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A CLINIC IN HOLINESS
By Isaac E. Springer

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INTRODUCTION

The writer of this remarkably instructive and helpful pamphlet has been for many years one of the most prominent, honored, and beloved men in the conference of which he is a member. This is one of the most heart-searching bits of literature that has fallen into my hands in many years. It is to be hoped it will have wide reading.

H. C. Morrison

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FOREWORD

I do not give this testimony in the spirit of boasting or self-glorification; but to illustrate one of the many methods of divine grace, and for the encouragement and help of others who are "hungering and thirsting after righteousness."

But I distinctly caution my readers not to expect that others must or will be led in precisely this same way. This is not a pattern, but only a report of the way the Lord dealt with me, and of what he could and did for and with and in me.

There are general rules of architecture, but many different methods in detail of building a structure, from a mud hut to a marble palace.

There are general principles in medicine and surgery; but each patient is treated according to the peculiarities of the case, irrespective of any other case.

The essential elements of this experience are: (1) Clear understanding. (2) Entire consecration. (3) Implicit obedience, and (4) Undoubting faith.

* * * * *

01 -- MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

In your own case, let the details be as varied as your own personality differs from that of every other one, and as the Holy Spirit shall judge best in your personal case.

Only let all join me in earnest praying that the Holy Spirit may be able to bless this testimony to spiritual welfare.

My parents were deeply pious. My father was an earnest Methodist itinerant, who died when I was but eleven years old. When fourteen I consented to become a Christian, from a strong conviction of duty. After six months Christ succeeded in finding His way into my heart, and I rested in him by faith for converting grace. When I was seventeen a license to exhort was placed in my hand, without solicitation. The week after I was eighteen -- March, 1857 -- I was thrust out into the itinerancy as a "supply." The next fall I joined the West Wisconsin conference.

From the first, I was impressed with the necessity of a holy heart and life; yet I was very ignorant concerning it. During the first thirteen years of ministry I was, as a rule, longing for holiness. Like many others I could sing:

"My soul breaks out in strong desire
The perfect bliss to prove;
My longing heart is all on fire,
To be dissolved in love."

Sometimes I would climb Mt. Pisgah and catch a glimpse of the Canaan of perfect love. Several times, on receiving some powerful manifestation of God to my soul, would dare to believe that I had passed over the intervening Jordan and had pressed my feet upon the holy land. But my experience was never satisfactory for any length of time. I did not then understand the reason why; but now I do. I could believe and rejoice so long as God would grant me exalted emotions and prove Himself with signs. But when these would be removed to let me rest solely on Him, alas, I turned from His immutable word, and grieved over the lost emotional exaltations. Not being well instructed, I valued holiness for what of joy it would bring to me. I appreciated an experience which carried me up to the mount of transfiguration; and like Peter I wished to abide there. But when Christ would wish me to come down and in hunger and thirst tread with Him the dusty highways of common, unromantic life, I would be puzzled. When He wished me to watch with Him in the gloom of some Gethsemane, I would stupidly slumber. And when He would wish me to be His companion and demonstrate holiness in the midst of mocking trials and crucifixion, I would forsake Him, saying: "My ideal of Christian holiness is the mount of beatific vision. I have come down from that and have lost the blessing. I will seek to return thither again." Thus, though a number of times I professed to experience what I then really supposed was the blessing of holiness, I am now satisfied that I knew little of it.

During my third year at LaCrosse, Wis., in 1870, I was led to mourn the smallness of spiritual results from my ministry. My soul groaned before God. In preaching, I tried to "hew to the line," and apparently left nothing untried to secure a deeper work of grace in my own heart and in the church. Still, it did not then seem to me that I needed so much to seek the blessing of holiness as of spiritual power and efficiency.

When the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness announced a camp meeting for Des Plaines, Ill., near Chicago, in 1870, I resolved to go and see if I could not obtain a baptism of power for ministerial efficiency, and any incidental benefit in personal experience the occasion would afford. During the afternoon of the day on which the meeting was to begin in the evening, I conversed with a member of the association, Father Coleman, disclosing my wishes. He seemed to cast suspicion upon my personal experience, and hurt my feelings by what seemed to me uncharitableness. In the evening I attended the opening prayer meeting, led by J. Inskip, president of the association. After stating the object of the camp meeting and the importance of holiness, he invited seekers forward. It was mortifying to me to think that after having been a minister over thirteen years, I must go forward in the presence of the public as though I were a common sinner; but I went. When an opportunity for speaking was given, I felt it my duty to tell where I stood, lest my coming forward might mislead them. I stated that Mr. Wesley taught in his "Plain Account," that Christian perfection is "nothing higher and nothing lower than this: the pure love of God and man; the loving God with all our heart and soul, and our neighbor as ourselves." Now such an experience was mine. I loved all men, even my enemies; and my greatest desire was to glorify God. There was no duty but I was willing to do; no cross but I was willing to bear; and no trial but I was willing to endure for Christ's sake. Yet I confessed that for some reason my experience was not wholly satisfactory and my ministry was not as efficient as desired. And it was because I so wholly loved God and my fellowman that I had come there to obtain a gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit to enable me to more successfully preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.

After I had concluded, Dr. Inskip, with a shake of the head and a sad look, spoke as though in his opinion I did not understand my own case; and that pride or ambition were mixed up in my desires. I retired from the tent feeling abused and hurt. It seemed to me that the members of the association were self-conceited bigots, who had come out west to show their self-righteous superiority over us frontier brethren; and to snub and humiliate whoever they might condescend to speak to. Though I trust I did not adopt these bitter suggestions, I did think that the camp meeting would do me little good; and so wrote to my wife. But even this conviction drove me to God in humble prayer that he would reveal to me by some means, and give to understand whatever was needed for my soul's good.

The next morning the needed light was given. At the eight o'clock meeting, a Brother Brooks, of the Wisconsin conference, arose and said that before coming to the camp meeting he had become conscious of a lack of ministerial power. It had not come to his mind as so much a defect in his personal experience -- for he had been very earnest on the subject of holiness -- as that of a failure to move the people as he desired, and that he came to camp meeting to get a fresh baptism of power. But since his arrival, on a prayerful examination, he had become satisfied that there was another thing that he needed more; or, at least, needed first -- a complete deadness to self and to the world. He did not dare to say that he was as though dead to the world and to his ministerial reputation and interests; yet he felt that such a deadness was necessary to that true holiness which lives alone unto God.

When Brother Brooks began speaking, I was especially attracted by the similarity of our ages, conditions and purposes. And when he spoke of his newly recognized needs, his words came as direct revelations to my soul; and I cried out: "That is what I need, after all" and could have thrown my arms around him for very joy that he had shown me my needs as I had never seen them before. I became lost to the farther course of that meeting, and began to think thus: Brother Inskip was right, after all. There is a defect in my personal experience. I am not dead to the world, reputation or self. I cannot say that I am not ambitious of praise as a preacher; to be sent to the better grade of appointments; and to secure larger salaries. Scales had fallen from the eyes of my understanding, and I could now see clearly how self had been mixed with all my past experience. I had, indeed, endeavored to honestly and faithfully do all my duty; but oftentimes against the protestations of self. Self would frequently murmur at some of God's requirements, and I often did my duty, as I might say, in spite of myself. I had endeavored to faithfully preach Christ, but had tried to so do it as to secure the praises of men as being an "excellent preacher." I would have gone to the poorest charge in the conference after my delightful pastorate of three years at LaCrosse, and had told my presiding elder so; but self would have claimed the heroism and honors of martyrdom. These are samples of many illustrations that came rapidly to my mind, which showed me that though I had religion enough to do my duty at whatever sense of sacrifice, yet self was still alive and ready at all times to put in a claim for indulgence. Several texts of Scripture suggested themselves to me; such as, "Knowing that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." "For I am dead unto the law that I might live unto God." "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ that liveth in me." "By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." I was obliged to say: Surely my experience has never been like that.

But how is it, came the query, that only last night you were confident that you loved God with all your heart, and soul, and your neighbor as yourself; and claimed with Wesley that Christian perfection was neither higher nor lower than that, but just that? Slowly came the answer of realization, Wesley was right. And I also stated my experience exactly as it then came to my consciousness, but I was blind, though, praise the Lord, I now see. I really supposed that I loved God with all my heart, when I only so loved Him as to bring every power of my being into obedience to His will. And the more my nature arose against His will, I supposed that my obedience by so much demonstrated the completeness and perfection of my love for Him. And in like manner I thought of my love for mankind. I understood and experienced the subordinating power of love, but never its death dealing power. That transforming power of love whereby it should not merely subdue and govern, but kill and destroy everything in the heart unlike itself, I had never grasped in thought; much less experienced in life. But now my soul was open to a new realm of ideas. I must become as dead unto sin, the world, and even self; and have my life "hid with Christ in God;" a new life, wherein every least and last thing of life should be the expression of God's will concerning me, because the product of his power who was to work in me "to will and to do of his good pleasure."

As I spiritually looked at myself and surroundings, I appeared to rest upon all the various interests of life which seemed to lie in strata under me, Down, below all these was the infinite, boundless ocean of God. I felt that what must be, and what I wanted, was to sink through and below all the intervening strata, and begin life over again; alone with God. Such a yielding included more than I had ever comprehended before in any act of consecration. Before, I had presented various interests to God, yet to be retained by me as His agent and to be used in His service. Now I gave them up to God; and wanted Him, for the present at least, to entirely separate me from them, and be alone with God!

In answer to my prayer, God undertook the work of reconstruction. I seemed to begin to sink; ever struggling to get lower still. This was no easy nor pleasant task; for as each interest was reached, passed through and abandoned a part of self seemed to be taken away. So, as the yielding and separating process was continued, I seemed to dwindle into insignificant littleness. When at last I had passed through and below the strata of bodily ease, self-will, the world, wealth, friendship, social relationship, legal virtue, the ministry and a claim to life itself, I fell, stripped of all as the merest atom of nothingness, into the alone presence of the great God.

O what a delightful satisfaction I then felt! It did not seem as if God even recognized my presence, but I did not care for that. The one great wish of my heart was actually, consciously, accomplished. I had no wish to even look back upon what I had left. I was alone with God. Nothing came between us. I was lost in Him. I was now privileged to begin life anew, and this time aright. I had no care or wish about the future. The great, absorbing, satisfying consciousness was: I am God's; all His; and in His presence; let Him do unto me as seemeth Him good.

At the Friday morning eight o'clock meeting, Father Coleman asked all present: "If God were to now call you by death, are you fully, completely ready?" My personal reply was: I dare not look at myself to examine or analyze my spiritual state. But if Jesus will not cast from him that trembling soul that creeps close to him to lade under His protecting hand, I am safe. It was not long, however -- toward noon -- when God was pleased to let me realize that He recognized my

presence, and smiled upon me a smile of approval. This brought to me an exceeding peace -- the peace of trusting confidence. Yet I could not frame my conscious experience into the words: "He fills me;" but only: "He accepts me. I am all His!"

In the afternoon of the same day, I was asked as though by a questioner within: "Is your present condition that holiness you have been seeking for?" After deliberation I concluded not. Thus far, God had but removed the past of life; and existence is all. The most I can say is that I am dead indeed unto sin, the world and self will; but the positive principle of life unto God, life in God, the life of God, I seem not yet to have. I seemed to be assured that it was my privilege to have that positive experience; and was bidden to arise and seek it.

I thought the way would be short and easy. I soon found out that though Satan had been cast out, he was still alive and a subtle tempter, I also found that I had to learn the way of perfect faith; and that God would thoroughly test me.

First, there was given to me a view of the immense height, and depth, and length and breadth and fulness of holiness. My poor heart reeled to and fro under the staggering weight. Yet it was just such a holiness as I wished. The temptation came: It is high, you cannot attain unto it; take a lower standard. Then I thought of some who when referring to holiness, spent most of their effort in explaining what it was not, until it seemed stripped of its glory and but a bundle of negations; and I could not yield. My longing soul eagerly fastened upon the standard raised in God's Word: "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." "But seek ye first God's kingdom and His righteousness." "But like as He who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." That ye may know "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God."

I considered that provisions had been made in the atonement for such a result. "He hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature." "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him."

I remembered, also, that just such a state of spiritual oneness with God had been attained and professed: "Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so are we in this world. Such, and nothing less would satisfy me.

The suggestion then came: Well, if you will have it, go forth being earnest in all your religious duties; and expect this holiness to come gradually, or to develop within you as you improve your opportunities. No, I replied, if working and striving could bring it, or doing be the channel through which it should come, I should have possessed it before now. Then, too, life may be suddenly cut off and no opportunity given for gradual development. If I ever have it, God must immediately bestow it, as an act of His omnipotent grace.

But, said the tempter, if you get it here you will soon lose it. It is alright here on the camp ground; but it won't stand the strain of every day life. I replied: God is able to keep that

which is committed unto him. Jesus prayed: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them from this world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

Another suggestion came: If you should persist in your notion, it would make you singular; people would shun you, and you would suffer. Then, said I, I will live holily while I do live; and then die in peace and ever dwell with Jesus.

Still another insinuation came: You know your intense nature. You would get fanatical and run into wild errors; and so damage the cause and bring sorrow to your friends. I replied: God will keep that which is committed to Him. I throw the responsibility of results on Him. The opinions of the world, or of friends, or of the church, have no weight with me now. My only care is to know, and be, and do, what God wishes of me. I would choose that even though it meant a complete failure in the estimate of my friends, rather than to go on in the experience of the past with a future considered by my friends as a splendid success.

But, persisted the tempter, this experience would make you sour and crabbed; and rob life of all its joys. My answer was: I am not now seeking joys, but God. "Thou, O Christ. art all I want."

Then I turned from the tempter, and cried unto the living God to come suddenly into his temple. The question came to me: Do you really believe that God can, and is willing to just now work so miraculous a change in you? O how I groaned, being burdened, to intelligently apprehend the divine power and willingness to complete the work just now! I could calmly think of its being done sometime in the future; but to have it done just now, seemed impossible. Yet, soon faith rallied and responded: God is omnipotent; and can even now "save unto the uttermost."

Then I fairly besieged the throne of grace and sought to prevail with God by the intensity of agonizing prayer. Occasionally upbraiding myself for a supposed lack of feeling, I tried vehemently to arouse a more intense emotionality; but in vain.

God then compassionately showed me the real cause of my failure -- the reliance on forms and feeling, and the lack of appropriating faith; and that the rule of faith is: "Have faith in God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what He saith cometh to pass; he shall have it. Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Then I plead for some sign or token for the strengthening of my faith. But God showed me that not Gideon but Abraham (Romans 4) was an example of true faith; and very properly declined to give me any other sign or token than the assurance that all of the general spiritual promises were meant for me; and that I might appropriate them and depend upon them.

Then followed a colloquy between my soul and God; for I wanted to see my way clearly, and thought that I needed instruction.

I asked: "How can I believe that I am made holy till I am? Must not my faith that I am wholly sanctified be based on an existing fact of experience?" The answer came: "Yes; but such a faith is not the faith necessary for receiving the blessing. To ask you to believe you have a thing in order to get it, would be to ask you to believe what would not be true at that instant. But when you pray for this or any other promised spiritual blessing to be bestowed immediately, you are to recognize it as a fact, by faith, that I immediately impart that blessing."

Question. "Why may I not pray with a firm and unwavering confidence that you are fully able and willing to bless just now; and then leave the case in thy hands, awaiting the testimony of inward consciousness to serve as the basis of faith for possession? I would not be deceived in this matter. I want an evidence that will convince caution itself, and prevent the possibility of mistake." Answer. Because the course you suggest is not a proper one. The law of prayer I have given you is not: All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that I am able and willing to give them; and then wait till you feel you have them before believing. But the law is: All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. Whosoever shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass, he shall have it. With regard to the wish to be certain, I promise to meet and bless you as desired, according to your faith.

Question. "Suppose I should exercise faith for the present reception of holiness, and I should afterwards find that the work had not been fully wrought?" Answer. Is that all the confidence you have in me? I promise that if you properly come for this or any other promised blessing I would give it, and you might confidently believe that you were then receiving it; not doubting in your heart, but believing that it was coming to pass; yet you are considering it as a possibility that you might so come, ask, and believe, and then find that I had been faithless and refused to keep my promise. Is that faith in me? How can you talk of having faith? Think of Abraham. Think of the poor woman who said: If I may but touch His garment I shall be made whole. Think of the man with the withered hand, whose confidence of faith was such that at the command, he stretched forth his hand. These are examples of true faith. Remember it is said in my word: "If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." (James 1:6.)

Question. "I now see my error, and abandon it. But suppose that on the exercise of faith there comes no joyfulness?" Answer. What are you seeking? joyfulness or holiness? I thought you only wished my will to be done. I assure you that I will bring you such emotional conditions of experience as I think best for you. But I want your confidence to be based on me and my word, and not on changing emotionality.

Question. "How can I believe without the basal consciousness? It seems like a leap in the dark." Answer. Consciousness testifies to existing facts. The faith required for the coming to pass of those facts must therefore precede the cognition of consciousness. The confidence which results from consciousness is the confidence of knowledge, not faith. And it is the confiding faith of trust and not the confidence of knowledge which is the condition of receiving. In spiritual blessings, consciousness must ever follow on me and my words, independent of even consciousness or any

other consideration. If it seems like leaping in the dark, so let it seem. You must learn to trust me, not your sensation. Duty belongs to you; results to me. Take the leap, and all will be well.

Question. "Suffer but one more question. It seems so impossible to believe in the absence of consciousness, that I would fain know whether the requirement of preceding faith is an arbitrary requirement as a test of obedience, or is really necessary in the nature of things?" Answer. That makes no difference. If it were purely arbitrary, it would be made for a good reason, and obedience would be imperative. But, as a matter of fact, it is necessary in the nature of things, in the difference of getting and having. Getting is an act; having is a state. And the act must precede the state. Receptive faith is not merely an attesting witness; it is the soul's hand which lays hold of and appropriates. When you put yourself in the right condition for receiving holiness or any other spiritual blessing that can be immediately bestowed, I immediately come to impart it. You then with the soul's eyes of faith recognize my approach and proffer. Then with the soul's hand of faith you accept and appropriate. Then you have. Then, and not till then, consciousness can give some form of realizing assurance of possession.

Thus were all my questions answered, one by one, and I felt that I no longer had excuse. Yet -- I confess with shame I still hesitated. The way pointed out seemed plain and right; yet it seemed impossible to exercise the definite faith for present reception just then. The loving Father gently encouraged me; yet I tremblingly stood on the brink, not daring to take the leap. Soon the Father gave me to understand that I must tarry no longer. He laid His command upon me to go forward; to ask, believe and receive just then. It no longer seemed a question of privilege, but of obedience. I must obey, and obey at once, or lose my justification. It was a terrible moment. The way was dark. I could not see any Father hand outstretched to help me. The obstacles formerly suggested seemed to again rise before me like a mountain -- as though they had never been met before -- and seemed an insuperable barrier. I found that I must take God at His word, and ask and believe and receive, in the presence of, and in spite of, all the difficulties in the way. But I hesitated only a moment longer. Then I said: "Let God be true, though every man a liar. I will believe God, whatever else I do or do not do. To do as he bids me throws all responsibility of results on him; and is my only way of safety." Then the short prayer was breathed: "O blessed God, fulfill in me now thy holy will. Transfuse thyself through all my spiritual nature, and make me immediately, completely holy, for Jesus' sake. Amen." I ceased "trying to believe," and calmly and without any doubt in my heart, claimed the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit for the consummation of my heart's desire. The ever blessed Spirit helped my infirmities, and enabled me to say -- vast, incomprehensible, almost awful in its daring as it then seemed.

Jesus comes! He fills my soul!
Perfected in love I am!
I am every whit made whole!
Glory! Glory to the Lamb!"

The emotional change following this assertion of faith, was simply the cessation of the previous struggle. It brought the rest of faith. I could say:

"Tis done! The great transaction's done!
I am my Lord's and He is mine!"

But there came no visions of glory; no uprising of ecstatic joy; nor any noticeable emotional consciousness of either purity or the divine indwelling. Soon my faith was tested. The question came: Will you tell the people that you have actually received the blessing of holiness? I answered: I can say that I am believing for it.

But, said the inward questioner, that is not enough. Is faith all you have? Have you not the blessing of holiness also? Tell me plainly: Are you confident and satisfied that you have actually received the distinctive blessing of Christian holiness? You either have or have not, in fact. Which is it? I thus saw that God wanted no halting faith, which would admit of even the shadow of a doubt; but a faith that brings a steady assuring confidence that "it is so!" "The blood does cleanse!" "My life is hid with Christ in God." So, looking to Jesus for help thereto, I was enabled to give him that completeness of confiding faith which he asked; and realized that at last the conflict of doubt was ended. I resolved to improve the first opportunity, and witness for Christ before the great congregation.

As the time drew near, something seemed to say: "Consider well what you propose to do. It is a serious thing to put yourself before the public as one having obtained the unspeakable grace of holiness and a fulness of the divine indwelling. Are you sure the work is done? What evidence have you? Is your spiritual state any different now than before, save the addition of a blind faith without consciousness. Give to yourself a reason for the hope that is within you." So I went over the ground of my confidence carefully. It was true that I had met with no sudden emotional change; that I had no rapture; and that I had no positive consciousness of an active presence of holiness and God. The only testimony of consciousness was purely negative; that since the moment I had received Christ by faith for holiness, I had not felt the movement or presence of any sinful condition. In addition, I had the evidence of Christ's pledged words: "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." I fully gave myself to Jesus and met his requirements. He therefore was faithful to his promises; and undoubtedly in that very instant performed the work of my entire sanctification.

"But," came the query, "how is it possible that so mighty and wonderful a transformation can take place without making itself evident to personal consciousness, how dare you believe and testify that so wonderful an experience has been given you?" I thus felt called upon to study and endeavor to understand the philosophy of such a strange possibility. After considerable deliberation, the philosophy of it shaped itself to my mind thus: States manifest themselves to consciousness through activity; and when quiet, they are recognized only through memory. In quiescence they are, but are not felt. Memory says they were; faith says they still are, and only wait the suitable opportunity of action to report themselves to consciousness. This is true of all states, whether the strength of the giant, the avarice of the miser, the love of the parent, or the spiritual states of the soul. It therefore follows that while in a quiescent state, soul conditions may be changed from defilement to purity; and may be filled with God without the change being noted in consciousness. Now I have fully met God's conditions for the blessing of holiness; and have a right, therefore, to have a confidence based on God's power and faithfulness, instead of sensible phenomena; to emphatically "have faith in God." I will bear public testimony.

When I reached this conclusion, a delightful rest came to me; a peaceful rest that remained undisturbed, when the time came. Though it was with faintness in the voice, and trembling in the flesh, yet it was with a firm and restful assurance of faith, that on Sunday morning in the love feast I said: "With an unwavering reliance on God to sustain me, I wish to profess to all that, walking in the light of faith as He is in the light of glory, we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth me from all sin."

On Monday, I found myself being unintentionally drawn out in prayer for the witness of the Spirit; or the direct manifestation of the indwelling One to my consciousness. At first I was somewhat startled, lest I was becoming to any extent dissatisfied with the experience God had assigned me. But on a thorough, self-searching, I felt sure that my will was still lost in the will of God. I could not feel to choose the highest exaltation of joy rather than the rest of faith, unless Jesus first wished it for me. I was satisfied, and should it so please God, felt entirely willing to go all my life by faith alone. I needed neither Gideon's fleece, nor the Mount of Transfiguration, nor the rapt ecstasy. Christ was better than all his gifts. I loved Him for Himself alone; and having Him I could gladly dispense with accompanying signs. I had the full assurance of faith.

But as I continued to find my heart going up in prayerful breathings for the direct witness, I began to conclude that those upbreathings were inspired of the Holy Spirit; and that it was the Father's good will that I should receive Him. I therefore yielded to the influence, and placed myself in a state of prayerful expectancy. About six o'clock on Monday evening the witness came, though in a different way from my anticipations. There was no voice nor vision; no apparent entering in as from without. But within me there arose a consciousness, a seemingly felt presence of the living God. The sensation was indescribable, save to say that my soul seemed to dissolve and be lost in a permeating and yet surrounding expanse of infinite love. With, if possible, a more positive realization than that of life itself, I felt, I knew, that the Savior's prayer: "I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one," was at last realized in me as a conscious experience. There was neither shout nor cry. I sank down in the straw, under, "The sacred awe that dares not move; And all the silent heaven of love." How different life seemed. To please God my only duty; my highest privilege; my unfailing joy.

The effect of this experience was, in some respects, almost the opposite of my anticipations before the camp meeting. Then, I was looking for power; now I had entered a state of humble littleness. Then, I was seeking an unction which should sway the people and melt the obdurate heart; now, I found that I was stripped of even accustomed ability, and my thoughts and language took on the simplicity of childhood. Then, I was seeking a stronger manhood; now, I felt as though my former manhood life had ceased, and I had begun a new life, in something like a childhood stage. Then I was seeking a more successful ministry; now, God had seemed to take the ministry from me, and had removed all oratorical taste and capacity.

The question came: "What will you do, as an occupation, in the future?" MY heart gladly and quickly responded: "I cannot tell, nor have I any care. I have committed myself to Jesus, and He must settle that question as seemeth best to Him. But I would choose to be a hod carrier or wood cutter for a living, with this experience, than to be a bishop without it. Whatever changes it makes in life, I will never let it go."

"Forever here my rest shall be,
Close to thy bleeding side."
."Now rest, my long divided heart,
Fixed on this blissful center, rest.
Nor ever from thy Lord depart,
With him of every good possessed."

"But consider," came the suggestion, "what the effect will be. You will return to LaCrosse, and when your people see that this experience has robbed them of their pastor, it will turn their hearts against the experience, and damage be done." I replied: "I have nothing to do with that. I dare not assume the responsibility of superintending results. God has taken me into His chariot of love with Himself. And no matter where or how He drives, or who looks on, or what others may think, I will never reach out my hands to take the reins. Rough or smooth, up or down, live or die, He must do the driving; and take me where He will. My will is lost in His. I choose the way and ends He chooses for me."

At the close of the eternally memorable Des Plains national camp meeting, I returned to LaCrosse. As Sunday drew near, I was impressed that the Father did not want me to preach; and no sermon or theme had been given me. But it came to me that it was God's good pleasure to have me tell the people my experience. I occupied the time of the Sunday morning service in the narration; but could not finish, and so filled the evening hour. Even then I could not satisfy the interest raised, nor meet all the points nor answer all the questions, and announced a continuation the next Sabbath. But the more I talked, the larger the subject grew, and the more eager the interest of the people in it. So that the remaining four Sundays before conference and the expiration of the pastoral term, were spent in expositions upon this ever-enlarging theme.

By conference time, I received the assurance of permission from God to continue in the itinerancy, so long as I would only speak as He should direct. Many interesting and instructive phases of this experience have subsequently developed, but as eternity itself would be none too long for the whole of the wondrous story, the narrative may well be closed at this point.

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02 -- ADDITIONAL

There are two points in subsequent experience of such great importance as constrains me to refer to them.

1. I find that I am not dependent on any joyous ecstasy, nor even an ever present consciousness of the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit. The waves of emotionality flow and ebb, and change their types without let or hindrance from me. I neither seek them nor hold on to them. Nor do I attach any value -- as a basis of present confidence -- to the experiences passed through or reached at the Des Plains camp meeting; nor of the experience of any subsequent time to the present. My present confidence arises from a present consecration and a present faith.

2. I have found one situation in experience, of great delicacy and embarrassment. Sin is ever the perversion of a proper liberty into a lawless license. It is not always easy to distinguish the dividing line between liberty and license; between the lawful and the wrong; or to know just when the transition is made over the dividing line. The boundary of permissible right is not often like a stone wall or monument, easily seen; but more often like the invisible degree of latitude. For instance: It is sometimes hard to determine whether an aroused emotion is a just indignation such as Christ felt in the desecrated temple, or whether it is irritableness; whether abhorrence of the wrong, or dislike of the person; whether the tendency to unpleasant excitement is due to a diseased physical condition, or to a wrong moral state; whether a given purpose or determination indicates moral firmness or self will. It was impossible for even Christ to escape censure from others for alleged inconsistencies and improprieties. I suppose that it is just as impossible for his most faithful followers to escape being either misunderstood, misjudged or slandered. "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household!"

But the difficulty and embarrassment do not wholly lie in the estimate of others. Times and circumstances have arisen when I have been in doubt as to which side of the line the past manifestation belonged. At first, such a situation would throw me into distressing perplexities, with temptation to cast away my confidence. But through experience I have learned "a more excellent way." When I now find myself necessarily near any such border line, or am charged by others with having crossed it, it is a joy to bring myself anew to God in honest faith, and ask Him to examine in view of all the circumstances, and that if He sees that I am not in state or feeling just what He would have me be, to then and there so change me as that my entire being should be from that moment the reflection of His will and the expression of His inspiring grace. Then I accept the results. If I observe any change I hail the correction and resultant change with satisfaction. If I do not, I accept the existing state and manifestations as in harmony with God's will; and go boldly forward. And in this manner I "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

I do not claim, at the time of this publication, that ever since that camp meeting in 1870, I have lived without falling from the state of Christian holiness into conscious sin; and two instances are especially grievous to memory. But I wish to now testify that I have proved in many severe experiences, God's power to save and keep to the uttermost, and am now walking in the unclouded light of full salvation.

The experience of mutual abiding and fellowship between my soul and Christ is increasingly satisfactory and precious as the months and years pass. May it continue until the perfect day. And then in the clear vision of heaven life develop its increasing glory through eternity.

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THE END