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## **WEAKNESSES THAT ADAM CLARKE OVERCAME**

**By Duane V. Maxey**

Genesis 49:19 "Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last."

Hebrews 11:34 "Out of weakness were made strong"

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## Part 1

### INTRODUCTION

For the benefit of those who know little about Adam Clarke, I append the following sketch: "Dr. Clarke was born at Moybeg, Ireland, In 1760 or 1762. His father was a classical scholar and a member of the Church of England. His mother was of Scotch origin, and was a Presbyterian. When he was seventeen he came in contact with a couple of Methodist preachers, united with the Methodist church, and became a class-leader and preacher. He became a man of studious habits and gave especial attention to the oriental languages. The greatest work of his life was the preparation of his commentary, which is, even at this late day, consulted by the most learned biblical scholars. He worked on this commentary twenty-five years before it went to the publishers, and fifteen years were consumed in bringing it from the press, so that the work represents forty years of unremitting toil. As a divine, antiquarian, and oriental scholar, he was without a peer in his day. He was thrice elected president of the British conference. He died of cholera in London Aug. 26, 1832." -- From a clipping found pasted into the front of a copy of the biography of Adam Clarke by J. W. Etheridge -- author unknown

Along with many others, J. W. Etheridge held Adam Clarke in high esteem. This is seen in the Introduction of his Clarke biography, from which the following is taken: "... May he then who now writes, and they who shall read, the words of this record, be stirred up to follow the high example of him to whose memory these pages are consecrated; remembering 'the end of his conversation, Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, and today and for ever.'

"A quarter of a century has already passed since this eminent servant of God descended to the grave: yet, not for a day in this long interval has he ceased to preach among the living the truths which it was the labor of his life to illustrate and practice. And while some of his contemporaries, who, in their day, made a considerable figure, have already disappeared in oblivion, time, the great prover of all things, has, for the name of Adam Clarke, authenticated a title to immortality. The worth of his character, his massive and consecrated learning, the high motives of his laborious life, and the enduring beneficence of its results, have all been verified by a scrutinizing world.

"The retrospect of such a career will strengthen the best aspirations of the heart, and show us the way to attain their objects. Adam Clarke uplifts his eyes, at the outset, to the true standard of human effort, -- the glory and approval of the Most High God. With this great ideal he holds such habitual converse, as greatly to think, and feel, and live, till at length his character brightens into a deathless grandeur, and he 'stands in his lot' with those nobles of the universe who are 'a kind of first-fruits' of the creatures of God.

"Few ministers of the Gospel in the present age, by the integrity of their character, the splendor of their learning, and the sterling merit of their works, have acquired more largely the veneration of enlightened and impartial men in all parts of Christendom, than Dr. Clarke: and, if so

many of the good and great in every branch of the catholic church have learned to esteem his memory, it well becomes that particular communion of which he was a conspicuous ornament, and in the most intimate fellowship with which he lived and died, to enshrine his name in her heart, and to teach it to her children. 'He was a burning and shining light;' and we, who, while he was yet personally with us, rejoiced in the benefit of his luminous ministration, should give some worthy attestation of our grateful estimate of his labors and his love, and of our desire that those who follow us may profit, to distant ages, by the unfading reflections of his wisdom, and the inspirations of his great example."

Still, having known the man, Etheridge realized that Adam Clarke had not been "Adamically Perfect": "And, if the most sun-like of characters have had their spots, and no mere man, however great, has ever appeared without some imperfections and littlenesses, the subject of our memoir will not be depreciated, if we find that in opinion he was sometimes in error, or that in any of the partialities or prejudices of the heart he gave evidence of being a fellow-creature, of like passions with ourselves. But, after all, it will, I believe, be a common conclusion, that he was more free from these inevitable blemishes than most men."

Adam Clarke was a great man of God. None can honestly esteem him to be anything less. But the greatest and strongest Christians and Champions of the Faith have, at best, been men -- human beings who have, like all others, been beset by human infirmity. In this article, I propose to set forth two weaknesses that beset this great man -- weaknesses which threatened to limit his usefulness in this life, but weaknesses which he overcame at last, becoming both a greatly used and influential instrument in God's hands and a triumphant finisher of his own Christian race.

Some may feel that it is unfair or unwise to focus upon the hidden weaknesses of a man of God -- that such an examination does injustice to his reputation and injures his influence for Christ. Thus they might advise concerning the little-known, or unknown, weaknesses of Adam Clarke and other great men of God: "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest [a doubting, unbelieving world] rejoice, lest the [enemies of Christ thereby] triumph." (2 Samuel 1:20)

But Job 32:9 tells us that "Great men are not always wise." Great men of God make mistakes; the most beloved servants of Christ have weaknesses; prominent and revered Christians were, and are, very human, -- and sometimes a revelation of the weaknesses with which they struggled, but which they triumphantly overcame, will prove to be an encouragement to others grappling with similar difficulties in themselves.

In their efforts to shield revered men and hide their weaknesses, I think that sometimes Wesleyan/Holiness writers have been overly protective. They have succeeded in perpetuating great esteem for the sublime characters of their subjects, but have, at the same time, so "touched-up" the picture of those revered persons that sometimes they seem nearly infallible, flawless, or impervious to the temptations of common men. However, this sort of glossing has no place in Holy Writ. God-inspired writers of the Sacred Pages always "told it like it was," never sparing even the most highly revered leader or saint from a candid revelation of his or her weaknesses and failures. None of the patriarchs were shielded from a candid revelation of the facts, nor was Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Peter, or any other respected servant of God.

God saw to it that in His Word life facts, good or bad, were recorded as they were, without any glossing over, covering up, or distortion. And, when we read those accounts, we may say to ourselves: "Well, it is sad that this was true, but I respect the God who 'told it like it was.'" And, no doubt millions have profited from such revelations -- profited by emulating the good and avoiding the bad seen in Bible characters, and profited by aspiring to the strengths and by overcoming similar weaknesses as those found in men and women of the Bible.

Now to the subject at hand: Adam Clarke -- a great, a highly revered, man of God, but a man who was very human. Let us consider two weaknesses that beset him in life: the first, more widely known, and the second, little known and practically unknown.

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## Part 2

### THE FIRST WEAKNESS -- HIS LEARNING DISORDER AS A BOY

In his Autobiography (hdm0074) Clarke records the circumstances surrounding this boyhood problem, and the striking occurrence that helped him overcome this difficulty. The reader should be aware that while the lines extracted from his Autobiography below are those of Adam Clarke writing about himself, he writes in the third-person: as if it were another person writing about him -- "he" and "his" are used instead of "I" and "my":

"There was little remarkable in other parts of his childhood but that he was a very inapt scholar, and found it very difficult to acquire the knowledge of the Alphabet. For this dullness he was unmercifully censured and unseasonably chastised: and this, so far from eliciting genius, rather produced an increase of habitude, so that himself began to despair of ever being able to acquire any knowledge by means of letters. When he was about eight years of age, he was led to entertain hopes of future improvement from the following circumstance.

"A neighboring schoolmaster calling at the school where he was then endeavoring to put vowels and consonants together; was desired by the teacher to assist in hearing a few of the lads their lessons: Adam was the last that went up, not a little ashamed of his own deficiency: he however hobbled through his lesson, though in a very indifferent manner: and the teacher apologized to the stranger, and remarked that, that lad was a grievous dunce. The assistant, clapping young Clarke of the head, said, Never fear, Sir, this lad will make a good scholar yet. This was the first thing that checked his own despair of learning; and gave him hope.

"How injudicious is the general mode of dealing with those who are called dull boys. To every child learning must be a task; and as no young person is able to comprehend the maxim that the acquisition of learning will compensate the toil, encouragement and kind words from the teacher, are indispensably necessary to induce the learner to undergo the toil of these gymnastic exercises. Willful idleness and neglect should be reprehended and punished; but where genius has not yet been developed, nor reason acquired its proper seat, the mildest methods are the most likely to be efficient: and the smallest progress be watched, and commended that it may excite to farther attention and diligence. With those who are called dull boys, this method rarely fails.

"But there are very few teachers who possess the happy art of developing genius. They have not a sufficiency of penetration to find out the bent or characteristic propensity of the minds of their pupils, in order to give them the requisite excitement and direction. In consequence, there have been innumerable native diamonds which have never shone because they have fallen into such hands as could not distinguish them from common pebbles; and to them neither the hand nor the art of the lapidary, has ever been applied. Many children, not naturally dull, have become so under the influence of the schoolmaster.

"As soon as Adam got through the Reading made easy, had learnt to spell pretty correctly and could read with tolerable ease in the New Testament; His father, who wished if possible to make him a scholar, put him into Lilly's Latin Grammar. This was new and painful work to little Clarke, and he was stumbled by almost the first sentence which he was ordered to get by heart; not because he could not commit it to memory, but because he could not comprehend --

"In speech be these eight parts following; Noun, Pronoun, Verb, Participle, declined; Adverb, Conjunction, Preposition, Interjection, undeclined.'

"He, however, committed this to memory, and repeated it and many of its fellows, without understanding one tittle of the matter; for no pains were taken to enable him to see the reason of those things which he was commanded to get by rote; and as the understanding was not instructed, the memory was uselessly burdened.

"The declensions of nouns were painful, but he overcame them: the conjugations of the verbs he got more easily through, because there he perceived a species of harmony or music, and they were no burden to his memory; though each verb was required to be conjugated after the manner of Hoole yet he could pretty readily run through them all, and took delight to puzzle his school-fellows with difficult verbs especially those which admitted great variety of inflection e. g. Lavo, lavas, lavi, atque lavavi; lavare, lavandi, lavando, lavandum; lautum, lautu, lautum, lautu, lotum, lotu, atque lavatum, lavatu; lavans, lauturus, loturus, atque lavaturus.

"Propria quae maribus, he got through with difficulty at two lines each lesson; which he was to repeat, afterwards construe, and lastly parse. With the 'As in praesenti, of the same ponderous grammar, he was puzzled beyond measure: he could not well understand the *bo fit bi, do fit di, mo fit ui, no fit vi, quo fit qiu, to fit ti, &c. &c.* , and could by no means proceed: of the reason or probable utility of such things, he could form no adequate judgment: and at last this became so intolerable that he employed two whole days and a part of the third, in fruitless endeavors to commit to memory two lines, with their construction, of what appeared to him, useless and incomprehensible jargon.

"His distress was indescribable, and he watered his book with his tears: at last he laid it by, with a broken heart, and in utter despair of ever being able to make any progress. He took up an English Testament, sneaked into an English class, and rose with them to say a lesson. The master perceiving it, said in a terrific tone to him, 'Sir, what brought you here? where is your Latin grammar!' He burst into tears, and said, with a piteous tone, I cannot learn it. He had now reason to expect all the severity of the rod: but the master, getting a little moderate, perhaps moved by his

tears, contented himself with saying 'Go, Sirrah, and take up your grammar: if you do not speedily get that lesson, I shall pull your ears as long as Jowler's, (a great dog belonging to the premises.) and you shall be a beggar to the day of your death.'

"These were terrible words, and seemed to express the sentence of a ruthless and unavoidable destiny. He retired and sat down by the side of a young gentleman with whom he had been in class, but who, unable to lag behind with his dullness, requested to be separated, that he might advance by himself. Here he was received with the most bitter taunts, and poignant insults. 'What! have you not learned that lesson yet? O what a stupid dunce! You and I began together: you are now only in *As in praesenti*, and I am in *Syntax*!' and then with cruel mockings, began to repeat the last lesson he had learned.

"The effect of this was astonishing -- young Clarke was roused as from a lethargy; he felt, as he expressed himself, as if something had broken within him: his mind in a moment was all light. Though he felt indescribably mortified, he did not feel indignant: what, said he to himself, shall I ever be a dunce, and the butt of those fellows insults! He snatched up his book, in a few moments committed the lesson to memory, got the construction speedily; went up and said it, without missing a word! -- took up another lesson, acquired it almost immediately, said this also without a blemish, and in the course of that day wearied the master with his so often repeated returns to say lessons; and committed to memory all the Latin verses with their English construction, in which heavy and tedious Lilly has described the four conjugations, with their rules exceptions &c. &c. Nothing like this had ever appeared in the school before -- the boys were astonished -- admiration took the place of mockings and insult, and from that hour, it may be said from that moment, he found his memory at least capable of embracing every subject that was brought before it, and his own long sorrow was turned into instant joy!

"For such a revolution in the mind of a child, it will not be easy to account. He was not idle, and though playful never wished to indulge this disposition at the expense of instruction -- his own felt incapacity was a most oppressive burden; and the anguish of his heart was evidenced by the tears which often flowed from his eyes. Reproof and punishment produced neither change nor good, for there was nothing to be corrected to which they could apply. Threatenings were equally unavailing, because there was no willful indisposition to study and application; and the fruitless desire to learn, showed at least the regret of the want of that ability for the acquisition of which, he would have been willing to have made any kind of sacrifices.

"At last this ability was strangely acquired, but not by slow degrees; there was no conquest over inaptitude and dullness by persevering and gradual conflict; power seemed generated in a moment and in a moment there was a transition from darkness to light, from mental imbecility to intellectual vigor, and no means nor excitements were brought into operation but those mentioned above. The reproaches of his school-fellow were the spark which fell on the gunpowder and inflamed it instantly. The inflammable matter was there before, but the spark was wanting. This would be a proper subject for the discussion of those who write on the philosophy of the human mind."

In a remarkable manner, and ever so suddenly, Adam Clarke triumphed over whatever mental weakness it was that had long made him a dull student. Out of that weakness, he was made

mentally and intellectually strong -- so strong that his erudition and intellectual achievements are yet spoken of today (August, 1999) -- well over 150 years after his passing!

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### Part 3

#### THE SECOND WEAKNESS -- AN INTELLECTUAL DOUBT OF HIS SANCTIFICATION

This weakness in Clarke, this problem with which he grappled, seems to have been purposely hidden by various writers for many years. So few have read anything about this struggle of Clarke that perhaps most who read these lines will be greatly surprised, learning of it for the first time. But, great as he was, the dear man was plagued with what may have been a life-time struggle to gain the assurance that he was sanctified wholly. As I see it, none who read the Clarke biographies and writings should doubt that he was a man with a pure heart, cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. However, it is far less certain that Clarke himself ever reached the place, in this life, that his confidence was such that he publicly claimed the experience.

#### Clarke's Sanctification Experience Cast in a Positive Light

J. W. Etheridge, Clarke's early biographer, seemed to have purposely cast into the background the account of Clarke's struggle for the assurance of his sanctification. In the main portions of the biography, Etheridge makes only positive remarks about Clarke's sanctification:

[First Positive Quotation From Etheridge About Clarke's Sanctification] -- "The studies of his earlier years had always a bearing on this grand design. From the beginning, he felt the need of being taught by God to understand His own word. Referring to his comparatively juvenile life, he says: 'No man ever taught me the doctrine I embraced; I received it singly by reading the Bible. From that alone I saw that justification by faith, the witness of the Spirit, and the sanctification of the heart, were all attainable. These I saw as clearly as I do now; and from them I have never swerved...'"

[Second Positive Quotation From Etheridge About Clarke's Sanctification] -- "Dr. Clarke's religious experience was the work of God's Holy Spirit in the soul; begun, continued, and perfected. It was begun in true regeneration. That adorable Being who alone "can bring a clean thing out of an unclean" renewed his heart in righteousness; and to the grace thus given in his youthful prime Adam Clarke was faithful. Day by day he watched unto prayer, and walked humbly with God. Working out his salvation with fear and trembling, while God wrought within him to will and to do of His own good pleasure, he became established in grace, and endured to the end.

"He sought and found -- what every man is obligated to seek, and every Christian believer privileged to find -- the clear knowledge of pardon, and of adoption to be a child of God; and the witness of his acceptance in the Beloved was never removed from his soul. In his autobiography he gives an unequivocal statement to that effect. It appears also, in a letter written to Mr. Wesley, when Mr. Clarke was in the Norwich Circuit in 1784, that, while at Trowbridge, he had received powerful convictions of a need of the entire sanctification of his heart; that he had become acquainted with a good man, a local preacher, 'who,' says he, 'was a partaker of this precious

privilege; and from him I received some encouragement and direction to set out in quest of it, endeavoring, with all my strength, to believe in the ability and willingness of my God to accomplish the great work. Soon after this, while earnestly wrestling with the Lord in prayer, and endeavoring, self desperately, to believe, I found a change wrought in my soul, which I endeavored through grace to maintain amid grievous temptations. My indulgent Saviour continued to support me, and enabled me with all my power to preach the glad tidings to others.' These sanctifying graces were evidently strengthened during the latter part of his residence in the Norman Isles, on the bed of sickness in Dublin, and in the days of labor at Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol, and London; diffusing their effectual influence on all his life."

Thus, in the main body of his book, Etheridge put a very positive interpretation on Clarke's conversion and sanctification. He gives a quite lengthy account of Clarke's conversion -- a marvelous story! -- one that reveals somewhat of Clarke's struggle with personal assurance, but which concludes with such a powerful persuasion from on High that all of Clarke's doubts were forever swept away concerning his conversion. Etheridge relegated the negative aspect of Clarke's struggle for the assurance of his sanctification -- the full account -- to a Supplement in the back of the book -- hoping perhaps thereby to place it where fewer readers would read it, and where it would not detract from Clarke's greatness, nor minimize his influence.

If this was his intent, I say that it was a noble purpose, and very much in accord with Clarke's own wishes. In the following paragraph from the main body of the Etheridge biography of Clarke we can see the author's attempt to justify his reason for not entering into the specifics of Clarke's inner experiences, and following those remarks we learn that Adam Clarke did not want his Personal Journal published after his death, and that his son, Joseph Clarke, carried out those wishes and consigned his father's Journal to the flames.

"The varied experiences of his inner and spiritual life are not sufficiently known to warrant an attempt, on our part, to give a professed account of them. The biographies of many good men are enriched with extracts from registries made by themselves of the dealings of Divine grace with their souls. But Dr. Clarke left no such documents. Indeed, he appears to have been averse from things of that kind. He began to keep a diary, but left it off as early as 1785. When sometimes asked whether he would not publish his journal, or leave it to be published, he used to say, 'I do not intend any such thing: the experience of all religious people is nearly alike; in the main entirely so. When you have read the journal of one pious man of common sense, you have read a thousand. After the first, it is only a change of names, times, and places: all the rest is alike.' The Rev. Joseph Clarke, knowing his father's mind, committed those early journals to the flames."

It seems quite likely to me that the pages of Clarke's Journal contained perhaps a number of references to his sanctification struggle. But in the main body of the book, Etheridge casts a veil over that conflict and sums up Clarke's Christian experience thus: "Dr. Clarke's religious experience was the work of God's Holy Spirit in the soul; begun, continued, and perfected. It was begun in true regeneration. That adorable Being who alone 'can bring a clean thing out of an unclean' renewed his heart in righteousness; and to the grace thus given in his youthful prime Adam Clarke was faithful. Day by day he watched unto prayer, and walked humbly with God. Working out his salvation with fear and trembling, while God wrought within him to will and to do of His own good pleasure, he became established in grace, and endured to the end."



Following the lead of Etheridge, holiness writers down across the years have presented only the positive part of Clarke's sanctification, using quotations from the Etheridge account such as: "Soon after this, while earnestly wrestling with the Lord in prayer, and endeavoring, self desperately, to believe, I found a change wrought in my soul, which I endeavored through grace to maintain amid grievous temptations. My indulgent Saviour continued to support me, and enabled me with all my power to preach the glad tidings to others." As I recall, McClurkan did this, and various other holiness writers who apparently quoted from the Etheridge book. While it is true that perhaps none of them read the Supplement, wherein Clarke's struggle for assurance is seen, it seems more likely that some of them did read it, but elected to leave Clarke's sanctification struggle behind the veil.

Maybe many will say, "So what? Adam Clarke was sanctified wholly. What more need anyone to know?" Perhaps nothing -- but there is more to the story -- there is, "the rest of the story" -- and it may profit some to know that even a man as great as Adam Clarke had battles, some of which may have plagued him to his dying day, yet he overcame! Years ago, I heard of a saint of God who said: "I tell the world my victories, but I tell Jesus my troubles!" -- a good policy -- and yet sometimes the telling of an inner struggle over which a saint has triumphed can encourage another, going through a similar battle, to persevere and also gain the prize.

#### Clarke's Sanctification Struggle Revealed

In the Supplement of the Clarke biography by Etheridge we find a portion entitled: "Religious Experience." It is under this heading that the more complete account of Adam Clarke's sanctification is found -- an account that shows that he was still "hanging in doubt" beyond that hour. In the attempt to get some counsel that would dispel all doubt from his mind, and bring him into the clear assurance of his sanctification, Clarke wrote the following to John Wesley:

"Letter to Mr. Wesley, from Norwich, 1784 -- Since I was justified, I have expected and prayed for the inestimable blessing of a heart in all things devoted to God; which, soon after I received pardon, I found to be indispensably necessary. But, meeting with little encouragement, I obtained it not; and so spent that time in offering a maimed sacrifice. I continued in this state, or at most advancing slowly, till I came to this kingdom, when you ordered me into the Bradford Circuit. Here the good Lord was pleased to give me a sight of the unspeakable depravity of my heart, and in such a measure that the distress I felt was as painful in sustaining as it would be difficult in describing. I suppose, at that time, had there not been a sea between me and my native country, and a want of money to carry me thither, it is probable I should have made a speedy departure from the work in which I was engaged. I regarded nothing, not even life itself, in comparison with having my heart cleansed from all sin; and began to seek it with full purpose of soul.

"Thus I continued till December, 1782, when I opened my mind to a local preacher, who, I had heard, was a partaker of this precious privilege. From him I received some encouragement and direction; and I set out afresh, endeavoring to believe in the willingness of my God to accomplish this great work.

"Soon after, while wrestling in prayer, and endeavoring, self-desperately, to believe, I found a change wrought in my soul which I endeavored through grace to maintain, amidst grievous temptations and accusations of the subtle foe, who seemed now determined either to spoil me of my confidence, or to render me as miserable, through reiterated temptations, as I was before when mourning the inbeing of his infernal offspring. But my indulgent Saviour continued to support and encourage me, and enabled me with all my power to preach the glad tidings to others: so that I soon saw more of the effects of the travail of my Redeemer's soul than I had seen before ... But to this day I am in doubt respecting the work in my own soul, not being able with propriety either to affirm that it is (fully) done, or to deny it as undone. I am in a strait betwixt two; a fear of denying, lest thereby I should forfeit what I have received, or grieve the blessed Spirit; and again, a fear of affirming that it is done, lest I should deceive myself. When you consider this, dear sir, you can easily perceive how much I stand in need of your advice and direction."

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#### Part 4

#### WAS CLARKE EVER FULLY ASSURED OF HIS SANCTIFICATION?

Clarke was a young man in his twenties at the time he thus bared his soul to John Wesley in the above letter. Was he ever fully assured of his sanctification? To my knowledge, we cannot learn this for sure, either from his Autobiography, the Etheridge biography, nor from his Commentaries. And, there is some evidence that could be taken to indicate that he battled with doubts about his entire sanctification to his dying day. I am not prepared to pass judgment on this unanswered question, nor do I feel it necessary.

However, I am personally inclined to believe that he was very much sanctified wholly at the time of his experience described to John Wesley. But, he was a man of great intellect, and sometimes, perhaps as with his inability to accept the truth of Christ's Eternal Sonship, Clarke's mind got in the way of simple faith -- the faith of a child. If this is true, then his mental strength at times became his spiritual weakness. The Bible indicates that spiritual realities are "known by the heart," and not "with the intellect": Proverbs 14:10 "The heart knoweth... and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." -- Romans 10:10 "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

What are you saying? Just this: "In his heart" Clarke may well have been divinely given to "know" that he was sanctified wholly, while "in his mind" -- in his intellect -- satan beset him with so many nagging questions and perplexities, that this simple, heart knowledge was overshadowed. Still, knowing in his heart that the work was done, and in his heart and life enjoying sanctifying grace, Adam Clarke may have gone on from that hour -- impacting his own generation for God and for Holiness, writing his magnificent comments and theological truths to benefit coming generations -- all the while, and perhaps to his dying day, being greatly tempted of satan to doubt the fact of his own entire sanctification.

Do I hear someone say, "This could not have been!" I will not debate the matter. This may not have been the case at all with Adam Clarke. I will only assert that I believe that such has been the case with probably many more than one useful, influential, and triumphant saint of God. Do you

set this forth as the pattern to follow? Not at all, I merely state what I believe is sometimes the case when one's mental prowess is, in effect, a mental weakness taken advantage of by satan to beset a sanctified thinker with holiness doubts -- if possible, to his, or her, dying day. In the final analysis, it will be one's pure heart, and not one's mental clarity on the experience, that qualifies the saint for heaven -- and, while mental fog is not to be advertised as a spiritual norm, that fog in and of itself does not mean that the one experiencing it does not have a pure heart.

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## Part 5

### CLARKE'S TESTIMONY JUST SEVEN WEEKS BEFORE HIS DEATH

From the Etheridge biography of Clarke, I take it that Clarke died on or near Sunday, August 26, 1832. On a missionary journey he had been greatly exposed to Cholera, and it was this dreaded disease that took his life. The caps in the following quotation from Etheridge are mine.

"About seven weeks before his death, Dr. Clarke, in closing a short journal of his last visit to Ireland, does it with the following words:-- "Thus terminates a journey remarkable for affliction, disappointment, and suffering. I went over to Ireland to work; I could do nothing, being called to suffer. My soul, hast thou learned any good lesson? Yes.... The cholera was before me, behind me, round about me; but I was preserved, from all dread. I trusted in the sacrificial death of Jesus: no trust is higher; and none lower can answer the end. -- I HAVE REDEMPTION through His blood; and I AM WAITING FOR THE FULNESS OF THE BLESSING of the Gospel of Jesus..."

What did Clarke mean?: "I HAVE redemption... I AM WAITING FOR the fulness of the blessing..."? Was he saying that he was now saved, but was still waiting for the full sanctifying grace of God? Did his struggle to attain the full assurance of his entire sanctification continue from his youth as a man in his twenties until so late as seven weeks before his death?

Do Clarke's comments on this scripture in Romans 15:29 cast any light on the question? No, none at all. In fact, we cannot tell with certainty from any source of which I am aware, either that Clarke's assurance-of-sanctification-struggle ended long before, or continued to the day of his death. But regardless, we do know this: HE WAS TRIUMPHANT IN DEATH -- HE OVERCAME AT LAST!

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## Part 6

### SHINING EVIDENCE OF CLARKE'S FINAL TRIUMPH

Two years before his death, Adam Clarke wrote: "I have enjoyed the spring of life; I have endured the toils of its summer; I have culled the fruits of its autumn:-- I am now passing through the rigors of its winter: and I am neither forsaken of God, nor abandoned by man. I see at no great distance the dawn of a new day; the first of a spring that shall be eternal. It is advancing to meet me! I run to embrace it. Welcome, eternal spring! Hallelujah!"

And, that testimony about 7 weeks before his death did not end with the words: "I have redemption through His blood; and I am waiting for the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Jesus." That testimony continued thus (again, caps mine): "I Feel a simple heart: The prayers of my childhood are yet precious to me; and the simple hymns which I sang when a child, I sing now with unction and delight. hemoi gar to zan, Christos kai to apothanein, kerdos. (Phil. i. 21) ["FOR TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST, AND TO DIE IS GAIN."] Parosko hei polla didoskomenos. May I live to Thee, die in thee, and be with thee to all eternity. Amen. -- Adam Clarke."

Just before the great Bible Commentator and Champion of Holiness died, he was admonished by one at the scene, a Mr. Hobbs: "My dear Doctor, you must put your soul into the hands of your God, and trust in the merits of your Saviour." Trusting only in the blood of Jesus, Adam Clarke replied: "I do, -- I DO," and at a few minutes past 11:00 a.m. on that August morning of 1832, his soul wafted into the eternal presence of the God he served so well -- washed and made white in the Blood of the Lamb! Whatever were his weaknesses on earth, he overcame them at the last.

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THE END