. So we regard and treat the character of others. Why should we be unwilling that our own should be subject to the same law? We regard ourselves, as having justly forfeited the esteem of no man, for having formed, and on proper occasions, expressed honest, and only honest convictions in respect to his character, whether such judgments be favorable or unfavorable to his reputation, or whether we may or may not have erred in judgment. No one, therefore, should cease to be love by us, as a brother, whatever his opinions in respect to our character may be, who has judged and spoken of us in conformity with the principle just stated. Suppose he has erred in judgment. Thus to err is not only human, but the common frailty of all finite intelligences. We can not justly require all men to think correctly or favorably of us. We can, however, require them to think honestly. When we have evidence that they have thus thought, whether they have judged favorably or unfavorably, correctly or incorrectly, they are to be to us objects of the warmest moral esteem and regard. Now it is the want of this free toleration of opinion and speech in respect to personal character which sunders many hearts "which else, like kindred drops had mingled into one." In the preceding remarks, it has been our object to elucidate and enforce subjection to a fundamental principle of Christian duty. It has not been our object to chide others for the want of "brotherly love;" but to lay

out before our own minds and those of others, the great law which binds alike "all the family in heaven and on earth," one towards the other. It has long been a pleasing thought to us, that many hearts now kept asunder, through mutual ignorance of each other, will most sweetly and cordially flow together, as, in the midst of the light of the coming future, the present veil will be removed from character, and each will know his brother as he is. Nor will individuals love each other the less cordially or intensely there, because they failed to know each other here. "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way."

S. Christian Perfection

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION BY ASA MAHAN, D.D.

Complete text but edited and updated FOREWORD TO THE 1962 REPRINT

Few Bible doctrines have been more maligned and misrepresented than Christian Perfection. Dr. Asa Mahan, D.D. was one of the most able champions and examples of that glorious truth the church has seen.

Sanctified, while President of Oberlin College, he infused students and faculty with an insatiable desire to "spread scriptural holiness over these lands." He was mightily used of God in winning thousands to Christ and holiness.

Dr. Mahan was an Englishman, well qualified by education and experience to write and teach the "deep things of God." He was contemporary with many of the great souls of the 19th century, Charles G. Finney the great revivalist, Dr. Daniel Steele and many others.

"Christian Perfection" is a small book, but it has been much sought after by saintly scholars. It is being reproduced unabridged through the good providence of God and the kindness of W. Reed of Wales who has loaned his copy for this reprint. The Reverend H. E. Schmul 124 Georgetown Rd.

Salem, Ohio LONDON, DEC. 1, 1874.

DEAR BROTHER WARNER,

It is now about forty years since, after the most careful and prayerful examination of the Word of God upon the subject, I embraced the views set forth in my work, entitled "Christian Perfection." All my subsequent examinations, and all my observations of facts, from that period to the present, have tended but in one direction to confirm and render absolute my confidence in the truth and supreme importance of those views. Our SAVIOR has, Himself, stated definitely the condition on which the world will come to know, that "he came forth from God." "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." My life-labors are, therefore, supremely directed to this one end "the perfecting of the saints."

Yours in the hands of Christ,

ASA MAHAN.

INTRODUCTION.

MORE than twenty years ago a good brother said to us, "I have a good book here I will give you, and if you will read it through on your knees it will do you five pounds’ worth of good." We wanted to get good, and accepted the book; it was "Christian Perfection, by Dr. Mahan." We read it through on our knees, and got good good, not to be balanced by five-pound notes. We knew

something of the experience of Christian Perfection, and this book greatly tended to show its scriptural foundation, and to establish us in the faith. We never read any other book through on our knees, save our Bible; we have thus read that annually every year since, and every year of our life are more fully convinced that it is God’s will that His people should be fully saved from all sin, and be "filled with the Holy Ghost." During the last twenty years we have read almost everything on the subject we could lay our hands on, but on the whole, know of no human production which more clearly sets forth the scriptural character of this great grace than does the present work. Meeting with the author, he readily gave us permission to reprint his work, for the edification and salvation of those interested in the subject. The question is not, "What is the experience of the Church?" but, "What are the provisions of grace?" The experience of the Church may be far too low, and must never be our standard of appeal. God has more light to pour upon the world than we have yet seen; and more grace to bestow than we have yet received. The question with which we should approach God’s word is, "What is my Father’s will concerning me?" George Fox, the Quaker, preached the Gospel of salvation from sin Antinomians met him at his open air meetings, and contended that we could never get further in this world than, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" They would proceed to quote passages which they supposed supported their views, but the Quaker stopped them with, "Nay, friend, thou must not take God’s Holy Word to prove thy dirty doctrine!" And he was right. God’s Holy Word enjoins a holy religion. A good brother says: "The doctrine we contend for is not limited to a bare and questionable place, a doubtful and uncertain existence in the holy records, but is repeatedly and abundantly. explicitly, and with great clearness embodied as a cardinal feature throughout the whole system. It breathes in the prophecy thunders in the law murmurs in the narrative whispers in the promises supplicates in the prayers sparkles in the poetry resounds in the songs speaks in the types glows in the imagery voices in the language and beams in the spirit of the whole scheme, from its Alpha to its Omega from its beginning to its end. Holiness! Holiness needed! Holiness required! Holiness offered! Holiness attainable! Holiness a present duty a present privilege a present enjoyment, is the progress and completeness of its wondrous theme! It is the truth glowing all over webbing all through revelation; the glorious truth which sparkles, and sings, and shouts in all its history, and biography, and poetry, and prophecy, and precept, and promise, and prayer; the great central truth of the system. The wonder is that all do not see, that any rise up to question, a truth so conspicuous, so glorious, so full of comfort." The experience of Dr. Mahan, as related towards the end of the work, goes to show that the reception of this grace was to him what the Old Methodists would call the "Second Blessing." He was a Professor in a College, and a successful Minister of the Gospel, and yet but a babe in grace. He had pointed many sinners to Christ for justification, and yet often felt as if he would give the world, if he had it, if some one would help him into the enjoyment of that which he dimly saw was in reversion for him. However, the time of his deliverance came, and now for about forty years he has lived and preached on a higher plane, and has seen a complete revolution of thought on this subject in the Church with which he is associated. His testimony is the more important, in the estimation of some persons, coming as it does from outside Methodism, and yet according with her acknowledged standards. A good brother said to us, some time since, when we had been insisting on the doctrine as a present privilege, to be received at once by faith, that there were some amongst us who were teaching that it was a grace into which we were to grow, but he had always believed we were to receive it at once as God’s gift, and then grow in it. That was evidently Mr. Wesley’s view of the subject. In the

early part of the Methodist Revival, many were brought into the enjoyment of full salvation. Concerning these, he said:

"Not trusting to the testimony of others, I carefully examined most of these myself; and every one (after the most careful inquiry, I have not found an exception either in Great Britain or Ireland), has declared that his deliverance from sin was instantaneous; that the change was wrought in a moment. Had half of these, or one third, or one in twenty declared that it was gradually wrought in them, I should have believed this with regard to them, and thought that some were gradually sanctified, and some instantaneously. But as I have not found in so long a space of time a single person speaking thus, as all who believe they are sanctified, declare with one voice that the change was wrought in a moment, I cannot but believe that sanctification is commonly, if not always, an instantaneous work."

We heard Dr. Mahan, now in his seventy-sixth year, preaching the doctrine of holiness with uncommon energy of body and mind, and we asked him to give us a line to prefix to this issue of his work, saying if his opinions were still unchanged, and the following day we received the communication which we print.

We have ventured on a large edition, in order to be able to offer it at a low price, and now send it forth in God’s name to do His work. We hope to spend our days in sanctified effort to "fill Jerusalem with this doctrine," and for Christ and His Church are yours, in the King’s Highway of Holiness.

GEORGE WARNER.

65, Stepney Green, London, E.,

January, 1875.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

DISCOURSE I. THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Matt. v:48.

Two important features of this passage demand our special attention: 1. The demand, "Be perfect." 2. The nature and extent of the command; "even as your Father in heaven is perfect." In other words, we are here required to be as perfect, as holy, as free from all sin, in our sphere as creatures, as God is in his as our Creator and our Sovereign. My design in the present discourse is to answer this one question, What is perfection in holiness? In answering this inquiry, I would remark, that perfection in holiness implies a full and perfect discharge of our entire duty, of all existing obligations in respect to God and all other beings. It is perfect obedience to the moral law. It is "loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and our neighbor as ourselves." It implies the entire absence of all selfishness, and the perpetual presence and all-pervading influence of pure and perfect love. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." In the Christian, perfection in holiness implies the consecration of his whole being to Christ the subjection of all his powers and susceptibilities to the control of one principle, "faith on the son of God." This is what the moral law demands of him in his circumstances. Were the Christian in that state in which he should "eat and drink, and do all that he does for the glory of God," in which his

eye should be perfectly single to this one object; or in which the action of all his powers should be controlled by faith, which works by love, he would then, I suppose, have attained to a state of entire sanctification his character would be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Every duty to every being in existence would be discharged.

It will readily be perceived, that perfect holiness, as above described, does not imply perfect wisdom, the exclusive attribute of God. The Scriptures, speaking of the human nature of Christ, affirm, that he "increased in wisdom." This surely does not imply that his holiness was less perfect at one time than at another. So of the Christian. His holiness may be perfect in kind, but finite in degree, and in this sense imperfect; because his wisdom and knowledge are limited, and in this sense imperfect.

Holiness, in a creature, may also be perfect, and yet progressive progressive, not in its nature, but in degree. To be perfect, it must be progressive in the sense last mentioned, if the powers of the subject are progressive. He is perfect in holiness, whose love at each successive moment corresponds with the extent of his powers. "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

Hence I remark that perfection in holiness does not imply, that we now love God with all the strength and intensity with which redeemed spirits in heaven love him. The depth and intensity of our love depend, under all circumstances, upon the vigor and reach of our powers, and the extent and distinctness of our vision of Divine truth. "Here we see through a glass darkly; there face to face." Here our powers are comparatively weak; there they will be endowed with an immortal and tireless vigor. In each and every sphere, perfection in holiness implies a strength and intensity of love corresponding with the reach of our powers, and the extent and distinctness of our vision of truth in that particular sphere. The child is perfect in holiness who perpetually exercises a filial and affectionate obedience to all the Divine requisitions, and loves God with all the powers which it possesses as a child. The man is perfect in holiness who exercises the same supreme and affectionate obedience to all that God requires, and loves him to the full extent of his knowledge and strength as a man. The saint on earth is perfect, when he loves with all the strength and intensity rendered practicable by the extent of his knowledge and reach of his powers in his present sphere. The saint in heaven will be favored with a seraph’s vision, and a seraph’s power. To be perfect there, he must love and adore with a seraph’s vigor, and burn with a seraph’s fire. To present this subject in a somewhat more distinct and expanded form, the attention of the reader is now invited to a few remarks upon 1 Thessalonians 5:23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The prayer of the apostle for Christians here is, in the language of Dr. Scott, that the "very God of peace" "would sanctify them wholly, and in respect to their entire nature, as consisting of a rational and immortal soul, an animal life, with its various sensitive appetites, and a material body; that every sense, member, organ, and faculty might be completely purified, and devoted to the service of God; and that thus they might be preserved blameless till the coming of Christ." In short, the prayer of the apostle is, that all the powers and susceptibilities of our being may not only be purified from all that is unholy, but wholly sanctified and devoted to Christ, and for ever preserved in that state. Now, the powers and susceptibilities of our nature are all comprehended in the following enumeration: the will, the intellect, and our mental and physical susceptibilities and propensities. The question to which the special attention of the reader is

invited is this: When are we in a perfectly sanctified and blameless state, in respect to the action of all these powers and susceptibilities?

1. That we be in a perfectly sanctified and blameless state in regard to our wills, implies, that the action of all our voluntary powers be in entire conformity to the will of God; that every choice, every preference, and every volition, be controlled by a filial regard to the Divine requisitions. The perpetual language of the heart must be, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?"

2. That we "be preserved blameless" in regard to our intellect, does not imply that we never think of what is evil. If this were so, Christ was not blameless, because he thought of the temptations of Satan. Nor could the Christian repel what is evil, as he is required to do. To repel evil, the evil itself must be before the mind, as an object of thought. To be blameless in respect to the action of our intellectual powers, does imply, 1. That every thought of evil be instantly suppressed and repelled. 2. That they be constantly employed on the inquiry, what is the truth and will of God, and by what means we may best meet the demands of the great law of love. 3. That they be employed in the perpetual contemplation of "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," in thinking of these things also. When the intellectual powers are thus employed, they are certainly in a blameless state.

3. That our feelings and mental susceptibilities be preserved blameless, does not imply that they are, at all times and circumstances, in the same intensity of excitement, or in the same identical state. This the powers and laws of our being forbid. Nor, in that case, could we obey the command, "Rejoice with those that do rejoice, and weep with those that weep." Nor does it imply that no feelings can exist in the mind, which, under the circumstances then present, it would be improper to indulge. A Christian, for example, may feel a very strong desire to speak for Christ under circumstances when it would be improper for him to speak. The feeling itself is proper. But we must be guided by wisdom from above in respect to the question, when and where we are to give utterance to our feelings. That our feelings and mental susceptibilities be in a blameless state, does imply, 1. That they all be held in perfect and perpetual subjection to the will of God. 2. That they be in perfect and perpetual harmony with the truth and will of God as apprehended by the intellect, and thus constituting a spotless mirror, through which there shall be a perfect reflection of whatsover things are "true," "honest," just," "pure," "lovely," and of "good report."

4. That our "bodies be preserved blameless," does not, of course, imply that they are free from fatigue, disease, or death. Nor does it imply that no desire be excited through our physical propensities, which, under existing circumstances, it would be unlawful to indulge. The feeling of hunger in Christ, under circumstances in which indulgence was not proper, was not sinful. The consent of the will to gratify the feeling, and not the feeling itself, renders us sinners. That we be preserved in a sanctified and blameless state in respect to our bodies, does imply, 1. That we endeavor to acquaint ourselves with all the laws of our physical constitution. 2. That in regard to food, drink, and dress, and in regard to the indulgence of all our appetites and physical propensities, there be a sacred and undeviating conformity to these laws. 3. That every unlawful desire be instantly suppressed, and that all our propensities be held in perfect subjection to the will of God. 4. That our bodies, with all our physical powers and propensities, be "presented to God as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable," to be employed in his service.

Such is Christian Perfection. It is the consecration of our whole being to Christ, and the perpetual employment of all our powers in his service. It is the perfect assimilation of our entire character to that of Christ, having at all times, and under all circumstances, the "same mind that was also in Christ Jesus." It is, in the language of Mr. Wesley, "in one view, purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is the giving God all the heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God. In another view, it is all the mind that was in Christ Jesus, enabling us to walk as he walked. It is the circumcision of the heart from all filthiness, from all inward as well as outward pollution. It is the renewal of the heart in the whole image of God, the full likeness of him that created it. In yet another, it is loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves."

REMARKS.

I. We will, in the first place, notice some of the features of the subject now under consideration, in respect to which all evangelical Christians are agreed.

1. All, I have no doubt, will admit that the nature of Christian perfection has been correctly stated in the preceding remarks; that were any individual actually in the state there described, his moral and Christian character would be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

2. All agree that this entire perfection in holiness is definitely and positively required of us in the Bible, and that, for not rendering such obedience to God, we are wholly without excuse.

3. All agree that the fact, that one is not thus perfect, should be to him a subject of deep repentance and humiliation, and of unfeigned sorrow and contrition of heart. It is certainly no pleasing feature of Christian character, that we are living in partial disobedience to the reasonable requirements of our God and Savior; and the individual that can contemplate the fact that he is thus living, without deep’ unfeigned, and unmingled contrition, penitence, and self-abasement, gives fearful evidence that he is a stranger to the love of Christ.

4. All admit that it is the indispensable duty of every Christian to aim at entire perfection in holiness, and that the individual, who is not aiming at a full discharge of every duty, is wanting in, at least, one fundamental requisite of Christian character.

5. All agree that, we are not only under obligation to aim at such a state, but to make it the subject of constant and fervent prayer, that God himself will thus sanctify us.

6. All agree that it is practicable for professors of religion, generally, to make far higher attainments in holiness than they now do, In view of this admission, let me ask the question Can he be a Christian who is conscious that he is living far below his privileges, and is yet comparatively satisfied with his present state, and is not making vigorous and prayerful efforts to arise to the full standard of practicable attainment? Is he not living in the habitual and allowed neglect of an acknowledged duty?

7. All agree that no line can be drawn this side of entire perfection in holiness, beyond which it is not practicable for the Christian to go.

8. All agree that, at death, or a short period prior to that event, every Christian does arrive at a state of entire sanctification.

Such are the questions connected with this subject, in reference to which all Christians are agreed. We will now,

II. In the second place, consider the question in respect to which they differ. It is in reference to the simple question, Whether we may now, during the progress of the present life, attain to entire perfection in holiness, and whether it is proper for us to indulge the anticipation of making such attainments? One part of the Church affirm, that the perfect obedience which God requires of us, we may render to him. The other affirm, that it is criminal for us to expect to render that obedience. One part affirm that we ought to aim at entire perfection in holiness, with the expectation of attaining to that state. The other part affirm, that we ought to aim at the same perfection in holiness, with the certain expectation of not attaining to that state. On the one hand, it is affirmed, that we ought to pray that the "very God of peace will sanctify us wholly, and preserve our whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," with the expectation that God will answer our prayers by the bestowment of that very blessing. On the other hand, it is affirmed, that we ought to put up that identical prayer, with the certain expectation of not receiving the blessing which we "desire of him." On the one hand, it is affirmed that grace is provided in the Gospel to render the Christian, even in this life, "perfect in every good work to do the will of God" On the other hand, it is affirmed, that no such grace is provided.

Such is a fair and unvarnished statement of the questions connected with the subject under consideration, in respect of which Christians agree and disagree.

III. No evil can result from the belief that entire perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, provided the true standard of perfection be kept constantly and distinctly before the mind. No one can show anything intrinsic in this doctrine, thus entertained, at which the Church ought to be alarmed. On the other hand, the belief of this doctrine, under the circumstances supposed, must be of the highest practical utility; because it lays the only adequate foundation for the most vigorous and prayerful efforts after those attainments in holiness, at which all admit we are bound to aim. To aim at a state, with the certain expectation of not reaching it, must be a hard task, truly, and must render all our efforts well nigh powerless. To aim at a state, on the other hand, with the belief that it is attainable, is the indispensable condition of efficient action.

IV. Whatever our present condition and circumstances may be, there is no presumption in our indulging the expectation of attaining to entire perfection in holiness, provided corresponding provisions are made in the Gospel, and God himself has promised thus to sanctify us. If Christ has promised to guard us against all temptation, we ought to expect to be thus kept by him, whatever the temptations may be which beset us. If God, on condition of our trusting him for this very blessing, has promised to "sanctify us wholly," we ought to expect to be thus sanctified. In view of such provisions and promises, there is no more presumption in expecting perfect, than partial sanctification; since our faith, alike in both instances, rests not upon an arm of flesh, but upon the grace and power of God.

V. The question, Whether entire perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, depends exclusively upon the question, What are the nature and extent of the provisions of the Gospel for our present sanctification, and of the "exceeding great and precious promises" of Divine grace? In pursuing our inquiries in respect to this question, we are to look away from our condition and circumstances as sinners, and from our natural powers as moral agents, to the provisions and promises of the

grace of God. If the "riches of Christ's inheritance in the saints" comprehends their entire sanctification in this life, we certainly are under obligations infinite to possess that inheritance in all its fullness. Are you, Christian, prepared to enter upon the investigation of the subject before us, with the simple inquiry, what has God provided for and promised to me, as a Christian? When will the Church be again able to say, "We have known and believed the love which the Father hath unto us?"

VI. Finally, inasmuch as entire perfection in holiness is required of us, not only in the law, but also in the Gospel, and is a ceaseless demand of our being, we are under complete obligation to approach the inquiry, Whether the doctrine, that such perfection is attainable in this life, is contained in the Bible? with the hope of finding it there. To this inquiry the attention of the reader will be directed in the following discourse.

DISCOURSE II.

PERFECTION IN HOLINESS ATTAINABLE.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." Matt. v:48. THE object of the preceding discourse was, to illustrate and explain the nature of Christian perfection. The object of the present discourse is to answer the inquiry, "Is such a state attainable in this life?" to ascertain the fact, whether it is practicable for us, as Christians, to consecrate our entire being, with all its towers and susceptibilities, to Christ, and to live under the continual influence of the all-pervading and all-controlling principle of pure and perfect love "of faith on the Son of God?"

I use the terms attainable and practicable, with reference not merely to our power as moral agents, but also with respect to the provisions and promises of Divine grace. If provision is made in the Gospel for the entire sanctification of believers in this life; if God has promised to render those "perfect in every good work to do his will," by whom he is inquired of by faith to do it for them, then is such a state, in the highest and most common acceptation of the term, attainable; and we are under the most sacred obligation to aim at that state, with the full and joyful expectation of attaining it. The question now returns, Is perfection in holiness, in the sense of the term as above explained, attainable in this life? That it is attainable, I argue from the following reasons:

I. The Bible positively affirms that provision is made in, the Gospel for the attainment of that state, and that to make such provision is one of the great objects of Christ's redemption. Romans 8:3, Romans 8:4, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." The phrase "righteousness of the law," obviously means the precepts of the law, or the moral rectitude which the law requires. This I argue, 1st, From the fact that the same phrase is undeniably used in this sense in the preceding part of the epistle, Romans 2:26, "If the circumcision keep the righteousness [the precepts] of the law." Without the best of reasons, we should not suppose the apostle to use the same phrase, in entirely different senses, in the same epistle. 2nd, Justification, the only other sense ever, I believe, attributed to the phrase under consideration, is never in the Bible called the justification of the law, but is definitely distinguished from it, by being called "justification by faith." 3rd, If justification were the thing primarily referred to in this phrase, still the moral rectitude required by the law, i.e., sanctification, is also implied in it.

For, if Christ should justify, and not to the same extent sanctify his people, he would save them in, and not from, their sins. The phrase righteousness of the law," then, directly and primarily means, or obviously implies, the precepts of the law, or the moral rectitude required by the law. To have this righteousness fulfilled in us, implies, that it be perfectly accomplished in us, or, that we are brought into perfect conformity to the moral rectitude required by the law. This is declared to be one of the great objects of Christ's death. Such conformity, then, is practicable to the Christian, or Christ failed to accomplish one of the prime purposes of his redemption.

Again, 1 Peter 2:24, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness." To be dead to sin, and alive unto righteousness, implies entire sanctification; or, to be dead in sin, does not imply total depravity. That we might be thus dead, and thus alive, Christ "bore our sins in his own body on the tree." Entire sanctification, then, is attainable, or Christ failed, in one important respect, to finish the work which his Father "gave him to do."

2 Corinthians 5:15, "And he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again." In other words, Christ died that his people might be free from all selfishness, and become purely and perfectly benevolent. Did he fail to accomplish his work?"

2 Peter 1:4, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

2 Corinthians 7:1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." If to "escape the corruption that is in the world through lust," and to be "made partakers of the Divine nature," to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," and to "perfect holiness," do not imply entire sanctification, how, I ask, can that doctrine be expressed? That the Christian may be thus sanctified is the declared object for which the promises were given. Who will deny that they are adequate to this object? Unless they are thus inadequate, perfection in holiness is, in this life, practicable to the Christian.

Under this head I might cite many other passages, equally to my purpose; but these must suffice. On these and other kindred passages, I have one remark to make, to which the special attention of the reader is invited. It is this: We have the same evidence from the Bible, that provision is made for the entire sanctification of Christians, that we have that provision is made for their entire justification. Any principles of interpretation that will show that provision is not made for the former, will be equally conclusive to show that it is not made for the latter.

II. Perfection in holiness is promised to the Christian in the new covenant under which he is now placed. To present this part of the subject distinctly before the reader's mind, we will first inquire what is the old or first covenant.

Exodus 34:27, Exodus 34:28, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words; for after the tenor of these words have I made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." Deuteronomy 9:11, Deuteronomy

9:15, "And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the Lord gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant." "So I turned, and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire; and the two tables of the covenant were in my hands." The first, or the old covenant, then, is the moral law, that law by which we are required to "love the Lord our God with all our powers, and our neighbor as ourselves." This covenant, as we learn from Hebrews 9:1-4, had annexed to it the types and shadows of the ancient dispensation. "Then verily the first covenant had" attached to it "ordinances of Divine service, and a worldly sanctuary," etc.

What the new covenant is, we learn from Jeremiah 31:31 - Jeremiah 31:34, and Hebrews 8:8-11, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt (which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord); but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more." The following blessings, specifically promised in this covenant, demand our special attention: 1. A confirmed state of pure and perfect holiness, such as the first covenant, or moral law, demands "I will put my law In their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." 2. The pardon of all sin, or perfect justification "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more." 3. The perpetual fruition of the Divine presence and favor "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." 4. The general spread of the Gospel among mankind "All shall know me."

We will now notice the relations of these two covenants.

I. The same standard of character, perfect holiness, is common to both.

II. What the old covenant requires of Christians, the new promises to them. For example,

1st, The old covenant requires perfect holiness. Its language is, "Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God;" "He that kept the whole law, and yet offends in one point, is guilty of all." On the other hand, the new covenant promises to the believer perfect holiness. Jeremiah 31:32, "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." See also Hebrews 8:10. Here, as above remarked, the very thing which the moral law requires is positively promised to the believer. Ezekiel 36:25-27, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Is it in the power of language to express the doctrine of entire sanctification, if it is not here expressed?

Jeremiah 50:20, "In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will

pardon them whom I reserve." What other thought, let me ask, is such language adapted to convey but this, a state of entire sanctification?

Deuteronomy 30:6, "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Here the perfect holiness required by the law is promised in the very words of the law itself.

Again, 2nd, The old covenant or moral law requires not only perfect, but perpetual holiness. Galatians 3:10, "Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." The new covenant, on the other hand, promises not only perfect but perpetual holiness. Jeremiah 32:39-40, "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." If, to give to Christians one heart and one way, that they may fear God for ever, and never depart from him, does not imply, not only perfect, but perpetual holiness, we may truly say that language cannot express that idea.

Ezekiel 37:23, "Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions." Every one will perceive, that if the Holy Spirit has not here given us the promise, not only of perfect, but perpetual holiness, he has made as near an approach to it as is in the power of language to make, and that, if he had designed to express that promise, no stronger language could possibly have been used. The same truth is taught with equal distinctness in Isaiah 59:21, and Luke 1:74-75, "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." "That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."

I cite but one other passage under this head a passage, which, if we had none others of the kind in the Bible, would place the doctrine under consideration upon an eternal rock. 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calls you, who also will do it." Here we have, 1. A prayer for perfect and perpetual holiness, dictated by the direct inspiration of the Spirit of God. Who can believe that the Holy Spirit has dictated a prayer which is not "according to the will of God," and which he requires us to believe that God will never answer by the bestowment of the blessing "desired of him?

2. We have the positive declaration of God himself, that this blessing, when asked in faith, shall be granted "Faithful is he that calls you, who also will do it." On the promises of Scripture, as thus presented, I remark,

I. That we have evidence just as conclusive, that perfect and perpetual holiness is promised to Christians, as we have that it is required of them. Any principles of interpretation that would prove that the former is not promised, would be equally conclusive to show that the latter is not required.

II. We have the same evidence from Scripture, that all Christians may, and that some of them will, attain to a state of entire sanctification in this life, that we have that they will attain to that state in

heaven. No passages can be adduced which more positively affirm the latter than the former. Any principles of interpretation that will show that such passages as I have cited, and shall hereafter cite, do not prove the practicability of perfect holiness here, will annihilate all evidence that heaven itself is a state of perfect and perpetual purity. An objection, deserving a passing notice, is sometimes brought to the view of the new covenant here given. This covenant, it is said, is applicable to the Jews only. To this position I reply,

1st, That to the converted Jew, at least, entire sanctification is undeniably attainable. Why deny it to other Christians?

2nd, Christ is the mediator of the new covenant, does he, as mediator, sustain one relation to the Jewish, and another to the Gentile Christian? Has he not "broken down the wall of partition between them," and made both one?

3rd, In Ephesians 3:6, and elsewhere, we learn that the Gentiles have become "fellow-heirs," and "of the same body," and partakers of the same promise with the Jews.

4th, The promise, from Thessalonians, above cited, is expressly addressed to all Christians, without discrimination.*

* [I have recently learned that certain objections to the views of the "two covenants," presented in this volume, have been started by some, on account of the declaration of Paul, Hebrews 8:13, "In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now, that which decayes and waxes old is ready to vanish away." If the old covenant is the moral law, does not the apostle, it is asked, here affirm its abrogation? In reply, I would remark, that the old covenant, as shown in this discourse, is the moral law, with the types and shadows of the ancient dispensation annexed to it. It includes, therefore, not only the "ten commandments," but all the precepts of the Pentateuch, together with the whole ritual of Moses. All these together, considered as a system of moral influences for the moral renovation of man, constituted the old covenant. The moral law, as embodied in the ten commandments, was, by way of eminence, called the covenant, because it embodied the most essential elements of that covenant. Now, the moral law, considered as a rule of action, constitutes an essential element of both covenants, the new as well as the old. In this sense it can never "wax old," nor be abrogated. But, contemplated as a part of the ancient dispensation, and as a part of a system of influences for the moral renovation of man, it has, together with the entire ritual of that dispensation, already "waxed old and vanished away."]

III. I infer that a state of perfect holiness is attainable in this life, from the commands of Scripture, addressed to Christians under the new covenant. I refer here, not merely to the fact, that perfect holiness is required of Christians, but to the manner and circumstances in which these commands are given. A general sends to a subordinate officer a dispatch containing several distinct and specific requisitions. The officer selects one of these requisitions, given in the same manner and circumstances as all the rest, and affirms, that his commander never expected obedience to this command, and that it would be criminal to suppose he did. What would be thought of such a conclusion? In the light of this illustration let us first contemplate the command of Christ, Matthew 5:48, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." To every other precept found in this discourse, all admit that obedience is not only required, but expected. On what authority, I ask, is this one precept selected from the midst of such requisitions, as a solitary

command to which obedience is not expected a command clothed in similar language, given at the same time, and under the same circumstances as all the others among which it is found?

Again, 2 Corinthians 13:11, "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." Why except the first of these precepts, and maintain that obedience to all the rest is expected? How could the expectations of the spirit be more clearly indicated, respecting the precept, "Be perfect," than by clustering it, in this manner, with other precepts, in respect to which we know that such expectations exist?

2 Corinthians 7:1, "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Who would dare affirm to the Christian, that what he is here exhorted and commanded to do, he never can nor will do, and that it is heresy for him to expect it?

1 Timothy 6:13-14, "I give thee charge, in the sight of God, who quickenes all things, and before Jesus Christ, who, before Pontius Pilate, witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." The command here referred to, as any one will see, who will read the context, includes everything required of Christians. Let us suppose that Timothy had answered this epistle, informing Paul that he had read his charge with solemn interest, and that, by the grace of God, he expected to keep it. What should we think, if, in Paul’s second epistle, such a rejoinder as this were found: "Timothy, your letter to me has filled me with amazement and sorrow of heart. You have become a wild fanatic a Perfectionist. How could you have misunderstood me so much, as to suppose that I ever dreamed that you would expect to keep that awful charge?" Why should we be shocked at such a reply? Simply because we cannot believe that such a charge could be dictated by the Spirit of God, not only in the absence of all expectation that it would be kept, but with the intention of impressing the subject with the opposite belief.

IV. I argue, that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, from the fact, that the attainment of this state in this life is the declared object for which the Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of God’s people, and for which all the gifts that Christ bestowed upon the Church when he ascended up on high were conferred. Ephesians 3:14-21, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Also Ephesians 4:11-16, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning

craftiness, whereby they lay in wait to deceive; but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." To be "filled with all the fullness of God" implies, unquestionably, that we be put in possession of all the moral perfections of God, as far as finite can resemble infinite; which can be nothing less than entire perfection in holiness. The same thing is, with equal manifestness, implied in the phrases "unity of the faith," "unto a perfect man," and "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:14-16, make it undeniably evident that these passages are to be understood with reference to this life. Now, that Christians may attain to this state of perfect holiness, is the declared object for which the Holy Spirit is here represented as dwelling in the hearts of God's people, and for which the ministry of reconciliation, etc., was conferred upon the Church, by our Savior, when he "ascended up on high, and gave gifts unto men." Thus Christ expressly adapted means to an end, which means are inadequate to that end? If not, perfection in holiness is not only to be regarded as attainable, but to be expected, in this life.

V. As a fifth argument in favor of the attainableness of entire sanctification in this life, we will now consider the prayer dictated by our Savior to his disciples, together with the one put up by him, in behalf of the Church, on the evening preceding his crucifixion. Who can believe that Christ has dictated a standing petition for the Church, which he requires her to believe that it is not for the glory of God to answer? Matthew 6:10, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." That this is a prayer for perfection in holiness, none, I presume, will deny. From the fact that Christ dictated this petition, I infer, 1st, That the object of this petition is agreeable to the will of God, and, consequently, that when the Church puts up the petition in faith, she will be heard, and will have the petition which she desired of him. 2nd, That, in the petition, we have the pledge of Christ, that it shall be granted when asked in faith, just as the petition, "Thy kingdom come," contains a pledge that that kingdom shall come.

Again, John 17:20-23,----"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. And the glory which thou gayest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." On this passage I remark, 1st, That the union here prayed for is a union of perfect love "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." In other words, perfection in holiness is the object of this prayer. 2nd, The salvation of the world is declared to be suspended upon the existence of this love among believers "That the world may believe and know that thou hast sent me." Consequently, we must admit that this love, and consequent union, will exist among believers, or maintain, 1st, That Christ, at that solemn hour, prayed for that which he requires us to believe that it is not for the glory of God to bestow upon his children. 2nd, That the world are never to believe in Christ. Christian, ponder this prayer, and then ask yourself if you can believe, or dare affirm, that this love shall never, in this life, exist in your heart.

VI. I argue, that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, and that the sacred writers intended to teach the doctrine, from the fact, that inspired men made the attainment of this particular state the subject of definite, fervent, and constant prayer.

Colossians 4:12 "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, salutes you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Hebrews 13:20-21 "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." The prayer of the apostle, in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, is also distinctly before the reader's mind, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly," etc. On these, and kindred passages, I remark

1. Such prayers are in perfect conformity with the prayer of Christ himself in behalf of his Church, as recorded in John 17:20-23, and cited above. They are also in conformity with the standing petition which Christ dictated to his Church "Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in Heaven."

2. All such prayers were dictated by direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Now, in Romans 8:27, we learn, that the "Spirit makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God." In 1 John 5:14-15, we also learn, that this is the confidence that we live in him [Christ], and if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hear us, we know that whatsoever we ask, we have the petitions that we desired of him." Have we not, then, proof positive, that when we pray, and pray in faith for perfect holiness, that blessing will be bestowed upon us? Is it possible, reader, for us to believe, that Christ himself prayed, and taught his Church to pray, and the Holy Spirit inspired and influenced apostles and saints to pray, for a blessing which the Scriptures require us to believe God will not bestow upon his people?

3. Let us suppose that God has revealed to us the fact, that he has made no provision for the bestowment of a certain blessing upon us; that whatever our prayers, intentions, and efforts actually may be, infinite wisdom has unchangeably determined to withhold the grace necessary to its attainment in this life. Would it be proper for us, under such circumstances, to pray for that blessing? What would such a prayer be, less than a request that God would reverse the revealed dictates of infinite wisdom? In what other light shall we regard the prayers of inspired men for the perfect holiness of Christians, on the supposition that God had revealed to them the fact, that no provisions were made in the Gospel for the bestowment of that blessing; that he had irreversibly determined not to confer the grace necessary to its attainment, whatever the prayers and efforts of the people actually might be; and that it is a dangerous error for them to suppose the opposite? Is not the fact, that inspired men prayed thus fervently and constantly for this blessing, the highest possible evidence that they regarded the attainment of the blessing as coming within the range of the provisions and promises of Divine grace?

VII. I infer that perfect holiness is attainable in this life, from the many promises of Scripture which are conditioned on this state. For example, Isaiah 26:3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee." Matthew 6:22, "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." 2 Corinthians 13:11. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." Php 4:6-7,--"Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus." All the blessings promised in such passages, of which the Bible is full, are conditioned, directly or indirectly, on the existence of perfect holiness in the subject. When, for example, God promises "perfect peace to those whose minds are stayed

on him," the condition of the promise is, of course, perfect faith, or confidence; because the want of such confidence would forfeit the blessing, or render the enjoyment of it an impossibility. So also the "single eye," the command, "be perfect," and "be careful for nothing," etc., directly require the same thing, a state of perfect holiness. Does God promise to his people, in this life, blessings of infinite value, upon conditions which he requires them to regard as impracticable? What is this but the most solemn mockery conceivable? A parent continually holds before his children promises of the richest blessings in his power to bestow, but all pledged upon the conditions with which he holds it criminal in them to believe they will ever comply. What would he thought of such a parent? Shall we charge such conduct upon God? In reply to the above argument, it is sometimes said that Christians do experience the fulfillment of these promises in proportion to their fidelity. Very true, I reply. This fact, however, does not in the least diminish the force of the argument, as above stated. God does hold out the richest blessings upon the definite condition of perfect holiness in us. Now as is true, according to the common theory, he requires us to believe that these blessings are proffered upon a condition with which we shall not comply, what is this, I ask again, but the most solemn mockery conceivable?

VIII. I argue, that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, from the testimony of Scripture that some did attain to that state. On this subject I remark

1. That from what the sacred writers have left on record in respect to the provisions and promises of Divine grace, from their prayers, exhortations, precepts, etc., in respect of this identical subject; in short, from the fact that this particular subject was the special theme of their meditations, discourses, and prayers, we ought to conclude, in the absence of positive proof to the contrary, that they did attain to this state, just as, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, we ought to conclude that they died in the triumphs of faith.

2. The fact, that some of them are said to have fallen into sin in some particular instances, is no evidence at all that they did not subsequently attain to a state of entire sanctification, any more than the sins of Paul previous to his conversion are proof of his want of holiness subsequent to that event.

3. There is no positive evidence on record that many of those men did not attain to this state, any more than there is that they did not "die in faith."

4. There is, on the other hand, positive evidence that some of them did attain to this state. To show this, I begin with the character of Paul, as drawn by the pen of inspiration. In respect to this apostle, I remark 1. That there is but one act of his entire Christian life, on record, which is of a doubtful character. I refer to the controversy with Barnabas. 2. With this exception and whether it be an exception, is, to say the least, doubtful his character, as presented by the sacred historian, is "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." 3. The testimony of the apostle to his own attainments, shows that he had arrived to a state of entire sanctification. Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith on the Son of God." 1 Thessalonians 2:10, "Ye are witnesses, and God, also, how holily, and justly, and uublameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe." 1 Corinthians 4:4, "I know nothing by myself," i.e., I am conscious of no wrong. Acts 20:26, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure of the blood of all men." Now, who would dare to apply such language to himself, who was conscious of being in any other than a state of entire consecration to

Christ? How can he be "pure of the blood of all men," who is constantly failing in his duty? And we do fail in our duty to men, when we are not wholly consecrated to Christ. How can he be conscious of no wrong, and affirm of himself that he lives "holily, and justly, and unblameably," not in the sight of men merely, but also in the sight of God, who is conscious of daily and hourly departures from the rectitude required by the Gospel? Who, let me ask, in view of the character of Paul, as drawn by the pen of inspiration, and of his own testimony to his own attainments, will dare to lay sin to his charge, or affirm that he did not arrive to a state of perfect consecration to Christ?

Further, the apostle presents himself as an example for the imitation of Christians, requiring and exhorting them to copy that example, without any intimation, that, in so doing, they will not discharge their whole duty. Php 4:9, "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you." Php 3:17, "Brethren, be ye followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample." 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ;" i.e., Be ye imitators of me, inasmuch as I am an imitator of Christ. Now, who would dare to address such language to Christians, unless he was conscious of presenting to them a perfect pattern for their imitation? Such, then, was Paul. If he did not claim to have been in a state of entire sanctification I know not by what language such a claim can be expressed.

Again 1 John 3:21, and 1 John 4:17-18, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." "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." "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear." Who can read such declarations, without the conviction that the apostle is here speaking of what he knew to be true from actual experience? Was he a stranger to a heart that doth not condemn, and its effects, and to perfect love, and its consequences? Is he not testifying as a witness to what his own consciousness affirmed to be a reality?

If the "one hundred and forty and four thousand also, who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes," are not declared, Revelation 14:4-5, to have attained to perfect holiness in this life, I have failed to divine the meaning of the passage. "These are they who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins." "And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God." The phrase "they are without fault" evidently relates to their character as Christians in this life; because the conjunction "for" connects this with the preceding part of the sentence, the meaning of which is perfectly evident; also, because the reason is here assigned for their pre-eminent glory in heaven. All this may be said to be mere hyperbole. I will not, therefore, insist upon it. The same principle, however, would be equally applicable to any phraseology that could have been adopted.

Isaiah 6:5-8, "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged."

Previous to this event, the prophet had at least some degree of holiness. What was his state subsequently when "his iniquity was taken away, and his sin purged?" was it a little higher degree of holiness than he before possessed? Was it not, as the language used implies, a state of perfect

holiness?

Other cases might be cited; but these must suffice.

IX. I argue that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, from the fact, that no one can point out any incentive to sin, from within or around him, for which a specific remedy is not provided in the Gospel. Do our lusts rebel? We are told, that if "Christ be in us, the body is dead because of sin;" that "the old man is crucified with him;" and that if we will "walk in the spirit, we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Do the world and Satan entice? We are assured that "this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith;" that "stronger is he that is in us, than he that is in the world; and that, when we have "put on the whole Armour of God," we shall be able, with the shield of faith, to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." In short, from whatever source temptation to sin arises, we are assured that God will not "suffer us to be tempted above what we are able," but will, "with the temptation, make way for our escape." With Christ within us, and these "exceeding great and precious promises" around us, we are commanded to "reckon ourselves dead indeed to sin, and alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ." In the presence of such facts and promises, who would dare to say to the Christian, It is impracticable for you to "cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh, and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God?"

X. I argue that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, from the fact, that no one can lay down any line this side of that state, beyond which it is not practicable for the Christian to go. Who would dare to lay down such a line, and then say to the convert, panting after holiness, "as the hart panteth after the water-brooks," "Hitherto mayest thou come, and no farther?"

IX. As another argument in favor of the attainableness of holiness in this life, I adduce the striking contrast between the language of inspiration and of the Church upon this subject, wherever the Church has denied the doctrine under consideration. I appeal to the conscience and memory of every one who reads these pages, whether from the pulpit, the press, or the private walks of life, as far as this doctrine has been denied, you have ever heard language which corresponds with the plain, positive, and unqualified declarations of the Bible upon this. subject, which have now been spread out before you. Why this contrast between the language of inspiration and of the Church? One supposition, and one only, in my judgment, solves the mystery. The Church and the sacred writers hold different sentiments upon this subject.

Let any minister, for example, holding the common sentiments upon this subject, begin, in the simple and unqualified language of inspiration, to pray that his people may be "sanctified wholly, and preserved in that state unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;" let him charge them, "before God and our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep the commandments of God without spot unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ;" let him begin to talk of the perfect peace of pure and perfect love; let him tell his people that the blood of Christ "cleanses from all sin," and that he "bore our sins in his own body on the tree;" that we, "being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness;" that the "righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us," etc., what would his Church and Congregation think of him? Would they not conclude that he had adopted some entirely new theory in regard to Christian perfection? I ask again, why has the language of the Bible so entirely disappeared, so far as this doctrine is denied? and why is it, that, as soon as this doctrine is adopted, the simple and expressive language of the Bible reappears, as the only language appropriate to express the sentiments of the preacher and the Church.

XII. The convictions of the Church, as universally expressed in her covenants, demand the admission of the attainableness of perfect holiness in this life. I have never, that I recollect, read or heard of such a covenant, which did not pledge its members to a state of entire sanctification. Every one, in the presence of God, angels, and men, and that under the sanction of the most solemn oath, avouches the Lord to be his God, promising to obey him in all things, and none else, to "deny himself of all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present evil world." This is nothing less than a pledge to "be perfect," and no Church dares to pledge her members to do less than this.

Yet, while this pledge is thus solemnly imposed upon all her members, they are required, under sanctions hardly less awful, to believe that this pledge will never be redeemed, and that it is a crime to suppose that it may. All this is done in the face of an acknowledged Divine declaration "It is better that thou shouldst not vow, than to vow and not pay." Now, why has the Holy Spirit thus constrained the Church to pledge her members in direct opposition to her creed? To open her eyes to the absurdity and ruinous tendency of her creed, in respect to the subject under consideration. Such is my solemn conviction. The Churches of Christ are bound fundamentally to change their covenants, or admit the doctrine under consideration.

XIII. The tendency of this doctrine, as compared with that of its opposite, is another important reason why we should admit it. To place this part of the subject distinctly before the mind, I remark,

1. That, as it was observed in the preceding discourse, no evil can result from the belief of this doctrine, provided we keep the true standard of holiness distinctly in view. Christ requires us to consecrate to him our entire being. What evil can result from the belief that we may do this, provided we understand what this requirement is? All the evil that has ever arisen, connected with this doctrine, can be demonstrated to have arisen, not from the belief that perfection in holiness is practicable to the Christian, but from a misapprehension of the nature of holiness itself.

2. The belief that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, involves the very principle that is considered necessary to efficient action on every other subject. Who would expect an army to fight with energy under the impression of inevitable defeat? All acknowledge it to be the duty of the Christian to aim at perfection in holiness. How can he do this efficiently with the persuasion that such perfection is impracticable?

3. Every Christian also admits that no one can be saved who does not aim at perfection. Now, to aim at this state with the belief that it is unattainable, is an absolute impossibility. To aim at the accomplishment of an object, is the same thing as to intend to accomplish it. How can a man intend to do that which he regards as impracticable? Let the hunter, for example, if he can, point his weapon at the moon, with the intention of hitting it. He will find the formation of such intention, with his present belief of the power of his weapon, and the distance of the object, an impossibility. Has God required the Christian, upon pain of his eternal displeasure, to aim at perfection in holiness, and then required him to believe a certain fact, the belief of which renders the formation of that intention an impossibility? Who can believe it? The principle before us, no one, I believe, at all acquainted with the laws of mind, will deny. Whatever a man regards as impracticable, or thinks it absolutely certain that he never will perform, the changeless laws of mind render it impossible for him to aim at, or intend to perform it. How can a man throw a stone at the sun, aiming or intending

to hit the sun? An individual is shooting at a mark, with the full belief, that no man, whatever his natural powers may be, ever did or ever will hit that mark. It is an absolute impossibility that he ever should, with that belief intend to hit it. For the same reason, while a man regards perfection in. holiness as impracticable; while he believes that no man ever did, or ever will, in this life, attain to that state, and that it is criminal to suppose the opposite, to aim at perfection in holiness, or to intend to be perfectly holy, is, then, an absolute impossibility. Now the Church universally affirms, and ministers everywhere preach the same thing, that no one can be a Christian who does not aim at perfection in holiness, or intend to be perfectly holy. The Church and the ministry, then, almost as universally, hold it criminal for any man not to believe a certain fact, to wit, that such perfection is unattainable, the belief of which fact renders the existence of such intention an absolute impossibility. "Thus have ye made void the law of God by your traditions." If a man must aim at perfection in holiness, or he cannot be saved, he must theoretically or practically believe that such perfection is practicable, or he cannot be saved.

XIV. As a final argument, in favor of the truth of the doctrine under consideration, I notice the absurdity of the common supposition, that the Christian is always perfectly sanctified at, or a few minutes before, death, and never at an earlier period. Two considerations will place the absurdity of this supposition in its proper light: 1st, the grace which sanctifies the believer amid the gloom and wreck and distraction of dissolving nature, would, if applied, have sanctified him at an earlier period. 2nd, No other reason can be assigned for this grace being thus withheld, but the supposition that God can be better glorified, and his kingdom better advanced by saints partially, than wholly, consecrated to their sacred calling. Where is the foundation for such an absurdity in the Bible?

Some objections to the interpretation which has been given to the various passages cited in this discourse demand a passing notice.

I. The fact, it is said, that provision is made in the Gospel for the entire sanctification of Christians; that this state is promised to them in the new covenant, on condition of their faith; and that, in view of these provisions and promises, perfect holiness is required of them, proves merely that such a state is attainable, but not that it is actually attained. I reply,

1. That my object in citing such passages has been, not to show Christians what they are, but what they may become; and thus to lay the foundation for the exercise of that faith by which they may come into the full possession of all the "riches of Christ’s inheritance in the saints."

2. The manner in which the sacred writers have presented the provisions, promises, and commands of the Gospel, demonstrates the fact that they did expect Christians to "cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God" an expectation precisely the opposite of what is now commonly entertained upon the same subject.

3. The supposition that such men as Paul, for example, knew that provision was made in the Gospel for their entire sanctification; that it was promised to them in the new covenant, and required of them as Christians; the supposition, I say, that they knew, that by simply trusting Christ for this blessing, they could enjoy it, and yet withheld the faith necessary to its attainment, is absolutely incredible. It is to suppose, that they lived in the habitual and allowed indulgence of known sin. The same remark is equally applicable to real Christians of every age. When they know

their privileges they will avail themselves of them. That they may know their privileges, and thus "come out of darkness into God’s marvelous light," is the great object of this work, and of all my prayers and efforts.

II. The prayer of Christ, recorded in John 17:20-23, it is objected, is put up in behalf of all Christians without distinction; and this prayer, in all its fullness, must be answered in the experience of each Christian, or Christ prayed in vain. In other words, according to this objection, the union now existing among Christians, is all that is implied in such language as the following: "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee;" that "they may be one in us;" that "they may be made perfect in one;" and the effect produced by this union, is all that is meant by the phrases "that the world may believe," and "that the world may know," "That thou hast sent me." In reply, I remark,

1. That the supposition that the union, or rather the disunion, now existing among Christians, presents a full reflection of all that is implied in the language above referred to, renders the Bible the most unmeaning book that ever was written.

2. The supposition that Christ prayed for any higher union than now exists, involves all the difficulties embraced in the supposition that he prayed for a perfect union. In both instances alike, according to the above objection, he prayed in vain.

3. If Christ did not here pray for a perfect union among Christians, and consequently for their entire sanctification, it is absolutely beyond the power of language to express such a prayer.

4. Christ here prays as the Mediator of the new covenant, and when the Church comes to her Mediator, in faith, for an answer to this prayer (and the day is no doubt near when she will do it), this prayer, in all its blessed fullness, will be answered.

III. It is further objected, that no particular time is specified when the prayer of Christ, and the promises of the new covenant, etc., are to be fulfilled; consequently, they do not prove the attainableness of entire sanctification in this life. I reply,

1. In some of the promises the time of their fulfillment is definitely specified. For example, 1 Thessalonians 5:23. When can our "whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," if not in this life?

2. If no time were specified, we should involve ourselves in infinite guilt, were we to "limit the Holy One," by fixing a time, at or subsequent to the hour of death. Such a limitation of the promises sanctions those principles of interpretation by which the worst forms of error are sustained from the Bible. Take, for example, the passage," Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." True, says the universalist, and all men will be holy in eternity. Shall we sanction such a principle by our manner of limiting the application of the exceeding great and precious promises of Divine grace?

I close this discourse with a few brief reflections:

1. We are now prepared for a distinct survey of the foundation on which the doctrine under consideration rests; a doctrine upheld by the declared provisions and promises of the Gospel; a doctrine sustained by the prayer of Christ as the Mediator of the new covenant, and by the "prayers of the saints," as dictated by him and by the Spirit of grace; a doctrine which so perfectly

corresponds with what God requires of us as Christians, and with all that inspired apostles and prophets taught and wrote upon the subject. Upon what foundation does such a doctrine rest, but upon the "Rock of Ages?"

2. We see the reason of the aspect of living death which the Church now presents to the world. It is simply this: She is in a state of unbelief in respect to the nature and extent of the provisions and promises of Divine grace.

3. We see when it is that the Church will realize, in her own experience, the fulfillment of the promises of the new covenant. 1. When she fully becomes aware of the nature and extent of these promises. 2. When the conditions are fulfilled by her on which the fulfillment of these promises rests, as recorded in Ezekiel 36:37: "Thus saith the Lord God I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do this thing for them." When this is done and the time is near, I believe, when it will be done there will then exist upon earth "a holy generation, a royal priesthood, and a peculiar people."

4. Christian brother, suppose that in view of all the facts, arguments, and Divine declarations, which have now been spread before you, you should reproach your Redeemer with holy boldness, confidently expecting that his "blood shall cleanse you from all sin" "that the very God of peace shall sanctify you wholly, and preserve your whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" would that Redeemer, think you, frown you from his presence, for having asked and expected more than he himself has authorized you to ask and expect? On the other hand, should you refuse to "open your mouth thus wide," would he not charge it to your unbelief, and would he not marvel at that unbelief?

DISCOURSE III.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

"Nicodemus answered, and said unto him, How can these things be?

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knows not these things?" John 3:9-10. THE evidence by which the attainableness of a state of entire sanctification in this life is sustained, is now, to some extent, before the reader’s mind, as the subject presents itself to my own. Notwithstanding the abundance and force of the evidence, some may still be disposed to ask, How can these things be? Are there not many passages of Scripture which positively contradict this doctrine? and are there not many fundamental objections against it? To a consideration of such passages and objections, the attention of the reader is now invited.

I. We will first consider the objections drawn from Scripture.

I begin with Romans 7:14-25. (The reader is referred to the Bible, as the passage is too long to be quoted entire.) The bearing of this passage upon the doctrine under consideration, depends upon the question whether the apostle is here describing the state of the Christian under the Gospel, or of the sinner under the law, and acted upon by legal motives only. In favor of the first supposition, two, and only two, considerations deserving notice, have, to my knowledge, been adduced.

1. The present tense is here used, "I am carnal," etc.; showing, it is said, that the apostle is describing his present character as a Christian. In answer to this, I remark, 1st, that it is perfectly

common for the sacred writers to use this tense in describing not only past but future events. 2nd, The present tense was demanded in this instance, inasmuch as the design of the apostle is to describe his own, and the state of every other person, under the exclusive action of legal motives, in opposition to their state under the Gospel. Under the former, he says, "I am [and of course every other man is] carnal, sold [a bond slave] under sin." Under the latter, Romans 8:2, "I am free from the law of sin and death." Thus said Whitefield, as a drunkard was reeling before him, "There is George Whitefield, but for the grace of God." Supposing the apostle here to be describing his state as a sinner under the law, the present tense is demanded just as much as if he were describing his state as a Christian.

2. The language used by the apostle in this passage, it is said, is applicable to the Christian only. For example, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." "That which I do I allow not." "What I hate, that I do," etc. To this I answer, 1st, That language equally strong is applied to the sinner in other parts of the Bible. Ezekiel 33:32, "And lo! thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not." Isaiah 58:2, "Yet ye seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of their God; they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God." John 5:35, "He was a burning and a shining light; and ye were willing, for a season, to rejoice in his light." Romans 2:17-18, "Behold thou art called a Jew, and rests in the law, and makes thy boast of God, and knows his will, and approves the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law." Many other passages of similar import might be cited. With what propriety, I ask, can the language used in Romans 7:1-25. be cited as proof, that the sinner cannot there be referred to, when language equally strong is so frequently applied to him in other parts of the Bible?

2nd, Precisely similar language was at this time in common use among the heathen, and by them applied to men as sinners. "He that sins," says one, "does not what he would; but what he would not, that he does." "I see the good," says another, "and approve it, but follow the bad." "I have forgotten none of the things about which you admonished me; but, although I have a desire to do them, nature struggles against it." "I knew that it was becoming; but, me miserable! I could not do it." Such is the language common with those very heathen converts to whom the apostle was writing, and applied by them to sinners as such. On what principle, I ask, is it asserted, that they would understand this language, in opposition to all previous usage, as applicable to the Christian only?

We will now consider a few of the reasons in favor of the supposition that the sinner under the action of legal influences, and not the Christian under the Gospel, is the subject of the apostle’s remarks in this passage:

1. It was so understood by the entire primitive Church for the first two or three centuries after the epistle was written. This, none, I believe, acquainted with the records of the primitive Church will deny. Did the entire Church, who received the passage directly from the apostle, mistake his meaning?

2. The supposition that the Christian is here referred to, places what the apostle says of himself, as a Christian, in this passage and elsewhere, in palpable and irreconcilable contradiction to each other. In the state here described, the apostle says of himself, "I am carnal, sold under sin," that is,

a bond slave under the power of sin, as the slave is under the absolute control of his master. We might here ask, Is this the Christian? Again, "The good that I would," i.e., approve, "I do not, but the evil that I would not," i.e., disapproves "that I do." "I find then a law," an invariable order of sequence for such only is law "that when I would do good, evil is present with me." Speaking of himself as a Christian, the apostle says, "I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection." Again, "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Are these states compatible? Are they one and the same? Again, the Christian is represented in the Bible as "overcoming the world." The individual here referred to is invariably overcome by the world. Are these characters identical? Again, in the state here described, the apostle declares himself to be in "captivity to the law of sin and death." In Romans 8:2, he says, that as a Christian he is free from that very law. How can an individual be a captive under a law, and free from that law, at one and the same time? Once more: In the state here referred to, the apostle says, "I am carnal." In Romans 8:9, he declares absolutely, that every real Christian is "not in the flesh," that is, carnal, "but in the spirit." How can these states be identical?

3. If the apostle has described the condition of the Christian under the Gospel, in the passage under consideration, he has defeated his own object, by showing that the Gospel is equally impotent with the law in producing holiness of heart, the opposite of which he designed to show. The law convicts of sin, and then leaves the subject in bondage under sin. What more does the Gospel, if the Christian, also, is "carnal, sold under sin?"

Well might the Jew ask, in view of such a presentation of the power of the Gospel, What advantage hath the Christian, and what profit is there in faith in Christ, as far as holiness is concerned? Do the motions of sin, which are by the law, work in my members to bring forth fruit unto death?" So is the Christian, by the same influence precisely, "brought into captivity to the law of sin, which is in his members." Am I in the flesh? The Christian, also, is "carnal." Am I in bondage, under the power of sin? The Christian, also, is a bond slave, "sold under sin." Do I "approve of the things which are more excellent," and delight to know God and the "ordinances of righteousness," and at the same time remain in a state of disobedience to God? The Christian, also, "delights in the law of the Lord, after the inward man," without obeying that law. "The good that he would he does not; but the evil that he would not, that he does." How could the apostle, by such a train of reasoning as this, convince the Jew, that in depending upon the law for sanctification as well as for justification, he was a sinner leaning upon a broken reed? and that the Gospel alone not only justifies but sanctifies the sinner?

4. The apostle, in the passage before us, declares expressly that he refers to his state as a sinner. "In me, that is, in my flesh," that is, in my carnal, unrenewed state, "dwelleth no good thing."

5. The individual here described is, by the apostle’s own showing, totally depraved. Notwithstanding all the opposition which the law of God and the law of his mind make to sin, he invariably practices it, on all occasions and under all circumstances. If such a state does not indicate the entire absence of holiness, nothing can do it. The whole matter is summed up by the apostle in verse 25, "So then, with the mind, I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." That is, in the language of Professor Stuart, "While my mind, i.e., my reason and conscience, takes part with the law of God, and approves its sanctions, my carnal part obtains the predominance, and brings me into a state of condemnation and ruin." For a full and complete

illustration of the meaning of the entire passage, the reader is referred to the commentary of Professor Stuart.

I conclude, then, that this chapter, as it refers to another subject, has nothing to do with the question whether entire holiness is attainable in this life.

Galatians 5:17, "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." The apostle here gives the reason for the declaration found in the verse preceding, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." The reason assigned is this. The dictates of the flesh and of the Spirit are in contradiction the one to the other. Obedience to one excludes subjection to the other. Hence, if we "Walk in the Spirit," we" cannot do the things that we would," i.e., "fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Strange that an objection to the doctrine of holiness should be drawn from this passage, which, when rightly understood, directly asserts the doctrine; unless the ground is taken that obedience to the command, "Walk in the Spirit," is impracticable. The common explanation of the passage makes the apostle assign the strange reason for the declaration, "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh;" that as the flesh and the Spirit are contrary the one to the other, the Christian cannot do the things that he would, i.e., Cannot walk in the Spirit.

Php 3:12 "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." On this passage I remark, 1st, from a comparison of this passage with the phrase in Php 3:15, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect," it is evident the apostle considered himself in one sense perfect, and in another imperfect. Why, then, is the inference directly drawn that, in Php 3:12, he affirms his imperfection in holiness, when the opposite conclusion is as fully sustained by verse 15? But, 2nd, The apostle, as is perfectly evident from the context, is not here speaking of sanctification at all. There are three senses, somewhat differing the one from the other, in which the verb here rendered perfect, as well as the adjective from which it is derived, are used in the Bible, 1. To designate moral perfection, or entire sanctification in holiness, as in Matthew 5:48 "Be ye therefore perfect." 2. Maturity in Christian knowledge and virtue, 1 Corinthians 2:6, "We speak wisdom to them that are perfect." 3. Exaltation to a state of reward or happiness in a future world, in consequence of a life of devotion to the Divine service in the present world. Thus, in Hebrews 2:10, Christ, as the Captain of our salvation, is said to have been made "perfect," that is, advanced to a state of glory through [or on account of] sufferings." "Among the Greeks," says Professor Stuart, speaking upon the passage last referred to, "this verb was employed to designate the condition of those who, having run in the stadium, and proved to be victorious in the contest, were proclaimed as successful combatants, and had the honors and rewards of victory bestowed upon them." Such persons were said to be perfect, or to have been perfected. Now, that the apostle uses the term "perfect" in this last sense exclusively in Php 3:12, is demonstrably evident from the fact that he was writing to Greeks, and uses it with reference to the very custom, in reference to which they had been accustomed to use the term in this one sense only. He represented himself as running in a race; but not as yet being "perfect;" that is, as not having been advanced to a state of glory in consequence of having victoriously finished his course. It is, then, in reference to having finished his course and received the consequent rewards, and not in reference to moral perfection, that the apostle uses the term "perfect" in the passage under consideration. This the apostle himself directly affirms. He uses the phrases, "not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect," and "I count not myself to have apprehended," with express reference, not to

present holiness at all, but with exclusive respect to the "resurrection of the dead," and "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," i.e., to the glory and blessedness consequent on having victoriously finished his Christian race. Hence, Professor Robinson, in his Lexicon on the New Testament, thus explains the phrase, "either were already perfect" "Not as though I had already completed my course, and arrived at the goal, so as to receive the prize." In respect to holiness, an individual who is running the Christian race, is perfect, who puts forth his entire energies in that course. In respect to a state of glory and blessedness, he is perfect, when, and only when, he has finished his course, and received the consequent reward. It is with exclusive reference to the latter, and not to the former, that the apostle affirms, that he had not "attained, and was not perfect." The passage, then, has no reference at all to the question whether perfection in holiness is attainable in this life.

1 John 1:8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." The phrase "have no sin" may relate to our present or to our past chapter. Thus, when a man says, "I am a sinner," he may mean, I am now actually sinning, or I have sinned, and on that account sustain the character of a sinner. In which sense does the apostle here use the phrase, "If we say we have no sin?" Does he refer to our character in view of what we are now doing, or of what we have done in past time? To the latter, I argue, for the following reasons: 1st, The denial here spoken of stands opposed to the phrase "confessing our sins" in the following verse. Confession relates to past, and not to present sin; it being absolutely impossible for a person to commit a sin, repent of it, and confess it, at one and the same moment; which must be the case if confession relates to sins which we are now committing.

2nd, In 1 John 1:10 the apostle repeats the thought contained in the phrase under consideration, in a manner which leaves no doubt in respect to his meaning, "If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar." This declaration is added, to give emphasis to the affirmation, "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," and is only another form of stating the same thing.

3rd, The Context plainly shows that the apostle is speaking of another thing, altogether, than the question whether a man ever attains to a state of entire holiness in this life. In the verse preceding, he says, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin." He then adds, "If we say we have no sin," to be cleansed from, to be forgiven, that is, if we deny our need of the redemption of Christ, "we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Now, what class of persons existed at the time, to whom this declaration was applicable? I answer, it was the unconverted Jew, who maintained, that in consequence of his obedience to the law, he was free from all sin, and did not need the redemption of Christ. Such persons the apostle addresses by saying, "If we deny our need of Christ’s redemption, by affirming our freedom from sin, we deceive ourselves; and not only so, by saying that "we have not sinned," i.e., affirming that "we have no sin," we also make God a liar. The passage, then, refers exclusively to sinners who deny their need of Christ’s redemption, by saying that they "have not sinned," and not to such men as John Wesley and James B. Taylor, who believed, that, by the grace of Christ applied to "cleanse them from all sin," they had "been made perfect in love." To be made thus perfect, is what we are here taught to expect, as the consequence of "walking in the light," and "confessing our sins." The passage, then, instead of contradicting the doctrine under consideration, when rightly explained, altogether favors the doctrine. What else can be the meaning of the declarations, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the

light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin?" Also, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness?"

James 3:2 "In many things we offend all." Here, it is said, we have the positive testimony of inspiration, that in many respects all Christians sin.

If so, the doctrine under consideration must be given up, of course. But what is the meaning of the above declaration? To answer this, it is necessary to explain the verse preceding, "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." The term "masters" may mean, simply, religious teachers, or it may mean slanderers, or critics on the manners and morals of others. The Greeks and Romans, as Calvin remarks, in speaking upon the term, "were at that time accustomed to call persons of the class last mentioned, masters, because they set themselves up as masters in morals." In this sense, not only Calvin, but Schleusner explains the term. It is used in the same sense as the term judges is in Matthew 7:1, the same identical sin being prohibited in the phrase "judge not," as in the prohibition, "Be not many masters." That the term masters is to be understood in this passage in this sense, as designating, not religious teachers, but slanderers, or critics on the manners of others, I argue, 1st, From the fact that the abuse of the tongue is the exclusive subject of discourse in the whole passage with which the term is connected. 2nd, The apostle declares absolutely, that, if we are "masters," we shall receive greater condemnation, which is only conditionally true of religious teachers, that is, if they sin. The apostle, as Calvin observes, forbids "that there should be many masters," because many are everywhere disposed to rush into this business. Understanding the term "masters" here, in this, its true sense, the declaration, "In many things we offend all," may be readily explained. It contains the reason why we "shall," if we are "masters," "receive the greater condemnation." The reason is this: as masters, "we all offend in many things," that is, are great offenders. The term poluv, here rendered "many things," is often used adverbially in the Bible, as explained above, Thus, the apostle says, "I wept much." Again, "He straitly charged them," i.e., earnestly. "And he besought him much." "I greatly desired him to come to you." In all these passages, the term rendered "many things" in the passage under consideration, is used. Now, when the apostle says that "we all offend greatly," or are aggravated offenders, he does not affirm this of us all as Christians, but as masters; just as in the phrase, "we shall receive greater condemnation," he affirms that as masters, and not as Christians, we shall be thus condemned. If we are masters, we are to receive greater condemnation; because we then are aggravated offenders, the only reason conceivable why we should be thus condemned. The common explanation of the passage makes the apostle render the strangest reason conceivable for the fact that masters "will receive the greater condemnation," to wit, that all men sin in many things. How does the fact, that all men sin in many things, prove, that those who are guilty of particular sins shall receive severer punishment than others? Or that religious teachers, even, if they sin, will be thus punished? Suppose a person should reason in a similar manner in respect to any other crime murder, for example. "All men sin in many things; therefore, the murderer shall receive the greater condemnation." This would be just as reasonable as in reference to the sin of evil speaking, or the sins of religious teachers.

Further, according to the common explanation of the passage, "masters" are to be punished more than they deserve. Two men, we will suppose, commit to-day the same sin. One immediately dies without repentance. The other subsequently becomes a "master," or slanderer. The former,

according to the Bible, will be punished for that sin, all that it deserves. The latter, according to the present explanation of the passage, is, for that identical sin, to receive still "greater condemnation," i.e., to receive greater punishment than the sin deserves. The meaning of the passage, together with the context, it may be thus expressed: Do not multitudes of you, my brethren, be "masters" or slanderers. If we are, we shall receive greater condemnation; because, in that case, we all offend in many things, that is, are aggravated offenders. On the other hand, "if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." The object of the apostle is, to contrast our character and prospects as "masters," with our state when our tongue is subject to the law of life. In the former case we are to "receive greater condemnation," because we are then all of us great offenders. In the latter, we are perfect. Nothing, then, was farther from the intention of the sacred writer, than the design of denying the doctrine of holiness, as maintained in these discourses.

Matthew 6:12, "And forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors." From the fact, that this petition is found in the Lord's prayer, it is argued, that Christians will always have sins to confess, or will never arrive at a state of perfect holiness in this life. This principle, if admitted, would prove that the kingdom of God will never come, and that the Christian will never be in a state in this life in which he will not be subject to injuries from others. The time will arrive, when the kingdom of God will have come, and when "they will not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain." At that time the above petitions will be inappropriate; because the prayers of all the saints in this respect will have been fully answered. So of the petition under consideration. The Savior says, "After this MANNER pray ye;" that is, if ye have, among other things, sins to confess, confess them in this manner. It was no part of his design to affirm or deny that we shall ever be in a state in which our "heart will not condemn us."

Hebrews 12:6, "Whom the Lord loves he chasteneth, and scourges every son whom he receives," From the fact, that all Christians are chastened of God, it is inferred that they never become perfect in holiness in this life; because they would not then need chastisement. I reply, that the case of the earthly parent, cited by the apostle to illustrate his meaning, proves precisely the opposite to what the objection supposes. An earthly parent induces obedience in his child by the rod; but the rod, properly applied, brings the child into a state in which the rod is no more needed. So of the rod in the hand of our heavenly Father. Its object is to render us "partakers of his holiness." Till this end is accomplished the rod will be used. When this end is accomplished it will no longer be needed. That the Christian will never come into this state in this life, it was no part of the apostle's abject to affirm.

These are all the passages that I have met with from the New Testament, which have been supposed to deny the doctrine under consideration. A very few passing remarks are called for, upon certain passages in the Old Testament, which are commonly adduced for the same object as the passages noticed above. Two preliminary observations are deemed requisite to a correct understanding of these passages, in respect to the subject before us.

1. Whatever is said of the character of saints, under the old dispensation, cannot be applied to Christians under the new, unless such application was manifestly intended by the sacred writer, The ancient saints, we are told, "received not the promises, God having reserved some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

2. When the sacred writers would express a fact which is true of the majority of men, though not of every individual, they make use, in most instances, of universal terms.

One example will illustrate both of the above principles. Jeremiah 9:4, "Take ye heed every one of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanders." Who supposes that this passage is applicable to all Christians, or even to real saints at the time the prophet wrote to the prophet himself, for example? Now, in the light of this example, let us contemplate two similar passages. Ecclesiastes 7:20-21, "For there is not a just man on earth, that doeth good and sinneth not." On this passage I remark, 1. If it is to be understood in an unlimited sense, no reason can be assigned why it should be applied to Christians in the full possession of the blessings of the new covenant. It was made with reference to men in the state then present, and not with reference to their condition under an entirely different dispensation. 2. The context shows that it is only in a general, and not in an unlimited sense, that this passage is to be understood. In the verse preceding the writer says, "Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men that are in the city." We are here exhorted to use prudence in our transactions with men. The reason is then assigned "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not;" i.e., in all your transactions with men, act upon the prudential maxim, that no man can be trusted. As a prudential maxim, the declaration under consideration is true, true not in a universal, but general sense; just as the declaration of the prophet, above cited, is true in a similar sense. In this sense only each of the writers under consideration evidently designed to be understood.

Again, Proverbs 20:9 "Who can say, I have made my heart clean; I am pure from my sin?" The first remark upon the passage last cited is equally applicable to this. The true meaning of this passage, however, is, in my judgment, generally overlooked. The, design of the sacred writer, as I suppose, is this: to ask the question, "Who, in looking over his past life, can deny the fact that he is a sinner, and is clear from all the sin charged upon him?" When an individual, in the language of the Bible, would affirm his innocency of any crime, or sin, he was accustomed to affirm that he "had cleansed his hands," or "washed them in innocency;" i.e., had kept himself pure. So of the sacred writer in the passage before us "Who can say, I have made my heart clean; I am pure from my sin?" i.e., Who can say, I have preserved my heart free from all sin, and my hands from all the iniquity that may be laid to my charge? This question is asked with reference to the entire past life, and not with reference to the fact whether any individual does, at any period of life, attain to a state of entire sanctification.

Job 9:20, "If I say, I am perfect, that also will prove me perverse." How does this declaration, which Job applies to himself, and to no other person, prove that all other saints, and Christians even, are imperfect, any more than the confession of David proves that all are guilty of adultery? The inference is just as legitimate in one case as in the other.

1 Kings 8:46, "If they sin against thee (for there is no man that sinneth not)." This passage, if rightly translated, simply affirms, that all men do, at some period of their lives, sin, and not that no man, at any period, arrives at a state of entire holiness. The former, and not the latter, is the thought that would naturally suggest itself to the speaker, under the circumstances in which he was then placed. The following note, from the Comprehensive Bible, shows clearly, to my mind, that a different rendering should have been given to the passage: "The second clause of this

verse, as it is here translated, renders this supposition, in the first clause, entirely nugatory; for if there be no man that sinneth not, it is useless to say, If they sin; but this contradiction is removed by rendering the original, 'If they shall sin against thee (for there is no man that may not sin;)' i.e., there is no man impeccable, or infallible; none that is not liable to sin." In the conjugation in which the word is here found, this is its appropriate meaning. The imperfection of good men, whose lives are recorded in Scripture, is also adduced to prove that perfection in holiness is impracticable in this life. In reply, I remark, that all that is recorded, is the simple fact, that such men were, at particular times, guilty of particular sins. How does this prove that, subsequently, they did not attain to perfection in holiness? How, for example, does the fact, that Paul disputed with Barnabas, the only sin if it be a sin of Paul's Christian life, I believe, on record, how does this fact, I say, prove, that, when Paul afterwards said, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God," he was not in a state of entire sanctification?

Having noticed all the objections derived from Scripture to the doctrine under consideration, it remains to notice some others arising from the supposed tendencies of the doctrine itself.

I. This doctrine, it is said, is, or in its legitimate tendencies, leads to, Perfectionism.*

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*[A form of error which arose, before the institution at Oberlin was founded, in two theological seminaries of the United States one in Troy, New York, under the care of Dr. Beman and the Rev. E. Kirk; the other in Newhaven, Connecticut. A species of absolute Antinomianism, the extravagance and evil of which is sufficiently obvious, and which, it will be clearly seen, has no relation to the form of Christian truth and experience presented in these discourses, except that of contrariety and counteraction.]

If any individual will point out anything intrinsic, in the doctrine here maintained, at all allied to that error, I, for one, will be among the first to abandon the position which I am now endeavoring to sustain. Perfectionism, technically so called, is, in my judgment, in the nature and necessary tendencies of its principles, worse than the worst form of infidelity. The doctrine of holiness, now under consideration, in all its essential features and elements, stands in direct opposition to Perfectionism. It has absolutely nothing in common with it, but a few terms derived from the Bible.

1. Perfectionism, for example, in its fundamental principles, is the abrogation of all law. The doctrine of holiness, as here maintained, is perfect obedience to the precepts of the law. It is the "righteousness of the law fulfilled in us."

2. In abrogating the moral law, as a rule of duty, Perfectionism abrogates all obligation of every kind, and to all beings. The doctrine of holiness, as here maintained, contemplates the Christian as a "debtor to all men," to the full extent of his capacities, and consists in a perfect discharge of all these obligations, of every obligation to God and man.

3. Perfectionism is a "rest" which suspends all efforts and prayer, even, for the salvation of the world. The doctrine of holiness, as here maintained, consists in such a sympathy with the love of Christ, as constrains the subject to consecrate his entire being to the glory of Christ, in the salvation of men.

4. Perfectionism substitutes the direct teaching of the Spirit, falsely called, in the place of the "word." This expects such teachings only in the diligent study of the Word, and tries every doctrine by the "law and the testimony," "the law and the testimony," expounded in conformity with the legitimate laws of interpretation.

5. Perfectionism surrenders up the soul to blind impulse, assuming, that every existing desire or impulse is caused by the direct agency of the Spirit, and therefore to be gratified. The doctrine of holiness, as here maintained, consists in the subjection of all our powers and propensities to the revealed will of God.

6. Perfectionism abrogates the Sabbath, and all the ordinances of the Gospel, and, in its legitimate tendencies, even marriage itself. The doctrine of holiness, as here maintained, is a state of perfect moral purity, induced and perpetuated by a careful observance of all these ordinances, together with subjection to other influences of the Gospel, received by faith.

7. Perfectionism renders, in its fundamental principles, all perfection an impossibility. If, as this system maintains, the Christian is freed from all obligation, is bound by no law, in short, if there is no standard with which to compare his actions (and there is none), if the moral law, as a rule of action, is abrogated, moral perfection can no more be predicated of the Christian than of the horse, the ox, or the ass. The doctrine of holiness, on the other hand, as here maintained, contemplates the moral law as the only rule and standard of the moral conduct, and consists in perfect conformity to the precepts of this law.

Perfectionism, in short, in its essential elements, is the perfection of licentiousness. The doctrine of holiness, as here maintained, is the perfect and perpetual harmony of the soul, with "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest," "just," "pure," "lovely," and of "good report," "and if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," with these things also.

What agreement, then, has the doctrine of holiness, as here maintained, with Perfectionism? The same that light has with darkness. A man might, with the same propriety, affirm that I am a Unitarian, because I believe in one God, while I hang my whole eternity upon the doctrine of the Trinity, as to affirm that I am a Perfectionist, because I hold the doctrine of holiness as now presented.

II. This doctrine, it is said, will lead to spiritual pride. I answer, 1. An individual holding the sentiment under consideration, who has the true standard of holiness before his mind, and is conscious of coming "short of the glory of God," will be weighed down in deep humiliation and self-abasement, under the conviction that he not only is not what he ought to be, but what he might become. On the other hand, the man holding the common views will be greatly comforted, under a consciousness of moral imperfection, with the thought that he, in common with holy Paul, and David, and Isaiah, and all the purest saints that ever lived, through the "law in his members warring against the law of his mind, is in captivity unto the law of sin and death." 2. If an individual should attain to a state of entire consecration to Christ, spiritual pride would, of course, be wholly excluded. I shall recur to this subject again in a subsequent discourse.

III. It is further objected, that the belief of this doctrine will lead individuals to suppose themselves perfect, when they are not, and thus leave them in delusions fearfully dangerous. I answer, 1. This will not be the case, if as remarked in a former discourse, the true standard of holiness be kept

before the mind.

2. If no doctrine is to be proclaimed which hypocrites will abuse, we must certainly find some other doctrine than this that none are entirely sanctified in this life.

IV. I have never yet seen any person that was perfect. I answer, 1. The reason may be, and I have no doubt is, the unbelief of the Church in respect to the nature and extent of the provisions and promises of Divine grace. 2. If, brother, your confidence in the provisions and promises of Divine grace is at all weakened, or your judgment of their nature and extent is at all influenced by the actual attainments of Christians at the present time, you ought to know that your faith rests upon "things seen," and not upon the Word of God. Where is the authority for determining the meaning of God’s declarations by the attainments of those who, by their unbelief, perhaps, are "making void the law of God?" 3. The objection under consideration lies with equal force against the Divine declaration, that the "earth shall yet be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." No such event has ever yet taken place. What should we think of the Christian, who, for this reason, should affirm that such an event never will take place? The question before us is, not what Christians have attained, but what God has promised.

REMARKS.

1. The reader is now prepared to determine the fact, where the weight of evidence lies, in respect to the momentous question, Is perfection in holiness attainable in this life? On the one hand, we have a long array of Devine declarations in respect to the provisions of the Gospel and the design of the redemption of Christ. We have also a similar array of "exceeding great and precious promises," the meaning of which cannot easily be misapprehended by the honest inquirer after truth. In addition to all these, we have the express commands of Scripture addressed to us as Christians, together with the prayer of Christ, and of inspired men, who spake and prayed as they were "moved by the Holy Ghost," all bearing upon this one point. On the other hand, we have a small number of passages, a careful analysis of which clearly shows to have no relevancy to the subject whatever passages the most important of which (such, for example, as Romans 7:1-25, Galatians 5:17, Php 3:12, and 1 John 1:8) have long since been given up as proof texts upon this subject, by many, who deny the doctrine maintained in these discourses. Under such circumstances, how is it possible for us to doubt, not only where the weight of evidence, but where the truth lies?

2. Here, also, I may be permitted to allude to the manifest carelessness with which the Church generally has made up her judgment upon the doctrine under consideration, and to the necessity of a careful and prayerful re-examination of the whole subject. In reading the works of the ablest divines upon this subject, I have been forcibly struck with their manner of treating it, as indicating the fact, that their opinions were formed, and their proof texts selected, almost at random, without reference to fundamental principles. How else can we account, for example, for the strange phenomenon that a declaration, which Job made with exclusive reference to himself, has been so universally cited as proof that the man who embraces the views maintained in these discourses is not only deceived, but shows himself, by the sentiment which he has embraced, to be perverse. How else can we account for the general adoption of the maxim, as if it were a revealed truth, that, if a man should become entirely sanctified, he would be taken directly to heaven, and not be permitted to live on earth a moment? Sin, or at least some degree of it, is regarded as an essential

element of Christian character, as a life-preserver, notwithstanding the Divine declaration, that, "he that would love life, and see good days, must refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile," and that implicit obedience to all God’s commandments is the only surety for long life.

3. Permit me, in conclusion, to allude to the state of mind necessary to a correct investigation of this subject. It is a supreme and ardent desire after holiness, and a knowledge of the means of attaining it. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Without this state of mind, we are unprepared, not only for this, but for every inquiry in respect to the Scriptures.

Reader, is this your state? Is the inquiry after the way of holiness the great and absorbing inquiry of your heart? "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

DISCOURSE IV. THE NEW COVENANT.

" Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old." Hebrews 8:8 - 1 Chronicles " And to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant." Hebrews 12:24. THE great difficulty, which a vast majority of Christians feel, in respect to holy living, is the want of the constant presence and influence of a filial, affectionate, confiding, and obedient spirit towards God, a spirit which perpetually cries, Abba, Father, and consists in the spontaneous flow of the heart’s purest and best affections towards Christ. If the mind could always be in this state, how easy it would be to avoid all sin, and perfectly to obey all the Divine requisitions! This spirit Christians often resolve to cherish. They find their resolutions, however, wholly inefficient to move the heart. To remedy the difficulty, they resort to their Bibles and to prayer, and renew their resolutions with increasing earnestness. Still the heart remains comparatively unmoved; and whatever effect is produced by such means, very soon passes away, "like the morning cloud," leaving in the heart the same "aching void" as before. Now, while the Christian is thus "resolving, and re-resolving," and constantly sliding back to the cheerless state from which he started, while, in spite of his efforts, he is perpetually sinking deeper and deeper in the "mire and deep waters," suppose the Divine Redeemer should pass along, and say to his weary and desponding disciple, If you will at once cease from all these vain efforts, and yield yourself up to my control, relying with implicit confidence in my ability and faithfulness, I will enter into a covenant with you, that I will, myself, shed abroad in your heart that "perfect love which casteth out all fear," that filial and affectionate spirit which you have vainly endeavored to induce in your own mind. I will so present the truth to your apprehension, that your heart’s purest and best affections shall constantly and spontaneously flow out toward me. I will secure you in a state of perfect and perpetual obedience to every command of God, and in the full and constant fruition of his presence and love. All this I will do in perfect consistency with the full, and free, and

uninterrupted exercise of your own voluntary agency. Such a message would be to the believer, "afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted," as life from the dead. This, Christian, is precisely what the Lord Jesus Christ offers to do for you, as the Mediator of the new Covenant. With the Psalmist you can say, " I will run in the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart." Christ is now ready thus to enlarge your heart, that, under the spontaneous flow of pure and perfect love, you may do the whole will of God. Till your faith is fastened upon Christ, as the life and light of the soul, as the "quickening spirit," who alone is able to breathe into your heart the breath of spiritual life, all your efforts after holiness will be vain. My object, in the present discourse, is to present to your contemplation and faith this new covenant, and Christ as the Mediator of this covenant. In illustrating this subject, the attention of the reader is invited to a consideration of the following propositions:

I. The nature of the new covenant, as distinguished from the first, or the old covenant.

II. The relation of these two covenants.

III. The object of Christ in the provisions of Divine grace.

IV. The conditions on which he will fulfill in us what he has promised as the Mediator of the new covenant.

I. The nature of the new covenant, as distinguished from the first or the old covenant. The old covenant, as was shown in a preceding discourse, is the moral law, the covenant originally made with Adam, re-announced at Mount Sinai, and which now exists between God and all unfallen spirits. The new covenant, on the other hand, is the covenant of grace, obscurely disclosed to our first parents, in the promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head," more distinctly unfolded in the promise to Abraham, and brought out in all its fullness in the new dispensation. As the Mediator of this covenant, Christ, as shown in the text, and in a preceding discourse, promises to believers, on condition of their faith in him, the following blessings: I. A confirmed state of pure and perfect holiness, such as is required by the moral law. 2. The full pardon of all sin, or entire justification. 3. The perpetual fruition of the Divine presence and favor. 4. The consequent universal prevalence of the Gospel. Such are the "riches of the glory of Christ’s inheritance in the saints." Such is the "completeness of the saints in him," as the Mediator of the new covenant. We will now,

II.* Consider the relation of these two covenants. This subject was alluded to in a preceding discourse. My object now is to present the whole subject with greater distinctness and fullness than I then could do for the want of space. I remark,

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* Most of the distinctions here made between the two covenants were suggested to my mind by my beloved associate, the Rev. C. G. Finney.

I. As then observed, the same standard of character, perfect holiness, is common to each of these covenants.

2. In the first covenant, holiness is required of the creature. In the new covenant, the same thing is promised to the believer.

3. The condition on which the blessings promised under the first covenant are secured is, Do and live. "Moses describes the righteousness which is of the law, that the man that doeth these things shall live by them." The condition of the new covenant is, Believe and live. "Now, the just shall live by faith." "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise: Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach. That, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

4. The "surety" of the first covenant is the creature himself. The "surety" of the new covenant is Christ. In other words, the salvation of a creature under the former depends upon the faithfulness of the creature himself. The salvation of a creature under the latter depends upon the faithfulness of Christ. Hence Christ is said, Hebrews 7:22, to have been "made a surety of a better testament" [covenant]. In Hebrews 8:6, as the Mediator of the new covenant, Christ is also declared to be the "Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."

5. The first covenant is adapted to the condition of creatures only who have never sinned. The new covenant is adapted, by infinite wisdom and love, to the condition of sinners involved in infinite guilt, and hopelessly lost, as far as any efforts of their own are concerned, under the power of sin.

6. The exclusive influence of the first covenant upon sinners is to increase their guilt and aggravate their depravity. The new covenant redeems these very sinners from the curse of the law, and "delivers them from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Hence the first covenant is said to "gender to bondage;" i.e., sinners under its influence are left in hopeless bondage, under the power of sin; while all who are under the full influence of the new covenant, are free, i.e., are delivered from the power of sin, and introduced into a state of purity and blessedness. Galatians 4:25-26, For these are the two covenants; the one from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all."

7. The first covenant is a dispensation of justice. The new is a dispensation of mercy, under the influence of which the sinner is brought to the "blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." The former influences the subject by commands and prohibitions, rewards and penalties; the latter subdues and melts the heart of the rebel by the power of love.

8. Finally, whatever the old covenant, or the moral law, requires of the creature, the new covenant, as shown in a former discourse, promises to the believer. The first covenant, for example, requires of the creature perfect and perpetual holiness. The new covenant promises to the believer perfect and perpetual holiness. I will first cite a few of the passages quoted in that discourse, to sustain the above declaration, and will then offer some general remarks to show that the construction there put upon them is correct. Jeremiah 32:39-40, "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me." Ezekiel 36:25, "Then will I sprinkle

clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart, also, will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Deuteronomy 30:6, "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." Jeremiah 50:20, "In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none, and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." That Christ, as the Mediator of the new covenant, does, in these and kindred passages, promise to the believer all that the law requires of him, will appear perfectly evident from the following considerations:

I. This sentiment is in accordance with the most direct and obvious import of the phraseology employed in such passages, that meaning I refer to, which most naturally suggests itself to plain and unlettered men, reading the sacred text without note or comment, and with their judgments unbiased by preconceived opinions. For such minds the Bible was written; and its import to them, in the state referred to, is in accordance with the "mind of the Spirit."

2. This is the construction which would, by all mankind, be put upon the same language, if found in any other book but the Bible.

3. Let any minister, in any congregation in the land, use this identical language in the same full and unqualified manner in which the sacred writers use it, and their hearers will, with one voice, charge him with holding the doctrine of Christian Perfection, as maintained in these discourses; so obvious is the import of such phraseology, when presented without qualification.

4. All Christians admit that entire justification is promised in the new covenant, that the Bible teaches that heaven is a place of perfect holiness, and that Christ was free from all sin while on earth. Now, the same identical principles of interpretation, by which either of the above doctrines can be proved from the language of the Bible, demand the admission of the doctrine under consideration, in all its fullness. If the language employed in the above passages does not sustain this doctrine, neither of the above doctrines can be sustained by the language of inspiration. Every candid reader of the Bible, who will carefully study the sacred volume, with his eye upon the phraseology there employed, in reference to all these doctrines, will find the above affirmations fully sustained.

5. The principles of interpretation by which it can be shown that the phraseology of the passages before us does not sustain the doctrine under consideration, would be equally conclusive against any other phraseology which the sacred writers could have employed, when from such phraseology this doctrine should be inferred.

6. This is the very sentiment which is invariably impressed by the Spirit of God upon the young convert in the warmth of his early love. The language and sentiment of every such heart is "Lord, I make a full surrender;

Every thought and power be thine Thine entirely Through eternal ages thine." With the young convert, this is not a poetical hyperbole, but the real sentiment and conviction of the heart. Now, present to such a mind, in the unsophisticated warmth of its "first love," the exceeding great and precious promises of the new covenant, and how would he interpret them? Who can doubt that he would understand them in conformity with the pure sentiments and convictions impressed upon his mind by the Spirit of God, in his conversion? Such are the promises of the new covenant, of which Christ is the Mediator. In looking to Christ for the fulfillment of these promises, would he not charge upon us the sin of unbelief, should we expect less from him than that he should "redeem us from all iniquity," and render us "perfect and complete in all the will of God?" We come now to consider,

III. The object of Christ in the provisions of Divine grace. It is, to lay the foundation and provide the means for the fulfillment, in believers, of all that is promised in the new covenant; to wit, the full and entire pardon of all their sins, their redemption from all iniquity, their perfection in holiness, and their perfect and perpetual blessedness, in an eternal fruition of the Divine presence and favor. 1 Peter 2:24, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." Ephesians 5:25-27, "Even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Titus 2:144, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works:" John 3:16-17, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through him might be saved." Rom. viii. 3, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." 1 John 3:5, "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin."

Such is the design of Christ, in all the provisions of Divine grace. It is to lay a broad foundation for the fulfillment, on his part, as the Mediator of the new covenant, of all the blessings promised in that covenant. This was the work which Christ undertook to accomplish, as the incarnate, atoning Savior; and, blessed be God, the work which he assumed in our behalf he finished. "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." "When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

Having finished this work, he now presents himself to us, as "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for us." We are permitted, by faith, to "behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." "And of his fullness we may all receive, and grace for grace." Listen, hearer, to the "gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth," as our high priest and intercessor, as the "Mediator of the new covenant." "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever lives and believeth in me, shall never die." "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." "I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." We will

now consider,

IV. The conditions on which Christ will fulfill in us what he has promised, as the Mediator of the new covenant. These conditions are distinctly stated in Ezekiel 36:37, "Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet, for this, be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." The things promised, permit me to remind the reader, are these: the unlimited pardon of all sin entire redemption from the power of sin the perfect and perpetual subjection of all our powers to the "whole will of God" and the full and eternal fruition of the Divine presence and favor. The condition, on which all this is promised, is, that God be "inquired of," through Christ, as the Mediator of the new covenant, "to do it for us." Now, inquiring of Christ for those blessings, implies,

I. A consciousness of our need of Divine grace of our infinite guilt and hopeless bondage under sin of the absolute hopelessness of our securing either of these blessings, through any unaided efforts of our own.

2. Confidence unshaken in Christ's ability and willingness to do all this for us. Suppose Christ should address you as he did one of old, in respect to another subject, "Believest thou that I am able to do this?" "Do you believe that I am now standing at the door, and knocking, and that, if you will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with you, and you with me," and confer upon you this full and finished redemption? What would be your answer? Could your soul settle down immovably upon the affirmation, "Lord, I believe?"

3. A preference of these blessings above all objects in existence. Suppose God should call upon you to lift your heart to his throne, and ask of him what blessing you pleased. Would your mind fasten upon a heart perfectly pure, together with its consequences, as the "pearl of great price," as the treasure in comparison with which all other objects are, in your estimation, "but loss?" If this is your state of mind, there is but one thing more to be done, which is this

4. An actual reception of Christ, and reliance upon him for all these blessings, in all their fullness a surrender of your whole being to him, that he may accomplish in you all the "exceeding great and precious promises" of the new covenant. When this is done when there is that full and implicit reliance upon Christ, for the entire fulfillment of all that he has promised he becomes directly responsible for our full and complete redemption. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever lives and believeth in me shall never die." To us his word stands pledged to "put the laws of God in our minds, and write them in our hearts;" to "circumcise our heart and the heart of our seed, to love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul;" to "sprinkle clean water upon us, so that we shall be clean;" to "give us one heart and one way, that we may fear God for ever; to make an everlasting covenant with us, that he will not turn away from us to do us good, but that he will put the fear of God in our hearts, that we may not depart from him; finally, to "sanctify us wholly, and preserve our whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Reader, "Believest thou this?" Can you open your mouth thus wide? Dare you ask, or expect, from your Redeemer, less than this? Methinks I hear that Redeemer asking you the question, "Do you now believe?" "According to thy faith, be it unto thee." Reader, let me ask you again, Do you desire to be imbued with a filial, confiding, and obedient spirit towards God, to be brought into such a state, that your heart's purest and best affections shall spontaneously flow out towards Christ, and the "peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus?" Christ is now present in your

heart, and ready to confer all this purity and blessedness upon you, if you can believe that he is able and willing to do it for you, and will cast your entire being upon his faithfulness. To you he says, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Come to the fountain, reader, and "wash your garments and make them white in the blood of the Lamb." "Christ bore your sins in his own body on the tree, that you, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness." Why should you any longer bear the burden of those sins? especially when Christ, in view of the provisions of his grace, calls upon you to "reckon yourself dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ your Lord."

REMARKS.

I. We may now understand the reason why Christ himself prayed, and taught his Church to pray, and why the Holy Spirit constantly influences inspired men to pray, for this one specific blessing entire perfection in holiness; also why this is required of us, as Christians, and such rewards are held before us to induce us thus to consecrate ourselves to Christ. Such prayers, commands, and motives, are all based upon the provisions and promises of Divine grace, which secure to the believer, on condition of his faith, this very blessing; and are designed to raise the Church to a comprehension of the "fullness that she has in Christ," that she may take possession of her purchased and promised inheritance. We are taught to pray for this blessing, and such a state is required of us, because provision is made, in the Gospel, for God to answer such prayers, when we "ask in faith, nothing wavering," and for us to attain to that state, by casting ourselves, in the exercise of simple faith, upon the power and faithfulness of Christ.

II. We learn how to understand and apply such declarations of Scripture as the following: "Wash you, make you clean;" "Make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit;" "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," &c. The common impression seems to be, that men are required to do all this, in the exercise of their own unaided powers; and because the sinner fails to comply, grace comes in, and supplies the condition in the case of Christians. Now, I suppose that all such commands are based upon the provisions of Divine grace. The sinner is not required to "make himself clean," or to "make to himself a new heart," in the exercise of his unaided powers, but by application to the blood of Christ, "which cleanses from all sin." The grace which purifies the heart is provided; the fountain, whose waters cleanse from sin, is set open. To this fountain the creature is brought, and because he may descend into it, and there "wash his garments and make them white," he is met with the command, "Wash you, make you clean," "make to yourself a new heart and a new spirit," and "cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." The sinner is able to make to himself a "new heart and a new spirit," because he can instantly avail himself of proffered grace. He does literally "make to himself a new heart and a new spirit," when he yields himself up to the influence of that grace. The power to cleanse from sin lies in the blood and grace of Christ; and hence, when the sinner "purifies himself by obeying the truth through the spirit," the glory of his salvation belongs, not to him, but to Christ.

Herein also lies the ability of the creature to obey the commands of God, addressed to us as redeemed sinners. "He that abides in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me." These declarations are literally and unqualifiedly true. We can "abide in Christ," and thus bring forth the fruit required of us. If by unbelief we separate

ourselves from Christ, we of necessity descend, under the weight of our own guilt and depravity, down the sides of the pit, into the eternal sepulcher.

III. In view of the provision of Divine grace for our full redemption, and of the promises of Christ, as the Mediator of the new covenant, to that effect, I would remark, that a state of entire sanctification is, and appears to be, the most natural and simple form of Christian experience the form which we ought to expect to find most common in the Church. If Christ has made provision for our entire sanctification, and promised thus to sanctify us, on condition of faith in him on our part that any sincere Christian, who is aware of his privileges, should ask for, or expect less from him, is the most unnatural form of Christian experience conceivable, and one whose occurrence, we should think, would be regarded as a strange anomaly among the disciples of such a Savior. So I have no doubt it will be regarded, when Christians come to a full understanding of their "completeness" in Christ.

IV. We are now prepared to contemplate the relation between the views maintained in these discourses, and those very commonly held by Christians upon the same subject. In reference to the standard of moral obligation, there is a perfect agreement. The only existing difference respects the extent of the provisions and promises of Divine grace, in respect to Christians in this life.

V. We are also prepared to estimate the difficulties in which the common theory is involved. I will specify a few of them.

I. The advocates of the common theory maintain, that the sacred writers designed to teach the doctrine, that no individual ever attains to a state of entire sanctification in this life; while it was their object to teach the fact, that Christ was free from all sin, that all Christians are perfectly justified here, and will be perfectly sanctified in a future state, and that perfect holiness is required of us in this life. Now, if the above positions are true, how can we account for the strange fact, that the same identical principles of interpretation, by which either of the doctrines last mentioned can be proved from the phraseology of the sacred writers, demand, when applied to the phraseology which they employed in expressing the nature and extent of the provisions and promises of Divine grace, the admission of the principle, that entire holiness is attainable in this life? a principle precisely opposite to the one which, it is maintained, they intended to teach. Again, how can we account for the fact, in consistency with the common theory, that the sacred writers employed a phraseology which, if found in any other book, or if now used by individuals in the same unqualified manner as used by them, would be universally understood to affirm the doctrine maintained in these discourses? Would the sacred writers have employed such a singular phraseology as this, had it been their object as the advocates of the common theory affirm to impress their readers with the conviction, that perfect holiness is, in this life, unattainable? Again, no phraseology conceivable is more perfectly adapted to convey the sentiment maintained in these discourses, than that employed by the sacred writers. To draw any other doctrine from it, it must be narrowed down, and regarded as altogether hyperbolical. Now, how can we account for the strange anomaly, that inspired men adopted a phraseology adapted to convey one sentiment, and that only when, as the common theory affirms, their definite object was, to convey precisely the opposite sentiment? These are some of the difficulties in which the common theory is inextricably involved, as far as the laws of interpretation are concerned.

2. That Christ prayed, and taught his Church to pray, and that the Holy Spirit inspired and influenced the apostles and primitive Christians to pray, continually and fervently, for this one specific object the entire sanctification of believers in this life all admit. According to the common theory, it was a prime object of the sacred writers to impress their readers and hearers with the conviction, that such prayers will never be answered by the bestowment of the blessing desired. How can we account for such prayers, in consistency with such an object? Above all, how shall we account for the fact, that Christ and inspired men prayed for one specific blessing the entire sanctification of believers in this life when their intention was, to impress us with the conviction, that such a blessing will not be conferred; while they did not pray for another blessing the partial holiness of the Christian when their design was to impress us with the conviction, that this blessing is agreeable to the will of God?

3. All admit that the richest blessings are promised to us on the specific condition of perfect holiness. According to the common theory, the sacred writers designed to impress their readers with the conviction that this is a condition with which they will never in this life comply. How, as asked in a former discourse, can such a fact be accounted for, in consistency with the sincerity and love of God?

4. According to the common theory, God requires as, in the most solemn manner conceivable, to be perfectly holy, and then, in a manner equally solemn, requires us to believe, that with such commands we shall not comply. How can such a fact be explained?

5. Certain maxims, which have been almost universally regarded as of fundamental importance to efficient action, not only in religion, but other subjects, present difficulties equally inexplicable in consistency with the common theory. For example, "What ought to be done, may be done," i.e., we should expect to do. "God bestows upon every one as much holiness and peace as he sincerely desires and prays for." Suppose, that with these maxims before me, I am met by the command, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Suppose, that in view of this command, I lift my heart in honest and fervent sincerity to God, for grace to keep that command. Now, under such circumstances, the advocates of the common theory must either give up the above maxims altogether, or admit the attainableness of entire sanctification in this life.

6. According to the common theory, we are required to aim at perfection in holiness, and, at the same time, as shown in a former discourse, to believe that such a state is unattainable a belief which renders the formation of the intention required an impossibility.

7. The advocates of the common theory generally admit, that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life; but at the same time maintain, that it is never attained, and that it is a great error to suppose that it is attained. Now, what evidence can we have, that such state is unattainable, higher than this, that all Christians, in all past ages, have honestly and prayerfully aimed, and all will continue, to the end of time, thus to aim at this state a fact which all admit with the absolute certainty of not attaining to it? Should it be said, that such efforts are not made with sufficient vigor; the answer is, that, to put forth efforts with the adequate vigor, is the very thing at which all are aiming. On the supposition above referred to, how can the position be sustained, that the state under consideration is attainable? The sinner, it is said, in illustration of the position that perfection in holiness is attainable, but never attained, is able to repent, in the absence of special grace, though he never will do it. To make the cases parallel, let us suppose, that all sinners, in the

absence of such grace, are honestly and prayerfully striving after holiness; with the absolute certainty of not, in the circumstances supposed, attaining it. With what propriety, I ask, could it, then, be said, that holiness is practicable to the sinner, in the absence of special grace? What is here supposed of the sinner, is actually true of every sincere Christian. Paul, for example, for the space of thirty or forty years, aimed steadily and prayerfully at this one definite state, and that, according to the sentiment under consideration, with the absolute certainty of falling short of his object. The same experiment, and with the same result, every Christian has repeated, and every true Christian will continue to repeat, to the end of time. Yet, it is said, to attain to that state, is to every individual, at every moment, perfectly practicable. What conceivable meaning do such persons attach to the terms " attainable " and "practicable," when so used? The advocates of the common theory are sacredly bound to take the ground, that the state under consideration is not attainable, in any appropriate sense of the term.

VI. We are now prepared to understand the nature and character of the Antinomian, legal, and evangelical spirit. The Antinomian spirit relies upon Christ for justification, in the absence of personal holiness, or sanctification. It looks to him to be saved in and not from sin. The legal spirit assumes two forms, I. It expects justification and sanctification both through deeds of the law. This is the spirit of the ancient Pharisee and modern moralist. 2. It expects justification from Christ, and sanctification from personal effort. Under the influence of this spirit, an individual will be perpetually and vainly struggling, by dint of resolutions, against the resistless current of carnal propensities. In this hopeless bondage he cries out, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The evangelical spirit looks to Christ alike for justification and sanctification both, and, by implicit faith in him, obtains a blissful victory over "the world, the flesh, and the devil." It is the "spirit of adoption" which cries, "Abba, Father," and in that cry, seeks and obtains deliverance from the "bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." The Antinomian spirit is the stagnation of the moral powers in a state of spiritual death. The evangelical spirit is their full, and free, and perpetual action, in a state of life and peace. While the legal spirit, in its hopeless struggle with the flesh, cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" the evangelical spirit, in the triumph of faith, exclaims, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The legal spirit crying, "Where is the blessedness I knew, When first I saw the Lord?" looks back to its first love, as the brightest spot in its whole experience, for it was then joined with another spirit than itself. The evangelical spirit, with its eye steadily fixed upon the "bright and morning star," moves peacefully and perpetually onward, in a path which "shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day." The legal spirit, "vainly puffed up," notwithstanding its perpetual short-comings, "with its fleshly mind," in view of a few fancied attainments, made by dint of resolution, exclaims to the stander-by, "Stand by thyself; I am holier than thou." The evangelical spirit, overwhelmed with a sense of the grace of God in its redemption, exclaims, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" "Not for works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, hath he saved us."

"Infinite grace to vileness given, The sons of earth, made heirs of heaven." In short, the Antinomian spirit is the spirit of spiritual death. The legal spirit is the "spirit of bondage." The evangelical spirit is the "glorious liberty of the children of God."

VII. We are now prepared for a distinct contemplation of the grand mistake, into which the great mass of Christians appear to have fallen, in respect to the Gospel of Christ. It is this: Expecting to

obtain justification, and not, at the same time, and to the same extent, sanctification, by faith in Christ. Where is the Christian who can say from experience, "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith?" When do we hear the convert, for example, directed to faith in Christ, as the certain means of subduing his temper, subjecting his appetites, crucifying his sinful propensities, overcoming the great enemy, "fulfilling the righteousness of the law," and enjoying perpetual and perfect peace and blessedness in God? An almost entire new leaf will be turned over in Christian experience when the Church knows Christ as such a Savior. The consequence of the mistake under consideration, is what might be expected. The great mass of the Church are slumbering in Antinomian death; or struggling in legal bondage, with barely enough of the evangelical spirit to keep the pulse of spiritual life faintly beating. When will the Church arise from this state of gloom, and death, and barrenness, to an apprehension and enjoyment of her privileges in Christ, as the Mediator of the new covenant?

VIII. We are also prepared to account for a melancholy fact which characterises different stages of the experience of the great mass of Christians. From the evangelical simplicity of their first love, they pass into a state of legal bondage, and after a fruitless struggle of vain resolutions with the "world, the flesh, and the devil," they appear to descend into a kind of Antinomian death. The reason why Christian experience takes such a course, I suppose to be this: The young convert, in the first instance, is turned away from Christ, to his own resolutions, &c., as the means of continuance in the path of life, and this with the assurance that his carnal propensities will never be fully crucified, till death shall release the captive. Thus, he is very soon conducted into the region of legalism, with the atmosphere around him already charged, to no small extent, with the cheerless, deadening vapors of Antinomianism. Here, after a vain struggle of longer or shorter continuance, with sin and sinful propensities, the spirit of Antinomian slumber prevails, and death, and not a present Christ, is looked for, as the great deliverer from bondage. This direction Christian experience will unchangeably take, till Christians fully understand the import of the question, "Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ?"

IX. We are now fully prepared to understand the design of Paul in Romans 7:1-25 and Romans 8:1-39. The whole epistle is mainly directed against two fundamental errors of the Jews, to wit, that justification and sanctification are both to be obtained by deeds of law. The first error he explodes in the preceding chapters, showing the hopeless condemnation of all men under the law, and their entire justification through faith in Christ. In chapters vii. and viii., he pursues a course in regard to sanctification, precisely similar to what he had done in the chapters preceding, in regard to justification. His object is, to contrast the hopeless bondage and fruitless struggle of the creature after holiness, under the old covenant, or moral law, with his perfect liberty, blessedness, and safety, under the new covenant. As the apostle had himself fully tested the influence of both covenants upon men as sinners, he gives us his own experience; first, as a Pharisee under the old; and secondly, as a Christian under the new, covenant. Under the former, he says, notwithstanding the law is good, and I delight in it "after the inward man," and often resolve to keep its pure requisitions, still "I am carnal, sold under sin." "The good that I would, I do not, but the evil that I would not, that I do." Under the new covenant, on the other hand, I am "free from the law of sin and death," breathe the "spirit of adoption," am free from all condemnation, possess a hope sure and steadfast, and am an "heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ." In short, in chapter vii. he gives us a view of the bondage of the legal spirit, in its fruitless struggle against the current

of carnal propensities. In the eighth, he gives us the triumph and freedom of the evangelical spirit, through faith in Christ, as the " Mediator of the new covenant."

X. We now see the reason why most professors of religion find their own experience portrayed in the seventh, instead of the eighth, chapter of Romans. One of two reasons must be assigned for this melancholy fact. Either they have never known any other than the legal spirit, or else, "having begun in the spirit," they are engaged in a vain struggle to be "made perfect in the flesh." In other words, they are now in legal bondage. To Christ, as a sanctifying Savior, as the "Mediator of the new covenant," they are, comparatively speaking, strangers. When they thus know Christ, they will find their experience portrayed in another and different chapter than the one now under consideration.

XI. Finally, we may now contemplate the reason why, to most Christians, the idea of arriving at a state of entire sanctification in this life, appears so chimerical. With the views commonly entertained of the power of the Gospel, and of the means of holiness, the thought of arriving at such a state is one of the most chimerical ideas that ever entered the human mind. If there is no other means of coming into that state, but by forcing my way, by dint of personal effort, through the dead sea of my carnal propensities, I may as well give over the struggle first as last. Whatever my natural powers may be, a victory I shall never obtain in this manner. But if, on the other hand, I am permitted to hear the voice of Christ saying, Look to me, and I will enter into a covenant with you, that I will myself "circumcise thy heart to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul," that I will "redeem you from all iniquity," and cause you to stand "perfect and complete in all the will of God," then I find myself standing in an entirely different relation to the state under consideration. The condition on which this blessedness is promised I can perform. I can as easily look to Christ for perfect as for partial holiness; and when my faith hangs upon his for a fulfillment of all that he has promised, he has mercifully assumed the responsibility of doing for me according to the faith which his own spirit has induced me to exercise.

Christian, "you have not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken unto them any more. For they could not endure that which was commanded. And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart; and so terrible was the sight, that even Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake. But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in Heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect; and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." To this "blood of sprinkling," let us come and "wash our garments, and make them white," and then lift our hearts to heaven and exclaim, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

DISCOURSE V.

FULL REDEMPTION IN CHRIST.

"Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25.

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:14. IN remarking upon these passages, the attention of the reader is invited to a consideration of the following propositions, which it will be my object to illustrate and establish.

I. Christ presents himself to us as a Savior in this sense, that he is both able and willing to meet fully every real demand of our being; in other words, perfectly to supply all our real necessities.

II. We will notice some of the demands of our nature which Christ pledges himself to meet.

III. Illustrate the nature of faith in Christ as such a Savior.

IV. I will endeavor to show that the object of Christ, in all his dispensations towards his people, is to induce in them the exercise of this implicit faith towards him.

V. That it is only when this implicit faith is exercised towards Christ, that he can accomplish in us all that he has promised.

VI. That Christians honor Christ most highly, when, and only when, they rely upon him for an entire fulfillment in them of all that he has promised.

I. Christ presents himself to us as a Savior, in this sense, that he is both able and willing to meet fully every real demand of our being; in other words, perfectly to supply all our real necessities. The truth of this proposition I argue,

I. From the fact that it is positively promised in the text, and elsewhere in the Bible. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." "Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst;" i. e., all his real necessities shall be perfectly supplied. Php 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Psalms 84:11, For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly," Romans 8:32, He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

2. On this condition only can Christ claim to be unto us the object of supreme regard. If there is any real demand of our nature, which he is unable or unwilling to meet, for the supply of that demand, we should look to some other source.

3. Christ is infinite in power and love, and therefore must be both able and willing thus to "supply our need."

II. We will now consider some of the demands of our being, which Christ pledges himself to meet. All the real demands of our nature are comprehended in these two a state of perfect moral purity and blessedness. That these may be possessed in all their fullness, the following special demands must be met:

I. As sinners, we need pardon. Till we are conscious that God has forgiven our sins, and fully restored us to his favor, a state of well-being is with us an absolute impossibility. To meet this demand, Christ presents himself to us as our "Advocate with the Father," and as the "propitiation for our sins." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

2. Another demand of our nature is, entire deliverance from the power of sin, into a state of conscious perfect moral rectitude. In every condition, actual and conceivable, this is a changeless demand of our being. Until it is met, and perfectly met, the want of it will, of necessity, render our minds "like the troubled sea." To meet this demand, Christ presents himself as able and willing to "redeem us from all iniquity," and render us "perfect and complete in all the will of God."

3. Another demand of our nature is, conscious security against all the temptations to sin, from the "world, the flesh, and the devil." To meet this demand, the Savior pledges himself that "he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it." He presents us with the Armour of righteousness, assuring us that, if we will "put on the whole Armour of God," we shall be "able to stand against all the wiles of the devil."

4. Another fundamental demand of our being is, a love of knowledge. In view of this demand, Christ holds before our minds the declaration of eternal love "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus, whom he hath sent" and then presents himself to us as able and willing, through his Spirit, to communicate this knowledge to us.

5. To a state of perfect well-being, the friendship and favor of other minds is an indispensable requisite. To supply this want of our being, he holds before us the Divine declaration, "I will dwell in them and walk in them;" "and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." He then lifts our contemplation to the eternal throne, and pledges himself to introduce to us an endless and blissful association with the pure spirits that are congregated there.

6. We have also certain demands through our physical constitution, which need to be met. To meet these, Christ stands ready to do for us the following things: I. To render us perfectly contented with our circumstances, whatever they may be. 2. To render us in the highest sense blessed, in what infinite love actually confers upon us. The saint who could sit down to her meal, which consisted barely of a cup of water and a few dry crusts of bread, and lift her heart to heaven with the exclamation, "All this, Lord, and Jesus too," hardly needed another ingredient to her cup of blessedness, to cause it to overflow. 3. To bestow upon us all that will be to us, in our circumstances, a real blessing. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." 4. To cause "all things to work together for our good."

7. I notice but one other demand of our nature which is met in Christ, which is this an assured hope of a peaceful death and a glorious immortality. To meet this demand, he spreads before us the following assurance: "In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." With what infinite sweetness can

we pillow our heads upon such a pledge as this!

Such, Christian, is the fullness that dwells in Christ for you. Such, also, is your completeness in him. In view of this fullness, this perfect completeness, he claims to be the sun and center of your soul. "To whom shall we go," blessed Jesus, but unto thee? "Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure, that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

III. We are now prepared for our third inquiry, which is, The nature of faith in Christ as such a Savior. It implies, I. A consciousness of infinite guilt, poverty, and helplessness in ourselves. 2. The apprehension of Christ as a present Savior, able and willing to meet all the demands of our being, as described above. 3. The actual reception of him, and cordial and voluntary surrender of our whole being to his control, that he may accomplish in us all that He has promised to those "who come unto God by him." The individual that knows and believes the "love that the Father hath unto us" that relies with implicit confidence upon the absolute truth and rectitude of all that Christ has affirmed, and casts all his powers and interests upon his faithfulness, with the peaceful expectation of realizing, in his own experience, a blessed fulfillment of all that he has promised, such an individual exercises that faith, by which we are told "the just shall live." This leads me to remark,

IV. That the object of Christ, in his dispensations and teachings, is, to induce in us the exercise of this implicit faith in himself. A bare allusion to a few circumstances in the life of our Savior will afford a sufficient illustration of this part of our subject. For example, I. The promptness with which he invariably granted the requests of those who cast themselves with implicit faith upon his power and faithfulness, together with the commendation which he always bestowed upon such acts of confidence. 2. The fact that he always required such confidence, as a condition of extending relief, by the exertion of miraculous power. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." 3. His perpetual reference to the unbelief of his disciples, as the cause of their failure to perform miracles, of their fear in the tempest, and of their carefulness in respect to the supply of their temporal necessities. 4. The repeated assurance that he gave them, that, if they would only exercise this implicit faith in him, "nothing should be impossible to them." 5. The manner in which he sent them forth to preach, and then asking them, at the close of his ministry, whether, in going out under his protection, "as sheep in the midst of wolves," without any provision at all for their wants, they had lacked anything. One object is perfectly visible in all these instances, which was, to break their hold of every other object, and to lead them to hang their entire being, with implicit trust, upon his power and faithfulness. Such was the single object of his entire course of treatment, in respect to his disciples and hearers while on earth. The same object, Christian, he is now pursuing towards you. When unbelief has disappeared from your heart; when you will "credit all that he has said;" when you shall calmly and peacefully repose all your powers and interests upon his faithful word then his object, in respect to you, is accomplished. Then he will open the fountains of eternal love, and let its life-giving waters flow in upon you for ever. He then can and will accomplish in you all that infinite love desires. "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?"

V. I am now to show, that it is only when this implicit confidence is exercised towards Christ, as a Savior able and willing to meet all our necessities, that he can accomplish in us all that he has promised. How else, for example, can he preserve us, free from all care, and "keep us in perfect

peace?" While the mind reposes with unwavering trust in his ability and faithfulness to meet all its necessities, the necessary result is a state of perfect quietude. Distrust, on the other hand, as necessarily throws the mind into a state of agitation. The little child could be preserved in a state of perfect peace, in the midst of the wildest fury of the hurricane, by the thought that his father held the helm, so long, and so long only, as he reposed implicit confidence in that father's ability and faithfulness to guide the vessel through the storm. So of the Christian: Christ will "keep those in perfect peace" whose minds are stayed on him, because they trust in him. To keep the mind thus, while in a state of distrust, is an absolute impossibility. For the same reason, it is impossible for Christ to be unto us an object of supreme love and delight, until we are brought to confide in him as being such a Savior as he represents himself to be. Then, and then only, can he stir up the deep fountains of feeling within us, and cause the tide of love and blessedness to roll on for ever.

How, it may further be asked, is it possible for Christ to bring us into a state of perfect obedience to his will, until we are induced to exercise implicit confidence in the absolute wisdom and rectitude of his requisitions? Whatever Christ does for us as a Savior, he does and must do, on one condition only that confidence implicit is reposed in his ability and faithfulness to meet and supply our necessities. The experience of every individual will present a perfect verification of his declarations, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever lives and believeth in me shall never die." On the other hand, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

VI. Lastly, I am to show, that Christians honor Christ the most highly, when, and only when, they rely upon him for an entire fulfillment in them of all that he has promised, i.e., to supply all their real necessities. The more enlarged and confiding their expectations, the higher the honor they confer upon him. This is evident from the following considerations:

I. They then, and then only, give him full and perfect credit for veracity in the testimony which he has given respecting himself. Such a Savior he represents himself to be. When we trust him with full and perfect confidence as such a Savior, we honor him as a "faithful and true witness." Unbelief, a want of this implicit confidence, casts the highest possible dishonor upon Christ, because it practically affirms, that he is not what he has declared himself to be.

2. In the exercise of this full and implicit confidence in Christ as a perfect Savior, we honor, in the highest possible degree, his benevolence, his mercy, his love. To expect less from Christ than a full supply of all our necessities, is to affirm, that his love is not infinite.

3. In the exercise of this confidence only, we give him credit for being a perfect Savior. If there is a solitary demand of our being, which he is not able and willing to meet, he is so far, as a Savior, imperfect. Do you wish, Christian, to put the highest possible honor upon Christ? "Open your mouth wide," with the joyful confidence that he "will fill it." Cast all your cares upon him. Believe that in him you are "complete," and seek and expect from him the most perfect fullness. When you expect from him less than this, you cast reproach upon his character for veracity and faithfulness, as possessed of infinite love as an all-powerful and perfect Savior. You affirm, that "in him all fullness" does not dwell. You wound his heart of love. You "grieve his Holy Spirit." You put out the light of your own soul.

REMARKS.

I. We may now understand the distinction between perfect and imperfect faith. They are not distinguished, I suppose, by this, that in reference to the same object and the same feature of Christ's character, the mind may be in a state of trust and distrust at one and the same moment. Our faith may be imperfect for two reasons: I. We may repose confidence in one, and not in every feature of Christ's character as a Savior. For example, the mind, in consequence of ignorance of the perfect fullness of Christ's redemption in all respects, may repose full confidence in Christ as a justifying, but not as a sanctifying Savior. 2. For the same reason, the mind may repose confidence in Christ, for sustaining grace, in one condition in life, and not in another. We may, for example, expect Christ to bless us in our closets, but not in the midst of our business transactions. The faith of all such persons is imperfect. Perfect faith, on the other hand, is a full and unshaken confidence in Christ, as in all respects, at all times, and in every condition, a full and perfect Savior a Savior able and willing to meet every possible demand of our being.

II. We also see how it was, that Satan effected the ruin of our first parents. It was by persuading them, that there was one fundamental demand of their being a love of knowledge which God did not design to meet; and by inducing them to attempt to supply that demand by transgressing the Divine prohibition. In this state of distrust of God's power or willingness to meet and supply all their necessities, all mankind now are by nature; and this distrust is the sole cause of every act of disobedience on earth.

III. We may now understand one fundamental design of the plan of redemption. It is to restore in man the full, implicit, and universal confidence in the power, wisdom, and love of God, which was exercised by our first parents before the fall, and is now exercised by all holy beings in existence. What God said to Abraham, he says to all the sons of men, who will hearken to his voice, as Abraham did, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." When God is chosen by the soul as its eternal portion, in whom every demand of its being is perfectly met, then the work of redemption is accomplished in man, as far as his restoration to the love and favor of God is concerned.

IV. We also see when it is that an individual is brought into a state of entire and permanent holiness when he is settled into a state of full and perpetual consciousness, that in Christ every demand of his being is met, and when all his powers are sweetly yielded up to his control, that he may thus supply our wants, and accomplish, in and through us, all the good pleasure of his goodness. Of such a person, in such a state, it may truly be said," There is none occasion of stumbling in him." Nor will there ever be to all eternity. Into this blissful state, Christian, Christ is both able and willing to bring you. Into this state he will bring you, as soon as you will credit his testimony to his own ability and willingness, and will accordingly surrender yourself to his sweet control.

V. We are now presented with another inexplicable difficulty in the way of the theory, that perfection in holiness is unattainable in this life. The advocates of that theory are bound to take the ground, that, in our condition in this life, such perfection i.e., a state of perfect moral rectitude would not be, on the whole, a blessing to us, for the glory of God, and the good of the universe; or admit that Christ is able and willing to confer this perfection upon us. If it is a good, Christ stands pledged to confer it upon us. For God has said, that "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ

Jesus." Further, if such perfection would be a good to us, and Christ did not present himself to us as able and willing to meet this perpetual and changeless demand of our being, he would be to us an imperfect Savior.

Again, if such perfection is not in this life a good, for the glory of God, or the well-being of the universe, we are under obligations infinite not to pray for it, or to aim to attain it. To make the present possession of that which, we believe, would not now be a good, the object of prayer and effort, must undeniably be in a high degree criminal. But is not the fact, that a state of moral rectitude would be a good to us, for the glory of God, and the good of the universe, a self-evident truth? Is it not demonstrably evident that it is a good, from the fact that it is required of us in the Bible; that Christ prayed for it in behalf of all Christians, and taught them to pray for it; and that such motives are held before us in the Bible, to induce in us this perfect obedience to God?

Now, which of the above alternatives shall we take? Shall we say, that perfection in holiness is not in this life a good, and, for this reason, as we are bound to do, if the supposition before us is correct, cease to aim at it, or pray for it? Or shall we say, that such perfection is a good, and that Christ, though able, is unwilling to confer it upon us, and thus impeach his benevolence, his character as a perfect Savior? Or, finally, shall we affirm, that a state of perfect moral rectitude is in this life a good, and that Christ is both able and willing to confer it upon us, and thus proclaim his absolute perfection as a Savior? One, and only one, of the above alternatives we must take. Which is most honorable to Christ? Which is most conformable to the teachings of inspiration? Which does it become us, as the pupils of the Bible and Spirit of God, as the disciples of such a Savior, to assume?

VI. We see, also, how it is, and by what means that Satan is endeavoring to draw Christians away from Christ. It is by tempting them to believe, that some one or more of the demands of their being are not met in Christ, and thus to draw off their hearts from him to some other object. In every instance in which a Christian falls into sin, he does it under the influence of some such temptation as this. For the time being, he is led practically to distrust the power or willingness of Christ to answer some of the demands of his nature. To meet this demand, the individual trespasses the command of Christ.

VII. We see, also, that the sentiment, that Christ is not both able and willing to render us, in this life, perfect in holiness, and thus meet this great, this fundamental demand of our nature, is directly and most perfectly adapted to induce distrust in him, and throw the mind under the power of the great enemy. No sentiment can be conceived of, which is more perfectly adapted to secure this object, than the one under consideration.

VIII. We may now understand the full meaning of the passage, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The meaning of the passage I suppose to be this Christ accomplishes in and for the believer all that the law would have done, had he always perfectly obeyed its requisitions. For example, perfect obedience to the law secures to the subject a full exemption from all condemnation, and a sure title to the protection and favor of God. This the Christian enjoys through faith in Christ. Entire obedience to the law would have rendered his moral character absolutely perfect, and infinitively lovely and excellent in the estimation of God, and of all intelligent beings. A character, equally perfect, lovely, and excellent, the believer receives through implicit faith in Christ. Further, obedience to the law would have rendered the believer perfectly

blessed in the love and favor of God. A blessedness equally perfect descends to the believer through faith in Christ. Again, obedience to the law would have secured to the believer a full and perfect supply of every necessity. Every demand of our being is met with equal fullness in Christ. All that the law would have done for the believer, had he perfectly obeyed its requisitions, Christ does for him, and infinitely more.

IX. We are also prepared to answer an objection, which is sometimes brought to the doctrine maintained in these discourses, to wit, that it tends to dishonor the law, by lowering the standard of moral obligation. When I hear this objection, I am often reminded of a declaration made to Paul by a fellow apostle "Thou sees, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are that believe; and they are all zealous of the law." Whenever the thought is presented, that perfect conformity to the Divine requisitions is not only required, but expected, of us in this life, a great zeal is instantly manifested for the law, as if some fearful sacrilege was done to it by the above supposition. The standard of moral obligation, it is said, will be let down, and Antinomianism, and errors fearfully dangerous, will be introduced. But how a law is honored, by maintaining that the subject will never obey it, is more than I can understand. And what is gained by elevating the standard of theoretical, and lowering that of practical attainment, is equally inexplicable to my mind. Christians should also understand, that, in their zeal to elevate the law, they may limit the grace of God. To place the law far above the provisions and promises of Christ’s redemption, confers honor neither upon the law nor Christ. On the other hand, "Christ magnifies the law and makes it honorable," in the highest sense possible, when, as the Mediator of the new covenant, he "puts the law in the minds, and writes it in the hearts," of his people, and brings all the powers of their being into sweet subjection to its requisitions.

X. In the light of this subject, you see, Christian, the real cause of every sin you commit; of all your "care and trouble about the many things" of this life; of your want of perpetual peace in God, and of the "aching void" in your heart in its stead; and of the absence of that state of perfect content which arises from the consciousness that all your wants are met in Christ. All this has its origin in one principle exclusively unbelief a want of confidence in Christ as a full and perfect Savior. Until you become fully sensible of this fact; until you are led to refer all your particular sins, all your carefulness and anxiety about your worldly interest, your want of perfect peace, and every improper feeling that arises in your mind, to one source unbelief you will never feel as you ought the "exceeding sinfulness of sin."

XI. We may understand the origin and cause of the profound insensibility and hardness of heart, in respect to the love of Christ, of which professors of religion so commonly complain. Three facts will sufficiently account for this state of gloom and heartfelt despondency: I. Christians generally are ignorant of the fullness of that redemption which they have in Christ. Unbelief has taken their Lord away from their hearts, and they know not where it has laid him. The secret of having a heart always melted with love and tenderness, is an indwelling Christ, from whose fullness our cup of blessedness may perpetually flow. 2. Another cause of the state under consideration is this the fact that almost every Christian, in uniting with the Church, took upon him the most solemn covenant and vow to live in a state of entire consecration to Christ, not only in the absence of all expectation that such vow would be kept, but with the definite belief that it would not be kept. With such a vow and such a belief lying together upon your conscience, Christian, cease to wonder that your heart has been hardened into the profoundest insensibility and gloom. 3. Another cause of

this state of things is, the daily habit of praying definitely for a state of entire sanctification, with the full belief that God will not answer such requests by the bestowment of the blessing prayed for. Let me beseech you, Christian, as you value the presence and favor of God, as you would not fasten a heart of stone as a perpetual mill-stone to your deathless soul, never to put up such a prayer again. "Be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong."

XII. One important aspect of the question at issue between the advocates and opposers of the doctrine of Christian perfection, here presents itself to the contemplation. That Christ is able to render us, in this life, as well as in eternity, "perfect and complete in all the will of God," none, I presume, will deny. The apostle, Ephesians 3:20-21, after having prayed for the entire sanctification and perfect blessedness of Christians, thus exclaims, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Surely we are not straitened in Christ, as far as power to save is concerned. The great question is, Is he willing, as well as able, to render us thus perfect? On this question, the advocates and opposers of the doctrine of Christian perfection are really at issue. On the one hand, it is affirmed that, at all times, and under all circumstances, Christ is both able and willing to meet, and to meet perfectly, every demand of our being, and that, as such a Savior, he is ever present as an object of faith. On the other hand, it is affirmed that there is no moment, during the present life, when he is willing, though able, to meet one changeless demand of our being, to render us "perfect and complete in all the will of God." Which of the above positions is true, you, reader, are called upon here, in the fear of God, to decide.

XIII. We are now prepared for the contemplation of another, and very interesting aspect of the question, Whether perfection in holiness is attainable in this life. That doctrine has the highest possible internal evidence in its favor, which directly and manifestly falls in with the great design of God in the Gospel; while the doctrine which wants this characteristic is equally destitute of all claim to our belief. Now, every one is aware that the great and fundamental design of the Gospel is, to induce in the Christian the exercise of implicit faith in Christ. Which view of the character of Christ is best adapted to increase in us the exercise of such faith in him that which presents him to our contemplation as able and willing to meet perfectly every demand of our being, or that which presents him as able indeed, but unwilling, during the progress of the present life, to meet one fundamental and changeless demand of our nature, i.e., to "sanctify us wholly," and preserve us in that state to his coming and kingdom? Is not the former view of the character of Christ most perfectly adapted to induce the exercise of perfect faith, and the latter as perfectly adapted to induce the opposite state of mind, that is, unbelief?

XIV. I will here notice a remark which is sometimes made in respect to dwelling upon the doctrine of Christian perfection. It is not in this manner, it is said, that the Christian makes progress in holiness; but by turning his contemplation directly upon the Divine glory, and thus being changed into the same image from glory to glory, "even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The question is, Does not the doctrine of Christian perfection present one of the essential features of this very glory, upon which we are required to turn our contemplation? What is implied in the general and devout meditation upon this doctrine? It implies three things:

I. Deep and profound meditation upon the pure and perfect law of God, and upon the action of all the powers of our being, in all the circumstances and relations in life, in conformity with that law. By thus meditating upon the Divine statutes, the Psalmist declares that he had become "wiser than his teachers." Who will dare affirm, that such meditations are not in a high degree favorable to holiness? Who will affirm that, in thus meditating upon God’s pure and perfect law, we shall see no bright reflections of that glory, in the beholding of which the Christian is changed into the same image?

2. In another view of the subject, dwelling upon the doctrine of Christian perfection implies a devout contemplation of the character of Christ, as a full and perfect Savior a Savior able and willing to meet all our real necessities. By such contemplations, contemplations in which we are brought to "know and believe the love which God hath to us," we are informed, 1 John 4:16-17, that "our love is made perfect."

3. In yet another view of the subject, dwelling upon the doctrine under consideration implies a frequent and devout contemplation of the provisions of Divine grace for the entire sanctification of believers, and of the designs of God to raise them to this state, whenever they look to him, by faith to do it for them. Such meditations upon God’s "thoughts of good, and not of evil," towards his people, tends, in the most powerful manner conceivable, to melt our hearts in love and tenderness towards God, and to induce in us the most vigorous efforts after that holiness which we are required to perfect. In whatever point of light the doctrine under consideration is contemplated, dwelling upon it has one tendency, and only one, the assimilation of our entire character to that of Christ.

Finally, brethren, seeing we have such a full and perfect redemption in Christ, "what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" For remaining under the power of sin in any form we have no excuse. To "rejoice in the Lord always" we are under obligation infinite. "The joy of the Lord is our strength." To be free from all care; to be perpetually peaceful and blessed in Christ; to "show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light;" to breathe his spirit, walk in his steps, exemplify his virtues, and have his "joy fulfilled in us," is our high privilege and sacred duty. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me."

DISCOURSE VI.

SPECIAL REDEMPTION.

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us." 1 John 4:16.

"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20.

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he, by the grace of God, "should taste death for every man." Hebrews 2:9.

[The last clause of this passage might more properly have been rendered thus: "Because that he, by the grace of God, has tasted death for every man."]

"And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2:2.

THERE are three positions, which have been taken by different classes of Christians, in respect to the nature and extent of the redemption of Christ.

I. Christ died for a part only of the human race the elect. This is called limited redemption, or atonement. This doctrine, I would simply remark, is positively contradicted by the passages cited above, and stands opposed to the whole aspect of the Gospel, as presented in the Scriptures.

2. Christ died for no individuals of our race in particular, but for all in general. This is called general atonement or redemption. This doctrine embodies one important and fundamental element of the grace of the Gospel the universality of its provisions. It fails, however, to present one of the most interesting and important features of the provisions of Divine grace, as we shall see, when we contemplate,

3. The third position which has been taken in respect to the subject under consideration, which is this, that Christ, instead of dying for no one in particular, died for every man in particular. This is positively affirmed in the text "He tasted death for every man;" "He loved me, and gave himself for me." The redemption of Christ had as special a regard to each individual, as if that one individual was alone concerned in it. This is what is called special atonement or redemption. I use the term "redemption" here, not in its strict theological sense, to designate the accomplishment of the provisions of mercy in the actual salvation of the sinner. In this sense of the term, "redemption" is limited by the reception of grace by the sinner. I use the term to designate the full and special provisions which Christ has made for the salvation of every individual of our race. My object in the present discourse is, to present to the contemplation of the reader the special redemption of Christ; to show what is implied in the fact that Christ, as explained above, "has by the grace of God tasted death for every man." We will then inquire, What is implied in "knowing and believing the love that God hath to us?"

I. What is implied in the fact that Christ has tasted death for every man? It implies,

I. That, in assuming the work of our redemption, Christ had our entire condition and necessities, as sinners and as creatures, distinctly before his mind. Otherwise he could not, with propriety, be said to have tasted death," specifically, "for every man." The same truth is also implied in the fact, that Christ is omniscient, and must have had his contemplation turned with perfect distinctness upon the entire condition and necessities of every individual, for whose redemption he died.

2. That the object of Christ, in thus tasting death for every man, was, to provide a redemption specifically adapted to the special condition and necessities of each individual for whom he died. For what reason should he taste death particularly for each individual, if this was not his object?

3. That Christ has provided for each individual of our race all the good that infinite wisdom could devise and infinite love desire. In short, he has accomplished a redemption for us, which covers our entire necessities in time and eternity. This he was able to accomplish, when he assumed the work of our redemption, and his infinite love would not permit him to accomplish less than this.

This was the work, reader, which Christ undertook for you and me; and having assumed it, he never ceased to travail in the greatness of his strength, till he could say, "It is finished." If you will believe it, such is the "fullness" which you have in Christ.

4. That Christ has rendered the attainment of all this good practicable to us; that is, he has not only provided it for us, but proffered it to us, upon conditions with which we can comply. To suppose that he has offered it upon other conditions, is to accuse him of mocking our misery in the most flagrant manner conceivable, i.e., providing for creatures blessings infinite, and then proffering them upon impracticable conditions. Instead of doing this,. Christ has presented the blessings of his redemption to us upon such conditions, that there is an infallible certainty, " that every one that will ask shall receive, that he that will seek shall find, and that to him that knocketh it shall be opened." The attention of the reader is now invited to a few particular examples, designed still further to illustrate the fullness and specialty of Christ’s redemption.

I. He has made full provision, reader, for the entire pardon of every sin that you ever committed. As your mind ranges over the dark catalogue of past transgressions, remember that those particular sins he "bore in his own body on the tree." For all those sins which rise up in appalling remembrance before you, he was "wounded and bruised," so that by "his stripes you may be healed." He has made such perfect provision for the forgiveness of each and every sin of your entire past existence, that there is no more necessity that you should be excluded from the presence and favor of God, on account of those sins, than there is that the purest spirit before the throne of God should be excluded.

2. Christ has provided means specifically adapted to secure your entire perfection in holiness. He perfectly understood your case when he undertook the work of your redemption. Every obstacle that lies in the way of your perfect sanctification was distinctly before his mind; and he has provided means fully adequate, and specifically adapted, to remedy all the consequences of your sins. However low you may have sunk in sin, he is able to lift you out of the "horrible pit and miry clay." However hard your heart may be, he can take it from you, and give you a heart of flesh in its stead. However firmly fixed your habits of sin may be, he can break them all up. However strong the power of your carnal inclinations, he can subdue them all, and give you a perfect victory over them. Whatever temptations to sin beset you, from within or around you, he can give you strength to endure them. The means to accomplish all this, and specifically adapted to your particular case, are all provided by his infinite love. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." Why, then, should you remain under the power of sin? Why should you be appalled by the fixedness of your habits of sin, by the strength of your carnal inclinations, or the multiplicity and power of the temptations which beset you? Christ saw all these when he assumed the work of your redemption. For all these he has provided a specific and all-powerful remedy. Go to Christ, and you will find that in him there is redemption in readiness for you, to render you " perfect and complete in all the will of God." Clad in the Armour of righteousness, which he has provided for you, you will find yourself able to stand against all the wiles of the wicked one.

3. In the redemption of Christ, there is special consolation provided for all the particular afflictions which come upon you. " In all your afflictions Christ was afflicted." If you will carry your wounded spirit to him, he will bind it up, however deep and multiplied the wounds may be. No one of them

was forgotten by your Savior, when he undertook the work of " bearing your griefs, and carrying your sorrows." Balm specifically adapted to heal all those wounds is in readiness for you. Whatever the particular affliction may be, which falls upon you at any particular time, remember that that affliction, with all its peculiarities, has been specifically provided for by the love of Christ.

4. Whatever the sphere in life may be, in which you may at any time be called to move, for you Christ has provided special wisdom to meet all the exigencies and responsibilities that fall upon you in that sphere. When you lack wisdom, go to him, and he will "give liberally and not upbraid you." The means to do it are all provided.

5. Christ, in short, has made ample provision for every particular necessity which may come upon you in time and eternity. There is not a solitary want of yours, throughout the endless future beyond you, for which a special supply is not made in the redemption of Christ. For you there is provided a seat in heaven, a robe of righteousness, a harp of gold, a crown of glory, and a special place in the center of God’s heart of eternal love.

Such is the redemption of Christ. I might have illustrated the sentiment of this discourse by referring to other particulars. These are sufficient, however, to present the subject with entire distinctness to the contemplation of the reader. We will now inquire, II. What is implied in our knowing and believing the love that the Father hath to us. This implies three things,

I. That we apprehend that love as it is, i.e., the infinite love of God in giving his Son to make, by his incarnation and death, such full and special provisions for our necessities.

2. That we credit this love as a reality; in other words, that we give the Lord Jesus Christ full credit for being such a full and special Savior as he represents himself to be.

3. That we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as such a Savior, and yield up our whole being to his control, that he may accomplish in us all the purposes of his infinite and special love. And now let me ask you, reader, do you believe with all your heart, that Christ is in reality such a Savior as he has here been represented? Do you give him full credit for having " loved you and given himself for you," for the purpose of making such full and special provisions for your entire necessities? Do you believe that for you he tasted the bitter cup of death? In every special exigency of your being, can you look to him with the full assurance that this particular exigency, with all its peculiarities, was remembered and provided for by him, when he was "wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities? "Can you reckon yourself among the number, who can say, "We have known and believed the love that the Father hath unto us?" Do you believe that Christ has provided redemption for you-a redemption so perfectly and specifically adapted to your particular case, that you can now go to him, and be cleansed from all that is impure and unholy, and so transformed into his likeness that your entire character shall hereafter present a pure reflection of his image. Do you believe that you may bring to him your temper, your appetites, your propensities, your entire habits, and have them all brought into sweet subjection to the will of God? Do you believe that, in him, there is a special balm for every wound; relief from every care; consolation for all affliction; a remedy for every ill; and a full supply for every specific necessity of your entire existence? Unless you believe all this, and your heart is all melted into love and tenderness under the influence of that belief, you have yet to learn the breadth, and depth, and length, and height of the love of Christ.

REMARKS.

I. We may now understand the nature of what may be called appropriating faith. It consists in receiving Christ, and relying upon him as our Savior, in reference to all our particular necessities as individuals. As the creatures of God, as sinners against his holy law, we have our particular duties, spheres of action, temptations, trials, afflictions, and necessities. Now, when Christ is contemplated as having provided a redemption for us, specifically adapted to our special exigencies, and is received as a Savior to meet these exigencies, then we exercise towards him appropriating faith. Then we appropriate to ourselves the special redemption that he has provided for us.

II. Here I may be permitted to allude to a very common mistake among Christians, in looking to Christ as a Savior. They appear to look to him as a Savior in general, without any reference to their particular necessities. How seldom do we meet with a Christian, for example, who carries to Christ his temper, his appetites, his habits, and propensities of every kind, which lead him into sin, to have them all corrected and subdued! Where is the Christian, who is accustomed to go to Christ, to be rendered by him all that he requires him or her to be as a father, a mother, a child, a brother, or sister, or in special reference to the business transactions of life? Now, until our faith fastens upon Christ, with reference to specific objects such as these, the power of his redemption will never be experienced. From our sins Christ does not and cannot save us, unless by faith we thus appropriate the provisions of his redemption.

III. In the light of this subject, we may also learn what Christ requires and expects of us as Christians. To present this part of the subject distinctly before the reader’s mind, I remark,

I. That Christ designs and expects that our religion shall be carried out, and influence us alike in all the scenes and transactions of life; that we shall eat, drink, dress, spend our time, talents, and property, transact our business, and move in every sphere in life, with exclusive reference to the same identical objects for which we pray, worship God on the Sabbath, warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come, or partake of the symbols of the body and blood of our Lord. "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." That you may all do this; that Holiness to the Lord may be inscribed upon all that you have, and all that you are -full provision is made in the redemption of Christ. Hence,

2. He requires and expects that you will believe that special grace to do all this is provided for you, and that you will look to him to be rendered thus " perfect and complete in all the will of God."

3. When you are called in providence to move in any particular sphere, he requires and expects that your first object will be, to understand clearly the particular responsibilities, trials, temptations, &c., incident to you in that particular sphere.

4. He requires and expects that you will believe that he, as your Redeemer, has made full and special provision for all your exigencies in that particular sphere; and that, in the exercise of full and implicit faith, you will look to him for grace to meet those exigencies.

Such are some of the requirements and expectations of Christ from us as Christians. Here let me add, that if we do not look to Christ to be saved by him, in every sphere, and in respect of every transaction in life, our faith does not fix upon him at all as a Savior from sin. I would also add, that

if Christ does not save us by subduing our tempers, controlling our appetites and propensities, by rendering us in our spheres, as husbands and wives, parents and children, in every sphere, and in all the particular transactions of life, what he requires us to be, he does not save us at all. The man who expects to be a Christian in his closet, and upon the Sabbath, and a man of the world behind his counter, in his shop, or on his farm, will find at last that he has failed of the grace of God.

We also learn the nature of unbelief, in its most common form in the Church. It is withholding from Christ implicit confidence, as a Savior, who has provided special means to do it, and is now able and willing to meet all our particular necessities as individuals.

V. We will now consider some of the most common indications of unbelief. Among these I notice,

I. The impression which individuals have, that there are peculiar difficulties in their case. The redemption of Christ appears fully adequate to the exigencies of every other individual but themselves. Did Christ, reader, in tasting death for you, overlook the special peculiarities of your condition? Or had he, when he cried, "It is finished," failed to make full provision for those peculiarities? Why, then, permit your unbelief to put far from you all the endless provisions of Christ's redemption? If you withhold confidence from Christ as an ever-present Savior, able and willing to meet all the peculiarities of your condition, you do it at the peril, yes, to the certain loss, of your eternal interests.

2. I believe, says another, that Christ has provided full redemption for me a redemption which perfectly covers all my necessities; but I cannot exercise faith in Christ. Christ, then, has purchased full and special redemption for you, but proffered it to you upon conditions with which you cannot comply.

Why let unbelief thus fasten a millstone about that deathless soul of yours?

3. My heart, says another, is so hard and insensible, that nothing in the universe will move or melt it. Did Christ, in tasting death for you, overlook that heart of stone in your bosom? and has he made no special provision to take it out of your flesh, and give in its stead a heart of flesh? Remember, that if you do not carry this very heart to Christ, that he may take it from you, and if you do not exercise special faith in him to do it, he will be no Savior to you in any sense whatever.

4. Another individual complains that his natural temper is so ungovernable, and his habits of sin so omnipotent in their influence over him, that it appears to him that there can be no redemption for him, at least in this life. If Christ has not provided a special and adequate remedy for these evils, and if your faith does not fasten upon that particular remedy, then there is no salvation for you. Christ will "save you from your sins," or not at all. Why let that temper, and those habits, drag you down to death, when Christ has made full and special provision for their perfect subdual?

5. Another individual feels that he cannot be preserved in his particular sphere. "How can a person be kept perfectly free from sin," says one, "in the midst of the numberless temptations incident to a residence in a great city?" If this were so, I would say, "Up, get ye out of this place." It is better for thee to "enter into life," from the obscurest and most barren spot on earth, than to descend into the lake of fire, from the most splendid palace or city. But who is it that has promised that he will not " suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but with the temptation will make a way for your escape, that ye may be able to bear it?" Who is the strongest, Christian; "he that is in you," or he

"that is in the world?"

"Do you believe," said a mother, "that I can be preserved in a state of perfect peace, in the midst of all the cares and perplexities of this great family?" Christ, according to the suggestions of unbelief in the mind of that individual, had, in the special provisions of his grace for her, overlooked the fact that she was to be the mother of a large family, and had failed to provide a special remedy for all the cares and perplexities incident to her lot in that particular sphere. Sad indeed was her condition, if that were really the case.

6. It does not appear, says another, possible that creatures sunk so low in sin as we are, should be raised to a state of perfect purity. Did you acquire that sentiment, brother, through a full and careful inquiry into the nature and power of the grace of Christ? Did you learn it from a prayerful investigation of the extent of the provisions and promises of Christ's redemption, and of the power of Christ himself as a Savior? Is that grace, which has the power to change a rebel into a friend, insufficient, if applied by Christ himself, for the purpose, to change partial into perfect love? What is there to appeal us, however deep and settled our habits of sin, if Christ has provided the means, and has undertaken to accomplish a full redemption from all iniquity?

7. If I could only see some one who had attained to a state of entire sanctification, then I would believe the doctrine. It is very doubtful whether, if such a case were actually presented to a person in this state of mind, God would not have occasion to say unto him, "I work a work in your day, which ye will in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Or if he should believe it for that reason, the fact itself would show that his faith rests, as said in a former discourse, upon what he sees, and not upon the Word of God. Which, reader, have you taken " as the only infallible rule of faith and practice," the Word of God or the attainments of men?

8. It does not appear to me, that by simply believing in Christ, says another, I could be saved from all sin. In other words, the declaration of Christ, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," does not appear to be a reality. Such an individual ought to learn another fact that he has as yet experienced but very little of the power of faith in his own heart. "Now, the just shall live by faith." "We also believe, and therefore speak."

VI. We may also learn the influence of unbelief. It annihilates wholly the saving influence of the Gospel upon the heart. It places the subject in the same state of absolute hopelessness that he would be in, had no salvation been provided. "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." Whatever necessity presses upon us, that necessity remains for ever unsupplied till faith fastens upon the special redemption of Christ, as an ever-present and all-powerful remedy.

VII. We may now understand the true remedy for spiritual pride. I recollect having once heard a preacher, in a public address, give this as the all-powerful corrective, "Let a person keep perpetually before his mind the standard of absolute perfection required by the law of God, and let it be his constant aim to ascend to a full discharge of every duty required of him. Now, if, while he is ascending from one degree to another toward the point of perfect holiness, he looks down and reflects upon the attainments he has already made, he will be lifted up with pride. If, on the other hand, in his perpetual ascent, he keeps his eye steadily fixed upon the point above him, he will be kept perpetually humbled in view of constant shortcomings." The remedy was received by the audience with unbounded applause.. This reflection, however, forced itself upon my mind, that if

the speaker was in the same state of mind in which Christians generally are, he was not a little elevated in his estimation of himself by the beautiful remedy which he had proposed for spiritual pride. And what a thought is this that a Christian must not obey the commands, " Search your own hearts," "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves," lest, if he should find that he had attained to any real holiness, he would be lifted with pride, and not exclaim, with adoring gratitude, " By the grace of God I am what I am! "

Now, the apostle has proposed a very different remedy for spiritual pride, from the one under consideration, which is the one commonly proposed, "Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what, law? Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith."

Suppose that an individual becomes fully conscious that, in consequence of his own reckless folly, he has involved himself in infinite guilt and hopeless bondage under sin; that Christ, of his self-moved goodness and mercy, has made full provision to meet all his necessities as a sinner; that, by implicit faith in Christ, he enjoys full redemption from the power and consequences of sin; and that the moment his faith loses its hold of Christ, he falls into the same hopeless guilt and bondage as before. When the man finds himself rising in spiritual attainments, under the influence of such a principle, to whom will he spontaneously ascribe the entire glory of his salvation? "To him that loved us, and washed us from our gins in his own blood." The fact that Christians generally cannot conceive themselves to have ascended in spiritual attainment, at all above the common level, without pride of heart, is to my mind full demonstration of the fact, that they yet need to be taught what are the "first principles" of holy living. "The righteousness which is of faith" excludes all boasting, of every kind.

VIII. You learn, Christian, to what to attribute every act of sin, and all your care, and trouble, and perplexity about the " many things " of this life. All these, together with every wrong feeling which arises in your mind, have their origin in one source exclusively unbelief a want of confidence in that special redemption of Christ, which, but for unbelief, would meet every possible exigency of our whole existence.

IX. We see, also, how it is that most Christians lose the presence of Christ under the pressure of business, when on a journey, or when brought into any scenes to which they have not before been accustomed. In such circumstances, they do not look to Christ for the special grace which he has provided to meet such exigencies. O that Christians would take this promise with them everywhere, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be!" "Then would their peace be like a river, and their righteousness as the waves of the sea."

X. We also understand the secret of always having a heart melted with love and tenderness. It consists in a full sense of our own infinite guilt and vileness of the boundless love of Christ, in making such full and perfect provision for our entire necessities, and as being ever present in our hearts, to confer upon us the full benefits of this eternal redemption. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!" Such a thought, when it once takes possession of the mind, has omnipotent power to melt the heart, and cause its purest, sweetest, and best affections to roll for ever around one "blissful center."

XI. We now understand the reason why the Lord Jesus Christ declared "the kingdom of heaven to be like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole were

leavened." The thought here presented, in its application to Christians, is this: When the kingdom of heaven is once set up in the heart of an individual, it will lead directly on to an entire subjection of all the powers and principles of his being to its Divine control. The reason is this: For our entire redemption from sin, into a state of perfect moral purity, the Gospel has made full provision. For every sinful habit and propensity, for every incentive to sin, it presents a specific and all-powerful remedy, through faith in Christ. Who that hates sin, and loves holiness supremely, will remain under the power of the former, and destitute of the fullness of the latter, under such circumstances?

XII. We see also the reason of Christ's declaration, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent." Suppose, Christian, that you could apprehend the excellence and love of Christ, as fully as your capacities will permit; suppose you could apprehend the fullness of his special love to you, and to every other individual of our race; that you could apprehend him as ever present with you, to meet your entire necessities in time and eternity; suppose you could apprehend him in all his relations to you, as your God and Savior, and you could be fully assured that, through his love, every attribute of the Godhead stands pledged for your present and eternal well-being: to know Christ in this manner, and to have all the powers of your being moving perpetually under the influence of his infinite love, this would indeed be life eternal. To be in this state is your high and blessed privilege. To present this love to you in all its fullness, God has given you his Holy Spirit. If you will look to that Spirit to be "strengthened with might in the inner man," for this specific object, " that the love of Christ may dwell richly in your heart by faith," you will then be able to "comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fullness of God."

XIII. Finally, we may, in the light of this discourse, understand the secret of the pre-eminent piety of Paul and of primitive Christians. It is all explained in one single expression of the sacred writer - "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." At all times, and under all circumstances, they " knew nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." They literally " counted all things but lass, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord." He was their wisdom," their "righteousness," their "sanctification," and "redemption." He was their consolation in every affliction. He was their perfect pattern, their sole leader and guide. He was their certain victory, in every conflict with the "world, the flesh, and the devil." He was their joy, their hope, their inheritance, their shield, and their " exceeding great reward." He was their "bright and morning star," the magnet of their souls, which held all the powers of their being in a blissful fixedness to one changeless Center.

Now, Christian, if you will believe it, Christ will be to you all that he was to them. " He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" and you may share as fully as they did in the infinite fullness of the love and grace of Christ. If, however, you would enjoy this full redemption, all the powers of your being must be brought under the perpetual influence of this one principle "Looking to Jesus." Do your sins rise up before you, and fill you with apprehensions of coming retributions," Look to Jesus." Do you desire to be wholly freed from the power of sin, and to have your entire character presented to God, " without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," "Look to Jesus." Are you burdened with care, or do the storms of affliction gather round you, "Look to Jesus." Is your temper unsubdued, do your appetites and propensities rebel, and call for unhallowed gratification, "Look

to Jesus." Do temptations beset you, from within or around you, "Look to Jesus." Do you need wisdom and grace for any exigency whatever, "Look to Jesus." Whatever your condition or necessities may be, hear his gracious voice, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls."

"Jesus, we come at thy command, With faith, and hope, and humble zeal, Resign our spirits to thy hand, To mould and guide us at thy will." DISCOURSE VII.

EXCEEDING GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES.

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that, by these, ye might be partakers of the Divine nature; having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter 1:4. IN the verse preceding, we are informed that God, in giving us a revelation of Jesus Christ, has furnished us with a knowledge of everything which "pertains to life and godliness." In the text, we are informed, that, in the same revelation, he has given unto us "exceeding great and precious promises;" that these promises are conferred upon us for this purpose, that through them, or by embracing them by faith, we may become "partakers of the Divine nature," and escape the "corruption that is in the world through lust." A promise is a pledge of good. In every promise of Divine grace, Christ discloses to us the good which he stands pledged to confer upon us, on condition that we look to him, by faith, for the blessing presented in the promise. Now, the success of all our efforts after holiness depends upon the use we make of the promises. I propose, therefore, in the following discourse, to illustrate the following propositions:

I. I will present to the contemplation of the reader some of the "exceeding great and precious promises" of Divine grace.

II. Show what is implied in our becoming "partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust."

III. Show the manner in which the promises must be used, in order that we may obtain the good which they present to us.

I. I am to present to the contemplation of the reader some of the "exceeding great and precious promises" of Divine grace. As much that I should otherwise say upon this part of our subject has been anticipated in preceding discourses, my remarks under this head will be very brief. In presenting the reader with a slight view of these "exceeding great and precious promises," I would remark in general, that Christ has pledged to us an eternal exemption from all that would be to us, on the whole, a real evil, and the possession of everything, in time and eternity, the possession of which would be to us a real blessing. "Not a hair of your head shall perish." "And nothing shall by any means hurt you." "No good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly." These promises belong alike to all Christians, in all ages and circumstances. For their fulfillment, they are required, with full and humble confidence, to cast themselves upon the power and faithfulness of Christ. But, to be more particular, I remark,

I. That Christ has promised, to all who will believe in him, an eternal exemption from all the condemnation which they deserve on account of their sins, and which actually will fall upon the wicked. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them

eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

2. A sure title to all the blessedness enjoyed by the pure spirits around the throne of God. "Ye are come," "to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven." "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." "Who shall separate us from the love of God?"

Suppose, reader, that you were introduced within the veil of eternity, and were permitted to look down into the gulph of death, until you should fully apprehend the infinite wretchedness of a lost spirit, as he wanders on, through ceaseless ages, amid the gloom and despair of the eternal sepulcher; suppose you were then permitted to raise your vision to those infinite heights of purity and blessedness to which redeemed spirits in heaven will ascend, as eternity rolls on its endless years. While these depths of gloom and heights of bliss were distinctly before your mind, suppose Christ should pledge himself to you, that he would free you from all exposure to the former, and give you a sure title to the full possession of the latter. What an "exceeding great and precious promise" that would be! Such is the promise of Christ now before you. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

3. Entire freedom from all sin, and the transformation of our entire character into a likeness to his own. "I," says Christ, "will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you." "And thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." "But we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This is held before us as a promise. Such a change Christ stands pledged to produce in us if we will believe in him.

4. He promises to subdue our lusts and propensities, to guard us against all temptation to sin from within or around us, and to give us a full and perfect victory over "the world, the flesh, and the devil." "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin." "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things have become new." "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." "Fear not, I have overcome the world." "He is able to succor them that are tempted." "Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

5. Consolation in every affliction. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

6. The constant fruition of the Divine presence and love, and all the blessedness which he himself enjoys, as far as our capacities will permit. "We will come and make our abode with him." "I will

dwell in them, and walk in them." "Peace I leave with you, my peace" i. e., the peace which I enjoy "I give unto you." "That they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." "The peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus."

7. The privilege of going to God, at all times and under all circumstances, in prayer, with the use of Christ's name, and with the certain pledge that whatsoever we thus ask, that will be a good to us, shall be granted. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." "Ask and it shall be given you, that your joy may be full."

8. The constant presence and illumination of the Holy Spirit. "He shall abide with you for ever." "He shall lead you into all truth." "He shall take of mine and show them unto you."

9. Not merely grace to make us holy and keep us from all sin, but an infinite reward for every expression of love that he shall receive from us, and every act of obedience that we shall render to him. "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Such is the infinite and incomprehensible love and grace of Christ. By his grace we are rendered holy, and are then to be rewarded infinitely for being what the grace of Christ has rendered us.

10. Great success in our efforts to advance his cause. "He that abides in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to my Father." Christ has not only promised to render us thus successful, but to bestow an infinite and eternal reward upon us for all that we accomplish for him. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

11. Christ promises to us a peaceful death, and a glorious immortality. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." "I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." "And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."

Such are the promises of Christ to his people. And, reader, are not these promises "exceeding great and precious?" To you they all belong; and Christ invites you to come to him, and receive your purchased and promised inheritance. We will now inquire,

II. What is implied in our being "made partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." This implies two things,

I. That we become entirely emancipated from the power of sin. No person, not thus emancipated, but still, in any degree, under the power of sin, could be said to have "escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

2. It implies that we, to the full extent of our powers, be rendered partakers of the holiness and blessedness of God. This is the only sense in which any intelligent being can be a partaker of the

Divine nature. "But he," says the apostle, "for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." To be partakers of the Divine holiness, and consequently of the Divine blessedness, is of course the same thing as to be rendered partakers of the Divine nature. That we might thus escape the corruptions that are in the world, and be "made partakers of the Divine nature," is the declared object for which the "exceeding great and precious promises" were given. When we come to Christ by faith for a fulfillment of these promises, his power stands pledged to fulfill in us the glorious object for which they were given. I am now,

III. To show the manner in which we are to use the promises, in order that we may obtain the good which they present to us. As the design of the promises is to free us from the "corruptions that are in the world," and render us "partakers of the Divine nature," they are addressed and adapted to every possible condition in which we may be placed, and as a remedy for every evil, natural and moral, in which we may be involved. They descend to the sinner in the lowest depths of guilt and depravity, for the purpose of lifting him out of the "horrible pit and miry clay," and rendering him a partaker of the "Divine nature." They meet the Christian, in a state of partial holiness, for the purpose of raising him to a state of "perfect love," and then of carrying him upward and onward, from glory to glory, through time and eternity. Now, to use the promises so as to become possessed of the blessings which they proffer to us, four things are necessary, I. That we know our need. 2. That we apprehend the particular promise of Christ, which was designed to meet that particular necessity. 3. That we repose full confidence in Christ's ability and faithfulness to fulfill the promise which he has spread before us. 4. That we cast our whole being upon him, for the specific purpose of securing a fulfillment of the particular promise before us. For example, the sinner is brought to feel himself to be in a lost condition. Here he is met with the declaration of Christ, "I came to seek and to save that which was lost;" together with the promises, "Look to me and be ye saved;" "Whosoever cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Let the sinner cast himself at once upon Christ, for the definite purpose of securing a fulfillment of those specific promises. Are you in darkness, reader? Go directly to Christ for the fulfillment of the promise, "I will lead the blind by a way which they know not." Is your heart hard and unfeeling? Go to Christ with the definite promise, "I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh," and cast yourself upon his faithfulness for the fulfillment of that promise. Are your appetites, or your propensities the "occasion of stumbling" to you? Carry these particular objects to Christ, and plead the definite promises, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin," and "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new." Do temptations beset you? Go to Christ with the promise, "Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation make a way for your escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Are you about to enter into new and untried scenes, or spheres of action? Go to Christ with the specific promises, "Lo, I am with you always," and "My grace is sufficient for thee." Are you "hungering and thirsting after righteousness?" This promise you may now plead with Christ, "They shall be filled." Does the water of life begin to flow in your heart? This promise now rises before you, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." In short, whatever your condition or state of mind may be, remember that you are addressed by your Savior with some specific promise, perfectly adapted to your peculiar case. Your life depends upon your casting yourself at once upon the faithfulness of Christ, for a fulfillment of that promise. In so using the "exceeding great and precious promises," you may, with absolute certainty, be rendered a

"partaker of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

REMARKS.

I. We will notice the great truth, of which we need to have a full and distinct apprehension, in order that all the promises may rise before our minds as living realities. It is the infinite love of God in the gift of Christ for our redemption. In Christ, "all the promises are yea and amen." "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" For the want of such an apprehension of the love of Christ, the promises are, to the great mass of the Church, almost as a "dead letter."

II. We notice one of the first lessons which should be taught to the young convert. He should first of all use the promises as a sovereign remedy to every ill that may press upon him. Let his eye be directed to these; let him become accustomed to apply to them in every possible exigency, and he will ascend upwards upon them, as upon Jacob’s ladder, from glory to glory, to eternal heights of purity and blessedness.

III. We see how it is that the peace of the young convert is very commonly destroyed, and his growth in grace prevented, by the instructions which he receives from older Christians. When the convert, alarmed at the discovery of inward corruptions, and of the numerous occasions of stumbling, in himself, arising from his temper, his appetites, his habits of sin, as well as the hardness of his heart, comes for counsel to those who ought to be able to point him at once to the remedy, and thus lead him to the "fountain of living waters," there is commonly a direct attempt to comfort him in his present state. He is told that such discoveries of inward corruption are the highest evidence of our conversion, that he must not be alarmed when he "finds the Canaanite in the land," that these foes will never be dislodged from his bosom till his dying day, and that Christ will very soon teach him the "plague of his own heart," by letting him slide down from the warmth and blessedness of his first love, into the valley of spiritual death, misnamed the valley of humiliation. Well might the convert reply to such guides, "Miserable comforters are ye all." If, now, he will turn from all such directions to the "exceeding great and precious promises" of Christ, and with humble confidence cast himself upon his faithfulness, then shall his "righteousness go forth as brightness, and his salvation as a lamp that burneth." Then shall he prove, by blessed experience, the truth of the promise, "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up on wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

IV. We may understand the object which the Christian should have in view, in searching his own heart. It should be the same as the physician has in examining the symptoms of his patient; i. e., to determine the nature of the disease, for the purpose of applying the appropriate remedy. So the Christian should examine himself to determine what he is, and what he needs, for the purpose of looking away to some definite promise as the remedy to that necessity. How profitable seasons of fasting and prayer would be, if spent in this manner with the Physician of souls. The want of this definite object is the great reason, I suppose, why such seasons are so generally almost profitless to Christians.

V. We see why it is that Christians apply to Christ for sanctification, &c., almost without success. Their object is commonly general and undefined, and no thing specific is presented. Let an

individual, on the other hand, who finds his temper, his appetites, his propensities, or worldly pursuits, the occasion of falling, take one or more of these definite objects to Christ, and cast himself, in view of some definite promise, upon his faithfulness, to have that particular cause of sin removed; let him thus bring all his powers and propensities to Christ, and how soon would all his faculties and susceptibilities be so sweetly and perfectly subjected to the will of God, that all occasion of stumbling would be taken away! In all instances, reader, when you go to Christ with some definite object, resting also upon some definite promise, you are sure to be heard.

VI. We see how it is that Satan often destroys the confidence of Christians in the promises, in their application to themselves. It is by directing their attention to some promise that is not applicable to their present state, and pressing them to attempt to believe in that. Said one, I often thought of the promise, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted;" and, because I was not in the state upon which that promise was conditioned, I thought there was no other promise in the Bible that belonged to me, or upon which I could lay hold. Before that individual could mourn, it was necessary for her to "look on him whom she had pierced." Quite another promise belonged to her in the state referred to, to wit, "Look to me and be ye saved." By casting herself upon this, she would soon have been brought into a state to which the promise first referred to was addressed. As long as Satan can keep the mind from the promises addressed to our particular state, and fixed upon others inapplicable, he will hold us, in spite of ourselves, in unbelief.

VII. We see why it is that, to most professors, the thought of being entirely sanctified in this life appears so chimerical. Their minds have ranged, in the darkness of unbelief, amid their own wrongdoings and shortcomings; and not upon the boundless provisions, and "exceeding great and precious promises" of Divine grace, till they have apprehended the riches of the glory of Christ's inheritance in the saints. If Christ has made provision for our entire holiness, and has promised, on the condition of simple faith in his word, that he will himself sanctify us wholly, and preserve our whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless unto his coming and kingdom, how reasonable to expect that his power shall effect what his love has provided and his truth has promised!

VIII. We see, why it appears to most persons so impossible to exercise that faith which would result in a state of entire sanctification. They do not believe that provision is made in the Gospel for the attainment of that state, or that Christ has promised it to us, on condition of our faith in him for that blessing. If Christ has made such provisions, and given such promises, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to account for the existence of that faith in an individual which induces partial and not perfect holiness, when he has those provisions and promises distinctly before his mind.

IX. In what sense all Christians are expected and required to be witnesses for Christ. They are expected and required so to trust Christ in respect to the fulfillment of all his promises, that they can say, from blessed experience, that in all those promises Christ is a faithful and true witness. Take the following promise as an example: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Now, we are expected and required to "stay ourselves upon God" in such a manner that we can affirm, from experience, that the effect of trusting in God is all that it is here affirmed to be. So of every other promise in the Bible. If we cannot thus testify for God, we are found to be false witnesses for him. It is in giving such testimony that we are chiefly to glorify Christ, and benefit our fellow-men. How melancholy is the fact, that most professors, instead of being able to speak for Christ, as his faithful and true

witnesses, can only give an opinion, that if they should embrace the promises, they would find them true; which is no more than the impenitent can say, and, of course, is no testimony at all.

X. We see that if, as is commonly supposed, God has so arranged the dispensations of his providence and grace, that no one will attain to a state of entire sanctification in this life, he has made such arrangements that he shall never have a witness on earth that can bear full testimony to the truth of his promises. Many of these promises are, as we have seen in a former discourse, conditioned on the existence of this state in the subject. How infinitely absurd is the supposition that God has made definite arrangement, by which he is never to have a witness on earth who can bear full testimony for him! "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." See to it, Christian, that you, by availing yourself of proffered grace, become perfectly qualified to bear full testimony for God. How reasonable is the supposition that God should make full provision for the perfect qualification, i. e., sanctification, of his own witnesses! How perfectly unreasonable the opposite supposition!

XI. We may also perceive the perfect absurdity of the supposition, that if a Christian were entirely sanctified, he would not be permitted longer to live on earth; but would be taken directly to heaven. In other words, if an individual were fully qualified to bear testimony for Christ, he would not allow him to testify at all.

XII. We perceive the infinite obligation resting upon us, to be entirely free from care and perplexity, and to be always, and under all circumstances, in a state of perfect peace and blessedness. We have only to rest down upon the "exceeding great and precious promises," and every care, every perplexity, and every burden is necessarily rolled from our minds. We are led into the "banqueting-house" of the Redeemer, "where his banner over us is love." We are conducted forth "into the green pastures, and beside the still waters." We range along the banks of the river of life, and our peace and blessedness will be like the broad, and deep, and crystal flow of that river.

Reader, what is the character of your religion? Is it a life-giving and a peace-giving religion? Your body, you say, is the "temple of the Holy Spirit." What are the fruits of the spirit that actually dwells in that temple? Are they, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance?" "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

XIII. In the light of this subject, we are also led to contemplate and adore the infinite love of God to us. This love is manifested in the bestowment upon creatures, infinite in guilt and vileness, of the highest blessing that infinite wisdom could conceive, that infinite love could desire, and infinite power confer the eternal possession of the "Divine nature" the holiness and blessedness of God. Reader, dwell upon this thought. In it learn to comprehend your own privileges, and the boundless love of God. For the bestowment of this blessing, full provision is made in the Gospel. For its full accomplishment in you, the Son of God is "standing at the door," and the Spirit of grace is now in your heart. If you will open the door, the Son of God will enter in and confer this blessed inheritance upon you.

XIV. Finally, we perceive the infinite obligation that rests upon us, not to remain under the power of any sin; but to have our temper, our appetites, our propensities, habits, and all the powers and susceptibilities of our being, subdued and brought into sweet and perfect subjection to the will of Christ, so that there shall be "none occasion of stumbling in us." For the accomplishment of this, full provision is made in the Gospel of the grace of God, and we have only to cast ourselves upon

Christ for the fulfillment of the "exceeding great and precious promises" which he has given us, and all this blessedness is ours. It is your blissful privilege, reader, in the use of these promises, to be made a "partaker of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Remember what God has said "Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."

DISCOURSE VIII. THE DIVINE TEACHER.

"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:7 - Job IN the verses preceding, the apostle speaks of the veil that was over the mind of the Jew, in the reading of the Scriptures, and which prevented his understanding their true import. In the text he speaks of the privileges which Christians enjoy through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;" i. e., there is a full and direct aspect of truth, and a full experience of its renovating power. "But we all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Every real Christian can call to mind seasons when he had such views of truth as are here referred to views which melted his whole soul into love and tenderness, and brought all the powers of his being into sweet subjection to the will of God. Could these visions be rendered perpetual in the mind of the Christian, his heart would never wax cold or unfeeling; nor would there ever be any rival to Christ in his heart, to dispute with him the empire of the soul. In the absence of such views, darkness enters and spreads itself over the mind, and temptations to sin have a sovereign power. Now, to impart these visions of truth, to render them perpetual, and thus preserve the mind under the uninterrupted influence of the love of Christ, and give to that love the highest possible efficacy over the heart, is the appropriate office of the Holy Spirit. This is the part which he now acts in the plan of redemption. Christ is of God made unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." The office of the Holy Spirit is to present Christ to our minds in such a manner that all these objects shall be fully accomplished in us. The attention of the reader is now invited to a few general observations, designed to illustrate the office of the Holy Spirit in the work of redemption, as above presented. To accomplish this object, I remark,

I. The Holy Spirit enlightens the intellect, and carries on the work of sanctification in the heart, by the presentation of truth to the mind; and the truth presented does not respect himself, but Jesus Christ. "The sword of the Spirit is the word of God." "Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." The Holy Spirit sustains to Christ the same relation that a teacher does to the particular science which he teaches. His object is not to present himself to the pupil, but the science. So the Spirit shows not himself, but Christ, to our minds. We feel and recognize the presence of the Spirit, only as Christ is presented to our minds, and thus the "love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."

II. In thus accomplishing the work of redemption, the Holy Spirit sustains to Christians and sinners entirely different relations. To the latter, he sustains the exclusive relation of a reprover of sin, his object being conviction, for the purpose of leading the sinner, humbled and penitent, to Christ. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." To the Christian, on the other hand, the Christian, I mean, in a state of love and obedience to God, he sustains the relation of a teacher, a comforter, an indwelling light in which the glory and love of Christ are continually reflected upon the eye of the mind. "He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." "He shall testify of me." "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." "He dwelleth in you, and shall be in you."

III. The Holy Spirit, in the relation last described, is given to Christians after they believe in Christ, and in consequence of their faith in him. Acts ii. 38," Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Ephesians 1:13, "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Proverbs 1:23, "Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you; I will make known my words unto you." As these passages respect all Christians alike, they refer, not to the miraculous, but common influences of the Spirit, as an indwelling light in the hearts of God’s people.

IV. The design of God, in the gift of his Spirit, is that he be to Christians, not as a " stranger or a sojourner, that turneth aside to tarry but for a night," but as the perpetual light of their souls, of whose illumination they are never to be destitute. John 14:15-17, "If ye love me, keep my commandments; and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Hence it is said of Christians, that their "bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost," and that they themselves are "the temples of the living God." As the visible manifestation of the Divine glory never departed from the Holy of Holies in the ancient temple, so God designs that the light of his Spirit shall never depart from the more sacred temple of the heart, and nothing but sin can quench his Divine illuminations there. To enjoy these perpetual Divine illuminations, Christian, to have those full and unceasing visions of the glory of Christ, by which you may be able to "comprehend the breadth, and depth, and length, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge," is your high privilege and most sacred duty.

V. We will now consider the state of those who thus enjoy the perpetual illumination of the Holy Spirit.

I. They have all those full, and direct, and perpetual visions of the love of Christ, which are necessary to their highest purity and blessedness. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." "But we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." "He that is spiritual" i. e., taught by the Spirit "judgeth all things," has a distinct perception of all truth which it concerns him to understand. "He shall guide you into all truth."

2. All the wisdom that is necessary, that they, as the servants of Christ, may in every sphere and condition in life, glorify him in the most effectual manner. This is implied in the promise, "he shall

lead you into all truth." It is also included in the promise, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth unto men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

3. They have such views of Christ as impart to them full and unfailing consolation in every affliction. In special reference to this part of his office, he is called the "Comforter."

4. Such a full and perpetual fruition of the presence and love of Christ as constitutes the richest foretaste of future blessedness. The gift of the Spirit, for this reason, is called the "earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession."

5. The Spirit is given to such, as Heaven's signet; as God's seal to their title to the eternal inheritance which Christ has purchased for them. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." "Ye are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."

Such are your privileges, Christian, in the gift of the Holy Spirit. All truth is perfectly known to him. "The Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God." Every truth that you need to understand, he is able to present to your mind, in such a manner, that, from it, you shall receive the highest possible influence. He is equally able to present those truths, and those aspects of truth, which are perfectly adapted to your necessities in every condition in life. To you he is given as the last and richest gift of your God and Savior, to be in you as a perpetually indwelling light, through which you are to be " filled with all the fullness of God." Christ has promised, that "whosoever believeth in him shall not walk in darkness; but shall have the light of life." By availing yourself of the illumination of the Holy Spirit, this promise may be fully accomplished in your own blessed experience. Remember this, also, that without this Divine illumination, you will and you must walk in darkness. Those life-giving aspects of truth, presented to the mind by the Spirit, you can obtain from no other source whatever. "Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." "The natural man," the man that trusts to his own wisdom, without the aid of Divine illumination, "receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither CAN HE KNOW THEM, because they are spiritually discerned."

VI. We will now consider the conditions on which we can enjoy the perpetual illumination of the Holy Spirit."

I. His perpetual presence and illumination must be sought by prayer and "faith on the Son of God." "How much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him!" 2. Your motives in seeking his illumination must be identical with those of the Spirit as your teacher. His appropriate office is, to " take of the things of Christ and show them unto you;" to impart to you that knowledge which is necessary to your highest holiness, blessedness, and usefulness, as a Christian. When you ask of God for the indwelling light of his Holy Spirit, ask it for this exclusive purpose, that you may know Christ, and fully experience the renovating power of his love upon your heart, that you may " know the things which are freely given you of God," and understand, as the servants of Christ, all the responsibilities devolving upon you, in every relation and condition in life.

3. Seek the illumination of the Holy Spirit, with a full consciousness and acknowledgement of your own blindness and ignorance, and entire dependence upon his teaching. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." "If any man would be wise among you, let him become a fool, that he may be wise;" that is, let him

acknowledge his total darkness and ignorance in himself, and seek for Divine illumination as the only source of true wisdom.

4. Seek the illumination of the Spirit in the diligent use of all appropriate means the study of the Scriptures, attendance upon the instructions and ordinances of God’s house, and in social converse and prayer with such as are themselves spiritually taught. In the use of such means, with such a Spirit and object, your cup will be always full. It will overflow for ever.

REMARKS.

I. In the light of this discourse, a few important passages of Scripture admit of a ready explanation. For example, Luke 10:21, " In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." "The wise and prudent" are those who proudly depend upon their own wisdom, and are regarded as wise by the world around them. "Babes" are such as acknowledge their blindness and ignorance, and look to Christ as the Divine illumination. How appropriate the joy and gratitude of Christ, that the former were left in darkness, and the latter Divinely illumined John 9:41, "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin;" that is, if you would acknowledge your blindness, and come to me for Divine illumination, your sins would be wholly removed from you: but now ye say: "We see; therefore your sin remaineth;" that is, you deny your ignorance and dependence upon me; therefore your character remains unchanged, and your sins rest upon you. 1 Corinthians 2:9, "But, as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." This passage is very commonly considered as applicable only to the condition of saints in heaven. The context shows, however, that it is applied exclusively to the condition of Christians on earth. "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Such are your privileges now, Christian, through the love of Christ reflected upon your heart by the Holy Spirit, which is given unto you.

II. We may now understand one, at least, of the ways in which the "Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." When, for example, the Christian asks for wisdom from above, or for Divine illumination in respect to any question of truth or duty, and receives from the Spirit an answer to his request; in that answer, the Spirit of God bears witness with his Spirit that he is a child of God. Such is the testimony that he is perpetually bearing in the heart of all who are humble and contrite in spirit, and tremble at God’s word. Reader, do you know what it is to have the witness of the Spirit in your own heart?

III. We are also fully prepared to answer the question, In what consists the grand secret of holy living? It is an indwelling Christ, whose image is perpetually reflected upon the eye of the mind, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Reader, is your piety of such a character as this?

IV. In what sense only is the Holy Spirit a sanctifier? "Christ is of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." The Spirit sanctifies by presenting Christ to the mind in such a manner, that we are transformed into his image. The common error of Christians, in respect to this subject, seems to be this looking away from Christ to the Holy Spirit for sanctification, instead of looking for the Spirit to render Christ their sanctification.

V. For not having Christ perpetually dwelling in your heart, reader, as your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, you are without excuse. For this special purpose, the Holy Spirit is given to you. In his light it is your blessed privilege perpetually to walk. "How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" "Ask, and it shall be given you." "For every one that asketh receives."

VI. We see, in the light of this subject, the true ground of the expectation, that, in our efforts after holiness, we may attain to a state of entire consecration to Christ. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." Our hope of attaining to this state rests not at all upon a view of our own natural powers as moral agents, but upon the provisions of Divine grace for our "redemption from all iniquity," and our perfect "completeness in all the will of God," together with the Divine aid that is promised to succeed all sincere efforts made in simple faith in Christ, for the attainment of that state. In the redemption of Christ, as we have seen in former discourses, full provision is made for the entire sanctification of every believer. The Holy Spirit is given for the express purpose of so presenting the Lord Jesus Christ to our minds, that we may experience in our hearts the full power of his redemption. The Spirit, it should be remembered, has a perfect understanding of all truth pertaining to our salvation. He has, at all times, direct access to our hearts, and is perfectly able to present the image of Christ to our minds in such a manner, that it shall exert upon us the highest possible transforming power. He is always in us, a perpetually indwelling light, whose highest illuminations we can always enjoy, by opening our hearts with simple faith and prayer to receive it. With such provisions and such a helper, to what state ought we to expect to attain? Who is strongest, Christian, let me put the question again, "he that is in you, or he that is in the world?" Which has the greatest power, the Spirit of the living God, together with an indwelling Christ, or your fleshly lusts and propensities? Shall the followers of Christ proclaim the fact, that the Spirit and grace of Christ are less strong in their hearts, than the "world, the flesh, and the devil?" that that grace which changed an enemy into a friend, is not adequate to render that friend "perfect and complete in all the will of God?" "Tell it not in Gath! publish it not in the streets of Askelon! lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph!"

VII. We are now prepared, in the light of this and of the preceding discourse, to understand the great and fundamental errors of the Perfectionists, a sect which rose some years ago in the state of New York, and subsequently spread to a small extent over various parts of the country. The following are some of the tenets of this sect: They maintained, I. That in the Gospel there is a total abrogation of the moral law as a rule of action, and that Christians are for ever freed from all obligation to God, or any other being. 2. That, by one act of faith, the Christian is brought into such a state, that it is absolutely impossible that he should ever afterwards commit sin. 3. That the Spirit now communicates truth to Christians by direct revelation; and hence the study of the Scriptures, the ministry of reconciliation, prayer, the Sabbath, and all the ordinances, and the Church itself, they wholly dispensed with. 4. For the teachings of the Spirit they substituted impressions and impulses, maintaining that every existing desire or impulse is produced by the direct agency of the Spirit, and therefore to be gratified. Hence, 5. Many of them maintained the abrogation of marriage, even, and became the advocates of gross licentiousness from principle, and all this under the profession of absolute perfection in holiness. The reader will at once perceive, that no system could possibly be devised, which placed the subject more perfectly under the power of the

great enemy, than this. The sect, containing in itself the principle of disunion and disorganization, very soon burst asunder, and now lie in scattered fragments in various parts of the country. Its entire history has been the perfect opposite of that union which Christ prayed might exist among believers, and which perfect love must and will produce. In the rise and subsequent disorganization of the sect, however, the great enemy has gained one important object. Whenever the true doctrine of holiness is urged upon Christians, and Christ held up as a sanctifying Savior, he can raise the cry of Perfectionism, and thus prevent many from receiving the substance, because a few have grasped a shadow. If, in this attempt, reader, you permit him to gain an advantage over you; if, because you have turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, you will reject that grace itself, you foolishly jeopardize your immortal interests.

VIII. The reader will now clearly perceive that the sentiments maintained in these discourses have no alliance whatever with Perfectionism. The two systems, in their essential features and elements, are the direct opposites of each other. An individual holding the sentiments here maintained, cannot become a Perfectionist, without a full and total renunciation of all the principles which he previously held. This every one will perceive who candidly examines the two systems.

IX. There is one error of the Perfectionists, into which Christians not unfrequently fall; against which I wish, in a special manner, to guard the reader. It is this: considering impulses and impressions as the teachings of the Spirit. An individual has upon his mind an undefined impression, that he ought, for example, to speak in meeting, or to pursue some particular course of conduct. In following that impression, he conceives himself to be following the leadings of the Spirit. In refusing to follow it, he supposes him self to grieve or quench the Spirit. Now, the principle that I maintain is this-that such impressions are of no authority whatever. The man who is led by the Spirit, is filled, not with impressions and impulses, but with light. He will always be able to give such reasons for his conduct as will commend themselves to his own and the conscience of every other man. Suppose, reader, that you should come to me for instruction or advice in respect to any question of truth or duty; what you would expect of me would be, that I should present such considerations to your mind, as would enable you to form an intelligent judgment in respect to the question before you. Much more should you expect the same thing, when you pray for Divine teaching. Remember that it is when, and only when, you are led by such considerations, that you are led by the Spirit of God. The individual who turns away from the Spirit, as a teacher and guide, and gives himself up to the control of impulses and impressions, regarding these as the teachings of the Spirit, will very soon find himself in the "snare of the devil."

X. We may also understand, in the light of this discourse, the nature of spiritual-mindedness. It is a mind, all of whose powers and susceptibilities are under the sweet, and perpetual, and all-pervading influence of the "things of the Spirit," the truths revealed and presented by the Spirit. All such persons are " led by the Spirit of God," and " they are the sons of God."

XI. You may now, reader, answer the question, whether you are really spiritually-minded or not. Do you, in your own experience, reap the blissful fruits of the Spirit? "The fruit of the Spirit," remember, "is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." Again, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." Is this the character of your religion? Is this the fruit of the Spirit that dwells in you? "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" and of the Spirit of Christ, these

are the appropriate and invariable fruits.

XII. We see when and how it is that Christians "quench" and "grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby they are sealed unto the day of redemption." It is when they turn away from the glory and love of Christ, upon which the Spirit is endeavoring to fix their supreme affection and regard, and give their hearts to other and inferior objects. When you do this, reader, you not only grieve the Holy Spirit of God, but you put out the light of your own soul.

XIII. Finally. We are now prepared to look once more at the question, whether the great doctrine maintained in these discourses accords with the mind of the Spirit, by whose inspiration the Scriptures were written. Here permit me to present a few considerations, bearing upon this question, in addition to those already presented, and which naturally suggest themselves from the train of thought which we have pursued.

1. The first that I notice is a fact which can hardly have failed to impress the mind of the attentive reader of these discourses. It is this: Whenever I have had occasion to give a full and definite expression of my sentiments upon this subject, no phraseology conceivable has been found to be so perfectly adapted to that object, as the simple, unadorned, and most frequent phraseology of the Holy Spirit, as found in the sacred Scriptures. Can it be, reader, as asked in a former discourse, that the Holy Spirit has dictated a phraseology so perfectly adapted to convey one sentiment, and only one, when his design was to convey precisely the opposite sentiment?

2. It was just as easy for Christ to make such provisions, and to give the Holy Spirit to Christians in such measures, as to render their perfect as practicable as partial holiness. Of what conceivable use can sin be as an element of Christian character, that Christ should have left it as an inseparable element of that character?

3. That Christ should have made provision for the entire sanctification of believers, and given his Spirit in such measure to them as to render that state attainable, best accords with his infinite love, and the absolute perfection of all his other attributes and works. Why should he leave this, the last and greatest of all his works, thus imperfect?

4. This view of the subject best accords with the relations which Christians sustain to Christ and the world around them.

They are Christ’s witnesses, to testify to the world, from their own experience, to the truth of the "exceeding great and precious promises" of Divine grace; promises, many of which are, as we have seen, conditioned upon a state of entire consecration to Christ. How infinitely absurd, as shown in a former discourse, is the supposition that Christ has so arranged the dispensations of his grace and Spirit, that he shall never have a witness upon earth, who can bear full testimony to the truth of his promises!

Christians are also constituted of Christ "the light of the world," by reflecting upon it his image. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." Who can believe that Christ has definitely arranged the dispensations of his grace and Spirit, so that his own image, as reflected through the character of his own people, shall always be presented to the world in a deep and dark eclipse?

Again, Christians are Christ’s representatives his ambassadors laborers together with God in the great work of saving lost men. Who can conceive a greater absurdity than this, that God has so arranged his dispensations toward his people, that all who are co-operating with him in this work, shall be but partially devoted to the duties of their sacred calling.

Once more, Christians are the "members of Christ’s body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Reader, can you believe that Christ has made no provision, but that the members of his own body shall be in a state of disease and moral death? Dare you cast such an imputation upon the Lord Jesus Christ?

5. This doctrine leads the soul directly to Christ as a certain remedy for sin, and for a!1 temptations to sin, and tends to induce the most vigorous efforts after pure and perfect holiness. The opposite doctrine tends directly to weaken confidence in Christ as a Savior from sin, and to paralyze efforts after holiness.

6. This doctrine meets perfectly a changeless demand of our being, a state of perfect moral rectitude, and tends to inspire the mind with life and peace. The opposite doctrine fails to meet that demand, and thereby covers the mind, that is hungering and thirsting after righteousness, with thick gloom. What can be more gloomy to such a mind than the thought that he is to be perpetually wounding his Savior, in the house of his friends?

7. Finally, this doctrine has all the internal evidence in its favor, that the Bible itself, or any doctrine of the Bible, that can be named, has. What higher internal evidence can be adduced, in favor of any doctrine, than this that it tends directly to moral virtue, and meets fully the changeless laws of our being; while the tendency of the contrary doctrine is precisely the opposite in both the respects above named? Say the opposers of this doctrine, If it is untrue, its tendency must be bad. The same might, with equal propriety, be said of the Bible, and of every doctrine of the Bible. When we speak of the tendency of a doctrine, we then look away from the question whether it is true or false, to what is intrinsic in the doctrine itself. When we try the doctrine under consideration by this principle, we find it to have all the evidence in its favor, that any Divine truth can have.

No, reader; in embracing this doctrine, we have not "followed cunningly-devised fables." We have followed the plainest teachings of the Spirit and Word of God. In taking our stand upon this doctrine, we are standing upon the "foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone." In looking with humble faith to "the very God of peace," that he may "sanctify us wholly, and preserve our whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," we only look to him for a fulfillment of one of his own "exceeding great and precious promises," "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

Reader, "believest thou this?" And will you now come to Christ, to have this promise, in all its fullness, accomplished in your own blessed experience? "Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." "Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

CONCLUSION. In drawing my remarks to a close, I will, in conformity with the desires of my own mind, and the suggestions of some brethren, in whose judgment I place much confidence, give the reader a short account of the manner in which I was led, by the Spirit of God, as I believe, to adopt the sentiments maintained in these discourses. In regard to my early experience as a Christian, I would say, that that experience had two prominent characteristics, a desire, inexpressibly strong, to be freed from all sin in every form, and to be entirely consecrated to the love and service of God, in all the powers and susceptibilities of my being. Nor can any one conceive the gloom and horror that covered my mind, when older Christians assured me, and, as I supposed, with truth, that that was a state to which I should never, in this life, attain; that my lusts would not be perfectly subdued or subjected to the will of Christ, and that one of the brightest evidences of my conversion and growth in grace was new discoveries of the deep and fixed corruptions of my heart, corruptions from which I was never to be cleansed till death should deliver me from my bondage. Notwithstanding all the impediments thrown in the way of my progress in holiness, I continued to press forward for a succession of years, till I could say, in the language of another, "I do know that I love holiness for holiness' sake." In this state, I commenced my studies as a student in college. Here I fell, and fell, by not aiming singly at the "prize of the high calling," but at the prize of college honors. I subsequently entered a theological seminary, with the hope of there finding myself in such an atmosphere, that my first love would be revived. In this expectation, I grieve to say, I was most sadly disappointed. I found the piety of my brethren apparently as low as my own. I here say it, with sorrow of heart, that my mind does not recur to a single individual connected with the "school of the prophets," when I was there, who appeared to me to enjoy daily communion and peace with God.

After completing my course under such circumstances, I entered the ministry, proud of my intellectual attainments, and armed, as I supposed, at every point, with the weapons of theological warfare, but with the soul of piety chilled and expiring within me. Blessed be God, the remembrance of what I had been remained, and constantly aroused me to a consciousness of what I was. I looked into myself, and over the Church, and was shocked at what I felt and what I saw. Two facts in the aspect of the Church and the ministry, struck my mind with gloomy interest. Scarcely an individual, within the circle of my knowledge, seemed to know the Gospel as a sanctifying or peace-giving Gospel. In illustration of this remark, let me state a fact which I met with in the year 1831 or 1832. I then met a company of my ministerial brethren, who had come together from one of the most favored portions of the country. They sat down together, and gave to each other an undisguised disclosure of the state of their hearts; and they all, with one exception and the experience of that individual I did not hear acknowledged that they had not daily communion and peace with God. Over these facts they wept, but neither knew how to direct the others out of the thick and impenetrable gloom which covered them; and I was in the same ignorance as my brethren.

I state these facts as a fair example of the state of the Churches, and of the ministry, as far as my observation has extended; and that has been very extensive. I here affirm that the great mass of Christians do not know the Gospel, in their daily experience, as a life-giving and peace-giving Gospel. When my mind became fully conscious of this fact, I was led to compare my own, and the experience of the Church around me, with that of the apostles and primitive Christians, and with the "path of the just," as portrayed in the sacred Scriptures. I found the two in direct contrast with

each other. Hence the great inquiry arose in my mind, What is the grand secret of holy living? How shall I attain to that perpetual fullness and peace in Christ, which, for example, Paul enjoyed. Till this secret was fully disclosed to my mind, I felt that I was, and must be, disqualified, in one fundamental respect, to "feed the flock of God." While the Gospel was not life and peace to me, how could I present it in such a manner that it would be life and peace to others. I must myself be led by the Great Shepherd into the "green pastures and beside the still waters," before I could lead the flock of God into the same blissful regions. For years, this one inquiry pressed upon my thoughts; and often as I have looked over a company of inquiring sinners have I said within myself, I would gladly take my place among those inquirers, if any individual would show me how to come into possession of the "riches of the glory of Christ's inheritance of the saints." But clouds and darkness covered my mind in respect to this, the most momentous of all subjects. In this state of mind, I became connected with the Institution at Oberlin, and continued to press my inquiries with increasing interest upon this one subject, till the fall of 1836. At that time, during a series of religious meetings held in the Institution, a large number of the members of the Church arose and informed us that they were fully convinced that they had been deceived in respect to their character as Christians, and that they were now without hope, and appeared as inquirers, to know " what they should do to be saved." At the same time, the great mass of the remainder disclosed to us the cheerless bondage in which they had long been groaning, and asked us if we could tell them how to obtain deliverance. I now felt myself, as one of the "leaders of the flock of God," pressed with the great inquiry above referred to, with greater interest than ever before. I set my heart, by prayer and supplication to God, to find the light after which I had been so long seeking. In this state I visited one of my associates in the Institution, and disclosed to him the burden which had weighed down my mind for so many years. I asked him if he could tell me the secret of the piety of Paul, and tell me the reason of the strange contrast between the apostle's experience and my own. In laboring for the salvation of men, I observed, that my feelings often remained unmoved and unaffected, while Paul was constantly "constrained" by the love of Christ. Our conversation then turned upon the passage, "The love of Christ constraineth us," &c. While thus employed, my heart leaped up in ecstasy indescribable, with the exclamation, "I have found it." I have now, by the grace of God, discovered the secret after which I have been searching these many years. I understood the secret of the piety of Paul, and knew how to attain to that blissful state myself. Paul's piety all arose from one source exclusively a sympathy with the heart of Christ in his love for lost man. To attain to that state myself, I had only to acquaint myself with the love of Christ, and yield my whole being up to its sweet control.

Immediately after this, I came before the Church, and disclosed to them what I then saw to be the grand defect in my ministry: I. Christ had been but as one chapter in my system of theology, when he should have been the sun and center of the system. 2. When I thought of my guilt, and need of justification, I had looked to Christ exclusively, as I ought to have done; for sanctification, on the other hand, to overcome the "world, the flesh, and the devil," I had depended mainly on my own resolutions. Here was the grand mistake, and the source of all my bondage under sin. I ought to have looked to Christ for sanctification, as much as for justification, and for the same reason. The great object of my being now was to know Christ, and in knowing him to be changed into his image. Here was the "victory which overcomes the world." Here was the "death of the body of sin." Here was "redemption from all iniquity," into the "glorious liberty of the children of God." At this time, the appropriate office of the Holy Spirit presented itself to my mind with a distinctness and

interest never understood nor felt before. To know Christ was the life of the soul. To "take of the things of Christ and show them unto us;" to open our hearts to understand the Scriptures; to strengthen us with might in the inner man, that we might comprehend the "breadth and depth, and length and height, and know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge," and thus be "filled with the fullness of God," is the appropriate office of the Spirit. The highway of holiness was now for the first time, rendered perfectly distinct to my mind. The discovery of it was to my mind as "life from the dead." The disclosure of that path had the same effect upon others who had been, like myself, "weary, tossed with tempest, and not comforted." As my supreme attention was thus fixed upon Christ; as it became the great object of my being to know him, and be transformed into his likeness; and as I was perpetually seeking that Divine illumination by which I might apprehend him, an era occurred in my experience, which I have no doubt will ever be one of the most memorable in my entire past existence. In a moment of deep and solemn thought, the veil seemed to be lifted, and I had a vision of the infinite glory and love of Christ, as manifested in the mysteries of redemption. I will not attempt to describe the effect of that vision upon my mind. All that I would say is, that, in view of it, my heart melted, and flowed out like water. The heart of stone was taken away, and a heart of love and tenderness assumed its place. From that time I have desired to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified." I have literally "esteemed all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord;" and the knowledge of Christ has been eternal life begun in my heart.

Now, when the Lord Jesus Christ was thus held up among us, by myself and others, a brother in the ministry arose in one of our meetings, and remarked that there was one question to which he desired that a definite answer might be given. It is this: "When we look to Christ for sanctification, what degree of sanctification may we expect from him? May we look to him to be sanctified wholly, or not?" I do not recollect that I was ever so shocked and confounded at any question, before or since. I felt, for the moment, that the work of Christ among us would be marred, and the mass of minds around us rush into Perfectionism. Still the question was before us; and to it we were bound, as pupils of the Holy Spirit, to give a scriptural answer. We did not attempt to give a definite answer to it during that time. With that question before us, brother Finney and myself came to New York, and spent most of the winter together in prayer and the study of the Bible. The great inquiry with us was, What degree of holiness may we ourselves expect from Christ, when we exercise faith in him, and in what light shall we present him to others as a Savior from sin? We looked, for example, at such passages as this passages of which the Bible is full, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God, your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it?" We looked at such passages, I say, and asked ourselves this question Suppose an honest inquirer after holiness comes to us, and asks of us What degree of holiness is here promised to the believer? May I expect, in view of this prayer and promise, that God will sanctify me wholly, and preserve me in that state till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ? What answer shall we give him? Shall we tell him that merely partial, and not perfect holiness is here promised, and that the former, and not the latter, he is here authorised to expect? After looking prayerfully at the testimony of Scripture, in respect to the provisions and promises of Divine grace, we were constrained to admit, that but one answer to the above question could be given from the Bible; and the greatest wonder with me is, that I have been so long a "master of Israel, and have never before known these things." Since that time we have never ceased to proclaim the redemption of Christ as a full

redemption. Nor do we expect to cease proclaiming it as a full and finished redemption, till Christ shall call us home. For myself, I am willing to proclaim it to the world, that I now look to the very God of peace to sanctify me wholly, and preserve my whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I put up this prayer with the expectation that the very things prayed for will be granted. Reader, is that confidence misplaced? In expecting that blessing, am I leaning upon a broken reed, or upon the broad promise of God?

There is one circumstance connected with my recent experience, to which I desire to turn the special attention of the reader. I would here say, that I have for ever given up all idea of resisting temptation, subduing any lust, appetite, or propensity, or of acceptably performing any service for Christ, by the mere force of my own resolutions. If my propensities, which lead to sin, are crucified, I know that it must be done by an indwelling Christ. If I overcome the world, this is to be the victory, "even our faith." If the great enemy is to be overcome, it is to be done "by the blood of the Lamb."

Believing, as I now do, that the Lord Jesus Christ has provided special grace for the entire sanctification of every individual, for the subjection of all his propensities, for a perfect victory over every temptation and incentive to sin, and for rendering us, in every sphere and condition of life, all that he requires us to be; the first inquiry with me is, In what particular respects do I need the grace of Christ? What is there, for example, in my temper that needs correcting? Wherein am I in bondage to appetite, or to any of my propensities? What are the particular responsibilities, temptations, &c., incident to each particular sphere and condition in life in which the providence of God has called me to act? What is the temper that I ought there to manifest, so that I may everywhere, and under all circumstances, reflect the image of Christ?

Thus, having discovered my special necessity, in any one of the particulars above referred to, my next object is, to take some promise applicable to the particular exigency before me, and go directly to Christ for the supply of that particular necessity. By having the eye of faith perpetually fixed upon Christ in this manner; by always looking to him for special grace in every special exigency; yes, for "grace to help in every time of need," how easy it is to realize in our own blessed experience the truth of all the "exceeding great and precious promises" of Divine grace! How easy it is to have the peace of God, which passes all understanding, "keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." "Our peace is then as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea." The mind seems to be borne upward and onward, as upon an ocean of light, peace, and blessedness, which knows no bounds.

"O glorious change! ’tis all of grace, By bleeding love bestowed On outcasts of our fallen race, To bring them home to God;

Infinite grace to vileness given, The sons of earth made heirs of heaven." And now, reader, "my heart’s desire and prayer to God" for you is, that you may know this full redemption. If you will cease from all efforts of your own, and bring your sins, and sorrows, and cares, and propensities which lead into sin, to Christ, and cast them all upon him; if, with implicit faith, you will hang your whole being upon him, and make it the great object of life to know him, for the purpose of receiving and reflecting his image you will find that all the "exceeding great and precious promises" of his Word are, in your own blissful experience, a living reality. The waters that Christ shall give you "shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life." You shall have a perpetual and joyful victory over "the world, the flesh, and the devil." Everywhere, and under all circumstances,

your peace in Christ shall be as a "river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea." "O taste and see that the Lord is good." "There is no want to them that fear him." And, reader, when your cup is once filled with the love of Christ, you will then say with truth, "The half has not been told me." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

S. Principles of Church Discipline

PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

[From The Oberlin Quarterly Review ARTICLE LXXII. May 1848.] BY PRESIDENT ASA MAHAN.

It is quite common for individuals to assume particular declarations of scripture designed only to be applied to particular and specific cases, as giving universal rules to be applied in all cases of every kind. The result is that one part of inspiration is placed in palpable contradiction to others equally important and sacred. An error of this kind has, in our judgment, been fallen into by a large part of the church, in the assumption that the directions given, Matthew 18:15-17 was designed as law universal for discipline in respect to all forms of offences whatever, whether individual or public; when in fact, as we shall see hereafter, it was given as a particular rule for specified cases, to wit, individual and private offences. The result of this assumption has been that directions equally sacred pertaining to offences of other kinds, have been totally overlooked. The church has also been left without any settled principles which she could intelligently apply to all forms of offences demanding discipline. Suppose for example, a member of a church has gone to distant regions and there become a notorious pirate, or robber. The church has proof the most absolute of his guilt. Yet she can, by no possibility get to him, so as to take the first and second steps with him. What must be done? If the passage under consideration be assumed as giving law universal for all forms of offences, the church must retain the wretch in her bosom till his dying day. She can pass no vote of censure or suspension in respect to him. Indeed, she can, as a body, take no cognizance of his crimes in any form whatever. For the offence, according to this view of the subject, is never to be so much as named in the church, till after the first and second steps have been taken. The church therefore has no right to consider any offence in any form. She has no right to appoint a committee to investigate evil reports, or to take the steps referred to. She has no right to do any thing about the offences of any of her members, till after the case is submitted to her adjudication, by those who have, as individuals, in their private capacity, taken these steps and failed to bring the offenders to repentance. To do so, would be to set aside a part of the solemn direction of our Savior, and if a part may be thus set aside, why may not the whole be?

Further, let us suppose that the offender above referred to, should, every time the church is engaged in celebrating the Lord’s supper, appear in her midst, and at the close escape without the possibility of individuals taking the first and second steps in a process of discipline. The church in that case, would be bound to distribute the elements to him, as a brother beloved, and continue to do so every time she celebrated the ordinance. She can know no individual of her body in any other relation, till after those steps have been taken. Such are the necessary and undeniable consequences of assuming this passage as law universal for discipline in respect to all forms of offences. More of this hereafter.

Special attention is now invited to a consideration of other passages of Scripture bearing upon our present inquiries, for the purpose of a clear and distinct understanding of the true principles of discipline to be applied in all cases. We will introduce the subject by a reference, as the basis of

our elucidations, to 2 Corinthians 7:9 - 1 Kings

"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."

Here we have the form which true repentance for a sin with which the apostle had charged the church at Corinth, in the preceding epistle, assumed, in consequence of the expostulations contained in that epistle. An individual, a member of the church, had been guilty of marrying the wife of his own father, the father being still alive. Compare 2 Corinthians 7:12, with 1 Corinthians 5:1. The church, instead of excommunicating the offender, as they, were bound to have done at once, had not even commenced a process of discipline with him in any form. The consequence of such a sin persisted in on the part of the church, would be the destruction of the offender himself, in the first instance, and in the next, the fatal corruption of the church who should retain such a criminal in her bosom.

"For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."—1 Corinthians 5:3-7.

"That the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," that is, the only hope of saving the offender himself is his prompt excommunication. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," that is, you will yourselves, if you do not put him away from among you, become as corrupt and guilty as he himself is. The reader will mark particularly the directions which inspiration required the church to pursue in the case referred to. It was not that they should take the first and second steps in discipline, and if these failed, then to pronounce sentence of excommunication. It was not that they should attempt his reformation in the church, and thus failing to proceed to extremities. One direction and only one was given, and that was, that as soon as the church should come together, to pronounce sentence of excommunication upon him.

"And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." The great reason urged for this course was, as we have seen, that it was the only means by which the individual could be reclaimed, on the one hand, and the church saved from corruption on the other. For a more full understanding of this subject, we now turn to a consideration of the effects produced upon the church at Corinth, by the reasonings and

expostulations of the apostle. The first result was deep sorrow and regret on account of the course which they had pursued relatively to the criminal. The next was, that this sorrow, which "was after a godly sort," induced in them a form of repentance in all respects approved of God, a repentance no elements of which they had occasion to repent of. This repentance was followed by a course of conduct in all respects what it should have been. The characteristics of the repentance induced by the godly sorrow exercised by the church, as enumerated by the apostle are the following. Carefulness, "What carefulness it [godly sorrow] wrought in you," that is, what haste, promptitude, earnest effort, forwardness to do the thing required, to wit, excommunicate the offender, "What clearing of yourselves," that is, apologising. Those who had not partaken of the sin of the church in the flagrant neglect of duty, exposed the fact, and showed to Titus, Paul's messenger, that they were innocent in the matter. Those, on the other hand, who had sinned, confessed the fact, and condemned and reprobated the sin of the offender, and their own conduct relatively to it. What indignation, that is, what deep reprobation of the sin, and the sinner who had perpetrated the sin. "What fear," that is, as Mr. Barnes says, "fear lest the thing should be repeated. Fear lest it should not be entirely removed." It implies a fear, that the entire evil might not be corrected, and their duty in the case not fully complied with. "What zeal," zeal to remove the sin by taking the offender from their midst, and doing all that duty required in the case. What revenge, that is, what prompt and ready execution of the sentence of excommunication upon the offender. "In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter," that is, the entire state of mind induced by the godly sorrow which you exercised, and the course pursued under its influence is what it should have been. The following important principles pertaining to the discipline of offenders are clearly deducible from the case before us, as binding the church in all similar cases.

1. The first, and only thing for the church to do in all such cases, is to excommunicate the offender, his guilt being clearly ascertained.

2. Any other course, in such cases, tends to the destruction of the individual, and the corruption of the church, and to no other result whatever.

3. No church is in a state which God fully approves, who is not ready thus to avenge all such offences. The carefulness, the clearing of themselves, the indignation, the fear, the vehement desire, the zeal, the revenge exercised by the Corinthian church, is the only state of mind, and course of conduct which God approves, and will sanction in respect to all similar offenders.

Now if we can clearly ascertain the characteristics of the offence under consideration, we shall have developed an important principle of discipline to be applied in all cases of a given character. What, then, are the distinguishing characteristics of this case?

One thing is quite evident in respect to it. It was an offence of such a nature, that it must have been perpetrated with a distinct knowledge of the fact that it was sin. No doubt could have rested upon the mind of the offender in respect to its character as sin. When he perpetrated it, he did it with, a distinct knowledge of its criminality.

Equally evident is the fact, that it was a deliberate offence. The individual did not fall in consequence of having come under some sudden, unexpected temptation. The act was deliberately performed with a distinct knowledge of its character as sin.

It was, finally, a crime, perpetrated under such circumstances as clearly to indicate established character. The man had entered upon his career of crime with the purpose distinctly and deliberately formed to continue in it. Such a case differs fundamentally from crimes, however aggravated in themselves, which are committed under the influence of some sudden temptation. The latter may, and as we shall see in the progress of this article, do require a different course of treatment from the former. Now if we suppose, as all Christians will admit, that the inspired direction of the apostle in the case before us is of any authority at all in respect to the church at the present time, it will follow, as a necessary consequence, that whenever a case occurs bearing the same fundamental characteristics that this one does, the same course of procedure laid down for this one case, will also bind the church in the case supposed. To deny this is to assume that inspired directions for specific cases are not law for us in cases precisely similar. This would render entirely nugatory a vast majority of the precepts of the Bible; for they are given in this precise form. Inspiration affirms what is demanded in a specific case, leaving us to apply the principle thus revealed to all similar cases.

What, then, is the principle or law of discipline revealed in the inspired direction of the apostle in this one specific case, the law which binds the church in reference to all offences bearing the same fundamental characteristics? It is this. Whenever an individual professing godliness, is found in the deliberate perpetration of known crime, whenever he is detected in carrying out a plan of acknowledged wickedness, so that his character as a criminal stands revealed as established, as would be true in the circumstances supposed, then his reformation is not at all to be sought in the church. He is to be cast out of it at once, as soon as, on proper trial, his guilt is formally established. The adoption of any other course in such a case tends not to the reformation, but destruction of the offender, not to the purity, but corruption of the entire church to which he belongs. If any use at all is to be made, as law in cases of discipline, of the inspired direction relatively to the case under consideration, this must be it. No other intelligent use can be made of it.

I will give one or two cases in illustration of the principle under consideration, as I understand it. A superintendent of a sabbath school in an eastern city blasted the virtue of one of his teachers, who till she fell a victim to his designs, had sustained a most unblemished reputation. On examination of the case, the church found that that fell deed had been the result of a plan systematically carried on for many months. What should be done in such a case? One, and only one thing. Prompt and immediate excommunication. All hope of saving the criminal himself from death, and the church from corruption, depends upon this one course being adopted. An individual of high standing in the church and community in one of the towns of New England, had been accustomed for many years to spend a certain portion of each year abroad. Before leaving, he always invited the church to hold a special prayer meeting at his house, and ever took his leave of them with a solemn admonition to be all found walking in the ways of the Lord, on his return. The night following he would leave with one or more stolen horses of his neighbors, and all the treasures he would bring with him on his return were found to be the fruit of crimes rendering him a candidate for the penitentiary. What would be the inspired direction of the apostle to that church in respect to such a case? It would be this, and this only:

1 Corinthians 5:3-7. "For I verily, as absent in the body, but present in spirit, have judged already as though I were present, concerning him who hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord

Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the, old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."

What carefulness, yea, what clearing of herself, yea, what indignation, yea what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge, will every church manifest towards all offenders of such a character, found in her bosom,—every church, we say, who is in harmony with the spirit and express teachings of inspiration relatively to sin. The church, as constituted and designed by its divine founder, is the asylum for the penitent, the poor in spirit and the broken hearted. In it, the bruised reed is not broken, nor the smoking flax quenched. But it is not the hiding-place of crime. The deliberate perpetrator of foul wrong is not to have a place there, no, not for a moment, after his crimes have, through proper trial, been ascertained. Nor is the church the place to attempt the reformation of such men.

They belong to the world. Among them therefore they are to be placed, and if ever re-admitted to the bosom of the church, they are to be received as those who have been converted from the world. The adoption of any other course in such cases, is not only contrary to the express teachings of inspiration, but its tendency is evil and only evil; evil to the offenders themselves, and evil to the church. If the church does not proceed to exercise discipline in such cases, she becomes a partaker of the sin which she tolerates, and her real moral corruption will be equal to that of the criminals whom she fellowships. If she attempts their reformation within her bosom, she presents a temptation to them, almost, if not quite, irresistibly strong to make hypocritical professions of reformation. An individual who has been perpetrating crime under the mask of religion, will be irresistibly tempted to repeat his hypocrisy in the form of professed repentance, if the church will hold out inducements to it, by attempting his reformation within her bosom. Such a course has no tendency to purify the church from criminals, one great object of discipline; but to fill it with hypocrites. The temptation to a hypocritical profession, it should also be borne in mind, is strong in exact proportion to the grossness of the offense of which the criminal has been guilty. The same is true also of the feeling of remorse, which is likely to be mistaken for repentance. The tendency then of attempting to reform offenders within the church, is to generate and then retain in its bosom the basest hypocrites on earth. Such a course tends to no other result whatever. It also tends to divide and distract the church itself. Many members will assume that signs of remorse, which will certainly exist, and professions of repentance, such as practiced hypocrites know well how to make, and certainly will make in the circumstances supposed, are indications of genuine repentance. Others, of course, will judge differently. Parties will be formed which will very likely bite and devour one another, until they are consumed one of another.

Contrast with the above the tendency of strict adherence to, the apostolic injunction under consideration. Such a course at once frees the church from all imputations from the world, on account of any crimes perpetrated by her members. Any society, and above all the church of the Living God is honored by the exclusion of criminals from their association. Prompt exclusion of criminals from the church also tends to preserve the conscience and heart of the church in a proper state towards offences. Offences in the estimation of all her members become fearful things. Nor is the influence of such a course of less salutary tendency upon offenders. Let those

individuals, who, by practicing crime under the cloak of religion, have made her their refuge, be told, that no professions of theirs can have any influence to restore them to the confidence or fellowship of the church. Nothing will do this, but the fruits of holiness in lives of strict obedience to Christ, and the spirit of Christ thus manifested. All motives to hypocritical professions of repentance, the great sin to which they are exposed are taken away, and they are thrown upon the only influences adapted to secure their real reformation, to wit, the idea of restoration to a standing in the confidence and fellowship of the church, through a life of "righteousness and true holiness." The entire influence of the church is thus brought to bear upon the very point on which their salvation turns. If they can have any hope of restoration to confidence by professed repentance, such professions will certainly be made, and they will remain hypocrites still; yes, if possible tenfold more the children of hell than before. Their salvation depends upon this temptation being taken away. Let them be at once put out of the church, with the distinct understanding that professions of repentance will not avail to restore them to confidence or fellowship, either, that when they shall by their lives reveal characters worthy of confidence and fellowship, they will be most gladly restored to both, and this temptation is not only taken away, but they are placed in circumstances of all others best adapted to secure their salvation. The strong reprobation manifested in their prompt exclusion from the church, tends above all things else to break the power of their sinful propensities in the first instance, while the hope of restoration to full and cordial fellowship by a life of virtue and obedience, gives to all the motives and influences of the gospel the greatest efficacy in inducing real genuine repentance. This, I can not but think is the true idea of the apostle in the declaration, "to deliver such a man over unto Satan," that is, exclude from the company of the faithful, and place among the world, the followers of Satan where he belongs, "for the destruction of the flesh," (the breaking of the power of carnal propensities,) "that the spirit may be saved in the day of Jesus Christ," by his real conversion. I sincerely question the fact whether the real reformation of a confirmed hypocrite was ever secured upon any other principles. An objection against the view of the subject presented above may by some be drawn from Titus 3:10.

"A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." In this case the reformation of the offender is to be sought in the church. He is to be twice admonished, and that without reformation, before excommunication is to be resorted to. The reason for this direction, in this case, is obvious. The simple fact that important error has been embraced, is not in itself proof of total subversion of character. But remaining in such error, after proper means for recovery have been used; is. Hence such means are to be used until the fact of moral subversion has been ascertained. Then the delinquent is to be rejected, and put out of the church. The direction of inspiration in this case, as contrasted with that given in the case of the offender in Cor. 5: 1-5, developes therefore another important principle of discipline, namely: when an offence has been committed which in itself, and under the circumstances of its occurrences does not imply total subversion, as the continued deliberate perpetration of crime does, then the reformation of the offender is to be sought within the church, and he is not to be cast out of it, till resistance to admonition proves that he is a subverted man. To this class belong those referred to Titus 3:10, and all cases of offences under sudden temptation. In. Galatians 6:1, the church is directed by inspiration to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine, making a difference between such and gross deliberate offenders, pulling the former out of the fire. The manifest fact that inspiration makes this difference between these classes of offences, demanding immediate

excommunication in one instance, and patient, persevering efforts for reformation, before resort is had to extremities, in the other, shows clearly, that we had rightly announced the principles of discipline, thus far.

We are now prepared to consider the real meaning of our Savior in Matthew 18:15 - Matthew 18:17. The class of offences here referred to are specific ones, to wit, individual and private offences. The design of our Savior is to reveal the principle which binds us as law universal for the redress of such wrongs. The principle here revealed was never designed as a law of discipline for the church in respect to public offences. The design of the Savior was, to designate a line of conduct which, as individuals, we are to pursue for the redress of individual and private offences. This I argue from the following considerations.

1. This is the identical case specified. "If thy brother trespass against thee, go, tell him his fault between him and thee alone." The case is a definite and specific one, and specific directions are given for its adjustment. Nothing is more contrary to all correct principles of interpretation, than the application of such a direction as law universal for all offences whatever.

2. On the supposition that this is the principle to be applied in all cases, the church, as we have seen in the commencement of this essay, can take no original jurisdiction of any offences whatever. She cannot even appoint a committee to investigate evil reports, or to reclaim offenders. This would imply a public adjudication of them, in some form, and in the case last named, would imply a positive judgment, that wrong has been done. Else why appoint a committee for the reclamation of the offender? The church, on the other hand, can take no cognizance of the conduct of her members, till after cases are submitted to her by individuals who have taken the first and second steps without redress. Now who can suppose that the Head of the church has left discipline in such a state as that? In case of public offences, the entire church are directly aggrieved, and who should take cognizance of the case if she does not.

3. It would, as we have also seen, be perfectly easy for the grossest offenders to put themselves in such relations to the church, as to render discipline absolutely impossible, if the passage before us be understood as law for the administration of discipline in respect to public offences. Suppose a member of a church has become a notorious pirate upon the high seas. Neither the church nor any of its members can get to him to take the first and second steps. Nor can they communicate with him by letter. What must be done? Must the wretch remain in the bosom of the church? He must, if he chooses to do it, according to this view of the passage under consideration.

4. But suppose that the church is permitted by this passage to take up public offences, but is required to take the first and second steps before proceeding to adjudicate upon it. This makes the command of our Savior the height of absurdity. The precept would in that case read thus:—If an individual trespass against the church, (as is the case in all public offences,) let the church go and tell him his fault between her and him alone. If he neglect to hear the church, through her committee if you please, let the church take with her one or two more, that is, one or two more churches. If he neglect to hear them, let the church tell the thing to the church, that is, to herself. Such is the real meaning of this command, unless we restrict it, as its language requires, to individual and private offences.

5. The case, if possible, is still worse, if we suppose that public offences are in the first instance, not to be taken up by the church as a body, but by individuals. According to this view of the subject, every member of the church is bound, though their number may consist of thousands, to commence a process of discipline. I cannot delegate my duty to another. The duty devolves, if not upon the church as a body, upon each individual in particular. Every one, whatever others may have done, or be doing, is bound to commence the process of discipline. Or if the fact that one is before the rest, binds them to suspend efforts, those who ought to be the last to interfere are most likely to be the first, and the whole process to be conducted as badly as it can be. Who can suppose that the Savior has given such directions as that!

6. Finally, this view of the subject places the command of our Savior under consideration in palpable, contradiction with other parts of scripture given also by inspiration of God, with 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, for example. Paul certainly would not have been inspired to give the direction he did in the above passage, if the command of our Savior in Matthew 18:15-17, was designed for law universal in respect to all cases of discipline whatever. I conclude, then, that this passage, according to its obvious literal import, has to do with individual, private offences only, and should never be applied as law for discipline in any other cases. The following then may be laid down as the principles of discipline which bind the church in all cases whatever.

1. Discipline is in no case whatever to be exercised, but for moral offences. Errors in doctrine, and external acts are to be subjects of discipline, only on the ground of indicating moral guilt. Discipline for any other purpose, is usurpation in the church of Christ.

2. For the adjustment of all private individual offences, the direction in Matthew 18:15-17 binds us. Excommunication is to be resorted to, only when the efforts of the individual, and of the church superadded, have failed to reclaim the offender, and he remains incorrigible under them all.

3. In all cases of public offences which do not imply established character for crime, such as sin committed under sudden temptation, the reformation of the offender is to be sought within the church, in the use of all the means best adapted to secure that result. Excommunication is to be resorted to, only when the offender has, by resistance, revealed the character of incorrigibility.

4. In all cases of gross offences deliberately committed, especially when individuals professing godliness, are detected in carrying out plans of known wickedness under the cloak of religion, they are at once to be put out of the church, as soon as on trial had, their guilt has been ascertained. Trial is then to be held for one object only, to ascertain the guilt or innocence of the accused. Discipline then would indeed be a terror to evil doers.

Such, then, are the principles of discipline in the house bold of faith, as revealed in the scriptures of truth. The whole subject thus becomes plain, and of ready application. The want of such an understanding of the subject has occasioned many great evils in the church. Discipline, in the first instance, is commonly exercised for offences not regarded as involving sin at all. Perhaps a majority of cases, adjudicated in ecclesiastical courts, are of this character, as for instance, deposition on account of imputed errors in doctrine. All such acts are usurpation in the house of God, just as much as the denial of the scriptures to the brotherhood is in the Catholic church. The next and greatest evil is, that discipline in the church has ceased in a very great degree to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well. This will continue to be the case until the true

principles of discipline are fully settled in the estimation of the church. For the same reason, excommunication is almost unresorted to for any offences in some churches. Instead of being regarded, as the apostle affirms it to be, a necessary means of grace, in desperate cases, excommunication is regarded by some as almost equivalent to the final reprobation of offenders. Hence, suspension, a form of discipline unknown in scripture has been, substituted, in the place of the form of punishment directly prescribed for presumptuous sins. I was once very forcibly struck, with a fact that I witnessed, that clearly indicated how little the principles of discipline have been fundamentally understood in the church. When the question of excommunication once came before a particular church, the pastor, who is seldom in darkness on any such subject, expressed the greatest conceivable horror, at its being resorted to, even in cases in which it is positively required in the Bible. He spoke of this form of penalty, as placing the criminal in a state of almost hopeless reprobation, and adduced with manifest approbation, the example of a distinguished pastor, who, for that reason, never did resort to this fearful expedient. The case recorded in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, was brought up, to show that inspiration prescribes the infliction of this penalty, in the cases when it is demanded, as a necessary means of grace to the criminal and the church both. The pastor started the inquiry, how delivering an individual over to Satan could be a means of his reformation. What not this the meaning? he asked. As God and the church both have failed to reform him, now turn him over to the devil, and see what he can do with him. The apostle it should be borne in mind, does not refer to any thing done after the offender is delivered over, as the means of his restoration, but to the act of the church in thus delivering him over. The deep reprobation thus heaped upon his crimes, operates to break the power of the flesh, and thus secure the salvation of the spirit in the day of Jesus Christ. It was this act which was effectual to the reformation of the offender, in the case referred to by Paul. "Sufficient unto such an one is the punishment inflicted by many." The united reprobation of the church poured upon his crime broke his proud, rebellious spirit, and that to such an extent that Paul subsequently called upon the church to show him special kindness, "lest he should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow." Let discipline be administered upon proper principles; and it would always powerfully operate for the sanctification of the church, and the reformation of offenders. As now generally administered, it is neither, as I have before said, a terror to evil doers, nor a praise to them who do well.

We close this article, with a, remark or two, on the manner in which the act of excommunication should be performed. On this point we have heard some things which we by no means approve. A series of Essays, for example, appeared upon the subject, some years since, in the Oberlin Evangelist. In these essays, it was very strongly urged that whenever such act was performed, there should not only be the avoidance of haste on the part of the church, but a day of fasting and prayer should be held, as preparatory to the act, and as a means of giving it solemnity and power. There is no question, but that the exclusion of an individual from the communion and fellowship of the church should be regarded as a solemn act, and should be performed in such a manner as to make as deep an impression as possible upon the offender, the church and the world. We are by no means persuaded however, that the expedient above referred to, if generally adopted, would operate to the production of such a result.

Wicked men love notoriety. To obtain it, they will even perpetrate crime, as in the case where one of the seven wonders of the world was destroyed by an individual for the purpose of being known to posterity. Now let a church of many hundred members come together to hold a day of fasting

and prayer, every time offenders in her communion become incorrigible, and it would operate to generate in them a sense of self-importance. Such individuals would be among the first to call for such a day when about to be put out of the church, and would be greatly offended, if they should not receive their exclusion through such ceremonies. Instead of being ecclesiastically buried with such pomp and circumstance, gross offenders, in most instances should rather be "dragged forth to, the burial of an ass." In other words, the penalty of exclusion should be promptly executed, as soon as the offence stands revealed before the church. The highest efficacy of the act depends upon this. Thus the reprobation expressed for the crime is likely to be felt. If the church would hold days of fasting and prayer on account of offences, it should be, as a general rule, on account of their frequent occurrence, and not with reference to specific cases.

Chapter 84

S. Taking Thought for the Morrow

SERMON VII.

TAKING THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.— Matthew 6:34. IN the preceding part of the Sermon on the Mount, the Savior had advanced many new, and, to his hearers, unheard-of principles of action—principles directly opposed to all the maxims by which they had been accustomed to supply their necessities, and regulate their deportment before the world. Instead of hating, they were to love their enemies, even the most imbittered. They were to do good, not merely to the righteous and the grateful, but to the "evil and unthankful." To those who asked of them, they were to give; not merely what was asked, but, if possible, even more. To those who would borrow of them they were to lend, "hoping for nothing" in return. In short, they were to live, not to themselves, but for God, and for humanity. To these ends their whole being was to be devoted.

Under such circumstances, questions like these would naturally suggest themselves to the disciples: How can we live in conformity with such principles, and acquire the necessaries of life? How can we make it our supreme object to lay up for ourselves treasures, not on the earth, but in heaven—how can we "seek first the kingdom of God, and its righteousness"—how can we conform all our transactions with men to the law of love, regarding rather the rights, and interests, and desires of our neighbor than our own, and obtain food to nourish, and raiment to clothe and adorn our bodies?

These and similar questions the Savior answers, by requiring his disciples to dismiss, at once and forever all anxiety about their future temporal necessities, all solicitude about the bearing of duty upon such subjects. The reasons which he assigns for such requisitions are the following: l. The concerns of the soul are of vastly greater importance, and such solicitude will jeopardize its Immortal interests. "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" "Ye can not serve God and Mammon."

2. God "clothes the grass of the field," and "feeds the fowls of heaven," without any anxiety about the future on their part. Why then should redeemed sinners distrust his paternal providence? "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet our heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

3. Such solicitude is wholly useless. It is a total waste of thought and feeling. It can add not a particle to the strength, beauty, or height of our persons, nor supply a solitary necessity of our nature. "Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?"

4. This is the spirit of worldly men, "men who have their portion in this life." The indulgence of such a spirit will separate the soul from God. "After all these things do the Gentles seek."

5. God, their Father in heaven, was fully aware that they needed all such things, not only as creatures, but in the prosecution of the great work to which He had called them. They might, therefore, quietly rest in the peaceful assurance that no real want of theirs would be left unsupplied.

6. God’s word was pledged that implicit obedience to His will should be followed, as a certain consequence, with a full supply of all their necessities. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

7. They could always have free access to the throne of grace, where they "could ask, and receive, till their joy was full." "Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?"

8. Finally, the cares and duties of the present moment are abundantly sufficient to occupy our entire solicitude, without dividing it between the present and the future. "Sufficient unto the clay is the evil thereof "

Such are the reasons upon which the Savior bases the command, "Take no thought for the morrow." The original word here rendered "take thought," designates a doubting, anxious, fearful, and perturbed state of mind in regard to the future. Such also was the meaning of the phrase, "take thought," when our Scriptures were translated. A cotemporary historian says of a certain individual, "His heart was broken, and so for thought [anxious care, or intense mental perturbation] he died."

We are not, of course, prohibited about thinking about, or making provision for the future. But all anxious solicitude about the result of our efforts to secure that end, and about the dispensations of Providence bearing upon it, is prohibited. To give the reader a distinct apprehension of the state of mind forbidden in the text, take a single example--the visit of Christ to the house of Martha-- Luke 10:38 - Luke As soon as Christ entered, she set her heart upon providing a sumptuous entertainment for her divine guest. About the accomplishment of this object she "took thought," and her mind was soon filled with care, doubt, and perplexity. Her thoughts, we may suppose, first turned upon the guest chamber. Every thing there must wear the aspect of perfect neatness and order. Yet, in her disquietude, every thing appreared the reverse of what it ought to be. Such and such things, were in disorder. Such and such articles were soiled. What would the Savior and his disciples think when they should see things thus? Then every thing upon the table must be prepared in the best style, and nothing be wanting to perfect the sumptuousness of the feast. But such and such articles, needful to render the entertainment what it should be, were wanting and could not be obtained. Then, of those that were provided, some were very imperfect in richness and flavor; others might be injured in preparation, and the remainder might not be got in readiness in time. Almost every thing seemed to be going wrong, and all her efforts to do appropriate service to her divine guest appeared likely to prove abortive. Thus "she was cumbered about much serving," and while Mary was peacefully "sitting at the Savior’s feet, hearing his words," Martha’s feelings (the natural result of her perturbed state of mind) kindled into displeasure against her

sister, and even against Christ himself, for permitting her thus to neglect her domestic concerns. With these feelings Martha came to Christ and said, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

How many persons are almost constantly in a state similar to that above described, in respect to their property, their business transactions, their reputation, their health, the interests and prospects of their children or families, the arrangements and dispensations of Providence, and every thing which deeply engrosses their feelings.

While on a journey, some years since, I fell in company with a Christian brother, who was going to the same place with myself. Providential occurrences, which we could neither foresee nor prevent, occasioned, at a particular point, a long and (to a worldly mind) painful delay. When we had again got under way, the question whether we should meet another hinderance equally long and painful, depended on our reaching a certain place at a given time. About this that brother "took thought." His mind, during the day, was in continual perturbation. His family were out of health, and he had promised to be at home at a given period. His business, too, required him to return at the earliest possible moment. Will not the boat have left before our arrival? Driver, can you not push us forward with greater rabidity? My own concerns were probably as pressing as those of that brother. Having, however, done all that I could to secure an arrival at the proper time, I had found grace to resign the whole subject with entire quietness to the will of God; and my mind was floating as peacefully along the current of Providence, as if conscious that all had been arranged in conformity to my will. So sweet and hallowed was the presence of Christ during the day, that I often had to cover my face, and weep for joy of heart.

We arrived some hours before the boat started. I then sat down with the brother, and endeavored to convince him not only of the folly and uselessness of the state of mind above described, but of its great wickedness in the sight of God. A brother in the ministry had for some time experienced symptoms of declining health. On this subject "took thought." His countenance wore the aspect of deep pensiveness, anxiety, and gloom. The solicitude and agitation of his mind would be rendered agonizing, if even a child should suggest to him that he seemed to be out of health. What a total stranger was that brother to the blessedness of the Apostle, who, though the grace of Christ, "had learned in whatever state he was, therewith to be content." "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." The individual who does not find the gospel an unfailing source of consolation, in every condition in life, can not, with the full assurance of faith and hope, present that gospel as a source of consolation to any person in any condition. Such an individual is totally disqualified for the discharge of the duties of the sacred office. A mother, as she looked out at her window, saw a little child in the garden having hold of a small but valuable fruit-tree, which it might injure or destroy. The injury, if done, would be consummated before it was practicable for the mother to caution her child. "There," exclaimed the agonized mother, "the child has got hold of that tree! She will very probably ruin it!" The child passed on, however, and left the tree, as the mother might reasonably have supposed, uninjured. Yet the mother suffered more, from simple apprehension, than she ought to have endured from the actual loss of a hundred such

trees.

Soon after the mother looked again, and saw the same child returning from the house of a neighbor, while the heavens were blackened with an approaching tempest, which had unexpectedly risen. Now, instead of peacefully commending the child to the divine protection, the apprehensions of the mother took a new direction. Certainly the storm would descend before the child could be got home! Its constitution was so delicate, that, if it should be overtaken by the storm, its health would be impaired and its life endangered! Some time before the descent of the rain the child was safe beneath the paternal roof, and the mother, after suffering incomparably more than she ought to have endured, had the apprehended calamity actually occurred, found that she had been "disquieted in vain." In that disquietude, however, she had been wholly unfitted for prayer for her child, or any other object, or for the discharge of any duty in which the sustaining grace of the gospel would have been manifested.

Reader, have not the facts above stated opened up an important page in your past history? If so, you are now prepared for a consideration of the great truth to be illustrated in this discourse, which is this:--

OBEDIENCE TO GOD IS THE SUPREME BUSINESS OF LIFE--ALL, ABOUT WHICH IT IS LAWFUL FOR US TO "TAKE THOUGHT." IN OBEYING GOD, IT Is OUR DUTY AND PRIVILEGE TO DISMISS WHOLLY ALL ANXIETY ABOUT CONSEQUENCES; ESPECIALLY IN REGARD TO WORLDLY, TEMPORAL OBJECTS. The reader doubtless recollects the answer given by the shepherd of Salisbury Plain to the question of a traveler, "What sort of weather he thought it would be on the morrow?" "It will be such weather as pleases me," answered the shepherd. Though the answer was delivered in the most mild and civil tone that could be imagined, the gentleman thought the words themselves rather rude and surly, and asked him how that could be. "Because," replied the shepherd, "it will be such weather as pleases God, and whatever pleases Him always pleases me." The principle that I maintain is, that, it is our duty and privilege to be continually in this resigned, confiding, and peaceful state of mind, under all circumstances, and in reference to all interests and events, especially such as have a bearing upon our worldly condition.

1. Our profession as Christians, together with our acknowledged relations to God, requires this of us, and prohibits, as most unbecoming in us, and most dishonorable to God, every other and opposite state of mind. What relations do we, as Christians, sustain to God, to all his works and attributes, and to all the resources of His infinity? "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" As children, we recognize ourselves as "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." "God is our shield, and our exceeding, great reward." "All things are ours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are ours; and we are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s." God has pledged His word to us, that "no evil shall befall us, neither shall any plague come nigh our dwelling." We believe that "all things are working together for our good," and that "these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Now, does it become individuals holding such truths, possessing such interests, and sustaining such relations to the perfections and heart of God, to be "careful and troubled about many things?" Ought not our minds ever to be as free from carefulness, as heaven’s atmosphere is from

darkness and clouds? How unbecoming in us, how dishonorable to the sacred name by which we are called, is the opposite state of mind?

2. Our minds can not possibly be harassed with doubt, care, and perplexity, but from one cause--the absence of faith in God, and the presence of unbelief in the heart. While our minds are "stayed on God," He has pledged His truth that He "will keep us in perfect peace." "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even forever." "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." "When we pass through the waters, He will be with us; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow us. When we walk through the fire, we shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon us." When we believe all this, and rest in it as a reality, we can not "fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." Nothing but unbelief can make room for fear in our hearts, at any time and under any circumstances. What right have we to "stagger at the promises of God through unbelief?"

3. Another consideration which demonstrates the sinfulness of almost every species of carefulness in respect to worldly prospects, is this: such solicitude very seldom if ever respects the necessities, but what may be called the luxuries of life. Reader, were you ever in circumstances in which you really felt apprehensive that you would perish, or very long or severely suffer from hunger, cold, or nakedness? "You have food and raiment," with no fear of not possessing them while you live. With these, what right have you not to be content? How sinful is that state in which, having these, you are "careful and troubled about many things." Where is your heart, and, consequently, your treasure, when in such a state?

4. But let us suppose a Christian placed in circumstances, where, in obeying some one, the least important, if you please, of all the principles of the gospel, he is necessitated to sacrifice his entire prospects of worldly good. If he obeys, he must, like Paul, "suffer the loss of all things." Three important questions here arise: Shall he, by an adherence to truth and duty, make the sacrifice? If so, with what spirit shall he make it? Shall it be done reluctantly, or with all joyfulness? I answer, he must not only make the sacrifice, but regard it as a privilege that he is permitted thus to suffer for the name of Christ. Reader, you are not a Christian, unless every individual principle and truth of the gospel is held in such estimation by you, that you would readily part with all worldly goods and prospects, in its reception, defense, and practical exemplification.

Let us now conceive a Christian placed in the circumstances supposed. The following considerations will show how, and with what spirit, it becomes him then to act.

(1.) In the providence of God a crisis has come, in which it is necessary that one of his children should make that sacrifice in defense of that truth or principle. The glory of God, and the interest of truth and righteousness, require it at his hands. God and the gospel of His grace will be more highly honored by obedience here than by ten thousand similar acts under ordinary circumstances. Shall a redeemed sinner, a man that calls himself a Christian, fail to meet such a crisis, and to meet it joyfully? Shall he be "careful and troubled" about the sacrifices which obedience shall cost him? God forbid. No, Christian, the pearl of great price, in the exigency in which God has placed you, is now before you. "For joy thereof, go, sell all that you have, and buy it." Remember that whether you are called to make such sacrifices or not, such must be the

esteem in which every truth and principle of the gospel is actually held by you, or you can never obtain that pearl.

(2.) An opportunity is now presented to disclose to the world the highest and brightest possible exhibition and evidence of Christian character. If he obeys, the world will see that he serves God from principle, and not from interest. By prompt, decisive, and cheerful obedience at such a time, he may give the world a more distinct and impressive exhibition of what the spirit of true Christianity is, than by a whole life of obedience in ordinary circumstances. What if he should fail at such a crisis? He can never repair the injury he has done to the cause of Christ. He can never make up the good which he would have accomplished, had he stood faithful at that one moment. Christian, where duty manifestly jeopardizes your reputation, your property, your worldly prospects, then is the time, by prompt and peaceful obedience, to show the world what Christianity is.

(3.) The blessedness, direct and indirect, immediate and remote, consequent on obedience, infinitely surpasses all the evils which may or can result from such obedience. In one scale there are a few "light afflictions which are but for a moment." In the other, much greater present blessedness than could result from disobedience, and a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" hereafter. With what feelings ought a Christian to make sacrifices for truth and righteousness under such circumstances?

(4.) The evils of disobedience infinitely surpass, under all circumstances, the advantages which can result from such disobedience. If, for any worldly considerations whatever, you trample upon the least of God’s commandments, you "deny Christ before men," and consequently subject yourself to the denunciation, "him also will I deny before my Father and his holy angels." What evil is so great as this? What temporary advantages can balance such evils?

(5.) Contemplate also the spirit of worldly men. When the King of Persia was pouring his armies upon the plains of Greece, the states, assembled in council, resolved, that to arouse the patriotism of the nation, by a public exhibition of the spirit which, at such a crisis, ought to animate every bosom, one of their most distinguished sovereigns, together with a small but chosen band of followers, must meet the enemy at a given place, and there die. The present exigency was judged to be of such importance as to demand such a sacrifice. The King of Sparta was selected as the victim. At the straits of Thermopylae, with three hundred associates, he met the enemy, and died accordingly. Nor did he and his chosen band do it reluctantly; they did it with all joyfulness. The very night on which they were to die, before they went forth to the sacrifice, they celebrated a joyful feast together, and then met death as a privilege. Now, what was Thermopylae, what was all Greece, when weighed in the balance against a single principle or truth of the gospel? And shall a Christian be less ready to sacrifice all that he has for infinite, than men of the world for finite objects?

"Take a company of grenadiers," said a French general to a subordinate officer, "and repel the approach of the enemy at such a pass. You will lose your life, but you will save the army thereby." "Yes, sir," said the officer, and in the dreadful pass he died accordingly. Such is the spirit with which worldly men, under the influence of worldly principles, labor for a "corruptible crown." With what spirit should a Christian make sacrifices to "gain an incorruptible crown?"

(6.) Consider also the examples of self-sacrifice for truth and duty recorded in the Bible. First of all—"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich." "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Nor with reluctance did He make the sacrifice. It was "for the joy that was set before Him, that he endured the cross and despised the shame." What he requires of us, is, that we be just as prompt and cheerful in "suffering the loss of all things" for his honor and truth, as He was in making such sacrifices for us. Are we worthy of the name of Christians, unless such is our spirit in reference to every truth and principle of the "glorious gospel of the blessed God?" Nor were primitive Christians wanting in respect to this spirit. The rejoiced that they were "counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ." Among their highest privileges they enumerated this--"Unto us it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for his sake." "And now," says Paul, "behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there; save, that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Again, "If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For this cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me." Such was the estimate in which ancient believers held the truths and principles of the gospel. Such was the spirit with which they "suffered the loss of all things" for that gospel. Shall we not in the same spirit offer ourselves in behalf of every truth and principle of the same gospel? Whenever a truth or principle of the gospel is before us, shall we "take thought" about the consequences resulting from a reception of that truth, or from obedience to that principle?

5. Let us now for a few moments contemplate the circumstances in which men are ordinarily placed, and the objects in view of which solicitude is commonly called forth. The farmer, we will suppose, has planted and sown his fields, and used all required instrumentalities to secure a harvest. Let him now simply do the following things, and carefulness about the result of his labors will have no place in his heart.

(l:) Let him repose implicit confidence in the following promises, and render continued obedience to the following precepts. "Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." "He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly, shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munition of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." Who can "take thought about the morrow," in presence of such promises?

(2.) Let him bear continually in mind, that he will have just such a harvest as pleases God. Why should he not be--how can he fail to be satisfied with the dispensations of infinite wisdom and love?

(3.) If he continues obedient and trusts the word of God, he will have just such a harvest as is best for him. "No good thing will be withheld from him." Not one of his real necessities will be left unsupplied. Where is the place for carefulness in the presence of such hallowed truths as these?

(4.) Let him bear in mind, that "taking thought" will not add a single grain to his harvest, nor a blade of grass to his pastures. At the same time, it will forfeit all claim to the divine protection and blessing. Who does not see that such an individual can not "take thought for the morrow, saying,

what shall I eat, or what shall I drink, or wherewithal shall I be clothed," or what shall be the result of my efforts for a harvest, without sin against God? without distrust of the truth and faithfulness of God? The considerations above presented are equally applicable to our condition in all the relations and circumstances of life. If it is sinful for us to be "careful and troubled" in any one relation, the same state of mind is equally sinful in every other.

But, says one, I am under engagements to others. I have contracted debts which I am bound to meet. Not if providential occurrences render it impossible for you to do it. Consider the following questions: Do you do right in contracting those debts? If not, repentance for the past, and not anxiety for the consequences, is demanded. Are you now using lawful instrumentalities to met those engagements? Are you willing and desirous to do all that duty requires of you to accomplish that object? If not, repentance for present sin, and not "thought for the morrow," is required of you. But suppose that those debts were contracted without sin, or that all past sin has been repented of, that you are now doing all that duty requires of you--then you owe it to God, to yourself, and to the world, even to your creditors, to resign the future, with the utmost peacefulness, to Providence. If God shall call you to exemplify the Christian character in a state of poverty or bankruptcy, it will be because precisely such exemplification is needed. You ought to be just as will to glorify God in that relation as in any other. You can not, by "taking thought," pay a solitary debt. You will thereby only injure your own soul, and disgrace the sacred name by which you are called. But our children, how shall we make provision for them? You have little fear, I presume, that they will not have "food and raiment." This is not the ground of your anxiety. To take thought even about them, is sin. For the promises of God cover all the real necessities, not only of yourselves, but also of your children. What then must be the character of anxiety for any thing beyond these? Even if your children should be left fatherless, you may "leave them with the Lord, and your widows may trust in Him." You are not fearful, that your children will not have, day by day, their daily food. You are solicitous, lest they should not become wealthy and honorable among men. Do you desire this, let me ask, as a means of their salvation? Do not the Scriptures teach us, that individuals, in such circumstances, are least likely to become "heirs of the grace of life." "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven?" "They that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, (and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." Are you careful and troubled, lest your children should not be placed in the midst of such temptations as these? But my health is poor. What if I should be laid aside entirely? Yes, reader, what if you should? That, then, is the very condition in which God most needs your services. Ought you not to be as willing to glorify Him in sickness as in health? in death as in life? Permit me to ask , two or three questions here. How was this state of your physical system brought about? Was it by a violation of the laws of life and health? If so, repentance for the past, and not solicitude for the future, is called for. Are you now living in strict conformity to the laws of life and health, and consequently to the laws of God, in respect to food, drink, and dress? If you are, and all interests are committed to your God and Savior, remember that you can not have too much sickness. Nor can you die too soon. "Fear not, God is with you." "He will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." "He will help thee, and strengthen thee. He will uphold thee by the right hand of his righteousness." He will place you in circumstances where you can do the most to glorify His name. "Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself, Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

REMARKS.

1. We are now prepared to contemplate the light in which "taking thought for the morrow," carefulness in all its forms, should be regarded. These are states of mind about which the great mass of Christians take very little account. To indulge them is commonly regarded as indicating mental or physical weakness, rather than sin. Yet there are doubtless few forms of sin more offensive to God, or more disastrous in their influence. How often did Christ rebuke this sin in his disciples. Never until they were emancipated from its influence, were they prepared for the great work to which He had called them. Reader, whenever you find yourself inclined to be "careful and troubled about many things," will you not stop at once, and inquire the cause? Will you not ask yourself, Why do these thoughts and feelings arise in my mind? You will find that they have their origin exclusively in unbelief. You have taken your affections from things above and set them on the earth. You have consequently ceased to rest with implicit confidence in the truth and faithfulness of God. The natural and necessary result is, your mind has become perturbed with doubt, fear, and perplexity about the very objects upon which your heart is set. How aggravated is the sinfulness of such a state of mind, when indulged, as it always is, in the presence of infinite realities, and of the "exceeding great and precious promises" of God, which cover our entire necessities in time and eternity.

2. The appropriate remedy of this state of mind next demands our consideration. If we would be fully emancipated from its influence, we must,

(1.) Admit to ourselves, and confess to God, its aggravated guilt. We must feel and acknowledge, that we have no more right to be "careful and troubled," than we have to perpetrate the crimes of murder and adultery. The great mass of individuals can not be emancipated from this state of mind, for the simple reason that they can not be brought to confess, to themselves and to God, its sinfulness.

(2.) We must "set our affections on things above, and not on things on the earth." When the heart is set upon objects, infinite and eternal, carefulness in respect to things finite and temporary will be excluded.

(3.) In the exercise of simple faith, we must commend our entire interests to God, as unto a faithful creator. When "our mind is thus staid upon Him, He will keep us in perfect peace." Not a wave of trouble shall ever roll across our peaceful breasts. Our hearts shall be strangers to fear, except in respect to one thing, offending the object of infinite and boundless love upon which our affection is fixed.

3. We now perceive the objects about which, when engaged in any employment whatever, especially in enterprises of great importance, it is proper for us to "take thought." It is about the simple and exclusive inquiry, What is right, what is duty, what is the will of God? About this we are ever to be careful, but not troubled. For our "eye being single," to this one object, God has promised Himself to "instruct and teach us in the way we should go, and guide us by his eye." About every thing else, all care is to be dismissed; for God has promised that while our wills are in harmony with His, not a demand of our being, shall be left unsupplied. Reader, are you now ready to "commit the keeping of your soul unto God in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator?"

Finally, we notice the exalted privilege of the Christian. The sacred writer thus expresses it "That we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies," from every thing which would destroy our peace, or disturb our deep and permanent repose of the soul in God, "might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life." It is his privilege to be "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things." "God is his shield, and his exceeding great reward," and it is his privilege to serve God, at all times and under all circumstances, with perfect "fullness of joy," to be so independent of all finite objects, that no vicissitudes of time or place can do him real injury, or disturb the fixed content of his soul in God, and in the arrangements and dispensations of His providence and grace. An English officer was in a storm at sea, where every one was momentarily expecting to be swallowed up in the bosom of the deep. While terror and dismay sat upon every countenance around him, he was as calm as a summer evening. "My dear," exclaimed his wife, "how is it possible for you to be thus calm and peaceful amid such a scene as this?" The officer arose, and placing his back against a pillar, so that he could stand with steadiness, drew his sword, and presenting its point to her breast, inquired, "Are you not afraid of that sword?" "No," was the reply; "my husband holds it, and I know he loves me too well to injure me with it." "So," said the officer, "I know in whom, I have believed. 'He holds the winds in His fist, and measures the sea, in the hollow of His hand,' and He hath declared that no evil shall befall those who put their trust in Him." It is your privilege, Christian, at all times and under all circumstances, to be in the same state of mind in reference to all objects and events. The Bible declares, that "they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up on wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." It is said of the eagle, that, when soaring in his native heaven, as he descries the approaching tempest, he first surveys the scene, and if he is equal to the storm, he sails on to meet, and rides triumphantly through it. If the storm appears too powerful for his strength, he raises his wings, and, mounting above the warring elements, sails in the eternal sunshine of the upper skies. So of those who "wait on the Lord." When their strength is equal to the approaching tempest, God "will keep them in perfect peace," while it beats around them. But if it be too strong for them, He gives the wings of faith and love, on which they rise above the storm, and ride with God upon it. Christian, have you attained to this blessed state? Have your feet been planted upon those everlasting hills, where your sun goes not down, and your moon does not withdraw itself; where the Lord is your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning are ended? To attain this is not only your duty, but your privilege. Till you have thus attained, you are not prepared for the great work to which God has called you.

Dear sinner, you are now "careful and troubled about many things." You are "afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted." In your own experience you fully realize the truth of the fearful declaration, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." What then will you do, when the storms and tempests of eternity sweep over you?

S. The Believer's Confidence

SERMON II. THE BELIEVER'S CONFIDENCE. This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.— 1 John 5:14-15. IN the preceding verse, the Apostle informs us, that his object in writing this Epistle was, to impart to believers a knowledge of the fact, that they have in Christ eternal life, and to induce in them the continued exercise of faith in the Son of God. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." In the text he imparts to us a knowledge of the nature of that faith which we are required to exercise in Christ. "This is the confidence that we have in Him;" that is, this is the nature of that confidence or faith which the true believer exercises in Christ. It is the assurance, that whenever we ask of God any thing "according to His will, He, will hear us," and bestow upon us the blessings which we desire of Him. This is true faith, as it looks to God, through Christ, for the supply of all real necessities. In discussing this subject, I propose to elucidate the following propositions:

I. THE MEANING OF THE PHRASE, "ACCORDING To HIS WILL," AS USED IN THE TEXT.

II. THE RELATIONS, or CHRIST To THE BELIEVER WHEN HE ASKS FOR BLESSINGS "ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD."

III. THE NATURE OF THE CONFIDENCE REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT.

IV. THE INFINITE OBLIGATIONS RESTING UPON US TO EXERCISE SUCH CONFIDENCE.

I. " The meaning of the phrase " According to His will," as used in the text. The term "will," as applied to God, is used in various and quite different senses in the Bible. Sometimes it is applied to the divine purposes or determinations. "Even so, it is not the will," that is, purpose, determination, or intention, of your Father which is in heaven, "that one of these little ones should perish." It is also applied to the commands of God—"doing the will of God," that is, obeying the commands of God, "from the heart." It is sometimes used in a sense still different, to designate that which corresponds with the promises of God, or with the benevolent feelings of his heart. Thus the Spirit is said to "make intercession for the saints according to the will of God;" that is, for objects which correspond with the divine promises, and with the benevolent feelings of the divine mind. That the phrase "according to His will" is used in this last sense in the text, including, of course, that which is conformable to the commands of God, I argue, from the following considerations:

1. The absurdity of understanding the phrase, as applied to the secret purposes of God. The meaning of the phrase would then be, "If we ask any thing according to His will," that is, which God had previously determined to bestow upon us, we shall be heard, and have the blessings which we desire. But such blessings we shall enjoy, whether we ask for them or not. Prayer would thus be utterly useless. The question, also, whether our prayers would be according to the divine will,

would be accidental, and not depend at all upon the question whether prayer, in respect to its spirit and object, corresponds with the divine will, as expressed in the commands and promises of God.

2. Christ was not appointed as Mediator between God and man, that we, through Him, may secure the accomplishment of the secret purposes of God. Faith can never fasten upon Christ for any such object. He was appointed as Mediator, however, that through Him the believer may secure in himself the accomplishment of the "exceeding great and precious promises." Whenever, therefore, the prayer of the believer fastens upon any blessing proffered to our faith through the promises, he then asks for that which is "according to the will of God," as the phrase is used in the text. Such prayer is everywhere represented in the Bible as pleasing in the sight of God, and of course as corresponding with the divine will, as expressed, not only in the promises, but also in the divine requirements. But an important question here arises: What are the blessings which are "according to the will of God," in the sense in which the phrase has now been explained? I answer, any blessing, whether temporal or spiritual, the possession of which would be to us, in our circumstances, a real good. Whenever we ask for any such blessing, we ask for that which is "according to the will of God." This is evident, from two considerations:

1. All such blessings are proffered to our faith in the promises. "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing;" that, is, any thing whatever, the possession of which would be to them, in their circumstances, a real good. "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus."

2. When the believer, in the simplicity of faith, prays for any such blessings, he asks for that which corresponds with the benevolent feelings of God’s heart. A child asks an affectionate parent for some blessing which the parent sees would be to the child a real good. That petition, of course, meets a ready response in all the deep and tender sympathies of the parental heart. So with the believer, when his prayer fixes upon any thing which God sees would, if bestowed, be a real blessing to the petitioner. Such petition corresponds with all the benevolent feelings of God’s heart of infinite and boundless love. The believer, then, asks for that which, is "according to the will of God," in the sense of the text, when he prays for any thing, the possession of which would be to him, in his circumstances, a real, blessing.

II. We will now consider the relations of Christ to the believer, when he asks for things "according to the will of God."

1. In all such petitions He permits us to use his name. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Hitherto have yo asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If yo shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." "Yo have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you."

Christian, have you comprehended the infinite privileges and boundless influence with God, which Christ has conferred upon you, in permitting you to use His name, when you approach the throne of grace? Suppose Christ; to be now upon the earth, as he was eighteen hundred years ago. He comes to you and requests you to make known to Him your wants, assuring you that He will then

"pray the Father for you," that these wants may be fully met. You comply with his request. Christ kneels with you and fervently beseeches the Father that, for the sake of his Son, He will confer these blessings upon you. Would you not feel an absolute assurance that that prayer would be all-efficacious to secure the good desired? Now, in permitting you to use his name at the throne of grace, Christ has conferred upon you all the influence there, and that in respect to all necessities, temporal and spiritual, which He himself would have in the circumstances supposed. A poor beggar calls for the supply of his wants upon a man who has great treasures in a bank. He writes a check, and directs the petitioner to go to the bank, and in his name to draw for the amount specified. How much influence has that beggar now at the bank, in reference to the sum named in that check? Just as much as the individual has whose name he is permitted to use. So, when Christ says to you, "Ask in my name," He has conferred upon you, in reference to all appropriate objects of prayer, all the influence that He himself has at the throne of grace. He has put into your hands a check upon the bank of Heaven, signed by his own name; a check covering all your necessities, temporal and spiritual, in time and eternity, and required you by virtue of His name to draw upon the Father, till every want of yours is perfectly met—till your cup of blessedness is full and overflows forever. "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy maybe full."

2. Christ not only permits us to use His name when we approach the throne of grace, but Himself, as our great High Priest, stands in the presence of the Father and intercedes for us. "Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost who come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Suppose the beggar in the case above referred to, says to his benefactor, I have no doubt that your name would be sufficient to gain my object, if I could secure a hearing. But they know me only as a beggar, and will at once drive me from their presence, without hearing me at all. His friend, to allay his fears, says, I will go with you, and when you present your paper, I will request them to give you a hearing, assuring them that my name is appended to the paper which you present. So, when Christ says to the believer, "Ask in my name," He adds, "I also will pray the Father for you," that your petitions may be heard and answered. Such are the relations of Christ to the believer whenever he approaches the throne of grace for the supply of any real necessity.

III. The nature of the confidence referred to in the text. This confidence implies two things:

1. A full assurance, that the use of Christ’s name, together with his intercession, will be efficacious to gain the ear and heart of God, so as to secure a hearing to our requests. "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything thing according to his will, He heareth us." Thus, the beggar, while conscious of utter poverty, destitute of all influence at the bank, rests with perfect fixedness in the assurance that his friend’s name, together with his personal influence, will secure him a favorable hearing. So of faith in Christ. Its language is—Though infinitely guilty and vile in myself, and utterly destitute of all influence at the throne of grace, should I approach it in my own name, and while it would be infinitely dishonorable in God to listen to me for a moment, should I thus approach, yet I know and am assured, that the name of Christ, together with his intercession in my behalf, will reach the ear and heart of God, so that He will listen with deep and tender interest to my requests. And, Christian, what an infinite privilege is here revealed to us, the privilege of knowing, that when we pray, we are in the very audience chamber of the Most High, in the Holy of Holies of his sacred presence; that we are uttering our petitions directly into the ear of the infinite God; that He is listening, with deep and attentive interest, to all our requests, and that

every want we disclose strikes a chord, which vibrates to the very center of his heart. Faith in Christ renders all this a felt reality to the believer. It enters as a fundamental element into the "confidence which we have in Him."

2. The confidence here referred to, implies the certain assurance that the name of Christ, together with his intercession, will he efficacious, not only to reach the ear and heart of God, so as to secure a favorable hearing, but also to secure the bestowment of the blessings which we desired of Him. "If we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." The beggar, as he contemplates the name of his benefactor, together with his personal influence now excited in his behalf, says, with joyful assurance, I know that I shall not only be heard, but that I shall also obtain the object I am seeking. So faith, in the heart of the believer, uses the name of Christ, and rests in his intercession, with the fixed assurance that his name and intercession will be all-influential to secure the supply of every real necessity, whatever it may be. In Christ "all fullness dwells." Faith recognizes itself as "complete in Him," in respect to every real want, here and hereafter. The believer, in the exercise of faith, under the deepest sense of his own infinite vileness and ill-desert, uses the name of Christ, and rests in his intercession, with the fill assurance, that in so doing, he shall realize in his own experience the entire fulfillment of the promise, "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." When his mind fixes upon any blessing, temporal or spiritual, and is assured that the possession of it would be to him, in his circumstances, a real good, he feels the most perfect assurance that, through the name and intercession of Christ, he can obtain that blessing from God.

Such, Christian, is the nature of faith in Christ and let me ask you, Is this the character of the "confidence which you have in Him?" You never pray without assuring your heavenly Father, that you present every petition in the name of Christ. With what feelings do you use that dear and venerable name? Is it with the peaceful assurance that it will be efficacious to secure "the petitions which you desire of Him?" So far as you are destitute of this felt assurance of the efficacy of his name to secure a full "supply of all your need," so far you are under the influence of cruel unbelief. Let me repeat the question, Christian—What is the character of the "confidence which you have in Christ?" Do you feel in your heart, that the privilege of using the name of Christ and availing yourself of his intercession at the throne of grace, has placed you in such relations to God that, from this time forth, you need not "want any good thing," that you may now "ask and receive, till your joy is full," till your cup of blessedness overflows forever? This is true faith, as it uses the name of Christ at the throne of grace.

IV. The infinite obligations resting upon us to exercise such confidence.

1. You know, absolutely, Christian, God’s power to bestow. You know, perfectly, that He is able to meet, fully and entirely, every want of yours, in time and eternity. Now, when Christ has told you to go in his name to his Father, and draw upon Him till "your joy is full," when He has promised Himself to intercede for you, when you thus approach the throne of grace—what excuse have you for not going with the fullest assurance that every want will be met, and that "no good thing will He withhold from you?" Do you feel the pressure of some special want? You know that that particular necessity God is perfectly able to meet. Christ has told you to carry that want to his Father, and in the name of the Son of his love, ask Him to meet it. Why, then, should you not comply with the injunction of Christ, with the most perfect assurance that you will "have the petition which you

desired of Him?"

2. The appointment of Christ as Mediator, has removed all obstacles, so far as God is concerned, to the bestowment of any blessing in his power to bestow. As soon as you are ready by faith to receive the good thus provided for and proffered to you, no reason in the universe exists why any real blessing should be withheld from you. Of this you are aware. Why, then, should you not use the name of Christ, and rest in the efficacy of his intercession, with perfect assurance that, when you "ask, you will receive till your joy is full," that "whatsoever you ask of the Father in Christ's name He will give it you?" Where is the excuse for unbelief?

3. The mediation of Christ renders it in the highest sense honorable in God to bestow the richest possible blessings, in answer to requests presented in the name of Christ. Whatever blessings are bestowed on Christ's account, even upon the chief of sinners, no injury results to the character of God, or to the interests of the universe; but infinite glory results to Christ. The richer the blessings thus bestowed, the higher the honor conferred upon him. When it is known, that the bank always meets the drafts of an individual, whatever the amount may be, and by whomsoever the draft is presented, this is the highest honor which such an institution can confer Upon such an individual. The individual presenting the draft is not honored at all, but the individual on whose account it is met. So when God bestows blessings upon us on Christ's account, and in answer to requests presented in his name, He honors not us, but Christ. And when it is known that the name of Christ, even when presented by the chief of sinners, is efficacious to secure the richest blessings in God's power to bestow, and an all-sufficient reason why they should be conferred, then it is, that the highest conceivable glory results to Christ. In the presence of such truths, Christ says to you, Go to the Father in my name, and "ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you." What excuse then, have you for not using the name of Christ, and resting in his intercession, with the most perfect confidence that "God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus?"

4. In the gift of Christ for our redemption, God has given the most perfect demonstration of the feelings of his heart toward us. He has shown, clearly, that there is no blessing in his power to bestow, nothing in existence, the possession of which would be a blessing to us, which He does not desire to confer upon us. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Now, to doubt the efficacy of Christ's name, to open the ear and move the heart of God, so as to secure a supply of any necessity which He is able to meet—what is it, but to call in question the love of God, as manifested in all the mysteries of redemption? Christian, are you not under obligations infinite to exercise this confidence?

5. To doubt, under such circumstances, is to call in question the efficacy of Christ's name and intercession with God, to secure the blessings which we need, and which are promised to all who ask in reliance upon the efficacy of his name and intercession. Suppose the beggar above referred to, while on the way to the bank with the check of his friend in his hand, and that friend himself by his side, manifests great fears and apprehensions, lest he shall not be heard and obtain the good he is seeking. Suppose he expresses such fears and apprehensions to the multitude around him, as he passes along. What is he doing but dishonoring his friend and benefactor, by proclaiming a distrust of the efficacy of his name and influence to secure the good which he has promised? The injured man, after hearing his name dishonored a while, says to the object of his compassion, "Sir,

please return me that check. I do not choose to have my name thus dishonored. You may now obtain a supply of your necessities elsewhere." Christian, dare you, by unbelief, by doubting, when asking in the name of Christ, and when you know that He stands before his Father to intercede for you, whether you "shall have the petitions which you desire of Him," dare you thus dishonor your Savior? Can you expect, that He will ever allow you to use his name again? Is not this the most grievous and aggravated sin of which you can possibly be guilty?

6. Once more. To doubt, under such circumstances, is to question the word of God. Christ has said, "Ask, and ye shall receive." "If ye ask any thing in my name, I will do it." To use the name of Christ without expecting to receive the "petitions which you desire of Him," what is it but to call in question the word of Christ? Christian, can you endure the thought of doing it? Unbelief does this. To ask in the name of Christ, doubting whether you will obtain the good you ask, does this. Shall your soul, Christian, be cut off from the infinite blessedness prepared for you, in consequence of doubting not only the efficacy of Christ's name and intercession, but also his positive word? No, take the name of Christ, and in reliance upon his intercession, "come boldly to a throne of grace, that you may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

REMARKS.

1. We are now prepared to contemplate one of the great mysteries of redemption. It is this:—In himself the Christian has nothing. No being in the universe is poorer, more "miserable, and blind, and naked, and in want of all things." Yet, in Christ, and in consequence of his relation to Him, "he has all things." No being in the universe is richer. No being has greater "power with God," or can obtain greater blessings from him. And all this takes place on principles perfectly honorable to God, and equally consistent with the interests of the universe. A man in one of our eastern cities had failed for a large amount. His credit was gone. His family was reduced to poverty, and himself involved in liabilities amounting to several hundred thousand dollars. He delivered his whole estate into the hands of his creditors, and stood penniless, and worse than penniless, before the world. He had a brother, however, who was known in that city as possessed of great wealth. From this brother he received a power of attorney to transact business in his name. On the authority of that brother, through the influence of his name, which he was permitted to use, he at once commenced business as one of the most efficient and prosperous merchants in the city. "In myself;" said this individual to a friend of mine, "I have no credit at all. No man will trust me with a single bale of goods; yet I am really worth all that my brother is worth. I can make any purchases, and upon the same terms that he can. I sometimes illustrate this fact, by first offering to purchase of an individual on my own credit. He will not trust me a farthing. I tell him that I wish to obtain the goods on my brother's account. I can then purchase every article in his store." So with the Christian. If he approaches the throne of grace in his own name, God thunders eternal terrors upon him. But if he approaches in the name of Christ, God bows his ear, and listens with infinite tenderness to his request. He opens all the treasures of eternity, and bids the suppliant "ask what he will, and it shall be done unto him." No angel before the throne has a title to an estate more vast. No one, I repeat, can obtain greater blessings from God than he. "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" In the mysteries of redemption infinite extremes meet. Yet such are the ways of God to men. Such, Christian, are your privileges consequent on your relations to Christ.

2. You may now, Christian, be ready to ask, on what conditions all this blessedness may be yours? If you would enjoy all the good provided for you through the grace of Christ, there must be, on your part, in the first place, a deep sense of need. In yourself you have nothing to recommend you to God but infinite guilt, poverty, and wretchedness. Christ expects you to feel and acknowledge this, when you appear at the throne of grace in His name. There must be implicit confidence, too, in the efficacy of Christ's name and intercession, to obtain for you any blessing you need? Christian, do you feel this, when you use the name of Christ at the throne of grace? Can you repose in that name as all-efficacious to procure for you any blessing you need? There must be, also, an actual application to God in every time of need, and in respect to every necessity, in full reliance upon the efficacy of the name and intercession of Christ, to secure a full supply of every want. On these simple conditions, "God will supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." There is not a want of yours, temporal or spiritual, during the interminable future before you, which He will leave unsupplied.

3. In the light of this subject, we may understand the kind of expectation demanded of us when we pray for spiritual and temporal blessings. In respect to the former, we know certainly that the possession of all such blessings, in all their fullness, must be a good to us. Whenever, therefore, we approach the throne of grace in the name of Christ, for such blessings, we are to expect to receive the identical blessings for which we pray. The absence of such expectation is unbelief. But when we pray for temporal blessings, we do not, in many instances, certainly know that the possession of the particular object for which we pray would be a blessing to us. We are always to pray, therefore, for such blessings, expecting that the want which directed the mind to the particular object in view, shall be met, and met in the best possible manner. But whether it shall be met by the bestowment of the particular thing specified in prayer, or something else, here we are not to indulge any positive anticipations. This question God's wisdom is to decide.

4. A very extensive and dangerous error, into which a large portion of the church have fallen, here demands a passing notice. The error is this:—There is great danger, it is thought, of raising expectation too high, especially in young converts, in respect to the amount of blessedness in Christ, which it is the privilege of the Christian to enjoy in this life. How careful many cold professors are to impress the young convert with the conviction, that the blessedness of his first love will not long continue—that however clear the light which now shines upon him may be, the "days of darkness will be many,'' and long continued. This is done to prevent the depth of gloom consequent on having previous expectation too highly raised. Now, in respect to all finite objects, this is no doubt a wise precaution. How often, for example, is the influence of a minister greatly injured, in consequence of public expectation having previously been raised too high respecting him. But in respect to the infinite and boundless grace and love of God, precisely the reverse is always true. Here expectation can not possibly equal the reality. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.'' And when we approach the throne of grace in the name of Christ, and in humble reliance upon His intercession, instead of there being any danger of our coming with expectations too highly raised, we ought to come with the most peaceful and assured expectation of obtaining "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Who can measure the boundless love of God? Who can measure, in anticipation, the amount blessedness which the name of Christ can draw from that ocean of love, when that name is used by a strong and unwavering faith at the

throne of grace? Never let us entertain a thought of raising expectation too high, while faith in the name of Christ keeps the heart and mouth open wide to receive the fullness which infinite love has prepared for us.

5. A question of this kind may here arise in the minds of some:—if the Christian can obtain all real blessings through the name and intercession of Christ, why should he not ask for the instantaneous conversion of the whole world, expecting to secure that result? I answer, that could be obtained, were it on the whole best for the Christian, and best for the world, and were it in itself possible. But God has told us what is the best way to have the world converted. It is by the "foolishness of preaching," attended with the sanctification, and consequent perfect blessedness of the church. Through such instrumentalities, and such alone, is it proper to pray that the world may be converted to God. "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

6. You see, Christian, the reason why you do not possess all that fullness of joy and peace which it is your privilege to enjoy through the name and intercession of Christ. The want of this blessedness arises from one of two causes, or both combined:—

(1.) A want of desire and preference of this very good. How few individuals would be satisfied to know that they will possess just that amount of temporal good, for example, and no more and no less than infinite wisdom and love sees would be best for them? Yet unless you are in this precise state of mind, it is impossible for God to bless you. You do not possess the amount of spiritual blessings which faith in the name of Christ would procure you, because you do not appreciate their value sufficiently to seek them with all your heart.

(2.) Want of confidence in the efficiency of Christ’s name and intercession to secure such blessings. "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering;" that is, doubting whether God will bestow the blessing asked. "For he that wavereth [doubeth] is like a wave of the sea, driven of winds and tossed. Let not that man think that he will receive any thing of the Lord." Nothing can grieve the heart of our Savior so much, nothing can be so offensive to God, as to have the name of Christ used at the throne of grace, expecting that it will avail little to secure the blessings we need. Christian, is not this the great cause of that deep and impenetrable gloom which covers your mind, if you are now in darkness—the long and frequent abuse of the dear name of Christ, as you have used it at a throne of grace? Have you appreciated the value of the privilege conferred upon you in being permitted to ask in his name? Have you reposed confidence in the efficacy of that name to procure the blessings you need, and especially to fill your cup of blessedness, and cause it to overflow continually? Whenever you approached the mercy-seat with due confidence in the efficacy of the name of Christ, to secure "the petitions which you desire of Him," were you sent empty away? Have you not always received "exceeding abundantly above all that you asked or thought?

7. You may now, Christian, answer the question, whether you have real genuine faith in Christ or not. You know that it is your privilege to ask of the Father, in the name of Christ, for any blessing which you need. What confidence have you in the efficacy of that name, to secure the ear and move the heart of God? Do you believe, and is this truth a felt reality to your mind, that you may

now, through the name of Christ alone, secure, not only a hearing at the throne of grace, but also a full supply of every necessity, here and hereafter? Is "this the confidence that you have in Christ?" If so, you have the faith which the gospel requires. If not, you are under the influence of unbelief. If you ever present a request to God in the name of Christ, without expecting that "He will hear you," and that "you will have the petitions that you desired of Him," remember, that that prayer is put up, not in faith, but in unbelief

8. We may now understand the reason of the peace-giving power of faith. A merchant, we will suppose, on looking over his books, finds that on each of ten successive days, claims amounting to a hundred thousand dollars will be brought against him, and that each of these claims must be promptly met, or he becomes a hopeless bankrupt. He finds his own resources wholly inadequate to such exigencies. His heart sinks into utter despondency. Just at this moment he receives a letter from his father, a man of untold wealth, informing him that, in anticipation of difficulties in which he might be involved, he had deposited in the bank for his use ten millions of dollars, and that he may now draw at will any amount which he may need. How instantly does this thick gloom give place to the highest animation and joy. He is no longer appalled at the greatness of his liabilities; because he knows that he has available resources, more than sufficient to meet them. So the Chirstian—as soon as his faith fixes upon Christ—knows, that whatever his necessities may be, he can, in the name, and through the intercession of Christ, draw upon the resources of infinite love, till at all times, and under all circumstances, his joy is full, till all his wants, however vast and multiplied, are perfectly met. The natural and necessary result is, "peace as a river, and righteousness as the waves of the sea." Faith in Christ removes every care, and keeps the mind in perfect peace, because it reveals boundless available resources to meet every possible exigency. "Therefore, will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea," Why? "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." When the believer looks only at himself, and contemplates his condition as a sinner, the greatness of his guilt, the vastness of his necessities, the strength of his sinful propensities, and the number and power of his enemies, he will be appalled. But when the eye of faith turns to Christ, all fear, and all apprehension arising from these causes, are swallowed up and lost in the boundless resources which then open upon the enraptured vision.

9. How reasonable the precepts, "Be careful for nothing," "Rejoice in the Lord always," &c. How practicable obedience to such precepts appears, when contemplated in the light of this subject. Who can describe the infinite sweetness that dwells in that divine declaration, "Ye are complete in Him?" Why should we not "be careful for nothing," and "rejoice in the Lord always," when every demand of our being is so perfectly met in the infinite fullness that there is in Christ? Christian:

"Why that look of sadness? Why that downcast eye? Can no thought of gladness Lift thy soul on high? O, thou heir of heaven, Think of Jesus' love While to thee is given All his grace to prove."

10. We may now understand the true meaning of the command, "Let us come boldly to a throne of grace." The beggar, as he thinks of the name attached to time check which he holds in his hand, and of the friend by his side who is to be surety for him at the bank, says to himself, I know that I shall obtain my object. So the Christian, when he thinks of the name which he is permitted to use at the throne of grace, and of the Intercessor that stands to plead for him there, says, in the simplicity energy of his faith, "I know that whatsoever I ask, I shall have the petition which I desired

of Him." This humble but fixed confidence which he has in the efficacy of Christ's name and intercession, to procure any blessing which he needs, constitutes the "boldness with which he approaches the throne of grace."

11. It may be important for us to contemplate the doctrine of Christian Perfection and the opposite doctrine, as they appear in the light of this subject. The former doctrine maintains that in Christ, through faith in his name, there are available resources to the believer, to meet every demand of his being throughout his endless existence. It is simply a reflection of the great truth, '' Ye are complete in Him." The opposite doctrine, on the other hand, maintains that a state of entire sanctification in this life would be a real good, the richest blessing that God could bestow; that for this blessing we are to approach the throne of grace, and, in the name of Christ, ask the Father to confer it upon us. At time same time, it maintains that it is a dangerous error for us to indulge the expectation that the name and intercession of Christ will be efficacious to obtain this blessing. We may use the name of Christ in respect to any other blessing, expecting to receive it; but in respect to the positive promise of God, to "sanctify us wholly, and preserve us blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," it maintains that we are to use the same dear name with the certain expectation of not "having the petitions which we desired Him."

Christian, when nearest my God, in time most hallowed moments of all my Christian experience, I know that that doctrine can not be true. And may I not say, that in the depth of your soul, you know it also? Are these the "good tidings of great joy," which He who was anointed of God to bind up all that are broken-hearted, has to proclaim to those who are bound in servitude to sin, that He will never break from their necks the yoke of Satan, till He takes them out of the world? Christian, the gospel "speaks better things" to the weary and tempest-tossed believer. It says to him, "Ask and receive, that your joy may be full." "Let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

12. A few words to my impenitent readers will close this discourse. Sinner, your necessities are infinite; and if you long remain under them, they will sink you down into eternal death. Provisions now, exist, in the gospel, to meet all those necessities. You also may approach the throne of grace, in the name of Christ, and obtain eternal redemption. But if you refuse to "seek the Lord while He may be found," and "to call upon Him while He is near," how changed must your condition soon be! Soon there will be a" great gulf fixed" between you and all that is pure, and holy, and blessed, in the universe. Soon you may to all eternity call for the least conceivable blessing, and it will not be granted you. Shall that time, reader, ever come with you? Shall this be your fearful doom; and shall that doom receive an infinite aggravation from the recollection of what you might have been, had you availed yourself of the present opportunity? "He that is wise shall be wise for himself He that scorneth, He alone shall bear it."

S. The Sufferings of Christ

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ARTICLE XLIV. The Sufferings of Christ.

"THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, BY A LAYMAN--SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED. HARPER & BROTHERS." BY PRES. ASA MAHAN. WHEN a long established article of the common faith has been successfully assailed, and the new truth supplants the ancient error, without embittered controversy, or disastrous convulsions of Zion, such an occurrence may be regarded as a happy omen in respect to the condition and prospects of the church. Such a desirable result is apparently about to be realized, in regard to the great truth elucidated in the work before us. It is but a short period since it appeared; yet the first edition has already been disposed of, and a second, improved, enlarged and corrected from the first, is passing off with such rapidity, that a third edition, as the author informs us, will undoubtedly be called for the present Spring. With great strength and power of thought and argument, and as we judge, with the most entire success, the work assails one of the long established articles of the common faith pertaining to the subject named. The interest excited in the work, on I account of the subject of which it treats, and the manner in which that subject is therein elucidated, is already great, and is constantly increasing. Yet as the darkness of night silently disappears, without any convulsions of the elements, as the opening light dawns on; so the new truth here set forth, is, in the minds of the ministry and lay members of the church, supplanting the ancient error which it combats, without any embittered agitation of the public mind. The appearance of this work, we doubt not, will, in coming generations, be regarded as a marked era in the progress of light in the nineteenth century. It is destined, we judge, to do more than any other work that has appeared, to bring back the great doctrine of Atonement to the heart of the church.

Every evangelical denomination holds, in theory at least that the doctrine of Atonement is the main pillar of the whole scheme of redemption, and that the sufferings of Christ, in connection with the mysteries of the incarnation, constitute by far the greatest and most heart-moving event that have yet transpired in the universe of God. Yet, as a matter of fact, that great transaction does not now affect the hearts of even those whom we cannot but regard as sincere christians, as it manifestly did the hearts of those by whom it was at first proclaimed. To a reflecting mind, the question would naturally come home with the deepest interest,—what is the cause of this difference of impression ? Nor can the question hardly fail to arise in such a mind,—whether this difference is not owing to some err which has crept into the modern view, and has thereby to a great extent neutralized the impression which the subject in itself adapted to make upon the mind ? Such an error our author professes to have discovered, and to its influence he attributes the evil of which we are speaking. For centuries, the common faith of the church has been, that in those fearful sufferings constituting

the Atonement, Christ's human natured and that exclusively, partook. The divine nature, to be sure, deeply sympathized with the sufferings of the human, but in no sense partook of them, even the sympathy exercised, so far from implying anything in the form of pain, contained no element not implied in a state of perfect, uninterrupted an infinite felicity. Such sufferings, were therefore mere human sufferings, and nothing else. In them exclusively, according to the theory under consideration, the Atonement consisted. It may readily be admitted that the union of the divine with the human nature of Christ, enabled the former to endure a degree of suffering otherwise impossible. Still, those sufferings were, and must have been limited, and as they were endured exclusively by the human nature of Christ, they could have been nothing else than human sufferings. It is a contradiction in terms to affirm otherwise.

Such a view of the work of Atonement; is totally unadapted to make a deep, permanent and all-transforming impression upon the mind. No conception of mere human suffering of a few hours continuance, however intense in itself, has any adaptation to the production of such results. We may assume what we please in respect to the subject, we make the most strenuous efforts, to impress our own minds with the conviction that there is a power here to produce such transformations ; still the heart lying comparatively unbroken, and Unmelted under the pressure of such an apprehension of the subject, affirms continually that the work of Atonement is not what the Bible asserts it to be, or that an essential error has been somewhere introduced into our view of that work. The divine declaration, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," can never become, in its full sense, a reality in actual experience, so long as Gethsemane and Calvary present a no more melting spectacle to the mind, than that of a human sufferer.

Equally impossible is it for us to feel, however we may reason upon the subject, that such sufferings, whatever relation they may sustain to the divine nature of Christ, can constitute an adequate Atonement for human guilt, or lay an adequate foundation for the redemption of lost men. The declaration may be reiterated in our ears again and again, that the divine nature of our Savior could impart infinite dignity and worth to the sufferings endured by the human. We may assume that it must be so of a truth. Still we cannot but feel it to be otherwise. All admit that there must be infinite merit in the sufferings of our Savior. Else they can never constitute an adequate Atonement for the sins of men. Still when it is asserted that such merit does, or can lie in any human sufferings, our feelings, however we may reason upon the subject, can never respond to this assertion as presenting any thing else than shadow, instead of substance to the mind. It is an intuition of the universal intelligence, that the merit of sufferings, under any conceivable circumstances, can never transcend the dignity and worth of the sufferer, in the same circumstances. If the latter are finite, so must the former be. Here then, the question forces itself upon us ;—does the divine impart infinite dignity and worth to the human nature of our Savior ? If so, the latter, as well as the former, is an object of worship, and the finite has equalled the infinite. Who believes that? Who does not know that it would be gross idolatry in us to worship the mere human nature even of the Son of God ? If then the union of the divine with the human nature of Christ, cannot impart infinite dignity and worth to the latter, it cannot impart corresponding merit to any sufferings which this human nature has endured. How can God himself make that in any sense infinite, which from its own nature, is, and must be in all respects finite? The necessary consequence of the theory pertaining to the sufferings of Christ which we are now considering, is, that we have no Atonement adequate to the necessities of fallen humanity. In opposition to such a

view of the subject, our author takes the ground that in the work of Atonement, the divine as well as the human nature of our Savior suffered, and that it was the sufferings of the former, that in a pre-eminent sense constituted that Atonement. The spectacle of the garden, and of the cross, is no less awful and soul subduing than that of the agony of "God manifest in the flesh,"—that of the Incarnate Word, who "In the beginning was with God, and was God," travailing in the Greatness of his strength in the: work of man's redemption. The Son of God, not merely in his human nature, but "through the eternal Spirit," that is the divine spirit or nature which he possessed, "offered himself without spot to God," for us. When the church in her soul melting hymns exclaims—

"Agonizing in the garden, Lo ! your Maker prostrate lies On the bloody tree behold Him, Hear Him cry before He dies," our author affirms that she is not uttering a glorious untruth, but an awful yet blessed reality.

If we consider this as the true exposition of the sufferings of Christ, one thing is quite certain. Neither time nor eternity can weaken the power of these sufferings to melt, subdue and transform the heart. If in the garden and on the cross, I really and truly behold my God agonizing there for my redemption, "Then am I dead to all the world And all the world is dead to me."

Here is the "mystery of godliness," into which, throughout, endless ages, even angels will desire to look. One fact in confirmation of the adaptation of this view of the subject and of this only, to move and melt the heart, should not be omitted here. While the church has in theory adopted the opposite view, this is the only one presented in her soul-melting hymns. The special object of sacred poetry, is to melt and dissolve into love and tenderness, the sensibilities of our nature. But one view of the sufferings of Christ, has real poetry or melting power in it. The common view has neither.-- Hence the creed and the hymns of the church, have for centuries stood in palpable contradiction to each other. In the former, we have only the spectacle of a human sufferer. As presented in the latter, "God the mighty Maker dies For man the creature's sin."

Such a contradiction can be accounted for, but upon one supposition,—the universally felt adaptation of this one view only of the sufferings of Christ, permanently to melt and subdue the heart.

Assuming this as the true view of the sufferings of Christ also, we not only know, but deeply feel, that in him we have an Atonement for sin, fully adequate to all our necessities as sinners. The infinite dignity and worth of the sufferer cannot but impart corresponding merit to the sufferings He endured in our stead. We not only see, but deeply feel that God can be "just and justify the believer in Jesus." In this wondrous plan, "Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." "Truth has sprung out of the earth, and righteousness has looked down from heaven." An enquiry of no little interest and importance here suggests itself; to wit: what has been the real basis of the opinion so long entertained by the church in respect to the sufferings of Christ ? Whence did the sentiment originate, that the divine nature of our Savior did not at all partake of those sufferings? It certainly did not take its rise in a careful study of the Scriptures, with the simple enquiry—what do they teach on this subject? We think we are quite safe in the assertion, that there is not a solitary passage in the Bible, that can be shown even to look towards a revelation of such a sentiment. We believe that none of its advocates even profess to adduce any thing from "the law and the testimony" in its support. It is not then as a revealed truth, that this doctrine has ever been received by the church. The basis of her convictions, or

rather, assumptions in respect to it, is not any thing found in the Bible. On the other hand, this sentiment has obtained in the church in opposition to the plainest teachings of Inspiration, to the whole tenor of the Bible in respect to this subject. The most impressive and heart-moving passages of scripture pertaining to the Atonement and sufferings of Christ, lose all their force and meaning when construed according to this view. Take a few, as examples. "For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Every one knows that it is to the divine and not to the human nature of Christ, that we are to look for succor in temptation. How then must this passage read, in order to assert the sentiment under consideration? It must read thus: Because the human nature of Christ "suffered, being tempted," his divine nature, which was all the while during the conflict in a state of absolute and infinite felicity, and consequently was not tempted at all, is "able to succor them that are tempted." Is the passage before us adapted to express any such sentiment as that? Does not a different and opposite sentiment most undeniably lie upon its surface? Is not all its beauty and impressive force annihilated by such a construction? Can another sentiment be drawn from it than this, that the very nature to which we are in the hour of temptation to look for succor, did itself "suffer, being tempted"? But the true meaning of this passage will be still more plain and impressive, if it is read in connection with seyeral preceding verses:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He a Himself took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: and deliver them who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto his brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted."

It would he the height of absurdity to suppose that it is, the human nature of our Savior, to which the apostle refers in the declaration, "he took not on him the nature of angels but he took on Him the seed of Abraham," &c. Now what Perfect violence is done to the whole passage, by the construction which makes the apostle refer to the human instead of the divine nature of Christ, in the phrase, "In that he Himself hath suffered, being tempted." What unbiased mind can read this entire passage, and avoid the full conviction, that, reference to the same divine nature is had throughout the whole of it? Yes, reader, the same divine being who "took part of the same," that is, became a "partaker of flesh and blood," and who by taking upon him, not "the nature of angels," but the "seed of Abraham," was "made like unto his brethren," it was this same being that "suffered being tempted," and is therefore "able to succor them that are tempted" The most obvious meaning, as well as the tender beauty and impressive force of the entire passage, is destroyed by any other construction. "Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." The dogma against which we are contending, if admitted as true, would make this passage read thus :—had they known it they would not have crucified the human nature of him who in his divine nature, a nature which in no form partook of the sufferings referred to, is the Lord of glory. Can any one who would not be wise above what is written, draw such a meaning from such a passage ? Is not the obvious meaning of the sacred writer, this : that the "Lord of glory" himself, that is, as these words must mean, Christ in his divine, as well as human nature, actually endured the pains of crucifixion ?

"Looking Unto Jesus, the author end finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." The words "author and finisher of our faith," must, as all admit, refer especially to the divine nature of Christ. how perfectly must the passage be perverted from its obvious meaning, to make it imply any thing else, than that it was the same nature in which he appears as "the author and finisher of our faith," that he endured the cross. "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father, and I lay down my life for he sheep." The phrase, "even so know I the Father," as all admit, must refer to the divine nature of Christ. What if, as the sentiment under consideration requires, we construct this passage thus; As the Father knoweth me, even so, my divine nature, know I the Father, and in my human nature, "I lay down my life for the sheep," a transaction in which my divine nature partakes in no sense, not implying not only total absence from all suffering of every kind, but the uninterrupted fruition of infinite felicity. What a monstrous distortion of the obvious meaning of the passage, have we in that case. How totally have its glorious beauty and impressive force disappeared. Let us go through "that dearest of books that excels every other," and thus construct all its melting declarations pertaining to the sufferings of our Savior, and their glory has departed. You have taken away our Lord from our hearts, and laid him no where. We have then another Bible, and in very many essential particulars, another gospel." Let the reader attentively consider the following passages, taken from among many others of similar character that might be adduced, and then ask himself, what aspect of the sufferings of Christ do they obviously present to our contemplation? Do they present to our hearts a mere creature, or the incarnate God enduring the agony of death for our redemption ?

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things."

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

"Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against him that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones,"

If the sword of Jehovah, in the sufferings of Christ for our redemption, fell only upon the human nature of our Savior, in what sense did it awake against God’s "fellow," that is, his equal?

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall, be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

"Surely he bath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Who can read these two passages together, without receiving from them the deep impression that he who is, in the first, presented to our contemplation as the "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God and Everlasting Father," is the same person, who, in the second, is unveiled to our hearts, as wounded for our redemption? From whence then did the opinion for ages so prevalent in the church, that in the work of Atonement, Christ suffered in his humanity exclusively, take its rise? A conviction pertaining to this subject not only not sustained by direct testimony from the Bible, but in manifest opposition to its plainest teachings, must, we should suppose, have some where, a very firm and imposing basis on which to rest. What is this foundation of many generations! We answer, it is an assumption in respect to what is possible and impossible to the divine nature; an assumption that God is absolutely impassible, that is, He cannot by any possibility actual or conceivable, from any cause out of himself, or from any choice or act of his own, come, for a single moment, from a state of infinite blessedness to one of suffering. This is assumed, not as a truth revealed by the light of inspiration, (for all acknowledge that the Bible is perfectly silent on the subject,) but as an intuition of reason in respect to the divine nature. God, if Himself should choose and for reasons of infinite weight, cannot for a single instant be the subject of suffering, in any form or degree whatever. The sufferings of Christ therefore must have been endured exclusively in his human nature. His deity in no sense or degree could for a single instant have participated in them. Now we may very properly ask for the authority of such a wide-sweeping assumption. God, it is admitted, has never revealed the fact that such is the truth in respect to himself. Has the human mind, unaided as it must have been, and unguided by the light of inspiration, attained to such an understanding of the divine nature, that it is authorized to make any such assumption in respect to it ? "Such knowledge," we confess, "is too wonderful for us ; it is high, we cannot attain unto it." Till we have "found out the Almighty unto perfection," we dare make no such affirmations or assumptions in respect to what is possible or impossible with God ; especially so, when such assumptions are in manifest contradiction to what God has positively taught us in respect to himself. When inspiration affirms that the "Mighty God," having become flesh and dwelt among us, was "wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities," have we obtained, or can we, unaided by inspiration, obtain such an insight into the mysteries of the divine nature, as to set aside such affirmations, as not meaning what they directly assert? One thing we are quite assured of. It is much better for our hearts, to say the least, to sit down to the study of the blessed word, with the assumption that no "man knoweth the things of God, but the Spirit of God," and there with childlike simplicity, enquire what that Spirit has revealed in respect to what is "possible with God." If that Spirit should affirm that the Mighty God" can suffer, and has suffered for our redemption, of one thing we shall feel the most undoubted assurance.— Our hearts, our inner being, our entire fallen nature, too imperiously needs that truth as an omnipresent reality, ever to doubt it. If he should teach us otherwise, if He should affirm the absolute impossibility of the divine nature’s suffering, then our souls will sink down under the gloomy

consciousness that the rock within us can never be melted and dissolved.

One good of infinite moment, in addition to that of bringing hack to the heart of the church, the great doctrine of the Atonement, will, we have no doubt, result from reading the work before us. It will induce far greater caution and modesty than now commonly exists, in determining what the Scriptures must mean, and determining this fact from pre-formed assumptions in respect to what must be true or false, possible or impossible with Deity. We would by no means be understood as affirming that there are no truths which the mind does and must recognize as necessary intuitions pertaining to God. The thing upon which we would insist is, greater caution than is commonly manifested in determining what such truths are, and their proper influence as lights in the interpretation of the divine word. How many of the most precious truths of the Bible have been almost totally neutralized in their influence upon the human mind, by human assumptions, unauthorized alike by reason and revelation both.

We believe also, that the general reading of, this work will do much to prepare the way for a new era in the progress of the church, which we have long desired to see. We refer to this—the study of the character of God through the, mysteries of the incarnation, as the church has hitherto not been accustomed to do. "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," that is, led Him out or revealed him as he is, to the human mind. But how hath the Son revealed the Father ? We answer, the Father is revealed in the acts of the Son. The compassion manifested towards the widow of Nain, is a real manifestation of the present feelings of the whole Deity towards every individual bowed down under the weight of affliction. In the melting scene at the grave of Lazarus, we behold the divine sensibility as it now exists towards all the sons and daughters of fallen humanity; we behold there, we say, the divine sensibility brought in contact with a fountain of tears. As long as we hold that Deity though incarnate cannot suffer for us, we can never feel that he can weep for us. The acts of Christ therefore are not to us real revelations, as they were designed to be, of the heart of God. When the heart of the Father is thus read in the acts of the Son; when to the faith of the church, the Father thus dwells in the Son, and is thus manifested to us, then will the whole Deity come to the believer and abide with him forever.

Chapter 87

S. The True Believer

THE TRUE BELIEVER: His CHARACTER, DUTY, AND PRIVILEGES,

ELUCIDATED In a Series of Discourses. By REV. ASA MAHAN, President of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute, Oberlin, Ohio.

"Unto you, therefore, which believe, He is precious."

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PREFACE

SERMON I. THE GOSPEL PLAN.

Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory or God.— 1 Corinthians 10:31. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.--Prov., iii., 6. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus.— Php 4:6-7.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee— Isaiah 26:3.

Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for He shall save His people from their sins.— Matthew 1:21.

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.— Mark 9:23. THE design of the present discourse is not to give a particular explanation of the passages above cited, nor to deduce any one specific principle from them as the basis of my remarks; but to present some reflections of a general nature, designed to throw light upon the "GOSPEL PLAN"--reflections which have suggested themselves to my mind on reading these and kindred passages of Scripture. I need not here particularly remind the reader, that all that God requires of any being on earth or in heaven is comprehended in one word--L0VE--and that every particular precept is only a specific exemplification and application of this one principle. With this thought distinctly before the mind of the reader, I remark:

1. That love, in all its forms, implies devotion to the interest of its object. In the form of natural affection it implies this. Parental affection, for example, implies devotion to the feelings and interests of children. In the form of benevolence, such as is required by the moral law, love implies supreme devotion to the great interests and objects of benevolence existing in the universe around us. As exercised toward God, it implies supreme respect for, and delight in his character, implicit confidence in his veracity anti faithfulness, unreserved obedience to his authority, and the

consecration of our entire being to his kingdom and glory. As exercised toward the creatures of God, it implies the devotion of our powers to all their interests, temporal and spiritual, according to their relative importance, such as Christ himself manifested when lie was on earth. The person who exercises this love "lives, and moves, and has his being" for this object. "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father," will manifest itself, not merely in devotion to the spiritual and eternal interests of men, but also in "visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and in keeping himself unspotted from the world."

2. It is a fundamental design of Christ, in the plan of redemption, that the principles of the gospel, or the law of love, shall be carried out and exemplified by the believer, in every condition and relation in life--that he shall eat, and drink, and clothe his body, demean himself in the family, in the church, anti before the world, and regulate all his interests and transactions with his fellow-men, under the influence of the same spirit of love by which Christ was induced to "become poor for our sakes, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich." 'We understand, distinctly, the spirit by which Christ himself was influenced in every condition and relation in life, and by which a minister of the everlasting gospel ought to be influenced, in the duties of his sacred calling. The design of Christ is, that every believer shall be influenced by the same identical motives, in every condition and relation in life. "Whether, therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, DO ALL to the glory of God." "In all thy ways acknowledge Him." These arc the fundamental requisitions by which Christ designs and expects that we shall regulate our entire conduct before God and the world.

3. In some particular sphere in life, every individual is required and expected to glorify God, by devoting all his powers and interests to the divine glory, and conforming his entire deportment in that sphere to the principles of the gospel. On account of natural endowments and the arrangements and dispensations of divine providence, one person is adapted to, and required to move in one sphere in life, and another in another. But the farmer, the mechanic, the merchant, the husband, the wife, the parent, the child, are to glorify God by conforming their entire deportment and transactions with their fellow-men to the same principles of pure and perfect love by which the minister of the gospel is required and is expected to regulate his conduct in the discharge of the most hallowed duties of his sacred calling. Every man, what. ever his sphere in life may be, is expected to make it his supreme object to conduct himself, in that sphere, in such a manner that the greatest possible amount of glory shall result to God, and the greatest good to men.

4. In the particular sphere in which a person is for the time being called to move, there is the time and the place in which he is to glorify God. If he is at home, within the domestic circle, or abroad on a journey, or engaged in any of the ordinary or special transactions of life, it is, by ordering his whole deportment, in these particular circumstances, in conformity with the principles of the gospel, that God is to receive honor from him.

5. Such are the fixed arrangements of divine providence and grace, that if we do not thus glorify God in each particular sphere in which we are called to move, we do not glorify Him at all. He can receive no honor from us in any sphere whatever. Suppose, for illustration, a professed Christian is, as in this respect he ought to be, very punctual in his attendance upon the services of the sanctuary on the Sabbath, and upon all the meetings for social prayer, &c., and that in all these

services be appears exceedingly devout, if you should meet him nowhere else, you might, whatever his real character may be, receive a hallowed influence from his example; because you would think his external appearance a reflection of the state of his heart. But, should you detect that man, in some business transaction, in a settled plan to overreach you, what influence would his appearance in the house of God and the circle for social prayer, now exert upon you? As long as that sin remains upon that individual, unconfessed and unrepented of, it is impossible for him to glorify God in your estimation, in any other sphere, whatever his appearance and conduct there may be. The same principle holds equally true in all cases whatever. The man who does not glorify God in every sphere in which he is called to move does not glorify him in any.

6. A fundamental design of the redemption of Christ was and is to provide and reveal grace, by availing ourselves of which we may "serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear," in every particular sphere in which we are called to move. In this consists our " completeness in Christ." In making provisions for our redemption, He remembered us in every particular sphere and condition in which we are called to move. As a Savior, He presents Himself as able and willing to meet all our necessities, and to render us, in every relation in life, all that God requires us to be.

7. Hence, I remark, that if Christ does not save us, by rendering us, in our different spheres and relations in life, as parents and children, as husbands and wives, as citizens and members of the household of faith, what God requires us to be in these relations and circumstances, he does not save us at all, if he saves us, he does it by destroying in us the spirit of disobedience, and inspiring us with the spirit of obedience to the commandments of God. The man imbued with such a spirit will have "respect to all God’s commandments" in every relation in life. If Christ saves US, He does it by destroying our selfishness, and rendering us benevolent like Himself. The person possessed of such a spirit (and none others know Christ as a Savior at all), who loves his neighbor as himself, will not "overreach or defraud his neighbor in any matter." All his business transactions with him will be an exemplification of the law of love.

8. Hence, I also remark, if our faith dues not fasten upon Christ, to render us in our different spheres as above referred to, what God requires us to be, we do not, in any true sense, exercise faith in Him as a Savior from sin. It is in these circumstances and relations that our sins are found. Here we sin, if we sin at all. Here, then, our faith must fasten upon Christ, to be thus saved from our sins, or we do not know Him by faith as such a Savior.

9. Another fundamental principle of the gospel plan is this: in every condition and relation in life, we are authorized and required to look to Christ for special wisdom and grace, to render us, in those particular circumstances, all that God requires us to be. This we are to do, with the assured expectation, that, in conformity with his promise, while we "acknowledge Him in all our ways, He will direct our paths." "He will instruct us, and teach us the way we should go, and guide us by his eye."

10. While we thus consecrate our entire being to God, He kindly assumes the guardianship of all our interests, temporal and spiritual. While we are "careful for nothing, but in all things by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make known our requests unto God," his word stands pledged that "no good thing shall be withholden from us ;" that the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Our exclusive business, the only thing about which we are to be careful, is, to "hearken to God’s word," and do his will. His

business is to see that all our real interests are secure, all our real wants supplied, and our souls "kept in perfect peace."

Such is a brief outline of the Gospel Plan. The way is now prepared for some important remarks, arising from the train of thought thus far pursued; remarks designed to throw still further light upon this subject.

1. We see the relations between the moral principles and precepts and the doctrines of the gospel. The former constitute the rules of action in conformity to which we are required to regulate our heart and conduct, in all the circumstances and relations of life. The latter embody those motives and influences designed and adapted by infinite wisdom and love, to secure obedience to the moral precepts of Christianity. This is the design of every doctrine of the gospel, and this the relation between the doctrines and moral precepts of Christianity.

2. We see, in the light of this subject, in what conflicts the perfection of the gospel. It consists in the absolute perfection of its moral precepts, and in the equally perfect adaptation of its doctrines and influences to secure obedience to its moral precepts. Any other view of the gospel than this makes it, so far, an imperfect gospel.

3. We also perceive in what consists the perfection of Christ as a Savior. It consists in his perfect ability and willingness to meet entirely every demand of our being, in every condition and relation in time and eternity, it consists in his ability and willingness to remedy all the consequences of past sins, to secure us, in all future time, against the power of sin and all incentives to its commission, and to cause all, by whom He is inquired of by faith to do it for them, to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Such a Savior, we, as sinners, imperiously need; and were Christ in any respect deficient in these characteristics, He would be so far an imperfect Savior.

4. We may understand the nature of evangelical faith. The believer, in the exercise of such faith, recognizes himself as "complete in Christ," in every condition, relation, and sphere in life. To his mind, every promise of God is "yea and amen in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God the Father." His great inquiry is, What has God promised ? When he understands the blessing really embraced and proffered in any promise, his faith at once fastens upon Christ, to have that promise, in all its fullness, accomplished in his own experience. Then he has no more doubt, whether he shall realize its fulfillment, than he has of the veracity of Cod. He never "staggers at any promise of God through unbelief." When called to move in any particular sphere or relation in life, he at once looks to Christ for grace and wisdom to meet fully every responsibility devolved upon him in that relation. This he does, expecting to "receive of Christ’s fullness, and grace for grace," as his circumstances require. Such is true evangelical faith. Reader, is this the "confidence that you have in Him ?"

5. We may see the nature of unbelief. Unbelief assumes three forms:

(1.) It denies the truth of revelation altogether. This is Infidelity.

(2.) It admits the truth of revelation; but denies the fact, that provisions are made and revealed in the gospel to enable the believer to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" in this life. Or, it admits the adequacy of the provisions of grace, and then affirms that they sustain such a relation to us, that no believer ever did or ever will so avail himself of them in this life as to render the obedience required. This is unbelief--as manifested by the opposers of the doctrine of

Christian Perfection.

(3.) Unbelief in the third form, admits the provisions of grace. and the practicability of our availing ourselves of them, and then withholds the faith required. This is practical unbelief.

6. We may also notice the symptoms of unbelief, or those indications by which any man may determine whether he is under its influence:

(1.) The absence of a confirmed and settled peace of mind is a sure indication of unbelief. "They that wait on the Lord are as Mount Zion, which can not be moved." "They whose minds are stayed on God are kept in perfect peace." Faith recognizes in Christ a full, and perfect, and present supply for every necessity. Where is the place for carefulness in such a mind? Remember, reader, that if your peace is not "as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea," it is because of your unbelief.

(2.) Present disquietude in regard to the future is, a sure indication of unbelief. Faith recognizes in Christ a full supply of every necessity, in every possible exigency of our present and future being. It, therefore, "casts all its cares upon the Lord," with the most peaceful assurance that every want will be met as it occurs. Carefulness finds no place in such a mind. Will you bear it in mind, reader, that all disquietude about the future--whether it respects our temporal or spiritual interests--has its origin exclusively in unbelief?

(3.) Continued failure in good resolutions is another certain indication of the presence and prevailing influence of unbelief. Faith is "the victory which overcomes the world." It resolves upon obedience, and, by the grace of God, renders that obedience. Unbelief is overcome by the world. It "Resolves, and re-resolves, and dies the same."

Or, rather, despite its resolutions to the contrary, it slides back "with a perpetual backsliding." Reader, how is it with you? Do your oft repeated, and as often broken resolutions, proclaim the fact, that you are in unbelief?

(4.) Another very common indication of unbelief is, the idea, that there is in our circumstances and relations in life, something peculiarly unfavorable to our sanctification, and that when our condition is changed, we shall be more holy. How perfectly evident is it, that the faith of such persons rests, not upon Christ, but upon external circumstances. In other words, here are the certain indications of unbelief. Faith recognizes for itself an infinite fullness in Christ for every condition, relation, and circumstance in life.

(5.) The complaint of a heard heart is another sure indication of unbelief. God has promised to "take the stony heart out of our flesh, and to give us an heart of flesh." Faith lays hold of the promise, and realizes its fulfillment in actual experience. Unbelief, on the other hand, retains the heart of stone, as a fearful weight upon the soul. The conscious presence, therefore, of such a heart is a certain indication of unbelief.

(6.) A want of a felt, conscious assurance, that God hears and answers us when we pray, is another certain indication of unbelief. Faith introduces the soul into the very audience chamber of the Most High. It uses the name of Christ with the most fixed and peaceful assurance of being heard, and of having the petitions desired of Him. Unbelief, on the other hand, shuts the soul from God, and depresses it with the gloomy consciousness that God does not hear and will not answer.

Christian, when you pray with the feeling that God does not hear you, will you admit the fact that the cause is unbelief in your own heart ? Say not that past sin is the cause. Past sin originated in unbelief; and God always hears the prayer of penitence and faith, whatever the past may have been.

(7.) The common impression that such is the strength of our sinful propensities, and the number and power of our temptations and besetments to sin, that we can not hope to be sanctified in this life, is a certain indication of the wide-spread influence of unbelief. The language of unbelief in this case is, that Christ, as a Savior, is not able to deliver us from the world, the flesh, and the devil, or that he is not willing--the worst imputation that can possibly be cast upon his character. To say that Christ is able or willing to save us from all sin, when and only when He has got us beyond the reach of all temptation, is saying very little, surely, to his credit as a Savior. It is the most cruel imputation which unbelief ever casts upon his character. Christian, how often have you thus wounded Him, "in the house of his friends ?"

I might mention other symptoms of unbelief; but these are sufficient to enable the reader to determine whether he is under its fearful influence.

7. We can now see why it is that the religion of the majority of professing Christians waxes and wanes with external circumstances. Who does not know that this is the case with a very great proportion of the church? If religion is revived around them, they are excited and active. If it declines, "the love of many waxes cold." They lie down and slumber with the rest. What is the cause of such a state of things? I answer:

(1.) The religion of such persons is not a religion of love. If it were so, as soon as religion begins to decline, instead of going with the multitude, they would begin to "sigh and cry for the abominations" which are being done around them.

(2.) Theirs is not a religion of faith. Faith "looks not at things seen and temporal, but at things unseen and eternal." The religion of faith, therefore, is independent, for its strength and continuance, upon external circumstances. "It endures as seeing Him who is invisible."

(3.) It is not Christ, but external circumstances, which sustain and influence such persons. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Those who are really sustained and influenced by faith in Him, will, indeed, be as "Mount Zion, which can not be moved." When circumstances around them are unfavorable, He will "give more grace." "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

8. What then must we think of the condition and prospects of a great proportion of professing Christians ? Let the reader attentively examine the ninth chapter of Ezekiel, and there learn who, and who only, have the mark of God in their foreheads. "And he called to the man clothed in linen, which had the writer’s ink-horn by his side; and the Lord said unto him, go through the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men THAT SIGH AND CRY for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in my hearing, Go after him, and smite; let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary." But one solitary class, as we see, was spared; those who, amid abounding wickedness, "sighed and cried for all the abominations" which were being done around them. In all the churches of the living God, this one class only now stand approved in his sight, as

"the heirs of the grace of life." Reader, when "judgment shall begin at the house of God," Where will you appear ?

9. The true spirit of the gospel, that which distinguishes the sincere believer from all other men, next claims our attention. It is all comprehended in this--implicit faith or confidence in every truth of God, firm reliance upon all his "exceeding great and precious promises," and filial, unreserved obedience to all his commandments. There is but one thing that such an individual really fears, and that is sin. As from the pains of "the second death," he flies from it himself, and from all incentives and allurements to it, and in the deep sincerity of his heart, "sighs and cries" when others perpetrate it. This, reader, is the true Christian. This was the spirit of him whose name we bear; and remember, "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

10. I not unfrequently meet with the question, How shall we obey the great precept ? "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." How shall we demean ourselves in respect to food, drink, and dress, and the business relations and transactions in life, for example, so that we shall therein glorify God ? We are now prepared for a specific answer to such inquiries, inquiries of vast importance to every one who would "have respect to all God’s commandments."

Let us suppose that an individual, in all his business transactions and arrangements, maintains a strict adherence to the principles of integrity, and to the demands of the great law of love, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and that he seeks the guidance of wisdom from above in the disposal of all that Providence commits to his trust, regarding himself in all such relations as the steward of God, the servant of Jesus Christ. Such an individual will glorify God in his business transactions as really and truly, as the minister does in the most hallowed, duties of his sacred calling. Thus every individual may glorify Christ in all the varied circumstances and relations in life. The application of the principle under consideration to the regulation of our conduct in respect to food, drink, and dress, is manifest. "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving. For it is sanctified," that is, its appropriate use is a service, rendered virtue in us, and acceptable to God, "by the Word of God, and prayer." The great truth here presented is this: Every object which God created, he brought into being for a certain end. When from respect to what is in itself right, and to the will of the great Giver of all, we use such object for the end for which it was created, we honor God in its use. Our mental and physical constitution was created for a certain end, an end of which no one is ignorant. Food, drink, and apparel are requisite to this end. When from a sacred regard, and in strict subordination to this end, we gratify and regulate these propensities, never in obedience to the demands of pride, custom, or appetite, violating the laws of life and health, we then "glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are His." Thus, while we acknowledge God in all our ways, everywhere, and in all things, "He directs our paths" to his own glory. One of the most melancholy features of the prevailing religion of the present time, is the almost total divorcement of the fear of God, and respect for his laws, from the ordinary transactions of life. How few remember that EVERY work is to be brought into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil. It is a fearful thing, reader, to "defile the temple of God," and that temple, remember, is the mortal body which you now inhabit.

Reader--does God thus receive glory from you ? "He that is faithful in the least, is faithful also in much. He that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much."

11. We see how it is, that individuals lose the presence of Christ, when they leave their closets, or the house of God, and engage in business, when on a journey, or when brought into new and untried circumstances. The reason is, that they do not admit that Christ has provided special grace for them in those particular circumstances, or they do not avail themselves of that grace. If this were so, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, would keep their hearts and minds," at all times and under all circumstances. Christ will be with you, Christian, as the joy, the rest, the life, and peace of your soul, whenever and wherever you have faith to apprehend and receive Him. Whenever your faith abandons Him, then He leaves you in darkness and the shadow of death.

12. We see how it is, that many professors of religion destroy their influence as Christians, when they are not at all aware of the fact. It is through the temper and spirit which they manifest, in the peculiar spheres of active life in which they are called to move. For example, a clerk in a store, was under deep conviction of sin, and apparently on the point of submission to God, was turned backward, and rendered an infidel, in consequence of detecting his employer, a professed Christian, in an attempt to defraud a stranger out six cents, in the sale of a trifling article. The exhortations to repentance from that merchant could have no influence over that young man, after the disclosure of such a spirit. How many children are hardened into an incurable obstinacy against religion, in consequence of the ill temper of their parents in the domestic circle. Reader, is the blood of no deathless spirit sprinkled upon your garments, in consequence of your conduct in some unguarded hour? Does religion so influence you in every sphere and relation in life, that your entire deportment is a standing reproof against sin, and not an excuse for it?

13. We may understand the great defect in the gospel, as apprehended by the mass of Christians at the present time. One glaring and melancholy defect is, that Christ is contemplated almost exclusively as a Savior front hell, and not as a Savior from sin--as a justifying, and not as a sanctifying Savior. Another is, that the gospel, as now apprehended, has comparatively little to do with men in their particular and varied relations in life. They expect the gospel to influence them in the closet and on the Sabbath, but to have very little to do with them in the ordinary transactions of life. The gospel, when thus contemplated, can have but little influence upon Christians themselves, or upon the world through them. On the other hand, when Christ is recognized and received, as the parents' and the child's, as the husband's and the wife's, as the farmer's, the mechanic's, and the merchant's Savior--when every believer, in every sphere and relation in life, shall look to Christ as a special Savior to him in that particular sphere and relation in which, for the time being, he is called to move--then will the power of the gospel be felt in the church, and through the church upon the world. This, reader, is the gospel of Christ. Christ has come as a Savior to us, in every condition and relation in life. The promises and provisions of His grace cover our entire necessities, here and hereafter. There is no condition or relation in life where His grace is not extended, and where it will not be sufficient for us, if we have faith to receive it. Remember, "the just shall live by faith." Remember, also, the fearful declarations, "If ye will not believe, ye shall not be established ;" "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

Such, I repeat, is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Such a Savior is Jesus Christ to all who will receive and trust in Him. Do you love this gospel ? Have you faith to receive such a Savior ? If you can thus receive Him, not one "jot or tittle" of all that He has spoken and promised shall fail of its accomplishment in your blessed experience. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

"So let our lips and lives express, The holy gospel we profess; So let our works and virtues shine, To prove the doctrine all-divine."

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