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## **INWARD DIVINE GUIDANCE**

**By Thomas Cogswell Upham**

With a Preface By  
Hannah Whitall Smith

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## PREFACE

The subject of inward divine guidance is one of the deepest interest to every child of God. We all feel our need of it in our journey through this bewildering world, and we all hunger after it with great desire, But there seem to many honest and devout souls to be great difficulties connected with the whole subject; and some who have been the Most earnest in seeking to find this guidance, have been led very far astray into manifest delusion and fanaticism. There is evidently a great need for clear and healthy teaching in regard to a matter that is so vital to the welfare of Christians; and one would have expected to have found abundance of such teaching in the voluminous religious writings of the day. But strange to say this is not the case. Not long ago, in my desire to help some one who seemed in danger of going astray, I tried to find a book or tract that would state the subject in a safe and helpful way, never doubting but that I should find what I wanted at the first religious book store I entered. But to my surprise it was nowhere to be found; and neither did any religious teachers whom I met seem able to direct me to anything that would meet the need.

It is useless to say that in this search I did not recollect myself, nor did any one recall to my mind the fact that Upham had written the admirable treatise on the subject which is reprinted in this little volume. Somehow it seemed to have been largely lost sight of among his larger works; and I feel, therefore, very thankful that it is to be again republished and brought to the notice of the church at the present time, when its teaching will, I am persuaded, be of inestimable value to all who seek to know for themselves the inward guidance of the Holy Spirit, as a practical and daily experience.

I have read it afresh with the deepest interest, and believe that nowhere can there be found a clearer or fuller statement of the whole subject in all its bearings tells us concerning the blessedness of hearing and obeying the still small inspeaking voice of God in our souls, and at the same time it warns us of the temptations and dangers that will be likely to beset us. No one need fear delusion or fanaticism who follows the teachings of this book, and neither can such fail to be led into a more intimate communion with Him. I trust it may have a wide circulation and may be used by the Lord to lead many honest seekers after truth into paths of peace and safety

Hannah Whitall Smith  
Germantown, Pa.

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## 01 -- ON THE DISPENSATION OF THE HOLY GHOST

It is a scriptural, and I suppose a generally-acknowledged fact, that the world is now, in a special manner, under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. The Father, in conceiving and adopting the plan of man's redemption, may be said, in relation to our apprehension of things in time, to have reconciled justice and mercy prospectively. The Son, by coming into the world in accordance with the plan of redemption, and by fulfilling, in his death on the cross, the indispensable conditions of the plan, rendered this reconciliation not only prospectively, but presently and actually possible.

The office of the Holy Ghost. among other things, is to teach men; and by teaching, and other spiritual operations, to induce and enable them to accept and to realize, in their own renovated persons and natures, all the benefits which the wisdom of the Father has provided, and which the voluntary humiliation of the Son has rendered possible. The work of man's salvation, therefore, in its practical and personal application, and so far as it remains uncompleted, may be said to be under the direction of the Holy Ghost. Accordingly, when our Saviour. left the world, he held the following language to his disciples: "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." And again he says, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 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." John 16:7, 8, 12, 13, 14.

The Holy Spirit, therefore, is to be regarded as the appointed and effective renovator, guide, comforter, and teacher, of the children of men. In the moral and religious world, all good is from him; and beyond the reach of his influence, and irrespective of his presence and operations, there is not, and cannot be, any thing which is valuable or desirable. There are some reasons for saying, that the dispensation of the Holy Spirit is precisely opposite and antagonistical in its principles and results, to what may be called the natural dispensation, viz., the law of the natural heart, or the reign of self in the soul. Man, before his fall had a true life in God. He did not live by his own vitality, and flourish upon his own stock. The power of God possessed its habitation in the center of his soul -- a living, animating, purifying principle. If he possessed, as undoubtedly he did, what might properly be denominated natural ability, it was, nevertheless, natural ability made alive, inspired, animated, by an ability out of and above nature. It was enough for him to know, and rejoice in, the fact that God was the continuance, as well as the beginning, of his inward life; that every good thought and good feeling, that all purified activity and divine strength, all holy love and all angelic aspirations, were from God, and from God alone. And his apostasy, as it seems reasonable to suppose, consisted in the alienation and dethronement of this inward divine power, and in the substitution of self instead of God. In the language of another, "man broke off from his true center, his proper place in God, and therefore the life and operation of God was no more in him. He was fallen from a life in God into a life of self, into an animal life of self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking in the poor, perishing enjoyments of this world. This was the natural state of man by the Fall. He was an apostate from God, and his natural life was all idolatry, where self was the great idol that was worshipped instead of God." (Law's Spirit of Prayer, Part 1, chap. 2). The object, therefore, of Christ's coming into the world, was to place men essentially in the condition in which they were before the Fall -- not only to secure their forgiveness, but to make them holy; not only to make them holy, but to make them so in the only way in which Adam or any other being was ever made holy, viz., by means of the living and constant operation of God in the soul. Hence the necessity of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Hence the various directions which are given in the Scriptures not to grieve and not to quench the Holy Spirit. Hence the declaration, that Christians are the temple of the Holy Ghost. And accordingly it is a great truth, though but imperfectly understood and estimated, that he who moves and acts, in religious things, without the attendant operation and grace of the Holy Ghost, cannot be spiritually wise and is not in the way to be

spiritually benefited.

(II.) The object of that peculiar state of things, which may with some good reason be described as the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, will not be completely realized till all Christians are filled with the presence and the operations of this Divine Agent. And why should not Christians of the present day experience this great inward result, as well as those of the primitive ages? It was said of John the Baptist, even before his birth, "and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost." It is related both of his mother Elizabeth, and of his father Zachariah, "that they were filled with the Holy Ghost." The apostle Peter and the martyr Stephen are described as being, in like manner, "full of the Holy Ghost." The disciples, on the day of Pentecost, are said to have been "filled with the Holy Ghost." Similar language is applied to the Savior: And Jesus, "being full of the Holy Ghost," returned from Jordan; and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. The baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is repeatedly spoken of, probably means, in some places, if not in all, the same thing with being filled with the Holy Ghost.

In the times of the apostles, miraculous powers were connected with the descent and the circumstances of the times, and to have been temporary. But the infinitely greater blessing, the crowning work of the Holy Spirit, -- that of imparting to the soul the grace of assured or perfect faith, and the attendant grace of perfect love, -- still remains. Now, if the Holy Ghost came into the world to dwell with men, to take up his abode with them, and to teach them; if he came to inspire within them the highest possible faith and love, and to procure to them the highest possible purity and peace; then it seems to me that the object of the dispensation of the Holy Ghost is not, and cannot be, completely realized till it can be said of all Christians, as it was said anciently, that they are men full of the Holy Ghost. Till this is done, there is a resistance in the heart proceeding from the remaining life of self, and from the inspiration and artifices of Satan, which ought not to be. The Holy Spirit is ready, not only to advance, but entirely to accomplish, the Inward work, whenever the people of God are prepared, with childlike simplicity of spirit, and without any reservation, to undergo his sharply-searching and purifying agency. It is the spirit of self, showing itself in the forms of distrust and resistance, which obstructs this faithful but friendly operation; which grieves the Spirit, and prevents his purifying the heart with the waters of the interior baptism. Let the followers of Christ ponder well these important truths. Let them strive to keep in mind, that they can do nothing well, in the moral and religious sense of the terms, which is not prompted by the presence and suggestions of the Holy Spirit; and certainly they cannot do all things well, bringing every emotion and passion into subjection, and walking always in the commandment of faith and love, without being "filled," as the Scriptures express it, with his efficacious agency.

(III.) An inquiry may arise here, In what manner does the Holy Spirit operate in individual hearts? In relation to the subject involved in this inquiry, it does not appear that any specific and certain rule can be laid down. The methods of the divine operation appear to be one of the secret things which are hidden with God. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit, so far as his method or manner of his influences is concerned operates differently in different cases. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit." He sometimes comes with sudden and almost visible efficacy, and produces his results with "observation." But, still more frequently, as it seems to us,

he comes as a still, small voice, and operates in a secret and silent manner but with no diminution of effective power and of inward purification.

"If the Lord be pleased," says Mr. Fletcher, "to come softly to thy help; if he make an end of thy corruption by helping thee gently to sink to unknown depths of meekness; if he drown the indwelling man of sin, by baptizing, by plunging him into an abyss of humility, -- do not find fault with the simplicity of his method, the plainness of his appearing, and the commonness of his prescription. Nature, like Naaman, is full of prejudices. She expects that Christ will come to make her clean with as much ado, pomp, and bustle, as the Syrian general looked for when he was wroth and said, 'Behold, I thought He will surely come out to me -- and stand -- -and call on his God -- -and strike his hand over the place -- -and recover the leper.' Christ frequently goes a much plainer way to work, and by this means, he disconcerts all our preconceived notions and schemes of deliverance. 'Learn of me to be meek and lowly of heart, and thou shalt find rest to thy soul.' Instead, therefore, of going away from a plain Jesus in a rage, welcome him in his lowest appearance, and be persuaded that he can as easily make an end of thy sin, by gently coming in 'a still small voice,' as by rushing in upon thee in 'a storm, a fire, or an earthquake.'" (Fletcher's Works, Vol. 2, p. 650.)

(IV.) At this place in our remarks, another inquiry naturally arises -- How shall a person know, since the modes of the Spirit's interior action are so various, when he experiences the full or complete presence and operations of this Divine Agent? A proper answer, so far as it goes, would perhaps be, that this can be known only by the results of such divine presence and agency. These results, in their entire length and breadth, we will not attempt to analyze at the present time; -but will only go so far now as to say, that one of the most decisive marks of the presence of the Holy Ghost in its fullness, is a resigned and peaceful state of the spirit, originating in perfect faith in God. In the precise state of mind to which we now have reference, there seems to be an entire subsidence or withdrawal of that natural excitability which is troublesome to the Christian; and instead of the eager and unsettled activity of nature, the substitution of a pure and deeply-interior rest of the soul, such as was seen in our Saviour, and resembling, on the small scale of man's limited spirituality, the sublime and passionless tranquillity of God.

Undoubtedly there are other important marks, characteristic of the inward fullness of the divine power. But this, if it be rightly understood, may be regarded as the highest result of the divine operation upon the human mind. It is not, therefore, merely the Christian whose mental exercises are characterized by traits that are calculated to excite outward observation, that is filled with the Holy Ghost, to the exclusion of others. Still more frequently is this fullness experienced in the hearts of those who sit in solitary places, unknown to the world; who live, in the secrecy of their spirits, with God alone; and of whom the multitude around them, ignorant of the interior power which dwells in their souls, know only this -- that they perform the religious and temporal duties of life with fidelity and gratitude, and endure its trials and sorrows with silence and submission. We would not have it understood, however, as these remarks might seem to imply, that persons in this calmly peaceful and triumphant state of mind, are destitute of feeling. Far from it. They have feeling; but it is regulated feeling -- perfect in degree, but symmetrical in all its relations; and therefore resulting in that angelic aspect of religious experience which has been indicated. And the explanation is this: Every emotion is so perfectly adapted to its appropriate object; every desire and affection is kept so perfectly in its position; every volition moves so

surely and strongly towards the goal of perfect rectitude; all worldly tendencies and attachments, all hopes and fears, all joys and sorrows, are so completely merged in the overruling principle of supreme love to God, -- a principle which makes all of God and nothing of the creature, -- that the result is, and of necessity must be, inward quietude.

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## 02 -- GOD'S PROVIDENCES AND THE INWARD OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We propose, in the present chapter, to enter upon a subject which may justly be regarded as one of special importance and interest. The proposition which we lay down, and which we design to illustrate, is the following, viz.: We cannot, as a general thing, arrive at the true interpretation and import of the inward suggestions of the Holy Spirit, except by connecting them with, and considering them in their relation God's outward providences.

Our inquiry is, what are we to understand by the providences of God. In answering this question, it does not seem to be necessary, for any purposes we have at present in view, to go into the distinction, which is frequently and very properly made, of the ordinary or common providence of God, viz., that which is exercised in connection with secondary causes, and in the common course of things; and of the extraordinary providence of God, or that which is altogether out of the common way, and has the nature of a miraculous operation.

Saying nothing of extraordinary providences, we apprehend that there is no ordinary or common providence of God of such a nature as to exclude him from an actual presence and supervision in relation to all things whatever. It is enough for us to know that the hand of God is, either positively or permissively, in everything. In our apprehension, therefore, all events (excepting such as involve the commission of sin, and even these are to be regarded as permissively providential) are to be considered as providential in the positive sense of the term. In other words, whatever takes place -- sin only excepted -- is to be regarded as expressive, of the will of the Lord. The controlling presence of the Almighty is there. God is in it. Certainly, there is abundant foundation for this view. If God clothes the grass of the field if not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice, if the very hairs of our heads are numbered, how can it be otherwise? It seems to us, therefore, that every true Christian ought to see, and will see, God providentially and positively present, with the exception which has just been made, in the events every passing moment.

We remark, in the second place, that the presence and agency of God, in his providences, is not an accidental thing, but is a result which has reference to the divine wisdom and choice. Whatever takes place, with the exception of sin, is not only a portion in the great series of events, but takes place in accordance with the well-considered and divinely-ordered arrangement or plan of things. Accordingly, every thing which takes place indicates, all things considered, the mind of God in that particular thing. And hence we may be said to reach, through the divine providences, a portion of the divine mind, and to become acquainted with it. We do not mean to say that we possess, in respect to that particular thing, the whole of the divine wisdom; but we undoubtedly possess a portion of it which is unspeakably valuable. To some extent, certainly, it can always be said, that God reveals himself; that is to say, he reveals his mind and will.

We proceed to remark again, and in connection with what, has been said, that the providences of God are, to a considerable extent, the interpreters of the mind of the Holy Spirit. The mind of God, as it is disclosed in his providences, and the mind of the Holy Spirit, as it reveals itself in the soul, are one; and, consequently, in their different developments, from time to time, can never be at variance, but will always be in harmony, with each other. And not only this, -- they have a relation to each other, which is mutually and positively illuminative. They throw light, the one upon the other. Certain it is that the mind of the Spirit, in all cases of mere practical action and duty, cannot, as general thing, be clearly and definitely ascertained, except in connection with providential dispensations. Such dispensations are the outward light, which corresponds to and throws a reflex illumination upon the inward light. And this is so general a law of the divine operation, that persons who are truly led by the Spirit of God are generally, and perhaps always, found to keep an open eye upon the divine providences, as important and true interpreters of the inward spiritual leadings. And accordingly we find the following expressions in the Life of Madame Guyon: "My soul could not incline itself on the one side or the other, since that another will had taken the place of its own; but only nourished itself with the dally providences of God." And again: "The order of Divine Providence makes the whole rule and conduct of a soul entirely devoted to God. While it faithfully gives itself up thereto, it will do all things right and well, and will have every thing it wants, without its own care; because God, in whom it confides, makes it every moment do what he requires. God loves what is of his Own order." (Life Of Madam Guyon, Part 1, chap. 27; Part 2. chap. 2.)

Hardly anything, in the conduct of the divine life in the soul, is more important than thus to keep an open and faithful eye upon the arrangements of Divine Providence. Until the divine intimations within are cleared up and illustrated by the subsequent openings of Providence, it seems to me to be the duty of Christians to remain in the attitude of patient expectation, and of humble and quiet faith. It is true, we may already be possessed of the inward voice, the declarations of the Spirit in the soul. But these inward intimations, taken by themselves, may, in many cases, be very obscure; and so long as we do not satisfactorily know the Information involved in them, and the issues to which they lead, it is obviously a duty to keep looking upward, in a childlike simplicity and faith, for those further developments which the openings of Divine Providence may impart.

I have sometimes thought that there is a similitude, an analogy, between the natural mind and the spiritual mind, in relation to the subject now under consideration. The natural mind (that is to say, the perceptive and reflective ability which is naturally given us) is adapted in its operations and results to the natural world around us. The ability which we possess of realizing in ourselves the various auditory visual, and tactual sensations and perceptions would be of no avail, would be practically useless, without the corresponding sounds, colors, and forms, of the external world. The mind therefore, in some of its important operations, and, the external world, are precisely and admirably fitted to go together. They are practically the mutual correspondences and counterparts of each other. And it seems to be essentially the same with the spiritual mind; that is to say, with the mind enlightened and guided by the influences of the Holy Spirit. The mind is divinely inspired, in the first instance, with thoughts and views which may be considered as conditionally instructive and binding upon us; but which can be drawn out of this state of conditionality, and be made positively clear and binding, only in connection with those various outward events which the

divine providence is continually developing. As instruments Of music will not give utterance to their beautiful sounds till they are touched and swept by an outward hand, so the inward inspiration of the Holy Ghost is to some extent latent in the mind and is not susceptible of being distinctly analyzed and heard in its responses to the spiritual ear, until it receives its interpretation from the outward application of providential events. In other words, as the natural mind, and the natural or outward world, are mutually and reciprocally adapted, so also the spiritual mind and the providential world are mutually correspondences and counterparts of each other.

Accordingly, although a person may be fully conscious of the presence of the Holy Spirit operating upon and guiding his mind, still it remains a great truth, that it is a guidance which, in some important sense, may be regarded as dependent on those prospective developments which still remain in God's mysterious keeping. Hence, as the interpretation of the inward suggestions of the Holy Spirit exists, in so great a degree, in the correspondent facts and aspects of outward providences, it becomes every one as has already been intimated, and especially every one who is seeking to live a truly devoted and holy life, to keep an eye humbly but conscientiously watchful upon all providential events! As in the expressions which have already been quoted, he should "nourish himself with the daily providences of God."

In connection with the doctrine which has been laid down a few incidental remarks remain. I And the first is, that this doctrine strikes at the root of great eagerness of spirit and of all inordinate self-activity. He who would walk with God must walk in God's order. God not only requires us to obey and serve him, but to obey and serve him in his own time and way. In the eye of God, voluntary disobedience in the manner of the thing, is the same as disobedience in the thing itself. If, therefore, in order to walk with God, we must walk in God's order, and must operate with him in his own time and way, it will be necessary for us to subdue our natural eagerness and impetuosity of spirit.

Again, this doctrine is totally opposed to the indulgence of an inactive and sluggish spirit. He who is seriously disposed to meet every movement of God's providence in the fulfillment of every known duty, will find no time to be idly and uselessly thrown away. Every moment, as it comes, brings with it its appropriate instructions, and calls for its appropriate duties. It does not always call for outward action; but it calls for something to be done. It does not always, nor does it ever, call for a feverish and unreflecting excitement; but, on the other hand, it never approves a listless and unprofitable inactivity. Nevertheless, every moment brings its duty, although not always to be fulfilled in the same manner. That duty may be outward action; or it may be inward retirement and conversation with God. It may relate to the improvement of others; or may have relation to the instruction and improvement of ourselves. It may call us to open aggressive assaults upon the strongholds of sin, or to the secrecy of the closet and the sacredness of private supplication.

Finally, in view of what has been said, we may lay it down as a great principle in the practical doctrines of holiness, that a soul wholly devoted to God will always endeavor to move calmly, yet firmly and exactly, in the blessed order of the divine providences -- neither prematurely and excitedly hastening in advance, nor yet sluggishly and carelessly lagging behind.



And this truth, be it ever remembered, is one of the leading elementary conceptions embraced in the great and glorious idea of walking with God. It is noticed by writers on philosophical subjects, that some sorts of motion are pleasant and beautiful to the beholder, while others are not so. And they assert further, that objects in motion are thus beautiful, (for instance, a winding stream or a ship under gentle sail,) partly, at least, because they are in, harmony with the laws of our own mental movement. But where the outward motion, which we are contemplating, is accelerated beyond a certain degree of rapidity, so as to be out of correspondence with the natural movement of our own minds, it at once ceases to be pleasant and beautiful, and becomes painful; and so, on the other hand when the motion becomes unusually sluggish and tardy, so as to fall in the rear of the movement of our own minds, and retard it, it then also loses its character of beauty. And It is somewhat similar in relation to the providences of God. When the inward operation of the holy soul keeps in exact correspondence with the progress of God's providences, moving In time and place just where he moves, then all is orderly an divinely beautiful. But when, through unfaithfulness to God's grace, we are jostled out of the divine order, either by going in advance through precipitancy, or falling in the rear through worldly sloth we are no longer conscious of this divine harmony and beauty. Under such circumstances we necessarily lose, in a considerable degree, the sense of God's presence and favor, and, wandering in our own position, and out of the divine position, we experience but little else than darkness and sorrow.

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### 03 -- SUGGESTIONS TO AID IN SECURING THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

One of the most important questions which can occupy the minds of those who wish to experience the reality of the interior spiritual life, is, In what manner can we most certainly secure the ever-present and guiding influences of the Holy Spirit? We learn from the Scriptures, that those who are the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God. And a woe is expressly denounced against those "foolish prophets that follow their own spirit." (Ezek. 13:3.) The facts of individual, experience, in relation to the subject of a divine guidance, abundantly confirm the truth of the scriptural declarations. "Though this secret direction of the Almighty," says Sir Matthew Hale, who was distinguished as a Christian as well as a scholar and a judge, "is principally seen in matters relating to the good of the soul, yet even in the concerns of this life, a good man, fearing God and begging his direction, will very often, if not at all times, find it. I can call my own experience to witness, that even in the temporal affairs of my whole life, I have never been disappointed of the best direction when I have, in humility and sincerity, implored it." And I think we may undoubtedly regard it as a great truth, ever to be kept in remembrance, that the true children of God, so far as they live acceptably to him, are guided by the Spirit of God. This great truth, that, as followers of God, it is our privilege and duty to be led by the Spirit of God, may be realized continually in our personal experience, as it seems to us, in connection with a few simple but fundamental conditions.

I. In the first place, we cannot reasonably expect to be guided by the Spirit, unless we desire it. And if we expect a continuance of this guidance the desire must be permanent and strong. It would be extremely absurd to suppose that the Holy Spirit will condescend to dwell with us, if we have no desire for it, or if we have not a permanent and strong desire. But we cannot suppose

that those who aim after holiness of heart are without this desire: and therefore we do not consider it necessary to dwell upon this point.

II. In order to realize this great blessing, we must have faith in God, that he will do for us the thing which we ask. To desire of God without having faith in the Giver, is nearly as effectual a way to defeat the object of our request, as to be without desire. But on this point also we will not delay. Who can be ignorant that one of the first elements in the life of holiness is the doctrine of faith? "Without faith it is impossible to please God." How can it be possible, then, without faith, to receive the blessing of the Holy Spirit?

III. Besides those which have been mentioned, there is another condition necessary to be realized, in order to have the guiding influences of the Holy Spirit always with us; namely, we must cease from our natural activity. We do not mean to say that we must be inactive; that we must be wholly and absolutely without mental movement; but merely and precisely that we must cease from the activity of nature. In other words, ceasing from self and from its turbulent and deceitful elements, and, as a consequence of this, ceasing to place ourselves and our personal interests foremost, we must keep our own plans, purposes, and aims, in entire subjection. For instance, when we ask God to guide us, we must not at the same time cherish in our hearts a secret determination and hope to guide ourselves; just as some persons foolishly, and almost wickedly, ask the advice of their neighbors, when they have already fully decided in their own minds upon their future course of action. If we would have our desires of being continually guided by the Holy Spirit fully realized, we must not only give up our personal and self-interested plans and purposes, submitting everything into God's hands with entire childlike simplicity, but it is important also not to give way to uneasy, agitated, and excited feelings. The existence of undue eagerness and excitement of spirit is an evidence that we are, in some degree, afraid to trust God, and that we are still too much under the influence of the life of nature; so that to cease from the activity of nature, when properly understood seems to be nothing more nor less than to cease from the spirit of self-wisdom, self-seeking, and self-guidance, and thus to remain in submissive and peaceful simplicity and disengagement of spirit. In order that God may enter in, and may guide us by the wisdom of his own divine inspiration.

It may be proper to add here, that the view which has now been expressed is entirely consistent with the exercise of our powers of perception and reflection. A cessation from our natural activity, in the sense which has been explained, is not only consistent with, but it is evidently favorable to, a just exercise of these powers. They will be found at such times to be free from erroneous and disturbing Influences, and to possess a clearer insight into the truth.

IV. In order to secure the continual presence of the Holy Spirit, we must not only fulfill the condition of ceasing from the self-interested activity of nature; we must not only believe in God's truth and faithfulness to his promises, attended with a sincere desire for the blessing under consideration; but when we ask under such circumstances, it is our privilege and duty to believe that we now have the thing which we ask for. If, for instance, in true detachment and simplicity of spirit, and with a sincere desire for the object, we seek the divine wisdom, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit, to guide us in some difficult case of duty, we are bound, on the principles of Scripture, to believe (provided, further, that we exercise all our powers of perception and reasoning applicable to the case) that we do now have all that wisdom which God sees to be necessary for

us. Accordingly, we are not at liberty, in the spirit of distrust towards God, to go about to seek some new natural light to see our spiritual wisdom with. Such wisdom, resting in its origin, upon the immutable promise of God, a promise which is fulfilled in connection with the exercise of faith, is, for the most part, hidden from all forms of sight on the part of the creature, except one. That is to say, as it has its origin in connection with the operations of faith, and cannot exist except in that connection, to it is visible, in general, only to the eye of faith. It seems very evident, under the circumstances, and in the fulfillment of the conditions which have been mentioned, that we should do wrong, we should sin against God, not to believe in the actual possession of the thing which had been intercede for. It would evidently be a case of unbelief; and unbelief can never be accounted otherwise than a great sin. It is in accordance with this view, that we find the following expressions in the First Epistle of John 5:14, 15: "And 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."

In conclusion, we would remark, that in yielding ourselves up to the divine direction under such circumstances as have been mentioned, we not only have the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but I think we are not exposed to those illusions and mistakes which might otherwise be likely to befall us. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say, that we may be sure of being kept in the right path at such times. The state of mind which we have described is not only one of earnest desire and, strong faith, but, as it seems to us, of true meekness. And we are told in the Scriptures, "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." Ps. 25:9. It is the opinion of Fenelon, who seems to have had a personal experience of the divine operation deeply interior, that in the moments of mental quietness and of recollection in God, in other words when we look to God in a state of cessation from our natural activity, we should not hesitate to follow the interior impulses and attractions of the soul; meaning to be understood, undoubtedly, that if we believingly ask for divine guidance in such a state of mind, the attraction or tendency of the soul which then exists, cannot be safely ascribed to anything but the Spirit of God; and that, consequently, we may consider ourselves under a divine, and not under a mere human direction. This we believe to be true. Nevertheless, in this case, as in all others, we should never yield to the guidance of any interior attraction, however it may have the appearance of originating with the Holy Spirit, which at the same time we know 'to be at variance with the written Word of God. God can never contradict himself; and whatever revelation he has made of himself in his Holy Word we must regard as authentic, and as entitled to our supreme confidence. But with the limitation implied in this remark, we have no doubt that God, operating upon the mind in a divine manner, will certainly teach and guide those who, in renouncing the self-interested eagerness of nature, possess true meekness and quietness of spirit, and who believingly and earnestly look to him for such teaching and direction.

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#### 04 -- DISTINCTION BETWEEN IMPULSES AND A SANCTIFIED JUDGMENT

It is sometimes the case, that persons act from certain interior impressions, which may properly be termed impulses. It would certainly be very injurious to the cause of holiness, if the doctrine should prevail that mere interior impressions or impulses may of themselves become the rule of conduct to a holy person. That persons in sanctification are under a divine guidance, and

that they cannot retain the grace of sanctification without such guidance, is entirely true. But, it has sometimes been the case, that men have mistaken natural impulses for the secret inspirations of the Spirit, and, in the flattering belief of being guided by a higher power, have experienced no other guidance than that of their own rebellious passions. On the danger of such a state, of which the church has seen too many melancholy instances, it is unnecessary to remark. We proceed, therefore, to lay down some principles, which, if we do not err in our statement of them, will be of some assistance in guiding us in relation to this practical and important subject.

First. The Holy Spirit is very various in his operations upon men; but it will be conceded, I suppose, as a correct principle, that he generally conforms himself in his operations, whatever they may be, to the structure and laws of the human mind. Accordingly, in those operations -- the object of which is to guide or direct men, -- it will be found that he always acts in connection with the powers which are appropriate to such a result; and particularly in connection with the perceptive and judging powers. We desire it to be kept in mind, that we are speaking here of his directing or guiding operations; In other words, those which have a special connection with human conduct. These are the operations which most intimately concern us, and in regard to which it is most important to establish correct principles. We proceed to say, therefore, it is very obvious from man's mental structure, although he is sometimes the subject of a purely instinctive movement, that God designed that the perceptive and judging powers which he has given us should ordinarily furnish the fundamental condition or basis of human action. And if in his spiritual providences it should be found to be his practice to guide men in any way not in accordance with this design, he would be inconsistent with himself. The first principle therefore which we lay down, is this -- that the Holy Spirit guides men by operating in connection with the perceptive and judging powers.

And we may properly remark here, that this view, which is so important as to be deserving of the reflection of the most judicious persons, seems to be in accordance with the sentiments of the pious and learned John Howe. "We cannot," says this esteemed writer, "so much as apprehend clearly and with distinction the things which are needful for us to apprehend, without the light of the Spirit of wisdom. It is necessary (viz., the light which the Spirit of wisdom gives), in order to the act of distinguishing or discerning between things, what is to be done and what is not to be done. There is a continual need, through the whole course of our spiritual life, for the using of such a discretive judgment between things and things. And in reference hereto, there needs a continual emanation of the Holy Ghost, for otherwise we put good for evil and evil for good; light for darkness and darkness for light. We need the Spirit's help, to shine with vigorous and powerful light into our minds, so as to bring our judgments to a right determination."

Second. We may lay it down as another principle, that the Holy Spirit does not, either by his gentle influences, or by those which are more sudden and powerful, so operate upon a person as to guide him into any course which is truly irrational and absurd. Now we know, in many cases, if we should yield to the direction of mere impressions and impulses, especially those which are of a powerful kind, we should be led to do those things which to whatever test or measurement they might be subjected, could not escape the denomination of irrationality or absurdity. Of such impulses the Holy Spirit can never be the author, because nothing which is really absurd and irrational (we speak not of the mere appearance, but of the reality of absurdity) can come from that source. I recollect once to have read the account of a person, published by himself, in which he gives the reader to understand, that on a certain occasion he was suddenly and violently seized by

the power of God, as he expressed it -- an expression undoubtedly synonymous, in the view of the writer, with the power of the Holy Ghost; that he was raised up by divine impulse from the chest on which he was sitting, and was "whirled swiftly round, like a top, for the space of two hours without the least pain or inconvenience." We do not see on what grounds such an extraordinary result as this, so unprofitable and absurd, can properly be ascribed to the power of God or the of the Holy Ghost; especially if it be susceptible of explanation, as we think it can be, in a considerable degree at least, on natural principles. We know that the Savior was full of the Holy Ghost; but we do not read of his being subjected to any operation of this kind. We know, also, that the apostles although they were plentifully endowed with the Divine Spirit, and under his teachings wrought various wonderful works, yet were never at any time made the subjects of such irrationalities. We have here, therefore, a mark of distinction, viz., that various irrational and absurd results may flow from natural impressions and impulses. but can never flow from the true operations of the Holy Spirit.

Third. Actions which proceed from pure impulse, or a mere internal impression, without attendant perception or reflection, cannot possibly be holy actions. What we mean to say is, that there is a natural impossibility of their being such. A mere impulse, unattended by perception and reflection, is of the nature of an instinct; and any action, done from mere blind impulse, no matter how strong or extraordinary that impulse may be, is both physically and morally of the nature of an instinctive action. Now, as it is universally conceded that purely instinctive actions have no moral character, it is entirely evident that impulsive actions, which are of the same nature with instinctive actions, have no title to the denomination, or character of holiness. Some persons seem to think, the more they act from impulse, especially powerful impulse, the more holy they are. But this, if we are correct in what has been said, is a great and dangerous mistake.

Fourth. That the Holy Spirit does sometimes act directly upon the sensibilities by exciting in them a purely impulsive feeling, we may probably admit. Undoubtedly there are some facts, in the experience of pious men, which favor this view. But is it the object of the Holy Spirit, in originating impulsive impressions to excite men to immediate action without any reflection, or to excite them to act rationally; that is to say, in connection with suitable inquiry and consideration? This is the important question; and the decision of it involves great practical results. It is certainly reasonable to suppose, that it is not the object of the Holy Spirit when he makes a direct impulsive impression on the human mind, to lead men to act without perception and reflection; but rather to stop them in their thoughtless and unreflecting career, and to awaken within them the slumbering powers of thought and inquiry. It is reasonable to suppose this, because, as a wise being, as a being acting in accordance with the laws of, the human mind, as a being infinitely desirous of true holiness in men, we do not perceive how he can take any other course than this. The true tendency, therefore, of those impressions or impulses which come from the Spirit of God, is to awaken men to a sense of their thoughtlessness and to quicken within them a state of humble and holy consideration. When such impressions and impulses are from the right source, we cannot doubt that the results will be of this character, that is to say, they will not of themselves lead men to direct action, but will lead them to that inquiry and reflection which are preparatory to action. But when impressions or impulses come from Satan, as they sometimes do, their tendency is to lead men to action at once, without such intermediate consideration

Fifth. Those impulses and impressions which are from the Spirit of God are of a peaceful and gentle character. They never agitate and disturb the mind but, on the contrary, lay a wholesome restraint upon it, and hold it in a state of deep solemnity and of attentive stillness. This is the precise state of things which is needed as preparatory to the mind's perceptive and reflective action. The first question of the soul, when it is thus arrested by the true impulses of the Holy Spirit, is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It pauses; it reflects; it inquires; it reads the Bible; it watches the providences of God; it prays; it asks for the assistance of the Holy Spirit upon its perceptions and reasonings; and it dares not take one step to the right hand or to the left, until all its perceptive and reasoning powers have been exercised and, exercised too, under the sanctifying guidance of the Holy Spirit. So that, although we may admit that there are some sensitive impressions and impulses which are from the Holy Spirit, yet they are not of themselves, when they are really from that right and good source, guiding and controlling principles, but are merely preparatory to the action of such controlling principles, which are to be found in the intellective, rather than the sensitive part. And such impressions are to be known by the decisive mark or characteristic which has now been given; viz., they are peaceable, holding the mind in a state of solemn and quiet attention. Perhaps a simple illustration will make our meaning more readily understood. A person is at a particular time peculiarly impressed that it is his duty to visit another person and converse with him on the subject of religion. If this impression is of divine origin, it will not violently agitate him; it will not lead him to action, whether rationally or irrationally; it will not necessarily and absolutely compel him to visit the person at once, and without any intermediate exercise of the mind. It will lead him, in the first instance, to reflect, to consider the suggested or impressed duty in various points of view, to mark the openings of God's providence, and to pray that, in his reflections and inquiries in respect to duty, he may be guided by the Holy Spirit. In a word, the impression which he has prompts him, in the first instance, merely to make a prayerful inquiry; but in his further action he puts himself under the direction of a sanctified judgment; or, if the expression be preferred, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost operating through the medium of a sanctified judgment. In accordance with these views, we find the following passage in the writings of Antonia Bourginon: "If the Holy Spirit inspires any thing, he always gives time to consult upon it with God."

Sixth. Impressions and impulses, which are not from the Holy Spirit, but from some other source, such as a disordered imagination, the world, or the devil, are not of that peaceful and quiet character which has been mentioned, but are hasty and violent. In violation of the great Scriptural maxim, "He that believeth shall not make haste," the person who is under this pernicious influence thinks he cannot be too quick. He makes, but little account of obstacles; cannot take time for interior examination; he has no open eye to God's outward providences; he is too impetuous, too much possessed by himself or by Satanic influence, to engage in calm and humble prayer for guidance; in a word, he rushes blindly onward just as his great adversary, who is especially interested in his movements, would have him.

The great plea of these persons is, that the time is now; that what is to be done is to be done now; that the present moment is the true moment of action. This is essentially true; but there is a valuable remark of Fenelon, which places the doctrine of present or immediate action in its correct position. It is, that the present moment has a moral extension. In other words, we are undoubtedly bound to fulfill the duty of the present moment; but it is the present moment, not in a state of barren insulation, but considered in all its relations to God, man, and the universe. But it is perfectly

obvious, that the duties of the present moment cannot be fulfilled in their moral extension without calling in the aid of a calmly reflective and sanctified judgment.

Seventh. When an action is performed, to which we are prompted by a gracious and not mere natural or Satanic impulse, but which action is not attended with all those good results which we expected and hoped, we are entirely acquiescent. We receive the result without trouble of mind. For Instance, we are led, in the providence of God and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to converse with a person on the subject of religion; and, contrary to our hope and expectation, he coolly and superciliously rejects our message. The result, though painful, does not disquiet us. We leave it calmly in the hands of God. Whereas a person, who performs an action from an impulse which is not from the Spirit of God, and who finds the result different from what he expected, will be likely to experience a degree of submissive dissatisfaction, and to show signs of fretfulness. And I think it a matter of common observation, that Christians who are governed in a considerable degree by natural or any other impulses not divine, mistaking them for a truly spiritual guidance, are, to use the common expression in the case, "always in trouble;" sometimes with the church; sometimes with their minister; sometimes with one thing, and sometimes with another; and alas! not infrequently, although they seem to be wholly unaware of it, with the wisely-ordered providences of God himself. They are not childlike, and meek, and lowly in heart, as those always are who are truly guided by the Holy Spirit. They are not like the Savior, who, when he was oppressed and afflicted, opened not his mouth, but was led as a lamb to the slaughter.

Eighth. We are continually taught by good men In the Bible. that we ought to be like our heavenly Father, to be holy as he is holy, to be perfect as he is perfect. And I suppose it is the general design and aim of Christians, who are striving after high attainment In holiness, to bear this blessed image. But probably we do not any of us conceive of God as acting impulsively and without reflection; as regulating his conduct by the stupid instinct of impressions, without the clear light of perceptive rationality. We should be deeply afflicted and affrighted in being obliged to ascribe to our heavenly Father such a character as this. Similar views will apply to the Savior. He himself says, John 5:30, "I can of mine own self do nothing. As I hear, I judge; [that is to say, the communications of the Holy Spirit call my judgment into exercise] and my judgment is just because [implying in the remark that he was uninfluenced by any suggestions and impressions from self] I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." Are we not safe, then, if God desires and requires us to be like himself, and to be like him also, whom, In the likeness of man, he has set before us as our example, in saying that a judgment enlightened by the Holy Spirit is the true guide of our actions, rather than blind impulses and impressions?

It will be, recollected that we do not absolutely deny the occasional existence of impulses and impressions resulting from the operations of the Spirit of God. But we cannot well avoid the conclusion, that they are entitled to no influence, and are not designed to have any, except in connection with, the subsequent action of an awakened and. Sanctified judgment. And it is this view only which can rescue them from the imputation of blindness and irrationality, even when they come from a good and right source. When, therefore, we speak of them as blind and irrational, we wish to be understood as speaking of them as they are in themselves, and without being enlightened by the subsequent action of the sanctified intellect. The subsequent action of the mind, which may always be expected to follow when they come from the Holy Spirit, cannot fail to impart to them a new and interesting character.

In conclusion, we would remark, that the doctrine of present sanctification has much to fear from not accurately distinguishing natural and Satanic impulses from the true movings of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. Many, who ran well for a time, but who afterwards yielded themselves to impulsive influences which were not from the Spirit of God, have wandered into perplexed and divergent paths, to the injury of the cause of holiness and of their own souls. And we Would just remark here, that the most interesting and satisfactory illustrations of holy living which have come under our notice are the cases of persons who endeavor constantly to put themselves under the direction of a sanctified intellect; who are willing to do anything and everything for the glory of God; but who feel that they need and must have wisdom. These persons can testify that they are guided by the Holy Spirit; but they can testify, also, that the Holy Spirit does not require them to do any thing which an enlightened and sanctified intellect does not appreciate and approve. And hence their course is marked by consistency and sound discretion. They are not different men at different times, on whom no dependence can be placed. They are always at their post; supporters of the ministry; pillars in the church; patient under opposition and rebuke; faithful in warning sinners; counselors in times of difficulty; mighty in the Scriptures; burning and shining lights in the world. It is such persons that truly sustain and honor the blessed doctrine of holiness; presenting before the world the mighty argument of consistent holy living, which unbelievers cannot confute, and which the wicked and the envious are unable to gainsay.

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## 05 -- ON SPIRITUAL CO-OPERATION WITH GOD

It is very obvious that man, considered as a rational and voluntary being,, is designed for action. And when we consider the, relation of entire dependence which man sustains to his Creator, it is no less obvious that human action ought to assume and to maintain the shape of co-operation with God. This is designed to be, and it ought to be, the great object of our life, viz., cooperation with God.

First. In endeavoring to ascertain the principles of this important subject. We remark, in the first place, that we are not to undertake to decide for ourselves (that is to say, by a reference to our own wishes merely) what we are to do, and what we are not to do. Such a course would exhibit a disposition to co-operate with ourselves, if we may so express it, rather than with God. On the contrary, realizing deeply the general fact of our liability to error, we should ever be in that state of mind which will lead us, with meekness and simplicity, to inquire what our heavenly Father will have us to do. We should have no choice of our own, which shall be, in any degree whatever, at variance with his choice. The thing to be done, whatever it may be, must be left with him. This is one condition on which we can co-operate with God, and without which it is evident that no acceptable co-operation with him can take place.

Second. We are not in the second place, while we leave to God to ascertain the object to be done, to undertake, of ourselves, to prescribe the time of doing it. God has not only a work to be done, but he also has a time of doing it. His time is the right time, and no other time is. David was willing to build a house of worship for the Lord. But the time which Infinite Wisdom prescribed for this great work has not arrived; and, in the spirit of acquiescence, he left It to his successor. In



repeated instances the Savior expressed the sentiment, that "his hour was not yet come;" implying, very evidently, that the great events of his life, whether of action or of suffering, had their appropriate time; and neither the protestations of friends, nor the dictation of enemies could induce him to violate the maxims of true wisdom, by anticipating, even for a moment, that appropriate period. If, therefore, we gird ourselves for action, however good the object to be done may be, either before the appropriate time or after it, we do not co-operate with God, who always acts precisely at the right time. This is a point which it is very important to remember. Persons are more likely to fall into error here than in the particular which was first mentioned. There is a sort of latent feeling, (a very unrighteous feeling it is,) that if God is permitted exclusively to designate the object, we should have some degree of liberty in exercising our own wisdom, either partially or wholly, in the designation of the time. In other words, we are apt to feel that a less perfect submission is required in regard to the time than in regard to the object. This tendency must be carefully guarded against.

Third. We are not, in the third place, while we leave to God to ascertain the object to be done and the time of doing it, to undertake to decide for ourselves as to the manner of doing it. We know how it is in ordinary life. A servant sometimes, or even a son, will do what the master or father has commanded, and do it at the right time; but will do it, perhaps, with excitement and rudeness of feeling, without true cordiality of heart, and that laborious care which might reasonably be expected. It is true that we have here the essentials of a visible and operative co-operation; but it is evident that we have not that higher inward and mental co-operation which God requires. We must co-operate cordially. If we are associated with others, we must be willing to take the first place or the last place, to act as leader or servant, just as God chooses. We must also take any part of the work which God sees fit to impose upon us; that which is esteemed low and degrading, as well as that which is more agreeable to refinement of taste and to prevailing notions of honor and dignity. In every thing of this kind, and in every thing else which can properly be included in the manner of doing what God imposes, we are required to follow, cheerfully and unhesitatingly, the indications of the Divine Will -- otherwise there is no true co-operation.

Fourth. In order to realize, personally, the conditions of divine cooperation which have been mentioned, it is necessary to be, mentally, in a state of passivity, as it is sometimes expressed; or, more properly and truly, of strict impartiality before God. In other words, we must be willing to submit ourselves to the divine guidance, without the least resistance or bias of mind; remaining in the attitude of silent and sincere waiting upon God, that we may learn, from him what he would have us to do; and also at what time and in what manner. The language of our souls must be essentially that of the Psalmist, when he exclaimed, "My soul, wait thou only upon the Lord; for my expectation is from him." And it is implied in this, especially, that our minds should not be under the influence of prejudice or of wrong passion in any form. When the mind has arrived at the state of entire submission and of holy impartiality, resulting in the removal of the stains of prejudice and the shades of passion, It resembles a clear and bright mirror, reflecting easily and distinctly the desires and purposes of God. In this state of mind it is easy to leave everything with him; to receive from him, implicitly, the annunciation of the thing to be done, and also all the attendant conditions of doing it. God is pleased to be present with, and to operate in, such a soul. The Holy Spirit teaches it; and it has both the power to hear and the spirit to obey. But in any other condition of mind there must, necessarily, be a conflict between the agitated and self-interested will of the creature and the decisions of the Supreme Mind.

Fifth. When we enter into the state of co-operation with God, we must feel that our agency is entirely dependent and secondary in all the subsequent progress of the work, whatever it is, not less than in its incipient stages. I know that man has will, and that he has power. It would be a great error to deny or to doubt it. But it is equally true, that he is dependent; and that in a very important sense, he has nothing. We must, therefore, not only begin in our nothingness, but must be willing to remain in it. It is a partnership where we must realize, that not only all the capital, but, when properly considered that all the personal operative power, are from one source. Man works, it is true; but God works in him. Man working without God's working, as the basis of it, is of no avail. Man's strength is in God's strength. Hence there must be no undue anxiety, no unsuitable and excited eagerness, no methods and plans of action originated and prosecuted on worldly principles; which necessarily imply some distrust of the skill and resources of the great Being who has thus condescended to work by means of human instrumentality. We must move when God moves; stop when he stops; deliberate when he deliberates; act when he acts. Any assumption, on our part, of superior wisdom or strength -- any disposition to move in anticipation of his movement, or in any way to forestall the divine intimations -- would be getting not only out of the position of dependence and nothingness, but out of the line of co-operation.

Sixth. As closely connected with what has already been said, and in accordance with the commonly-received doctrine of "preventing," or prevenient grace, we remark further, that, in co-operating with God, it seems to be necessary that we should be in a state of reciprocity rather than of communication. In other words, it being admitted that we have nothing of our own which we can communicate or give to God, it would seem to follow that our cooperation, so far as it has an existence at all, must depend upon the fact of our receiving from him. Accordingly, it seems to be our great duty, by meekness and simplicity of heart -- by freedom from worldly vanities, and entire self-renunciation -- to put ourselves in the true receptive attitude. We must remember especially as unbelief is apt to find its way in at this entrance, that God is always ready to communicate himself. We need not fear that our divine Associate in this great co-partnership will be found wanting. On the contrary, It is his desire, his delight, his highest happiness, to communicate himself; and the reason why he does not communicate himself to all men at once, is the existence, in their bosoms, of obstacles which they themselves have voluntarily placed there; so that the highest honor and the highest power of man is, having put away these obstacles, to wait upon God, in the exercise of simple faith, for the reception of the divine sufficiency.

But some will perhaps inquire in connection with the views presented, Shall we remain inactive? I reply, that man is justly and sufficiently active when he is active in communication with God, and yet remaining deeply in his own sphere of nothingness. Man never acts to higher and nobler purpose than when, in the realization of his own comparative nihility, [nihility n. 1 non-existence, nothingness. 2 a mere nothing; a trifle. -- Oxford Dict.] he places himself in the receptive position, and lets God work in him. He who is receptive is neither idle nor unprofitable. In the intercourse between man and his Maker, it is the receptive, and not the communicative activity, which is the source of truth, riches, and power. The religious man, in his receptive activity, is like the earth, (so far as we can compare things mental with material,) which reaches into its plowed and expanded bosom the morning dew, and the summer shower, and the daily sunshine; that thus, by being prepared to receive them, and by being endowed with abundant communications from without and above, it may, subsequently, become rich in itself, and in its

own vitality, as it were, be crowned with fruit and flower. Or perhaps we may say, more appropriately, that he is like those scholars who are impressed with a sense of their own inferiority and ignorance, and are willing to sit patiently and humbly at the feet of their distinguished teachers, that they may grow in knowledge. Their minds are receptive, but not inert -- are in the attitude of listening, but are not idle. They ultimately, in the way of co-operation with what they have received, become fruitful in themselves; but it is only because they are humble and attentive recipients in the first instance.

Seventh. Besides that co-operation in particular emergencies, which has already been remarked upon, we may observe further, that God requires a constant co-operation -- a co-operation moment by moment -- what some writers have described as "living to God by the moment." It is a universal law, unalterable as God is, and lasting as eternity that no created being can be truly holy, useful, or happy, who is knowingly and deliberately out of the line of divine co-operation even for a moment. Accordingly, we are to consider every moment as consecrated to God. It is true that, in order to the full and assured life of God in the soul, there must be the general act of consecration, which is understood to relate to a man's whole nature, and to cover the whole ground of time and eternity. And we may say further, that it is proper to recall distinctly to mind, and to repeat at suitable times, the general act of consecration; but it does not appear to be necessary in the strict sense of the terms, or in any other sense than that of repeating it, to renew it, unless it has been, at some period, really withdrawn. But while the general act remains good, and diffuses its consecrative influence over the whole course of our being, it is necessary to consecrate ourselves in particular as the events or occasions of such particular consecration may successively arise. And in the remark as we now wish it to be understood, we do not mean merely those events which, while they are distinct, are peculiarly marked and important; but all events, of whatever character. In other words, although we may have consecrated ourselves to God in a general way, and by a universal act of consecration, in all respects, and for all time, we must still consecrate ourselves to him in each separate duty and trial which his providence imposes, and moment by moment. The present moment, therefore, is, in a special sense, the important moment -- the divine moment -- the moment which we cannot safely pass without having the divine blessing upon it.

Thus extensive is the doctrine of divine co-operation, when it is rightly understood. How thankful should we be, thus to be permitted to enter into partnership, insignificant as we are, and to become co-workers, with God! Such was the life of Enoch, of Abraham, of Daniel, of John, of Paul. How the idea of the life of man, thus united with the life and activity of God, throws discouragement and dishonor upon all low and groveling pursuits, and at once elevates and sanctifies our nature!

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## 06 -- EVIDENCES OF BEING GUIDED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

It is the object of the present chapter -- without professing, however, or attempting, to exhaust the subject -- to lay down some of the marks (or evidences of being guided by the Holy Spirit.

And, accordingly, we proceed to remark, in the first place, that the person who is guided by the Holy Spirit will be eminently perceptive and rational. The operations of the Holy Spirit, in the agency which he exerts for the purpose of enlightening and guiding men, will not be found to be accidental, or arbitrary, or, in any sense, irrational operations. It is hardly necessary to say here, after what has been said in the chapter on the Distinction between Impulses and a Sanctified Judgment, that the Holy Spirit is not an ignorant, but a wise Being -- not an agent that is moved by unenlightened impulse, but by perfect knowledge. And this being the case, it is a natural supposition, and one which will be generally assented to, that his operations will always exist in accordance with, and not in opposition to, the laws of the human mind. And, furthermore, according to the Scriptures, a primary and leading office, though not the only office of the Holy Spirit, is to teach men -- to lead them into the truth. And if so, then, ordinarily, the first operation will be upon the intellect, in distinction from the sensibilities and the will. And we do not hesitate to say, in point of fact, and as a matter of personal experience, that the person who is guided by the Holy Spirit will find that this divine agent does, in reality, impart an increased clearness to the intellectual or cognitive part of the mind. This divine operation is, for the most part, very gentle and deeply interior; revealing itself by its results more than by the mere mode of its action; but it is not, on that account, any the less real. It seems to put a keenness of edge, if we may so express it, upon the natural perceptivity, so as to enable it to separate idea from idea, proposition from proposition; and thus to guide it, with a remarkable niceness of discrimination, through the perplexities of error, into the regions of truth. We repeat, therefore, that one evidence of being guided by the Holy Spirit is, that such guidance contributes to the highest rationality; in other words, the person who is guided by the Holy Spirit (other things being equal) will be the most keenly perceptive, judicious, and rational; not flighty and precipitant -- not prejudiced, one-sided, and dogmatical -- but, like his great inward Teacher, calmly and divinely cognitive. The experience of holy men, particularly of those who have made it a practice to ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit on their studies, agrees with this statement.

Second. We observe in the second place, that the person who is guided by the Holy Spirit will possess a quickly operative and effective conscience. This is too obvious to require much remark. It seems to be impossible that a man should be guided by the Holy Spirit, and not experience a purified and renovated activity of the moral sense. This important result is what might naturally be expected, among other things, from the result on our intellectual nature which has already been indicated. It is well known that the conscience operates in connection with the intellect, and subsequent in time. There must necessarily be certain intellectual data or facts, as the basis of the inward conscientious movement. And in accordance with this law, in proportion as the truth, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, develops itself from the intellect with greater and greater clearness, the action of the conscience becomes increasingly distinct, sensitive, and energetic. It becomes a sort of flaming sword in the soul, and keeps it in the way of life. Accordingly, on this principle, no man, who has a dull and sleepy conscience, a rough and blunted edge of moral perceptivity, is at liberty to say that he is guided by the Holy Ghost.

Third. When we are led by the Holy Spirit, there will be a subdued, tranquil, and well-regulated state of the natural sensibilities, in distinction from the moral sensibilities or conscience; that is to say, of the various appetites, the propensities, and the affections. It is well understood, that when we are led by the world or by Satan, the various natural propensities and affections which constitute what we understand by the natural sensibilities are, in general, ill

regulated, agitated, and turbulent. A really worldly man is either externally or internally an agitated man; generally in movement, and generally discordant with himself; resembling the troubled sea, and casting up to the surface of his spirit mire and dirt. On the contrary, he who is led by the Holy Spirit, with the exception of those occasional agitations arising from the purely instinctive impulses, which do not recognize the control of reason and the will, is always subdued, patient, quiet. His natural propensities, which, in persons who have not experienced the same grace, are so turbulent and violent, run peaceably and appropriately in the channels which God has assigned to them. His natural affections, which so often become the masters and tyrants of the mind, submit to the authority of conscience and the will. The inroads and shocks of the heaviest afflictions pass, over him, and leave his inward submission and his peace unbroken. A divine tranquillity is written upon the emotions and desires, upon the affections that linger upon the past, and upon the hopes that move onward to the future. In this respect, being under this divine and transcendent teaching, he is like his heavenly Father. The Infinite Mind is always tranquil.

Fourth. We remark, again, that the teachings of the Holy Spirit will have a tendency to beautify and perfect the outward manner, as well as the inward experience. And, accordingly, he who is truly under this divine direction will always find his conduct characterized by the utmost decency, propriety, and true courteousness. I believe it is a common remark, that a truly devout and holy person may, in general, be easily recognized by the outward manner. And this remark, which is confirmed by experience, has its foundation in nature. The natural life, which is inordinately full of self, and is often prompted in its movements by passion, pride, and prejudice, will of course develop itself in an outward manner as extravagant, inconsistent, and imperfect, as the inward source from which it springs. Hence, it is that we so often see, in the intercourse of man with man, so much that shocks our notions of propriety; so much, in word or in action, that is characterized by violence or levity; so much that is unsuitable to the time and place. But he, on the contrary, in whom, the natural life is slain, and in the center of whose heart the Holy Spirit has taken up his residence, to inspire it with truth and love, will discover an outward manner as true, as simple, and as beautiful, as the inward perfection from which it has its origin. A voice inspired with gentleness and love; a countenance not only free from the distortions of passion, but radiant with inward peace; a freedom from unbecoming gayety and thoughtless mirth; a propriety of expression resulting from seriousness of character; a disposition to bear meekly and affectionately with the infirmities of others; a placid self-possession; an unaffected but strict regard to the proprieties of time, place, and station, can hardly fail to impress upon the outward beholder a conviction of the purity and power which dwell within.

Fifth. We proceed to say, further, that he who is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit will always find himself in the possession of coincidence and union with the divine providences. He will not only be in harmony with whatever is true and beautiful in human intercourse, but there will also be no jarring and no points of discordant contact between his conduct and the unerring consecution of providential dispensations. This will be sufficiently obvious, we suppose, after what has been said in some of the preceding chapters, without going into any length of remark. It is unquestionable that the will of God is made known, to a considerable extent, in his providential dealings. Consequently, the language of the Holy Spirit will never, in an case, contradict the correctly interpreted language of divine Providence. On the contrary, they will always completely, and as they have but one author, will necessarily, harmonize. To illustrate the subject, the Holy Spirit will never instruct an individual to give to religious purposes a certain amount of property,

when the providence of God, by taking away his property, has rendered the donation an impossibility. Again the Holy Spirit will never, by an interior teaching, instruct a man to go upon a distant missionary enterprise, when at the same time the providence of God, by placing him on a bed of sickness, has rendered him incapable of the requisite physical and mental exertion. And if any impressions or convictions, which thus involve a contradiction of the voice of the Spirit and the voice of Providence, should rest upon the mind of any person, he may be assured that they come from a wrong source, and ought to be rejected. We assert, therefore, that he who is led by the Holy Spirit will find his conduct beautifully harmonizing with the events of divine providence, as they daily and hourly develop themselves. In other words, while he is continually led by the inward guidance to do and to suffer the divine will, he always finds himself acting and suffering in co-operation with the manifested designs and arrangements of God.

Sixth. He who is led by the Holy Spirit will find his conduct, so far as he is the subject of this divine guidance in entire harmony with the teachings of the Scriptures. It has already been intimated that the voice of the Spirit can never be contradictory to itself. And accordingly, having spoken in the Scriptures, it can never contradict what it has there said by any interior revelation to individual minds. If, for instance, the Scriptures, dictated by the divine Spirit, have, for wise and adequate purposes, authorized and required the specific observance of the Lord's day, and have authorized and required the setting apart of the ministry, or have recognized and established other institutions and ordinances, it would be unreasonable to suppose that the same Spirit, in contradiction to himself, will guide individual minds to a disregard and contempt of those institutions. And in like manner, if the Bible, in any case of specific and personal action, requires a thing either to be done or to be omitted to be done, the Holy Spirit, operating on individual minds, will teach the same thing, and will always lead the subject of his operations to the performance in the one case, and to the omission in the other. And in all cases whatever, as the Holy Spirit speaking in the heart, and the Holy Spirit speaking in the Bible, necessarily, utter the same voice, they will necessarily, in their ultimate tendencies, lead to the same result.

And we may remark further, in connection with what has now been said, that he who is led by the Spirit will love to be led by the Spirit. It will be his delight And under the influence of this divine attraction, he will earnestly strive to ascertain the mind of the Spirit. And consequently he will be led to the Bible, as one of the most valuable means of ascertaining it; he will read it much; he will read it with seriousness, candor, and prayer; that he may know the length and breadth of the divine communications which are there made. And the pleasing and important result will be, that his life will be characterized by the same traits of submission and love, of regard for the divine institutions and precepts, of prompt and consistent action and of mighty faith, which adorn the lives of those of whom the Scriptures gives us an account.

Finally. We may remark in conclusion, and as in some sense embracing the whole subject: It is an evidence that a person is guided by the Holy Spirit, whose whole conduct, whether considered in its particulars or in its general outline, has a distinctly favorable bearing on the promotion of God's glory in the world. The end of all things is the glory of God. In the promotion of this great object, God the Holy Ghost co-operates with God the Father and God the Son. The Holy Ghost, therefore, recognizes and enforces the great truth that all subordinate tendencies, that all inferior and private interests, whenever they receive a correct and sanctified direction, will always converge to the same center, and will never reach their terminus, if we may so express it,

except in the bosom of the adorable Infinite. To this great result all his interior and individual teachings infallibly tend. To know all things, and to love all things, in God; to annihilate self in all the various forms of creature-love and of self-will, and to make God the great center of our being; this only is true wisdom and everlasting life. He, therefore, who is led by the teachings of the Holy Ghost, will be taught that he must think for God, feel for God, will for God, act for God; and that the great reality of God, which is the true beginning and completion of all religious life, must be received into the soul as the paramount motive; and with a power to expel all subordinate motives and to reign there forever with supreme dominion.

Such are some of the marks by which those may be known who are led by the Divine Spirit. These are a hidden people. They have intimacy with the Highest; but they are, nevertheless, the little ones, they are almost unknown among men. Rational with the highest degree of rationality, scrupulously conscientious, ever desirous to learn the will of God as manifested in his Word and providences, modest and sincerely courteous and becoming in their intercourse with their fellow-men, and governed under all circumstances by a supreme regard to God's glory, they pass calmly and devoutly through the world, blessed in themselves and a blessing to others. And yet the people of the world, blinded by their unbelief, but little know and little value that interior instruction, by which they are thus guided to the illuminated heights of evangelical perfection. Happy is he who is led, not by mere sights and sounds; not by strange and momentary impressions, which may come from the disordered senses, from the world, or from the devil; but by that clear light which illuminates the intellect, the conscience, and the heart; which is ever consistent with itself and with God's Word and providences; and which has, in reality, for its author, the Comforter, the Holy Ghost.

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## 07 -- ON THE STATE OF INWARD RECOLLECTION

I believe it is the case that all those, who have had much experience in the principles and methods of interior living, agree in attaching a very great importance to the state of inward recollection. It is certainly difficult to meet the crosses and trials of life with composure, and to sustain the soul on other occasions in purity and peace, without the aid of inwardly recollected habits of mind. However sincere may be our desire for entire devotedness of heart, and whatever resolutions we may form with that view, we shall often find ourselves in confusion of spirit, and inadvertently failing in the fulfillment of our own resolutions, without this important aid.

In the recollection is that serious and collected state of mind, in which God is realized and felt as the inward and present counselor, guide, and judge of all our actions, both internal and external. In its results, when it becomes the fixed habit of the soul, it not only restores God to the inward possession and establishes him upon the throne of the intellect and heart, but, differing from that condition in which he comes in broken and fragmentary visits, it sustains him there essentially, without interruption, in what may be termed a continuance or perpetuity of presence. In a word, it is the devoutly and practically realized presence of God in the soul, moment by moment. This is the state of mind which we cannot hesitate in saying all Christians ought to be in. It is hardly necessary to say that it is a scriptural state of mind. It is obviously implied and taught in those numerous passages of Scripture, which inculcate the duty of watchfulness, which speak of setting

the Lord always before us, of walking with God, and of our inability to do anything without him. And it is not more agreeable to God's Word than it is suited to man's condition; not more scriptural than it is necessary. We need it in order to know what to do. We need it in order to do what is proper and necessary to be done, in a just, Christian, and holy manner. We need it in all times and places, and in small things as well as great; since there are no times and places from which God ought to be excluded, and nothing is so small, hat it may not have great and important relations.

It will be objected, perhaps, that the state of inward recollection, considered as a state of long continuance and still more as perpetual, is an impractical one. Whatever it may be to others, (and undoubtedly it is a state of mind which is never experienced either in the absence of religion or in a low state of religion,) it is certainly not impracticable to a person of a truly devout spirit. But how can it be possible, says the objector, inasmuch as the religious life is made up, in a great degree, of specific religious duties, that a person can give the attention of his mind to those duties, and be occupied with the distinct idea of God at the same time? The difficulty which is implied in this objection, whatever may be its reality or its extent, is met and obviated, at least for all practical purposes, by an acknowledged law of our mental nature. We refer to the principle or law of habit. By means of this law, the rapidity of the mental action may be increased to a degree almost inconceivable; so much so that actions, which are distinct in time, will appear to be simultaneous and objects, which are separately attended to, will appear to be embraced in one mental view. And so far as all practical purposes are concerned, the acts of the mind, which thus separately and successively take place, may be truly regarded as one act. And applying this law to the state of inward recollection, recollection, we may easily see how the mind may be occupied with a specific duty, and may at the same time be percipient of the divine presence, and may also connect the two together, and impart to them a character of unity, so that the duty may properly be said to be done in a religiously-recollected state. The movement of the mind in relation to the duty, and then in relation to God as cognizant of the duty, and the transition from one to the other, are all so exceedingly rapid, that memory does not ordinarily separate and recognize them as distinct acts; and thus, in our apprehension and consciousness of them, they are blended together as one. God, therefore, in our mental contemplation of him, may be made present to all our specific duties; and thus the essential condition is fulfilled, which enables the mind to exist in the state of inward recollection. It is our privilege, therefore -- a privilege too often undervalued and neglected -- to do everything which Christian duty requires, as in the divine presence, in God and for God. We proceed now to specify some of those antecedent conditions or tendencies of mind, which may properly be regarded as preparatory, and even indispensable, to the state of inward recollection.

(I.) In the first place, there must be a sincere and earnest desire to possess it. This eminent grace, without which the kingdom of God in the soul will be liable to constant irruptions and overthrows, will never be possessed by a heart that is indifferent to, its possession. It can belong to those, and those only, who with a sincere disposition to seek God in all things, can be truly said to "hunger and thirst after righteousness."

(II.) In the second place, in order to possess recollection of spirit, it will be necessary not to be involved, to an undue extent, in the perplexities of worldly business. There is such a thing as admitting so much of the world and its cares into the mind, as to crowd out the great idea of God. Indeed, this is often done. And thus men, and some of them, too, who occasionally observe the formalities of religion, become practical atheists. I notice, in reading the religious writings of



Antonia Bourignon, that she expresses her opinion to one of her correspondents, that God had sent a certain affliction upon him, in order to bring him to the state of mind which we are now considering. "The multitude of your comings and goings," she remarks among other things, "and other agitations of body, do, without doubt, disturb the inward recollection. It is impossible to converse purely with God, [that is to say, when we permit them to have their natural effect upon us,] in the midst of external agitations." And again she says, in writing to another person, "If you could but proceed in this affair, keeping your spirit recollected in God, I doubt not but it would succeed to his glory and your great good. I speak always of this recollection; because I myself can do nothing out of it. God's spirit is a well-regulated orderly spirit, which proceeds with temperance, and weight, and measure, and discretion, without any manner of precipitation."

(III.) In the third place in order to possess inward recollection, we are to have nothing to do, as a general rule, in thought or in feeling, or in any other way, with any thing but the present moment, and its natural and necessary relations. Discursive thoughts of a flighty and purely imaginative character, either going back to the past, for the mere purpose of drawing pleasure from it, or prospective and anticipative of the future in the manner of an idle man's reverie, are great hindrances to a recollected state. We are, in that, way rather pleasing ourselves than God; and the divine presence cannot well be secured at such times. In other words, as a general rule, there must be before us some present object; and that object must be regarded by us particularly in its moral aspect and relations. The present moment is necessarily, to a certain extent, a declaration of the divine will, and furnishes the basis of present duty. And it is the duty of the present moment, considered in its moral extension, to which, and to which. only, God will consent to be a party.

(IV.) It may be added, further, that the state of mind which we are considering will not be likely to be possessed without great fixedness of purpose; a holy inflexibility of will, which keeps the mind steady to its object. We must not only wish to be the Lord's in this matter, but resolve to be so. It is well understood that even worldly objects, restricted as they are in compass and importance, cannot, in general be satisfactorily accomplished by an unfixed and vacillating mind. And still less can the vast object of religion. I know, if the great object of interior recollection is proposed to be secured by the mere labor of the will alone, without the co-operation of the affections, it will be hard work, and useless work too. And, on the other hand, a favorable posture of the affections will be of but little avail, unless aided by the super-added energy of a fixed determination. But when the decisive and uncompromising act of the will combines its influence with that of the aspirations of the heart, the most favorable results may, with the grace of God, be reasonably expected. It is true, without the grace of God, nothing can be done, whatever may be the applications and discipline of the mind. But when the conditions which have been mentioned are fulfilled, the divine assistance, if we may rely upon the promises, can never be wanting.

(1.) It has already been intimated, that the state of mind to which our attention has been directed is one of great practical importance. And we proceed, therefore, to observe now that one of the benefits connected with the state of inward recollection is, that it is favorable to the best improvement of time. It will be a matter of course, that the person who lives in religious recollection will avoid unnecessary employments. With the idea of God, and perhaps we may add with the reality of God, continually present in his heart, scrutinizing every motive and action, and continually enforcing the claims of moral obligation, he will find no time to be spent idly, nor for the mere purpose of pleasure. Nor can he under the circumstances be the subject of internal

dissipation; of vain and wandering imaginations and reveries; but will be enabled, to a degree unknown before, to bring every thought, as well as every feeling into subjection. In order to prevent misapprehension, it may properly be added here, that whatever recreation of body or mind, either by social intercourse or any other way, is really required by the physical and mental constitution and laws, is entirely consistent with duty and with inward recollection -- a remark, however, which requires, in its practical application, no small share of wisdom

(2.) Again, the state of inward recollection tends to diminish greatly the occasions of temptation. It is very obvious that he who knows nothing but his present duty in itself and its relations, which is all that is necessary for him to know, cannot be so much exposed in this respect as other persons. Unspeakable dangers must, of necessity beset the mind which is full of worldly activity and which is continually discursive, running upon errands where it is now called; curiously and unnecessarily speculative; prying oftentimes, with microscopic minuteness, into the concerns of others, not only without reason, but against reason. What a flood of tempting thoughts must flow out upon these various occasions, and throng around the mind! what suggestions, which Satan knows well when and where to apply, to envy, distrust, anger, pride, worldly pleasure, ambition! none of which probably would have approached the mind that remained recollected in God.

(3.) Another remark is, that inward recollection helps us to know the truth, especially moral truth. The supreme desire of him who has fully given his heart to God, is, not merely that he may be happy, and thus please himself, but that he may know and do God's will. Knowledge, therefore, (we do not mean all kinds of knowledge, but particularly that which has relation to the divine will,) is obviously of the greatest consequence; and those will know most who are the most recollected. The truth opens itself to the mind, that faithfully perseveres in the state of inward recollection, with remarkable clearness; and the reason, in part, is, because the mind, in a religiously-recollected state, ceases to be agitated by the passions. "The light of God," says the writer already referred to, "shines as the sun at noonday; but our passions, like so many thick clouds opposed to it, are the reason that we cannot perceive it. Love, hatred, fear, hope, grief, joy, and other vicious passions, filling our soul, blind it in such a manner that it sees nothing but what is sensible and suitable to it; refusing all that is contrary to its own inclinations; and being thus filled with itself it is not capable of receiving the light of God." Now, there can be no question that inward recollection secures the soul in a most remarkable degree from inordinate passions. Such passions cannot well flourish with the eye of God distinctly looking upon them. And accordingly, under such circumstances, the illuminative suggestions of the Holy Spirit readily enter the mind, and operate in it, and reveal the divine will, so that he who walks in recollection, may reasonably expect to walk in the light of true knowledge and of a divine guidance.

And not only this, inward recollection tends to concentrate, and consequently to strengthen very much, the action of the intellectual power. It does this, in part, and indirectly, by disburdening the mind of those wandering thoughts, and unnecessary care and excitements, which, with scarcely any exception, overrun the minds of those who do not live in a recollected state.

(4.) Another favorable result, connected with the habit of inward recollection, is that, by confining the mind to the present moment, and retaining God in the position of a present counselor and guide, it prevents the exercise of reflex and selfish acts on the past, and also undue and selfish

calculations for the future. Self, if we permit it, will either secretly or openly find nourishment every where; and every where, therefore, we are to fight against it, overcome it, slay it. When the past is gone, and we are conscious that we have done our duty in it, if we would not have the life of self imbibing strength from that source, we must leave it with God in simplicity of spirit, and not suffer it to furnish food either for vanity or disheartening regrets. We should avoid also all undue and selfish calculations for the future, such as continually agitate and distract the minds of people of the world; and indeed all thoughts and anticipations of a prospective character, which do not flow out of the facts and relations of the present moment, and which are not sanctified by a present divine inspection. "Happy is the man," says Fenelon, "who retains nothing in his mind but what is necessary, and who only think of each thing just when it is the time to think of it; so that it is rather God, who excites the perception and idea of it by an impression and discovery of his will which we must perform, than the mind's being at the trouble to forecast and find it." To these important results there can be no question that the habit of inward recollection is exceedingly favorable.

(5.) Again, we have good reason for supposing that the state of mind under consideration is eminently propitious to the spirit and practice of prayer. There certainly can be no acceptable prayer without a considerable degree of recollection. And the requirement that we should "pray without ceasing," seems almost necessarily to imply that we should always be in a recollected state. "He who is always dissipated," says a certain writer, "like a house open to all comers and goers, is very unfit for prayer. He that will never pray but in the hour that calls him to it, will never do it well. But he that would succeed in this great exercise ought, by continual recollection, to keep himself always ready, and in an actual disposition for praying." (Letters of Instruction on Christian Perfection, by Francis de la Combe.)

Finally. One of the great excellences of the state of inward recollection is, that it gives us the place of central observation and power -- the key, if we may so express it, to the position of the religious life; and enables us to exercise an effective control over its whole broad extent; that is to say, it places us in the most favorable position to discover and meet the attacks of our spiritual adversaries, and also to render our own movements and efforts fully available. However well disposed may be our intentions, whatever good purposes we may have formed, whatever may be the formality and solemnity of our recorded resolutions, they will ever be found in a great degree useless, without this aid. It will be in vain to think of living a life of true religion, a life in which God himself is the inspiring element, without a present, permanent and realizing sense of his presence. It is, therefore, not without a good degree of reason that the pious Cecil has remarked, that "recollection is the life of religion."

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## 08 -- ON THE INWARD UTTERANCE, OR THE VOICE OF GOD IN THE SOUL

"I laid my request before the Lord, and the Lord answered me." This is a remark which is frequently made by persons of eminent piety. They cannot doubt that they truly hold communication with God. Addressing him either in silence or the spoken utterance of words, they find that they do not ask without receiving. God speaks to them in return.

It is important to understand the nature of the answers which God gives. In those earlier religious dispensations, of which we have an account in the Old Testament, God answered his people in various ways; by visible signs, by the cloud and the fire, by Urim and Thummim, by miracles, by audible voices. The periods of those dispensations have passed away, and the methods of communication, which were appropriate to them, have passed away also. What are we to understand then, by the divine utterance, the voice of God in the soul, of which those persons, who are eminently pious at the present time, have frequent occasion to speak?

We remark, in the first place, that one class of those inward utterances, which are frequently regarded as returns or answers from God, appear to be impressions, or rather suggested thoughts, or suggestions, which are suddenly but distinctly originated in the mind, and apparently from some cause independent of the mind itself. Sometimes the suggestion consists in suddenly bringing to the mind a particular passage of Scripture, which is received as the divine answer.

Sometimes the suggestion consists in the sudden origination of new ideas, or truths in a new form of words; but truths so remarkable, either in their origin or in their application, that we are disposed to regard them as the inward intimations and the voice of God. Of the frequent existence of such inward and sudden suggestions or impressions, we suppose there can be no reasonable doubt. It is well understood, and seems to be placed beyond question, that they make a portion of the internal history of many pious persons.

A few remarks may properly be made on this class of inward voices; and one is, that sudden suggestions or impressions may have, and that they do sometimes have, a natural origin. The natural man as well as the religious man, will sometimes tell us that he had an unexpected or remarkable suggestion or impression. In the treatises which exist on the subject of disordered mental action, the existence of frequent and sudden impressions, such as have been described, is laid down, and apparently with good reason, because the results have justified it, as one of the marks of an incipient state of insanity. Another remark, which it may be proper to make here, is this: It is a common, and, probably, a well-founded opinion, that sudden inward suggestions or impressions may have, and that they sometimes do have, A Satanic origin. If Satan is permitted to operate upon the human mind at all, and lead it astray, of which the Scriptures do not permit us to doubt, it is certainly a reasonable supposition, that he sometimes makes his attacks in this manner. And especially may we take this view, when we consider that he is a spiritual being, and would more naturally act upon the spirit or minds of men than upon the body. A third remark is, that the sudden suggestions or impressions which we are considering are undoubtedly, in some instances, from a truly good or divine source. It is hardly reasonable to suppose that God would forbid himself a method of operation on the human mind which he allows to Satan, and which, if it may be employed under a bad direction, to a bad purpose, is also susceptible, in other hands, of a good one. We may reasonably conclude, therefore, that the Holy Spirit sometimes adopts this method of operation.

It remains to be added here, that, if these remarkable suggestions may arise from sources so various and different, they should be received with caution: otherwise we may be led astray by the voice of nature or the voice of Satan, believing it to be the voice of our heavenly Father. God deals with us as rational beings. And it is a consequence of God's recognition of our rationality, that he does not require us to act upon sudden suggestions or impressions, even if they come from himself,

without our first subjecting them to the scrutiny of reason. And it is here that we find the ground of our safety in respect to a method of operation upon us which otherwise would be likely to be full of danger. Accordingly, when a sudden suggestion is presented to the mind, we ought to delay upon it, although it may seem, at first sight, to require an immediate action. We should compare it with the will of God, as revealed in the Bible. We should examine it dispassionately and deliberately, with the best light of reason, and with the assistance of prayer. Indeed, if the suggestion comes from God, it is presented with this very object; not to lead us to action without judgment and without reason, but to arouse the judgment from its stupidity, and to put it upon a train of important inquiry. And when this is done in a calm and dispassionate manner, and with sincere desires for divine direction, we have good reason to believe that we may avoid the dangers which have been referred to, by detecting those suggestions which are from an evil source, and may realize important benefits.

But we ought not to feel, that, in our inward conversation with God, we are limited to such occasions as have been mentioned, and that we have no inward response, except by means of sudden and remarkable impressions, which are liable to the dangers which have been indicated, and which generally exist only at considerable intervals from each other. On the contrary, we have abundant reason for saying that it is our privilege always to be conversing with God, and always to receive the divine answer. It is a great truth -- almost as evident on natural as it undoubtedly is evident on scriptural grounds -- that, when we have given ourselves wholly to God, he will give himself to us in all that is necessary and important for us. And this general principle involves the subordinate idea that he is willing to communicate knowledge and to become our teacher. We ought not to doubt that God is ready to speak to us with all the kindness of a Father, and to make known all that is necessary for us. And while, in the process of teaching and guiding men, he operates outwardly, even at the present day by means of his written Word, he also operates inwardly by means of interior communications; some times by sudden suggestions, in the manner which has already been mentioned; but much more frequently and satisfactorily by-availing himself of the more ordinary laws of the mind's acting, and by uttering his inward voice through the decisions of a spiritually-enlightened judgment. This is a great practical and religious truth, however much it may be unknown in the experience of those who are not holy in heart -- that the decision of a truly sanctified judgment is, and of necessity must be, the voice of God speaking in the soul.

But this important doctrine, it must be admitted, requires to be correctly and thoroughly understood. It should be particularly remembered that God does not and cannot speak in this way, unless there is sincerity. And by sincerity we mean a sincere desire to know and do his will in all things, as well as a desire to know and do his will in the particular thing which is laid before him. Such sincerity which may be regarded as but another name for entire consecration, naturally excludes all the secret biases of self-interest and prejudice, and places the mind in the position most favorable for the admission and discovery of truth. It is in such a mind, and not in a mind which is governed by worldly passions, that the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to guide men into all necessary truth, loves to dwell. We may, therefore, lay down the general principle, that the decision of a spiritually enlightened judgment, made in a state of entire consecration to God's will, and with a sincere desire to know his will, may justly be regarded as a divine answer, or an answer from God, in the particular matter or subject in relation to which an answer has been sought. The decision of the judgment, which is arrived at in such a state of freedom from

self-interest and passion, and under the secret guidance of the Holy Spirit, is oftentimes so clear and so prompt that it almost seems to be a voice audibly speaking in the soul. It is true, however, in point of fact, that it is only the inward ear, or the ear of faith, and not the outward or bodily ear, which is spoken to. In yielding our assent to the decisions of our judgment, we have faith, under all circumstances of the case, and especially in view of the promise of God to give light to those that sincerely ask him, that we are adopting the decisions to which our heavenly Father would lead us; so that we may confidently say, that the answer of the judgment, in connection with the spirit of entire consecration, on the one hand, and of entire faith in God's promises, on the other, is God's answer; that, is to say, is the answer which God, under the existing circumstances, sees fit to give, whether it be more or less full and explicit. And this is all which the truly humble Christian either expects or wishes to receive; viz., such an answer, be it more or less, as God sees fit to give. Even if he is unable to come to a specific determination on the subject before him, he still feels that he is not without an inward voice. He has God's answer even then; viz., that, under the circumstances of the case, God has no specific communication to make, and that he requires him to exercise the humility and faith appropriate to a state of ignorance. And this response, humbling as it is to the pride of the natural heart, he truly regards as very important, and as entirely satisfactory. It is in this method -- a method which appears to be free from dangers -- that God ordinarily answers and converses with his people.

In view of what has been said, we come to the conclusion that it is very proper for pious people, especially for those whose hearts are truly sanctified, to speak not only of laying their requests before God but of receiving a divine answer. It is not improper for them to speak, if it is done with a suitable degree of reverence, of holding conversation with God -- of talking with God. The expressions correspond with the facts. To talk with God; to go to him familiarly, as children to a parent; to speak to him in the secrecy of their spirits, and to receive an inward answer as gracious as it is decisive, is not only a privilege granted them, but a privilege practically realized. When, therefore, we find, in the memoirs of very pious persons, as we sometimes do, statements and accounts of their holding internal conversations with God, of the requests they make, and the answers they receive, we are not necessarily to regard such experiences as fanatical or deceitful. On the contrary, we think it impossible for a person to be truly and wholly the Lord's, without frequently being the subject of this inward and divine intercourse.

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## 09 -- SPIRITUAL BREAD, OR THE DOCTRINE OF RECEIVING BY FAITH

It is well understood that we must pray in faith. No petition to God, which is not attended with confidence in his character and his Word, can be acceptable to him. But I suppose that it is not so generally understood and recognized, that, in most case, we must receive, by faith, as well as pray by faith that faith is as necessary in the reception of the thing petitioned for, as in the petition itself.

1. In order to better understand this subject, which we hope will throw some additional light upon the important doctrine contained in the last chapter, we would remark, in the first place, that every Christian who humbly and sincerely addresses his Father may reasonably expect an answer. It does not well appear how a perfectly just and holy Being could impose on his creatures

the duty of prayer, without recognizing the obligation of returning an answer of some kind. By making this remark, we imply, of course that the prayer is a sincere one. An insincere prayer, just as far as insincerity exists, is not entitled to be regarded as prayer, in any proper sense of the term. Our first position, therefore, is that every person who utters a sincere prayer may reasonably expect an answer, and that, in fact, an answer always is given, although it is not always understood and received. And this appears to be entirely in accordance with the Scriptures- -"Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

II. But it becomes now an important inquiry, What is the true and just answer of God to the petitions of his people? It seems to us that it is, and it cannot be anything else than, the decision of his own infinitely just and omniscient mind, that he will give to the supplicant, or withhold, just as he sees best. In other words, the true answer to prayer is God's deliberate purpose or will, existing in connection with the petition and all the circumstances of the petition. But some will say, perhaps, that on this system we sometimes get our answer, without getting what we ask for; and that God's decision may not correspond with our own desire. But the objection is met by a moment's consideration of the nature of prayer. There never was a true prayer, there never can be true prayer, which does not recognize, either expressly or by implication, an entire submission to the divine will. The very idea of prayer implies a right on the part of the person to whom the prayer is addressed, either to give or withhold the petition; and the existence of such a right on the part of God implies a correlative obligation on the other party to submit cheerfully to his decisions. To ask absolutely, without submission to God's will, is not to pray but to demand. A demand is as different from true prayer, as an humble request is from an imperative order. A request God always regards; he always treats it with kindness and justice; but a demand cannot be properly addressed to him, nor can it be properly received by him. The true model of the spirit of supplication even in our greatest necessities, is to be found in the Saviour's prayer at the time of his agony in the garden. "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." True prayer, therefore -- that prayer, which can be suitably addressed to the Supreme Being, and that which it is suitable for an imperfect and limited mind to offer -- always involves the condition, whether it be expressed or not, that the petition is agreeable to the divine will. This condition is absolutely essential to the nature of the prayer, there is no acceptable prayer, there is no true prayer, without it. Such being the nature of the prayer, the answer to the prayer will correspond with it, viz., it will always be the decision of the divine mind, whatever that decision may be, made up in view of the petition, and all the attendant circumstances.

III. The next inquiry is, How are we to receive the answer? By sight, or by faith? It seems to us that it must be by faith. The life of the just is represented as a life of faith; and we should naturally conclude the life of faith would include the answer to the prayer, as well as prayer itself.

It is very evident that the just live as subjects of the divine Sovereign, not only by praying but by being answered. And in either case, according to the Scripture representation, the principal or inspiring element of the inward life, whether a person prays or is answered in prayer, is faith. Any other view will probably be found, on close examination, to be inconsistent with the doctrine of living by faith. Accordingly, on the true doctrine of holy living, viz., by faith, we go to God in the exercise of faith, believing that he will hear; and we return from him in the exercise of the same

faith, believing that he has heard, and that the answer exists and is registered in the divine mind, although we do not know what it is, and perhaps shall never be permitted to know.

And in accordance with these views, if, in a given case, we know from the Word of God that the petition is agreeable to the divine will, and that it is also agreeable to the divine will that it should be granted now, then the doctrine of faith will require us to believe, that the divine decision is made up and is given, and that we do now have the things which we sought for, although they may come in a different way, and with a different appearance, from what we anticipated. And, on the other hand, if the Word of God has not revealed to us the divine will, the doctrine of faith still requires us to believe that the true answer exists in the will of God; that the decision of God is made up as in the other case, whatever that decision may be, and whenever and wherever it may be visibly accomplished. In both cases we have need of faith; we believe that God is either now doing, or that he will do. So that the true answer to prayer, as it seems to us, is an answer resting upon the revealed declaration or Word of God for its basis, and made available to us in any given case by an act of faith. God promises that he will answer. Faith, accepting the declaration recognizes the answer, whether it be known or unknown, as actually given in every case, where it can justly be expected to be given.

IV. We proceed now to give some illustrations. We will suppose, for instance, that, in a particular emergency, we need and are sincerely desirous of wisdom to guide us, and that we truly and humbly ask for it. While we thus pray, it is of course implied that we, at the same time, employ all those rational powers which God has given us, and which are appropriate to the subject under consideration. To do otherwise would be like the husbandman's asking the rains and the blessing of Heaven upon lands which he had neglected to cultivate. While we thus pray and thus act, it becomes our privilege and our duty, in accordance with the doctrine of the life of faith, to believe fully and firmly that God does in fact answer, and that, in the sanctified exercise of the powers which are given us, we truly have that degree of wisdom which is best for us in the present case. Whether we are conscious of any new light on the subject or not, it is our privilege, and -- what is very important -- it is our duty, as those who would be wholly the Lord's to believe that we have just that degree of knowledge which is best for us. Even if we are left in almost entire ignorance on the topic of our inquiry, and are obliged to grope our way onward in the best manner we can, we still have the high satisfaction of knowing that we are placed in this position because God sees that a less degree of light is better in our case than a greater, and it is certain that his perception of it involves the fact that it is so. And accordingly, if it be true that God does not give to us that precise form and degree of wisdom, which, in our ignorance we sought for, we nevertheless have received all that wisdom which, in the view of faith, is either necessary or desirable. Such is God's answer. And such also is the true answer, viz., the answer which precisely corresponds to the spirit of the petition, if the petition has been offered up in the true spirit. But it is obvious it is an answer which could never be realized as the true answer, and as God's answer, except in the exercise of faith. It is, therefore, an answer resting upon the revealed declaration or Word of God, viz., that he will give wisdom to those that sincerely ask it, and made available to us in being received by faith. It answers our purpose just as much and as well, and in some important points of view far better, than if it were an answer addressed directly to our sight.

We will suppose, as another illustration of the subject, that we have a sincere and earnest desire for the salvation of one of our friends. Under the pressure of this desire we lay the case



before our heavenly Father in supplication. What is the nature of the answer which we can reasonably expect, under such circumstances? Is it a specific answer, of such a nature as to make known to us, by a direct communication, whether the thing shall be done or not, and whether it shall be done at a particular time or not? Or is it an answer resting on the revealed declaration of the Word of God, as that answer is received and made available to us by faith? In the former case, we shall pray till we know, or rather till we think we know; not merely know that God answers us, and answers us in the best manner; but, what is a very different thing, shall pray till we know, or think we know, what the answer is. Under the influence of a very subtle and secret distrust of God, we shall not be disposed to desist until we obtain some sign, some voice, some specific manifestation, some feeling which shall make us certain; and certain, not merely that God hears us, and will do all he consistently can for us; but shall insist on a certain knowledge, by means of such signs and manifestations, of the precise thing which he will do. In other words, we cannot trust the answer in God's keeping; but must gratify our inordinate and sinful curiosity by having a revelation of it. In the latter case, viz., where we expect an answer, resting upon God's word and received by faith, it is very different. While we humbly, earnestly, and perseveringly lay our request before God, we shall leave the result in his hands with entire resignation; believing, in accordance with the declarations of his holy Word, that he does truly hear us; entirely confident that he will do what is right; and recognizing his blessed will, although that will may as yet be unknown to us, as the true and only desirable fulfillment of our supplication. We shall feel, although salvation is desirable both for ourselves and others, that the fulfillment of the holy will of God is still more, yea, infinitely more desirable. "Thy will be done." And here is a real answer, such an answer as would completely satisfy an angel's mind; and yet it is an answer received by simple faith. "The just shall live by faith." The whole doctrine is beautifully summed up in a short passage in the First Epistle of John. "And this is the confidence [or strong faith] that we have in him, that if we ask anything 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.) In connection with the doctrine which has been laid down, viz., that answers to prayers are to be received by faith, we proceed to make a few remarks which are naturally related to it. And one is, that this doctrine is favorable to self-renunciation. The desire of definite and specific answers naturally re-acts upon the inward nature, and tends to keep alive the selfish or egotistical principle. On the contrary, the disposition to know only what God would have us know, and to leave the dearest object of our hearts in the sublime keeping of the general and unspecific belief that God is now answering our prayers in his own time and way, and in the best manner, involves a present process of inward crucifixion, which is obviously unfavorable to the growth and even the existence of the life of self.

(2.) We remark, again, that a disposition to seek a specific, or rather a visible answer to our prayers, in distinction from an answer addressed to our faith, tends to weaken the principle of faith. The visible system if we may be permitted so to call it, implies that we will trust God only so far as we can see him. It requires as one may say, ready payment, cash in hand, a mortgage of real estate, something seen or tangible. It cannot live upon what it calls mere air; it is not disposed to trust any thing to a mere word, a mere promise, though it be the word or promise of the Almighty. Such, on close examination, will be found to be the spirit of the specific or visible system, a system which will answer, to some extent, in our intercourse with men, but not in our intercourse with God. It is easy to see, in addition to other evils resulting from it, that it is adverse

to the growth of faith; which, in accordance with a well-known law of our mental and religious nature, flourishes by exercise, and withers by repression. If the system, which is not satisfied without seeing or knowing, should prevail generally, faith would necessarily be banished from the world, and God would be banished with it.

(3.) The system which requires a present and visible or ascertained answer, in distinction from the system of faith, which believes that it has an answer, but does not require God to make it known till he sees best to make it known, is full of danger. It tends to self-confidence, because it implies that we can command God, and make him unlock the secrets of his hidden counsels whenever we please. It tends to self-delusion, because we are always liable to mistake the workings of our own imaginations or our own feelings, or the intimations of Satan, for the voice of God. It tends to cause jealousies and divisions in the church of Christ, because he who supposes that he has a specific or known answer, -- which is the same, so far as it goes, as a specific revelation, is naturally bound and led by such supposition, and thus is oftentimes led to strike out a course for himself which is at variance with the feelings and judgments of his brethren. Incalculable are the evils, which, in every age of the Christian history, have resulted from this source.

(4.) We have but a single remark more, viz.: It is a great and blessed privilege to leave everything in the hands of God; to go forth, like the patriarch Abraham, not knowing whither we go, but only knowing that God leads us. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." Phil. 4:6. This is what is sometimes denominated walking in a "general and indistinct faith;" or walking in the "obscurity of faith," or in the "night of faith." Faith, in its relation to the subject of it, is truly a light in the soul; but it is a light which shines only upon duties, and not upon results or events. It tells us what is now to be done, but it does not tell us what is to follow. And accordingly, it guides us but a single step at a time. And when we take that step, under the guidance of faith, we advance directly into a land of surrounding shadows and darkness. Like the patriarch Abraham, we go, not knowing whither we go, but only that God is with us. Blessed and glorious way of living! Indeed, it is the only life worth possessing; the only true life. "Let the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing;" let nations rise and fall; let the disturbed and tottering earth stand or perish; let God reveal to us the secret designs of his providence or not, it is all well. "Cast all your cares upon God, for he careth for you." "Believe in one Lord your God, so shall you be established. Believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper."

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## 10 -- ON THE PRINCIPLE OF INWARD QUIETUDE OR STILLNESS

We proceed, in this chapter, to lay down and explain a principle which is more or less distinctly recognized by writers on Christian experience, and which, by the common consent of those who have examined it, is very intimately connected with the progress and perfection of the interior Christian life. The principle is that of inward quietude or stillness; in other words, a true and practical ceasing from self.

First. This principle involves, in the first place, a cessation from all inordinate and selfish outward activity. It does not, it will be remembered, exclude an outward activity of the right kind. To entertain any idea of this kind, would be a great error. But it disapproves and condemns that spirit of worldly movement and progress; that calculating and self-interested activity; that running to and fro without seriously looking to God, and without a quiet confidence in him, which has been, in all ages of the world, the dishonor and the bane of true Christianity. How much of what may be called secular scheming and planning there is in the church at the present time! How much of action, prosecuted on principles which certainly cannot be acceptable to a truly holy heart! While it exhibits much of true piety, and much of the right kind of action, is it not evident that the church exhibits a great deal, also, both in its plans of personal and of public activity, of that restless, unsanctified, and grasping eagerness, which characterizes, and may be expected to characterize, those who live and act as if there were no God in the world? The principle of quietude, or stillness, decidedly condemns this injurious and evil course.

Second. But this principle has inwardly still more important results. The true state of internal quietude, or stillness, implies three things.

(1.) And, accordingly, our first remark is, that true quietness of soul involves a cessation from unnecessary wandering and discursive thoughts and imaginations. If we indulge an unnatural and inordinate curiosity; if we crowd the intellect, not only with useful knowledge, but with all the vague and unprofitable rumors and news of the day, it is hardly possible, on the principles of mental philosophy, that the mind should be at rest. The doctrine of religious quietude conveys the notion of a state of intellect so free from all unnecessary worldly intruders, that God can take up his abode there as the one great idea, which shall either exclusively occupy the mind, or shall so far occupy it as to bring all other thoughts and reflections into entire harmony with itself. This is, philosophically, one of the first conditions of union with God. It seems to be naturally impossible that we should realize an entire harmony, or oneness, with the divine mind, while the soul is so occupied with worldly thoughts flowing into it, as almost to shut out the very idea of God. A state of religious or spiritual quietude is, in other words, a state of rest in God. The idea of God, therefore, -- that magnificent and glorious idea, -- must so occupy the intellect, must be so interwoven with all its operations and modes of thinking, that the thoughts of other things, which so often agitate and afflict the religious mind, may be easily shut out. And in order to do this, they who would be perfect in Christ Jesus, must not mingle too much in the concerns of the world. Little have they to do with the unprofitable frivolities and pleasures of secular society; with idle village gossiping; with the trades, and adventures, and speculations, of those who hasten to be rich; with the heats and recriminations of party politics, and many other things, which it would be easy to mention. No reading, also, should be indulged in, which shall tend to separate between the soul and God. Knowledge is profitable, it is true; but not all kinds of knowledge. It is better, certainly, if we cannot, consistently with religious principles, have a knowledge of both, to be familiar with the psalms of David than with the poems of Homer; not only because the former are in a higher strain, but especially because heavenly inspiration should ever take precedence of that which is earthly. When, however, we read in the world's books from the sense of duty, when we may be said to read and study for God and with God, then, indeed, the great idea of the Divinity remains present and operative in the soul. And such inquiries and studies are always consistent with Christian quietude, because the mind, venturing forth at the requisition of the great Master within, returns instinctively, at the appointed time, to the inward center of rest. Hence we should lay it

down as an important rule, to chasten the principle of curiosity, and to know nothing which cannot be made, either directly or indirectly, religiously profitable. Such knowledge, and such only, will harmonize with the presence of the great idea of God. All other knowledge tends to exclude it. And hence it is, that it can be so often said of those who possess all worldly knowledge, to whom all arts, all languages and sciences, are familiar, that God is not in all their thoughts. The intellect is not in sufficient repose from the outward and purely worldly pressure constantly made upon it, to receive him. He comes to the door, but finds no entrance, and leaves them alone in their folly.

Perhaps, in order to prevent mistakes, it should be added that, when the mind is thus in a state of quietness and repose from worldly and errant imaginations, it does not by any means follow, as some may suppose, that it is therefore in a state of sluggish and insentient idleness. Not at all. No sooner has it reached the state of true stillness, by ceasing from its own imaginative vanities, and thus giving entrance to the purifying and absorbing conception of the great Divinity, than it becomes silently but actively meditative on the great idea. Not, indeed, in a discursive and examinative way, not in a way of curious inquiry and of minute analysis, but still active and meditative; much in the manner, perhaps, that an affectionate child silently and delightedly meditates on the idea of an absent parent; not analytically and curiously, but with that high and beautiful meditation which exists in connection with the purest love; or much as any persons, who sustain to each other the relation of dear and intimate friendship, when in the providence of God they are separated at a distance, often repose in mental stillness from all other thoughts inconsistent with the one loved idea; and thus reciprocally the mind, active in respect to the object before it, though still and quiet in respect to everything else, centers and dwells with each other's image.

(2.) Again, the state of internal quietude implies a cessation, or rest, from unrestrained or inordinate desires and affections. Such a cessation becomes comparatively easy, when God has become the ruling idea in the thoughts; and when other ideas, which are vain, wandering, and in other ways inconsistent with it, are excluded. This rest, or stillness of the affections, when it exists in the highest degree, is secured by perfect faith in God, necessarily resulting in perfect love. We have already had occasion to say that perfect faith implies, in its results, perfect love. How can we possibly have perfect faith in God, perfect confidence that he will do things right and well, when, at the same time, we are wanting in love to him? From perfect faith, therefore, perfect love necessarily flows out, baptizing, as it were, and purifying, all the subordinate powers of the soul. In other words, under the influence of this predominating principle, the perfect love of God resting upon perfect faith in God the harmony of the soul becomes restored; the various appetites, propensities, and affections, act each in their place and all concurrently; there are no disturbing and jarring influences; and the beautiful result is that quietness of spirit which is declared to be "in the sight of God of great price."

Those who are privileged, by divine assistance, to enjoy this interior rest and beautiful stillness of the passions, are truly lovely to the beholder. The wicked are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest, tossed about by conflicting passions, and are not more unhappy in themselves than they are unlovely in the sight of holy beings. There is a want of interior symmetry and union: that guiding principle of divine love, which consolidates and perfects the characters of holy beings, is absent; the lower parts of their nature have gained the ascendancy, and there is internal jarring and discord, and general moral deformity. In such a heart God does not and cannot dwell. How different is the condition of that heart which is pervaded by the power of a sanctifying stillness,

and, which in the cessation of its own jarring noise, is prepared to listen to the "still small voice"! It is here that God not only takes up his abode, but continually instructs, guides, and consoles.

On this part of the subject, in order to prevent any misapprehension, we make two brief remarks: The first is, that the doctrine of stillness, or quietude of the desires and passions, does not necessarily exclude an occasional agitation arising from the instinctive part of our nature. The instincts are so constituted, that they act, not by cool reason and reflection, but by an inexpressibly quick and agitated movement. Such is their nature. Such agitation is entirely consistent with holiness; and it is not unreasonable to suppose, that even the amazement and fears, which are ascribed to our blessed Savior at certain periods of his life, are to be attributed to the operation of this part of his nature, which is perfectly consistent With entire resignation, and with perfect confidence in God. The other remark is, that the doctrine of internal quietude, pervading and characterizing the action of the sensibilities, is not inconsistent with feelings of displeasure, and even of anger. Our Savior was at times grieved, displeased, angry;, as he had abundant reason to be, in view of the hardness of heart, and the sins, which were exposed to his notice. Anger (so far as it is not purely instinctive -- which at its first rise, and for a mere moment of time, it may be) is, in its nature, entirely consistent with reason and reflection; is consistent with the spirit of supplication, and constant, also, even in its strong exercises, with entire agreement and relative quietude in all parts of the soul. In other words, although there is a deep feeling in one part of the soul, the other parts, -- such as the reason, the conscience, and the will -- are so entirely consentient, that the great fact of holy, internal quietude, which depends upon a perfect adjustment of the parts to each other, is secured. A strong faith in God, existing in the interior recesses of the soul, and inspiring a disposition to look with a constant eye to his will along, keeps every thing in its right position. Hence there still remains the great and important fact of holy internal rest, even at such trying times.

(3.) We proceed now to the third characteristic. The true state of internal quietude implies a cessation not only from unnecessarily wandering and discursive thoughts and imaginations, not only a rest from irregular desires and affections, but implies, in the third place, a perfect submission of the will; in other, words, a perfect renunciation of our own purposes and plans, and a cheerful and perfect acquiescence in the holy will of God. Such a renunciation of the will is indispensably requisite. It is not to be understood that we are to have no will of our own, in the literal sense; this would be inconsistent with moral agency; but that in its action, under all circumstances, however adverse and trying, our will is cheerfully and wholly accordant with God's will. A mind in such a state must necessarily be at rest. It realizes that God is at the helm of affairs; and that necessarily all the plans of his wise and great administration shall come to pass. Why, then, should it be troubled? "What a blessed thing it is," says Dr. Payson, "to lose one's will! Since I have lost my will, I have found happiness! There can be no such thing as disappointment; for I have no desire but that God's will may be accomplished." The blessedness of such a soul is indeed indescribable. It is an inward death, out of which springs inward and eternal life; a self-annihilation, out of which rises immortal power. The man who has the true quietude is like a large ship firmly at anchor in a storm. The clouds gather around, the winds blow, the heavy waves dash against her, but she rides safe in her position, in conscious dignity and power. Or perhaps his situation is more nearly expressed by the memorable and sublime simile of Goldsmith:--

"As some tall cliff, that rears its awful form,

Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

But some will say, "Is there to be no action? and are we to do nothing?" A person in this state of mind, being at rest in the will of God, and never out of that divine will, is operative precisely as God would have him so; moving as God moves, stopping where God stops. He is at rest, but never idle. His God forbids idleness. Therefore he keeps in the line of divine co-operation, and works with God. There may be less of vain and noisy pretension, and sometimes less of outward and visible activity; but there is far more wisdom, and far more actual efficiency; for God is with him.

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## 11 -- ADDITIONAL REMARKS ON THE STATE OF INTERIOR STILLNESS

Fenelon has somewhere remarked to this effect, that in our inward feelings, "it is often more easy to perceive what is the result of nature than of grace." This remark may perhaps be of doubtful correctness in the view of some persons; but it is certainly worthy of serious examination. If it be true, it is a remark which involves important principles.

We are aware that the common opinion is the opposite of this. It is generally supposed that the emotions and affections of the religious life are marked and more perceptible than those of the natural life. It seems to be a prevalent idea, that a person who is not internally perceptive of strong emotions and affections, has but little claim to depth and power of religious experience. It is implied in this idea, that there must be a salient or projective aspect to these feelings, so that to the subjects of them they shall appear, in comparison with other feelings, to stand out distinctly and prominently perceptible. It is to this particular phase of the common doctrine that the remark of Fenelon -- viz., that, in our inward experience, it is more easy to perceive what is the result of nature than of grace -- is particularly opposed. He would not by any means deny the strength of religious emotions and feelings in those who are truly and eminently pious. This would be a great error. His idea is that, when the soul is wholly given to God, there is such an entire harmony and internal rest, that no one of the religious affections, however strong they may be, is comparatively so much in advance of what might reasonably be expected of other religious feelings, as necessarily to claim and secure a distinct and particular notice. All are the subjects of a perfect relative adjustment; all are kept in their place by the superintendence of the principle of perfect love; all are sprinkled over and bright with the celestial dew; so that one part or exercise is as beautiful in its place as another, and as much calculated to arrest particular attention as another. The result is the harmony, the eternal stillness, and the beauty, which must ever characterize true holiness.

This doctrine is in accordance with the facts which from time to time present themselves to notice in the annals of personal Christian experience. The interesting form of the religious life, of which this doctrine may be regarded as the theological or philosophical expression, seems, indirectly at least, to be indicated in those beautiful expressions in II. Corinthians, where the apostle, speaking of himself and others, says, "as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and,

behold, we live; as chastened and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." He who is known and yet unknown, dying and yet living, sorrowful yet rejoicing, poor yet communicating riches, having nothing and yet possessing all things, is the subject of feelings, the result of whose various action, strange as it may seem, is perfect harmony and internal calm: His fame is counterbalanced and harmonized by his obscurity; his sorrow by his joy; his absolute possession of nothing by his possession of all things; so that the soul possessed as it were by equal forces in opposite directions, necessarily maintains the central position of interior rest. The state of mind, of which we are speaking, appears to be disclosed in one of the short prayers that are found in Fenelon's Pious Reflections; a part of which is as follows:

"O Lord, I know not what I should ask of thee. Thou only knowest what I want; and thou lovest me, if I am thy friend, better than I love myself. O Lord, give me, thy child, what is proper, whatsoever it may be. I dare not ask either crosses or comforts. I only present myself before thee. I open my heart to thee. Behold my wants, which I am ignorant of; but do thou behold and do according to thy mercy. Smite or heal! Depress me, or raise me up! I adore all thy purposes, without knowing them. I am silent. I offer myself in sacrifice."

Such supplications give evidence of a mind that is at rest in itself; a mind that reposes with entire confidence, whatever may be its temptations and sorrows, upon the Divine Mind.

The religious State of Madam Guyon, in the latter part of her life, illustrates this form of Christian experience. "In these last times," she says, "I can hardly speak at all of my dispositions. It is because my state has become simple and without variations. It is a profound annihilation. I find nothing in myself to which I can give a name; [that is, no feeling so specific and remarkable, separate from this simplicity and this loss of self in God, as to enable me to describe them.] All that I know is, that God is infinitely holy, righteous, good, and happy." "All good is in him. As to myself, I am a mere nothing. To me every condition seems equal. All is lost in his immensity, like a drop of water in the sea. In this divine immensity, the soul sees itself no more."

In that state of internal experience, which is described by Madam Guyon, there seems to be a perfect balance and harmony of the different parts of the mind. There may be deep feeling, (and there is in reality very deep feeling,) but it is so perfectly controlled by a sense of union with the will of God, that the result is complete simplicity and rest of soul. Just as it is in a piece of complicated machinery: if the wheels and other parts are out of order, or if there is much friction, the action of the machinery is perplexed, and is really weak, although there is exceedingly great jarring and discordant noise. But when the wheels are all in position, and there is no friction, the action may be one of tremendous power, and yet so easy and quiet as to be hardly perceptible. And such is the true kingdom of God in the soul. It comes and exists with power, but with great simplicity. There is nothing in it, in itself considered, which is calculated to attract and secure worldly observation. It is mighty; but, like God himself, it is inwardly silent; "a still small voice." The religiously quiet man, that is to say, the man who is inwardly and truly subdued and quiet, in consequence of religion, is really the man of great strength; and yet this strength, in consequence of that harmonious silence of movement, which is the result of its own perfection, is so hidden from his view, that he seems to be hardly conscious of its existence. But it is very different with the natural man; and also with the Christian, who still retains a large infusion of the natural element.

While the operations of the sanctified man are harmonious and quiet, and therefore are withdrawn, in a great measure, from distinct inward notice, those of the natural mind are not only self-interested, but are restless, impetuous, and contradictory, and therefore, as a matter of course, are mentally prominent and perceptible. The true controlling principle of the mind, in the case of the natural man, is gone; and its parts in action strike and jar upon each other with an inward concussion, like the hinges of the gates of hell, that grate "harsh thunder."

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## 12 -- ON THE TRUE IDEA OF INTERIOR ANNIHILATION OR NOTHINGNESS

When we use the phrase "interior annihilation," we of course use it in a mitigated or qualified sense, as meaning not an entire extinction of any principles within us, but only an extinction of certain irregularities of their action. In other words, it is not an absolute annihilation; but only the annihilation of any thing and every thing which is wrong; the annihilation of what the Scriptures call the "old man," in distinction from the "new man, created anew in Christ Jesus." Perhaps we should not refer to this form of expression at all, nor make any remarks upon it, although it is sometimes a convenient one in the description of internal experience, were it not that it is often employed, or some phrase of equivalent import, in writers, particularly those of an ancient date, on the interior religious life. I believe, also, it is quite common among many Christians, at the present time, to speak in rather a loose way of their Nothingness, of the importance of feeling that they are Nothing, and the like; which shows that this form of expression indicates the existence of some great practical truth, although it may be but indistinctly developed, which is clear to the religious mind. We shall give our ideas on this subject as plainly and concisely as we can.

First. The state of inward annihilation is characterized, in the first place, by the extinction of all unregulated and unsanctified love of created things, or "love of the creatures," as it is sometimes expressed. Accordingly, we cannot say that a person is interiorly lost or annihilated, who is in any degree the slave of his appetites. The action of the appetites, when directed to their original objects, and when subjected to the regulation of a purified conscience, is undoubtedly consistent with this state; that is to say, when they are exercised, not from a view to the mere pleasure which they afford, but in accordance with their primitive constitution, and consequently in accordance with the will of God. But he who takes delight in the pleasures of the senses, and indulges the lower appetites of his nature, that the attendant pleasures rather than the original objects of the senses may be realized, has not so crucified and slain himself, that he can be said to be inwardly annihilated. There is still within himself the germination and the growth of that form of selfish gratification which may properly be called a "love of the creatures."

A similar statement may be made in regard to those principles which are understood to be higher in rank than the Appetites; and which, in order to distinguish them from the lower or appetitive part of our nature, may properly be denominated the Propensities and the Affections; such as the social propensity, the desire of knowledge, the desire of esteem, the filial affection, the parental affection, friendship, and the love of country. If these propensive principles and affections, whatever comparative rank they may sustain, are not perfectly subordinated to the principle of a supreme love of God, -- if they exist in such a degree as to be in conflict with what



the law of God requires, -- then it is very clear that the state of mind does not exist which, in the language of religious experience, is denominated "interior annihilation." There is still a vigorous portion of the life of the "old man," which has not been slain. And hence it is, that we lay down the extinction of the love of created things, or "love of the creatures," with the explanation and illustration of the meaning of the terms just given, as one of the characteristics of the state of mind under consideration. Of a person who is thus interiorly annihilated it can be truly said, "he is crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to him."

Second. Another mark or characteristic of that state of mind which is described as interior annihilation, is the extinction of self-will. He who is annihilated and lost to himself has no will of his own. We ought to remark here, that, when we speak of the extinction of inordinate creature-love and of self-will, we do not mean to imply that the mind is rendered naturally or physically incapable of such irregular exercises; but merely that the work of grace in the heart has been so deep, that there is, at the present time, a practical extinction of all such wrong internal acts. We are no longer troubled with them. Acting from supreme love to God has become the confirmed principle and habit of the mind; so that sensual pleasure, and worldly applause and private ends of a kind, have lost their power. We have no pleasure of our own; we have no desires of our own; we have no will of our own. Under all circumstances, rejecting all wisdom and all plans originating in ourselves, our inquiry is, "What wilt thou have me to do?" "God within us," the divine image, living operatively in the soul, is the all-powerful and absorbing principle.

Third. The state of interior nothingness is characterized, further, by the extinction of the power of antecedent evil habits. A person may be sanctified to God, his heart may be pure in the divine sight, and still there may be a struggle on the part of the "old man," or the "old nature," to regain possession. It is difficult to explain this, viz., that a truly holy heart may still have a struggle antagonistical to sin, and oftentimes a fearful struggle; but it is probably owing, in addition to the direct temptations of Satan, to the tremendous power of antecedent evil habits. The principle of self-love, for instance, may by divine grace be redeemed from its selfish attitude, and may be brought to its true subjective position, and become a holy principle; and yet, in consequence of its previous habits of inordinate exercise, there may be a strong tendency, which requires constant resistance to resume its former position of irregularity and sin. This tendency is not, properly speaking, in the principle itself; but is forced upon it exteriorly if we may so express it, by the law of habit: and therefore, although it is extremely dangerous it does not appear to be necessarily sinful. The idea may here perhaps be illustrated in the case of the reformed inebriate. He has refrained from drinking; but the influence of the antecedent law of habit is still felt in his system. He is no longer guilty of the sin of drinking; but his liability to fall into this sin is greatly increased by his antecedent evil habit. There is, undoubtedly, something mysterious in this; but it seems, nevertheless, to be true. He feels that, in consequence of his former evil habits, the enemy is near at hand and in great power; that his danger is thereby increased, and that he must always be in the attitude of watchfulness and of resistance. Something like this is the case with those who have just entered that state where they can say they "love the Lord with all their heart." The enemy is cast out; but he avails himself of the influence of the law of habit, to take a hostile attitude and to seek a re-entrance.

Now, when a person has experienced the state of interior nothingness, as it is conveniently, perhaps, and yet not accurately termed, he has, by divine grace, not only succeeded in conquering

sin in the gigantic forms of creature- love and self-will, but in breaking down the perplexing influence and the unfavorable tendency of former habits. And hence there is a vast accession to his power; and to his tendency to union with God. Satan himself, in the presentation of his temptations, has comparatively but little influence over such a soul. He has, comparatively speaking, no basis to operate upon; no way of secret, circuitous, and indirect attack; but must come boldly up and make his attack face to face, as he did in his temptation of the blessed Savior; and this he would rather not do, if he can approach the object of his attack in some other way.

Fourth. It is a further characteristic of the mental state which we are considering, that a person in this state of mind has no disposition to exercise self-reflecting acts, originating either in undue self-love or in a want of faith. What I mean to say is, that, when he has done his duty, he no longer turns back upon himself and asks, as the half-way Christian often does, "What does the world think of me?" Divested of all selfish purposes and aims, and having no will of his own, he acts deliberately and supremely for God; and therefore he feels that whatever is done, so far as motives and intentions are concerned, is well done. In that respect, no trouble enters his mind. There is no need of retrospection; no need of apologies to cavilers. Indeed, he can scarcely be said to exercise retrospective acts and reflections upon himself in any sense whatever. Such acts seem to be, to some extent, inconsistent with the fact that his heart is fixed exclusively upon an object out of himself. What is done, stands written in the record of his Divine Master; and there he leaves it. His whole soul is given to the present moment. The present moment is given to God.

Fifth. Another and remarkable characteristic of this state of mind is: He who is the subject of it is dead and crucified to all internal joys, also, as well as to all pleasures and joys of an external kind. He has no sympathy with those who are always crying, "Make me happy -- pay me well, and I will be holy." Personal happiness, as a supreme or even a separate object of desire, never enters his thought. It makes no difference what the form of that happiness is, whether pleasures of the senses or pleasures of the mind. He is willing to abandon and sacrifice even the pure and sublime pleasure, almost the only consolation left to him in this sad world, which flows from communion with those who, like himself, are sanctified to God. His true happiness consists in hanging upon the cross, and in being crucified to self. Whether he is tempted or not tempted, interiorly and in the bottom of his heart he can say, "All is well." Whether he suffers or does not suffer, the throne of peace is erected in the center of his soul. Wretchedness and joy are alike. He welcomes sorrow, even the deepest sorrow of the heart, with as warm a gush of gratitude as he welcomes happiness, if the will of God is accomplished. In that will his soul is lost; as in a bottomless ocean. "Lord, I will not follow thee," says a devout person, "by the way of consolations and self-pleasures, but only by love. I desire thee only, and nothing out of thee, for myself. If I ever mention anything as appertaining to me, if I name myself, I mean thee only; for thou only art me and mine. My whole essence is in thee. I desire nothing which comes from thee, but thee thyself. I had rather suffer forever the cruel torments of hell, than enjoy eternal happiness without thee. If I knew I should be annihilated, yet would I serve thee with the same zeal; for it is not for my sake, but thine, that I serve thee. O, how great is my joy, that thou art sovereignly good and perfect!"

In connection with what has been said, it will not be surprising when we say further, that the person to whom these statements will apply, makes but little account of raptures, visions, ecstasies, special illuminations, sudden and remarkable impressions, or anything of the kind,

except so far as they tend (which alas! is frequently not the case) to extinguish self, and to lead the soul into the abyss of the Supreme Divinity.

Finally. The soul that has reached the center of its Nothing, (that is, is absolutely and forever nothing relatively to self,) remains without resistance in the hands of God, like clay in the hands of the potter. It has, become perfectly pliable and impressionable to the divine touch. Such a soul is peculiarly the subject of that ennobling form of prayer, which is called in certain writers the Receptive or Passive Prayer; that is to say, a prayer which is inspired rather than self-originated, which is given rather than self-produced. Entirely divested of those habits of self-activity which are so common, and which, in consequence of preceding or of perplexing the operations of the Holy Spirit, are so injurious, the soul remains quiet and childlike in the divine presence. Like the placid lake, that receives, and reflects to the eye of the beholder, the image of trees and flowers on its banks, returning image for image, without a stem disarranged or a petal broken; so, in all the hidden aspirations which it constantly sends forth, it passively and almost unconsciously receives and reflects the image of God -- an image which is not distorted by the mixture of self-originated acts, nor marred by the disturbing power of internal agitation. God loves to leave the impress of his blessed image on the self-annihilated soul; and the prayer which it breathes, as it is not self-moved, but moves as it is moved upon, may truly be regarded as the praying breath of the Holy Spirit, who always dwells in the soul that knows itself no more.

We may see, therefore, how strong must be the position of the Divine Mind (the Deus agens inter, as it has been expressed in the Latin) in the self- annihilated soul -- a soul, in the language of Michael de Molinos, "desiring as if it did not desire; willing as if it did not will; understanding as if it did not understand; thinking as if it did not think; without inclining to anything, [that is, independently of the will of God;] embracing equally contempts and honors, benefits and corrections. O, what, a happy soul is this, which is thus dead and annihilated! It lives no longer in itself, because God lives in it. And now it may most truly be said of it, that it is a renewed phoenix, because it is changed, spiritualized, and transformed into the divine image." And again, he says, "We seek ourselves every time we get out of our Nothing; and, therefore, we never get to quiet and perfect contemplation. Creep in, as far as ever thou canst, into the truth of thy Nothing; and then nothing will disquiet thee; nay, thou wilt be humbled and ashamed, losing openly thy own reputation and esteem.

"O, what a strong bulwark wilt thou find of that Nothing! Who can ever afflict thee, if thou dost once retire into that fortress! Because the soul, which is despised by itself, and in its own knowledge is nothing, is not capable of receiving grievance or injury from anybody. The soul which keeps within its Nothingness is internally silent, lives resigned in any torment whatsoever, by thinking it less than it doth deserve; is free from abundance of imperfections, and becomes commander of great virtues. While the soul keeps still and quiet in its Nothingness, it perfects it, it enriches it, the Lord draws his own image and likeness in it without any thing to hinder it." (See "Spiritual Guide of Molinos," chs. 19, 20.)

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Among the higher forms of Christian experience, as we find them described by writers on experimental religion, there is a state of mind which we find denominated the state of union. It is also frequently called, by a phrase which intimates the same thing, the unitive state of mind. This state of mind is not infrequently implied, and even described, by devout writers, without a formal mention of it by name. Archbishop Leighton, for instance, speaks of the Christian who perceives himself "knit to God, and his soul more fast and joined nearer to him than to his own body." The following prayer is ascribed to John Climacus, many centuries since a devout and learned recluse of Mount Sinai: "My God, I pretend to nothing upon this earth, except to be so firmly united to thee by prayer, that to be separated from thee may be impossible. Let others desire riches and glory; for my part I desire but one thing, and that is, to be inseparably united to thee, and to place in thee alone all my hopes of happiness and repose." These expressions indicate a full belief, on the part of this devout person, of the existence of the state of present mental union with God, as well as earnest desire for it. There are repeated allusions to this state of mind in the works of Kempis and Tauler; writers who, although Catholics, are favorably mentioned by Luther, and have always been much esteemed by Protestant Christians. Sir Henry Vane, one of the English Puritans, a man religiously as well as politically memorable, wrote a religious treatise, which in part had express relation to this subject, entitled, *On the Love of God, and Union with God*. Many pious persons in more modern times, and in different denominations of Christians, have spoken very emphatically of their union with the Divine Mind, and in such a way as to leave the impression, that they considered the state of union as a distinct and peculiar, as well as a very desirable and eminent modification of Christian experience. "Time would fail me," says Lady Maxwell, "to tell of the numberless manifestations of divine love and power. I have, though deeply unworthy, been favored with such wonderful lettings into the Deity as no language can describe or explain; but the whole soul dilates itself in the exquisite enjoyment; so refined, so pure, so tempered with sacred awe, so guarded by heavenly solemnity, as effectually to prevent all irregularity of desires. These, with every power of the mind, bow in holy subjection before Jehovah. Surely the feelings of the soul on these memorable occasions are nearly similar to those enjoyed by the heavenly inhabitants. I have it still to remark, that all my intercourse with God the Father is strongly marked with that superior solemnity and awe which lay and keep the soul in the dust, yet raised to that holy dignity which flows from a consciousness of union with the Deity."

First. Proceeding now to make a few general remarks in explanation of the subject, we observe in the first place, that the name Unitive State, or State of Divine Union, is derived from the peculiar state of mind which exists. The precise state of the soul, stated in general terms, seems to be one of close and ineffable conformity with the Divine Mind. It is called the state of union, therefore, simply because it is such. We cannot help regarding this state of mind, if it be rightly understood, as a scriptural one. Is it too much to say, that there is a recognition of it in those remarkable, and to some persons inexplicable passages which are found in the latter part of John's Gospel? -- passages which, however mysterious they may appear to many at the present time, have nevertheless a real meaning; and, as the church advances in holiness, will undoubtedly be made clear and full of import in connection with the personal experience of multitudes. "Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also, which shall believe on me through their word. That they may all 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." John xvii. 20, 23.

Second. The following principle appears to lie at the foundation of the doctrine of divine union, as we find it represented in various writers, viz.: That all moral and accountable beings, just in proportion as they are freed from the dominion of sin, have a natural and inherent tendency to unite with God. Of the correctness of this principle, when properly understood, there does not appear to be any reasonable doubt. It is nothing more nor less than this, -- that holy beings recognize in each other a mutual relationship of character, and are led, by the very necessities of their nature, to seek each other in the reciprocal exercise of love. In other words, nothing appears to them so exceedingly good, desirable, and lovely as holiness, whenever and wherever found. Accordingly, just as soon as we feel that our sins are pardoned, and have an inward consciousness that faith in Christ, who is "the way, the truth, and the life," is working by love and purifying the heart, we begin to feel also a secret union with the Savior, not only as our atoning sacrifice, but as a holy being, and as a true representative of the Divinity in the flesh. And just in proportion as we grow in grace and become free from sin, we shall find this state of union with the Savior increasing. And union with Christ (a real union, such as that of the branch when it is united to the vine) is followed, in the natural progress of the religious life, by union, through Christ and in Christ, with God the Father; in accordance with the remarkable prayer of the Savior, which has already been referred to, "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." And it is in accordance with this view, that Lady Maxwell, whose religious experience, especially in the latter part of her life, is exceedingly interesting and instructive, remarks, in expressions which convey an important truth, though perhaps liable to be misunderstood, "Jehovah teaches and enables me to pass through Jesus as the way to himself." In a single word, union, (whether we look at the subject in the light of nature or in the light of God's word), union, pure, strong, inseparable, and without regard to natural or physical differences, is the one great and necessary law of holy beings. Just in proportion as our sin is taken away, the element of separation is taken away; and the soul, delivered from the clogs which fastened it to that which is not God, returns instinctively and unerringly to the Infinite Center.

And it should not be forgotten, also, that there is the same tendency on the part of God, a tendency which his holy nature renders necessary and invariable, to enter into this intimate union. No matter how inferior holy beings may be; they may be mere insects in capacity; still the holy heart of God loves them, seeks them, becomes one of them. In a very important sense, inasmuch as their holiness cannot be regarded as self-originated, they are a part of himself by their very nature. Hence the doctrine so distinctly and strikingly laid down in the writings of Dr. Cudworth. Speaking of holiness, he says, "If it be but hearty and sincere, it can no more be cut off and discontinued from God, than a sunbeam here upon earth can be broken off from its intercourse with the sun, and be left alone amidst the mire and dirt of this lower world. Holiness is something of God, wherever it is. It is an efflux from him that always hangs upon him and lives in him; as the sunbeams, although they gild this lower world, and spread their golden wings over us, yet they are not so much here, where they shine, as in the sun, from whence they flow." The necessity of this union on the part of holy beings, seems to me to be clearly implied in that beautiful passage of Scripture, "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God, in him."

Third. We remark again, in the third place, that union with God, considered as a form of Christian experience, is not a physical union, a union of essence with essence physically, but a moral and religious union. It would hardly be necessary to make this remark, were it not that some pious writers on this subject make use of strong expressions, which may be easily misunderstood and misapplied, but which obviously were not designed to be, and ought not to be, taken in their physical or literal import. The passages of Scripture which recognize and which require the union of the regenerated mind of man with the mind of his Maker, or with the mind of Christ, are in some instances exceedingly strong, and seem to require a modified interpretation. All that is necessary is, that we should exhibit in other cases the discrimination and candor which generally characterize our interpretations of the Scriptures. But although we are not to understand, from the language of the writers on this subject, that there is a physical union, or a union which would imply, in any sense, the loss of our own personality and accountability, they undoubtedly mean to teach the existence and the reality of a moral and religious union, as close and intimate as such a union possibly can be; a union entirely analagous, in all probability, to that pure and blessed union, which existed between Christ Jesus, considered in his human nature, and his heavenly Father.

Fourth. The existence of the unitive state does not necessarily imply inward manifestations and raptures of an extraordinary kind. On the contrary, such manifestations, and joys, and raptures, of a remarkable character, which would be likely to attract attention to themselves as distinct objects of notice, and thus nourish the life of self, would be unfavorable, rather than otherwise, to the existence of the state of mind under consideration. This state of mind implies, however, the existence, in the highest degree, of those two great elements of the religious life, to, which the reader's attention has been repeatedly called, viz., Consecration, which separates us from every known sin, and lays all upon the altar of God as a perpetual sacrifice; and Faith, which leaves all in God's hands, and which receives and accepts no wisdom, no goodness, no strength, but what comes from God as the true source of inward and everlasting life. Consecration renounces the all of the creature; faith recognizes and accepts the all of God. Consecration implies the rejection and hatred of all evil; faith implies the reception and love of all good. The one alienates, abhors, and tramples under foot all unsanctified desires, aims and purposes; the other approves, receives, and makes a part of its own self, all the desires, aims, and purposes of God; and both are implied and involved, and are carried to their highest possible exercise, in the state of divine union.

Fifth. The mind, in the state of union with God, is disposed to indulge in subdued and affectionate acts of contemplation, rather than in examinative and discursive or reasoning acts. It is undoubtedly the case, that the mind may remain fixed upon God, and may be in a certain sense united to him, in what may variously be called a perceptive, or speculative view of him, occupied in the critical examination of his various attributes, his justice, wisdom, and goodness, or something of the kind. But something more than this kind of union is implied in the state of mind which we are now speaking of. The examinative and discursive state of the mind implies the presence of God to the intellect merely; the contemplative state, although not altogether excluding an intellectual view, implies his presence to the heart. And it is on this ground that we make the remark, that the mind, in the state of divine union, is rather contemplative than perceptive and examinative.

I have sometimes supposed, that something like the unitive state of mind, which it is so difficult to describe, might perhaps exist in the case of a blind child, who has an attentive and

affectionate father. The child, being blind from birth, has visually and perceptively no distinctive knowledge of his father. But he knows there is an object present to him, though unseen; and that this outward and unseen being is ever beneficent and ever active in securing his happiness. He has but an indefinite and obscure notion of his form, and is not capable of any accurate analysis of his character; but his mind rests in the general complex idea of an ever-present being, who, although he is unseen, and in many of his attributes is essentially unknown, is nevertheless the precise object which of all others is the most fitted to secure, and is the most worthy of, his love. It is thus contemplatively rather than discursively that his father is ever present to his thoughts, and is ever the object of his almost adoring affections.

Sixth. The state of divine union may exist under two modifications; the one characterized by our being distinctively conscious of its existence, the other without such consciousness. The union of the human with the divine mind, when it is once originated, is not easily broken. The fact, for instance, of our being taken up at times with indispensable worldly cares, does not necessarily destroy the state of union, although we may not be distinctly percipient or conscious of it, at such times. But what we wish to remark here is, that the state in question, whenever it is the subject of distinct inward notice or consciousness, seems to be characterized, among other marks, by a tendency, not only to inward contemplation, but to outward silence. At such times the soul appears to know but one object, and that is God; and to have but one feeling, and that is love. It is drawn inwardly; and outward objects seem to have but little influence. Hence words are few. It has but little disposition to express even what itself feels. In fact, the conversation which is carried on at such times between the soul and God is too high for human language; and, what is more, it is carried on with a Being who can understand the soul's meaning without the medium of human speech. The conversation is with God, and not with men; and is in God's manner, and not after the manner of men; and, therefore, it would be difficult to repeat it, even if there were a disposition to do it. The soul, in its attitude of serene and fixed contemplation, continually but silently repeats to itself sentiments of trust and adoration, of gratitude and love. God recognizes the import of this hidden language, and returns it, by condescendingly unveiling himself in his amiableness and benevolence. There is a constant flowing and re-flowing of affection; love ascending to God and love returning; so that there is not only a consciousness of love to God on the part of the person; but what is yet more striking, there is a consciousness, or rather a deeply-wrought conviction, that God loves him in return. He can say, in the beautiful expressions of the Canticles, "Thou dost place thy left hand under my head, and with thy right hand thou dost embrace me; and thy banner over me is love."

Seventh. It is very obvious, that this state of mind cannot be fully understood, except in connection with inward experience. In the language of the author of the *Life of Sir Henry Vane*, "Divine life must have divine words; words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, to give its own character." Therefore we will not attempt to pursue the topic any further than to say, that the state of union with God, when it is the subject of distinct consciousness, constitutes, without being necessarily characterized by revelations or raptures, the soul's spiritual festival, a season of special interior blessedness, a foretaste of heaven. The mind, unaffected by worldly vicissitudes and the strifes and oppositions of men, reposes deeply in a state of happy submission and quietude, in accordance with the expressions in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that those who believe "enter into rest." So true it is, in the language of Kempis, that "he who comprehendeth all things in His will, and beholdeth all things in His light, hath his heart fixed, and abideth in the peace of God.

And in the language of Blossius, another devout writer of early times, such holy souls "enjoy the most calm and peaceable liberty, being lifted up above all fear and agitation of mind concerning death or hell, or any other things which might happen to the soul, either in time or in eternity." How can there be otherwise than the peace of God, pure, beautiful, sublime, when consecration is without reserve and faith is without limit; and especially when self-will, the great evil of our fallen nature, is eradicated and subdued? What higher idea can we have of the most advanced Christian experience, than that of entire union with the Divine Will, by a subjection of the human will? When the will of man ceasing from its divergences and its disorderly vibrations becomes fixed to one point, henceforward immovable, always harmonizing, moment by moment, with God's central and absorbing purposes, then we may certainly say that the soul, in the language which is sometimes applied to it, and in a modified sense of the terms, has become not only perfected in faith and love, but "united and one with God," and "transformed into the divine nature" "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." And from that moment, in its higher nature, and so far as it is not linked to earth by sympathies which its God has implanted, and which were smitten and bled, even in the case of the Savior, the soul knows sorrow no more; the pain of its inward anguish is changed into rejoicing; it has passed into the mount of stillness, the Tabor of inward transfiguration, the temple of unchanging tranquillity.

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#### 14 -- ON VARIETIES OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

Much more might, undoubtedly, be said on the interesting and important subjects to which our attention has been directed. But we leave them, for the present, to the serious reflections and the examination of others, with a few additional remarks in illustration of some varieties of Christian Character.

First. There are three classes of Christians, who seem to be easily distinguishable from each other. The first class are those who, destitute, in a considerable degree, of any marked spiritual manifestations and joys, may yet be said to possess faith. And in the possession of faith, they undoubtedly have the effective element of the inward life. Their faith, however, is weak. Their language is, "Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief." They have but little strength. In general, they move feebly and slowly; and in some instances scarcely show signs of life. Some, however, exhibit a little more strength and activity than others; and God honors them by employing them in the smaller charges and duties of his church. These cases are not without their encouragement. Such persons are often characterized by the trait of humble perseverance. They grow in grace, though not rapidly; and not infrequently become strong in the end. As a general statement, they have not much to say in any period of their experience; but they are not wanting in sincerity, and they cling to the cross of Christ, as the foundation of their hope. It is seldom that they make a strong impression upon the world; but their example is generally salutary. These are not those who have been caught up to the "third heaven," and have seen wonderful things.

Second. The second class are those, who have had striking manifestations in the way of strong convictions and of subsequent great illuminations. From time to time, a remarkable impulse, a divine afflatus, if we may so express it, seems to come upon them, and they are borne on in a gale. Then comes a calm; and they temporarily make but little progress. Sometimes they have great



darkness; but it is alternated with gleams of light. Nor is the light which they have always the pure and calm light which is of a heavenly origin; but sometimes the red, meteor-like glare of an earthly fire. They may be said to have a considerable degree of faith; but they evidently have less faith than feeling. Their mental history, however, under its various changes, partakes in no small degree of the striking, the marvelous. These persons are generally the marked ones, the particular and bright stars in the church. They often have great gifts; they labor for God; they attract attention. They overwhelm by their eloquence; startle by their new and sometimes heretical views; are denunciatory, argumentative, prophetic, just as the occasion may call. But their movements are not always clear of self; and pride sometimes lurks at the bottom. They are "many men in one;" without true fixedness and simplicity of character; but exhibiting themselves in different aspects, according as the natural or the spiritual life predominates. Sometimes they are sunk deep in their own nothingness through the influence of the Spirit of God; and sometimes they are up in the "airy mind" of nature's "inflatability." They are undoubtedly very useful; aiding themselves in the things of religion, and aiding others; but it can hardly be said of them, that their life is hid with Christ in God. They think too much of their own efforts and powers; they place too high an estimate on human instrumentality; they do not fully understand the secret of their own nothingness; nor do they know, in their own experience and to its full extent, the meaning of self-crucifixion. Hence their confusion, when, in their own views, things do not go right; hence their evident dejection, when the voice of the multitude is suddenly a little adverse to them; hence their plans, their contrivances -- too much like the plans and calculations of human policy. They are not destitute of Christian graces; but they need more lowliness of heart, and more faith. Nevertheless, they have had much experience of the divine goodness. God owns and blesses them; and their memorial is often written in multitudes of grateful hearts.

Third. A third class are those whose life may be said to be emphatically a life of faith, attended with an entire renunciation and crucifixion of self. Faith is not perfect until self is crucified; and the converse is equally true, that perfect faith necessarily results in entire self-renunciation.

In the second class of persons, which has been mentioned, the spiritual life mingles more or less, and perhaps in nearly equal proportions, with the tendencies and activities of nature. The fire which blazes up from their hearts, and which often casts a broad light upon the surrounding multitude, is a mixed fire, partly from heaven and partly from earth. The natural unholy principles are not extinct; but can only be said to be partly purified, and to be turned into a new channel. Hence they will oftentimes fight for God with the same zeal, and almost in the same manner, that worldly men fight for temporary and worldly objects; with great earnestness, with an unquiet and turbulent indignation, and sometimes with a cruelty of attack which vents itself in misrepresentations, and which persecutes even to prison and to death.

But the class of Christians to whom we are now attending, having their souls fully fixed in God by faith, cannot consent to serve their heavenly Father with the instruments which Satan furnishes. They sow the seed; but they have faith in the God of the harvest; and they know that all will be well in the end. They are not inactive; but they move only at God's command, and in God's way; and are fully satisfied with the result which God may see fit to give. At the command of the world, or of a worldly spirit, they would not "turn upon their heel to save their life." But to God they hold all in subjection; and they rest calmly in the great Central Power. These are men of grave

countenance; of a retired life, except when duty calls to public action; of few words, simple manners, and inflexible principle. They have renounced self; and they naturally seek a low place, remote from public observation and unreachd by human applause. When they are silent to human hearing, they are conversing with God; and when they open their lips and speak, it is the message which God gives, and is spoken with the demonstration of the Spirit. When they are apparently inactive, they are gaining strength from the Divine Fountain; drinking nourishment into the inmost soul. And when they move, although with quiet step, the heart of the multitude is shaken and troubled at their approach, because God moves them. There is no thunder, but the "still small voice;" no smoke, but consuming fire.

These are the men of whom martyrs are made. When the day of great tribulation comes, when dungeons are ready, and fires are burning, then God permits his children, who are weak in the faith, to stand aside. Then the illuminated Christians, those who live in the region of high emotion rather than of quiet faith, who have been conspicuous in the world of Christian activity, and have been as a pleasant and a loud song, and in many things have done nobly, will unfold to the right and the left, and let this little company, of whom the world is ignorant, and whom it cannot know, come up from their secret places to the great battle of the Lord. To them the prison is as acceptable as the throne; a place of degradation as the place of honor. They eat of the "hidden manna," and they have the secret name given them, "which no man knoweth." Ask them how they feel, and they will perhaps be startled, because their thoughts are thus turned from God to themselves. And they will answer by asking what God wills. They have no feeling separate from the will of God. All high and low, all joy and sorrow, all honor and dishonor, all friendship and enmity, are brought to a level, and are merged and lost in the great realization of God present in the heart. Hence chains and dungeons have no terrors; a bed of fire is as a bed of down.

It is here, in this class of persons, that we find the great grace of sanctification -- a word, alas! too little understood in the church. These are they, who, in the spirit of self-crucifixion, live by faith, and faith only.

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THE END