

**All Rights Reserved By HDM For This Digital Publication
Copyright 1993 -- 2006 Holiness Data Ministry**

**Duplication of this disc (CD or DVD) by any means is forbidden,
and copies of individual files must be made in accordance with
the restrictions stated in the B4UCopy.txt file on this disc.**

**ASPECTS OF HOLINESS
By H. W. Middleton**



**A Series Of Sermons
On The Subject Of Holiness,
Entire Sanctification, Or Perfect Love.
Delivered During The Author's Pastorates
As A Minister In The Methodist Episcopal Church**

**Copyright 1949
By H. W. Middleton**

* * * * *

**Digital Edition 07/07/06
By Holiness Data Ministry**

* * * * *

NO CURRENT COPYRIGHT FOUND FOR PRINTED VERSION

The reader is herewith informed that HDM holds the copyright for this digital version of "Aspects of Holiness" by H. W. Middleton. However, during searches performed at the U. S. Copyright site on July 7, 2006, no evidence was found of a current copyright on the hardcopy (printed) edition of the book. -- Duane V. Maxey, Holiness Data Ministry

* * * * *

CONTENTS

Preface

01 -- Holiness The Original Purpose Of God For Man

02 -- Attaining Unto Holiness

03 -- Entire Sanctification

04 -- Perfect Love

05 -- Christian Perfection Or Holiness

* * * * *

PREFACE

A noted modern story-writer in a preface to one of his books says: "Prefaces are out of fashion. Nobody writes them now, or if they do, they call them 'forewords'" He then proceeds as a preface to state briefly the purpose, or rather the circumstances under which the work was prepared.

In like manner in this "preface" we wish simply to state the circumstances under which the following chapters were prepared, and the reason for their appearance in their present form.

The several chapters of this little work were prepared as separate sermons and delivered as such by the author during his ministry as a pastor in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The subject of Holiness, Christian Perfection or Entire Sanctification, has always been for the author a favorite theme for sermons, as well as an interesting subject for study. Among the many books we have studied with great profit, and to which we are indebted for the material for these sermons as well as for great inspiration and spiritual help are "Possibilities of Grace" by Lowrey, and "Pope's Theology," the greater part of these sermons being adapted from these works.

After having delivered these sermons the author received many favorable and encouraging comments upon them, and the idea of uniting them in a series of sermons, more or less connected in thought suggested itself. After looking them

over with this end in view it was finally decided to combine them in their present form.

In thus combining them no material changes have been made in the form of the sermons as originally prepared and delivered, except very minor changes to preserve somewhat a continuity of thought. The content of the several sermons remains the same as originally prepared.

In this series no particular attempt is made at originality or the introduction of anything particularly new. The thought in mind has been to gather together material from whatever source available, and to arrange and prepare it in such a way that when presented it might impress the minds and hearts of the hearers of the fundamental ideas of the necessity and possibility of a full salvation, and to so describe the experience that it may at once serve as an inspiration to seek and to find the experience, and as a sort of touchstone and inspiration to holy living.

If ever these humble sermons should find their way into print, it is with the hope that their perusal may bring to the readers the measure of inspiration, enlightenment and encouragement which it was hoped they would bring to the hearers as orally delivered sermons. And if in any degree they should accomplish this end, the writer shall feel amply repaid for any effort and labor he may have put forth; and all honor shaft be given to Him in whose name and for whose glory they were prepared.

The Author

* * * * *

01 -- HOLINESS, THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF GOD FOR MAN

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ." (1 Pet. 1:2)

In the contemplation of the omniscience of God it is easy to conceive that all the possible exigencies of human nature lay within the scope of divine knowledge before the creation of the race. Consequently God saw even from the beginning, that man would reach an emergency in which he would need not only forgiveness, but cleansing. God in his infinite foreknowledge saw the prospective sinfulness of man, and in his infinite wisdom and love devised a plan of redemption to meet all his needs. All this is clearly indicated in the text. This Scripture indicates:-- (1) That the personal sanctification of man was God's objective point; and (2) The Holy Spirit and the blood of Jesus Christ are the efficacious agencies through which this is to be accomplished; and (3) That thus external rectitude and internal purity were provided for by the Blood which cleanses from all sin through the Holy Spirit who efficiently fills His pre-appointed office as Sanctifier.

These are the integral parts of God's original purpose and plan. It was for this that the Son was sent into the world to die on Calvary. Upon this basis the whole plan of human redemption rests.

This great plan is too divine, too infinite, to be easily comprehended by fallen man. It is too great to be grasped by a single generation or age, hence it has been constantly unfolding throughout the ages, resolving itself into deeper spirituality and higher life as it unfolds. Perhaps we are yet but in the beginnings of our understanding of this great plan. We may be as Newton expressed it, "like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting ourselves in now and then finding a smoother pebble or prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lies undiscovered before us." What man can declare the full possibilities of grace? Who can say that we have now comprehended or fathomed the great plan and purpose of God?

As we have already stated the development of this idea of the purpose of God has been slow. It required four thousand years to educate the faith of the race up to that point where they could receive the Redeemer who should found a kingdom which is spiritual, inner, and consisting of "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

If this be the great aim, object and purpose of God for man, we might reasonably expect that the whole trend of Bible teaching would be in this direction; we might expect that this purpose should be revealed throughout the whole of Bible teaching and history. We might expect to discover it in Jewish ceremonial; in the ancient covenants; to detect it in the prophetic visions; find it revealed in the codes of precepts; and particularly find it revealed in the golden chain of Old and New Testament promises. We might expect to find taught that the ultimate intention of all these to be the sublime achievement of salvation from all sin.

Redemption has a wide scope, and influences many of the activities of man. It lends its stimulus to education and government. It concerns man's life in various ways. Yet in it all, and through it all it never deviates or wavers from the primal or original design, to "destroy the works of the devil." One great failure of the preaching of today is that too often attention is directed away from the central idea or purpose of the plan of redemption, that of a complete salvation from sin, to the by-products of redemption. Various reforms and "movements" which are in themselves the results of salvation occupy the center of the stage, while the one great object is pushed aside. Salvation, if it is anything, is deliverance from, sin; and is the one great purpose for which the Son of God was manifested. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1: 21)

The Church, the Bible, the priesthood, the Mosaic ritual, the prophetic order, all were but means to an end. The same is true of the Christian dispensation; the gift of Jesus Christ; the gospel revelations; the bestowment of the Holy Spirit; the

Christian ministry; the sacraments; all are but the instruments to effect the attainment of that end which is the reproduction of the divine image in man. The significance of the whole Levitical code was the need of, and the possibility of, human purification.

This was necessary then, and it is necessary now, Man had to be taught the necessity of such purification, and also the possibility of such when the need of purification became apparent. So today, men must be shown the heinousness of sin, the incompatibility of sin with the nature of a holy God; and then when man has such a vision of sin as this, he must be taught from the Word of God that such cleansing has been made possible through the blood of Jesus Christ. Otherwise men will never become seekers of that grace which fits men for fellowship with God here and yonder. Such a view will revolutionize much of the preaching of today. It will mean the abandonment of many of the popular subjects of the day, and a return to the old themes of sin and salvation which have so signally been blessed of God in the past, and also today.

Paul calls attention to this original thought of God in his second letter to the Thessalonians. Note his language: (2:13) "Brethren... because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

Observe that we are not chosen primarily for heaven; but chosen to a state of salvation, and that -- through a process,-- the "sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

Again in this same connection we read from Paul's letter to the Ephesians, first chapter, third and fourth verses:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

Here it is expressly declared that we are chosen to be holy and without blame before him in 'love. Accepting this state as the original purpose of God for man, let us contemplate some of the ways in which this is shown in the Bible.

Let us Notice:--

1. THE DISPENSATIONS FORESHADOW HOLINESS.

The gracious dispensations of God to man are progressive, and ever brightening, growing more and more clear as they advance and unfold.

We speak ordinarily of two Dispensations, the dispensation of Law, and the dispensation of Grace. But under these general heads there are several subdivisions called covenants, promises, revelations, prophecies, etc. Each of these has a purpose in amplifying or making clearer the plan and purpose of God in redemption, and serve to spiritualize religion. And we may anticipate just here enough to say that each of these foreshadow holiness. Let us note in this connection:--

(a) The requirement not to eat of the forbidden fruit.

This command was given as we all know to beings already pure and holy. As they were so, obedience was the only thing necessary to perpetuate their holiness. Had the first pair continued to be obedient to God and His requirements, the sad story of the Fall and its awful results would never have been written. There would have been no need of a redemptive plan; and there would have been no necessity for the sacrifice of Jesus.

Inasmuch as this requirement was not made of a fallen race it contained no promise of grace. The great lesson intended for mankind in it was, that a life of holiness can be maintained. O, how much we need to learn that lesson today! So many seem to be hesitating to seek for holiness, fearing that it is such an exalted state that they can never hope to continue in it. Yes, hesitating soul, the experience can be maintained. You can live holy by being obedient to God. Just as Adam could have maintained his holy estate through obedience, so can you live the life by being obedient to God.

(b) The Commandments or Decalogue.

These were given to a fallen race. But as we read them we feel somehow, a sense of discouragement because they contain so little if anything of promise of help in keeping them. But the one thing they teach us is, and the one great fact they reveal is, the necessity of rectitude or holiness. That God demands uprightness, rectitude, yea holiness is plainly shown in the demands of the Ten Commandments. They become, as Paul expresses it, "schoolmasters" to bring us to Christ. The Law and God's requirements are necessary to cause us to see the need of holiness. They are the straight-edge by which we measure ourselves to discover our imperfections, and at the same time discover the holiness of God and His requirements of man.

Such was true then and it is true today. All we need today is to carefully examine God's requirements of us, his demands upon us, to see our own shortcomings, and that God's standard for us is holiness.

With the passing of time we notice the Decalogue expanded into the Levitical code, and finally transferred to the gospel. The same principles obtain in each. In its gospel form however it is more stringent and exacting. For example let us take the

command with respect to murder. In the old dispensation it was restricted in meaning to the act of unlawfully taking life, while in the new it is expanded to include hate as well. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." (I Jn. 3:15)

But while this is true, the gospel requirements contain provisions to keep them; so that the gospel not only requires holiness, but provides for it. Both dispensations demand holiness, and, all thanks be to God, the gospel dispensation provides for both its attainment and its continuance; so that the demand upon man for holiness is not optional but obligatory. Holiness is thus at once a duty, heaven's absolute requirement, and a blessed privilege. Let us next note,--

(c) The Promise Made To Abraham.

"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." So ran the promise of God to Abraham. This promise was enlarged as time passed, and was finally defined in the later promise of a Saviour who was to "save his people from their sins." These promises we find repeated in various forms in the Jewish ceremonial, and in the definite promises of the prophets. These promises are many; and they come to full bloom in the gospel dispensation. All the types and symbols now pass away, and the whole of religion resolves itself into a spiritual worship, simple faith, and perfect love according to the prediction of Jesus, in John 4:23. "But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth"; When we shall worship the Lord "in the beauty of holiness."

Not only do the Dispensations teach holiness, but,

2. THE HOLINESS OF GOD THE PROTOTYPE OF HUMAN EXCELLENCE.

Holiness is one of the commonly accepted moral attributes of God. To think of God apart from the idea of holiness is to destroy the idea of God as generally conceived. And this conception of a holy God is in contradistinction to the bloody, sensual deities of Paganism and false religions.

The Bible abounds in references to the holiness of God. Everywhere He is constantly represented as immaculately pure and holy. No hint or suggestion of His character other than that of holiness is given anywhere. One or two quotations will suffice to illustrate this fact. Notice first Exodus 15:11.

"Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" Or the exhortation of the Psalmist, (99:9) "Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy."

Many such passages might be cited supporting the doctrine of God's holiness, but these suffice. A study of the Word reveals the fact that He is declared to be holy:--

(a) In His relation and offices to His chosen people.

Upon the holy relation of God to His people, and the purity of His offices toward them are founded His peculiar grandeur and supremacy. In this respect He towers above and is unlike all other gods who were impure and unholy. Even the earliest conception of God as the true God seems to have been that of purity and holiness. We note the praise of the Psalmist (71:22) as he exclaims, "I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God; unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel."

Again, He is declared to be holy with reference to

(b) The place where He resides and has fixed as the seat of His government.

Heaven, the place of His abode is represented as a holy place. Whatever we have in the Bible in the way of description of heaven, there is always held forth the idea that there is nothing of impurity or uncleanness there; that it is a holy place, peopled with holy beings, and ruled over by a holy God. Whatever else may enter into man's conception of heaven, this idea or thought of its holy character is supreme. We have many" scriptures sustaining this idea, but we will cite but one,-- Isaiah 57:15: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit." Still again,

(c) Angels recognize and celebrate this property in the divine nature.

We note the language of the angel in Isaiah's vision; (Isa. 6:3) "And one cried to another and said, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

The three-fold repetition of the word holy here indicates the superlative of holiness as recognized by the angels themselves. And so awful was this vision of holiness to the angels that they covered their faces and their feet as they sang of the infinite holiness of God. Then lastly in this connection let us notice that,

(d) Zion, God's earthly home, is represented as a holy mountain.

The prophet Joel speaks of this earthly abode in the third chapter of his prophecy, the seventeenth verse. Note his language:

"So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain; then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no stranger pass through her any more."

God's purity and holiness is so complete that it creates in Him an uncompromising repugnance to all evil and sin. He cannot tolerate it at all. Sin and the holiness of God are incompatible. So much so that the house of God is to be holy. Small wonder then that His earthly tabernacles should be regarded as holy. Not to be considered strange or unusual if his temples were to be holy, and that no "stranger" should pass through them. This holy character of the material house of God should deter us from lightly considering the building even that has been dedicated to the worship of God, and to be exceedingly careful what we bring into it. This conception of the holy character of even the building dedicated to the worship of God will beget in us a carefulness and reverence which sometimes fails to characterize us even as professed Christians.

The utter repugnance of God for evil is shown in Habakkuk 1:3. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." How careful then should we be of the house of God.

Such is the essential character of God. His nature; His relations to men; His place of abode; His judgments and tastes; His laws and administrations; His surroundings; His systems of truth; His required service; all are holy. It is this holiness which inclined Him to institute holy places, holy rites, and holy services. God so appreciates holiness that He resolved to create man in his own image,-- that is in holiness. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (4:24) declares him to have been so created: "And that ye put on the new man, which after God was created in righteousness and true holiness."

Man therefore was created in holiness, a holy being. O, what wreck and loss and devastation was accomplished through his fall! We cannot estimate the loss he sustained.

But, thank God, there is hope and assurance of restoration. Let it be heralded abroad. Let it be proclaimed from the housetops. God in his infinite wisdom, power and goodness which are beyond the ability of man to measure, has purposed, planned, and provided for the complete restoration of man. God's holiness demands the restoration of man to holiness.

But someone asks why this emphasis upon the holiness of God? Because holiness in God is an incentive to holiness in man. It is the basis for the command to holiness. Note the command given in Leviticus, chapter nineteen, verse two, and which is carried over into the New Testament requirements: "Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy."

We have said that the holiness of God is an incentive to man to be holy. This is true because a vivid conception of divine holiness awakens within us a realization of our own uncleanness, and also a desire for holiness on our part. Listen to Isaiah's cry when he beheld the vision of the holiness of God. (6:5) "Then said I, woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

Likewise David declares he will be "satisfied" when he shall awake in the likeness of God, that is in holiness. (Ps. 17:15)

Holiness is the only satisfying experience for man today. It is that for which men yearn and for which they pray. What Christian is there, who, in the better moments of his Christian experience does not yearn to be more like God; who does not pray the prayer daily, "create within me a clean heart, O God"; who does not ever yearn to be all the Lord's? O, brother, holiness is the one satisfying good which your soul craves. It is that which God intended for you. It is that condition of heart which fits you for the skies. Will you not seek your blood-bought inheritance?

Then still further we find it revealed in the Word that,

3. HOLINESS IS DEFINITELY PROMISED.

Holiness is not only indicated and foreshadowed in the types and symbols of the Old Testament, but is distinctly and definitely promised under both old and new covenants. No sooner had sin and the shadows of death as the result of sin settled down upon the race than God entered into covenant with man for His redemption. The first promise to man after the Fall was a promise of restoration. Notice this promise as recorded in Genesis 3:15:-- "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

This promise though somewhat veiled contains a specific promise to "destroy the works of the devil" in the bruising of the serpent's head, that is, in a vital place. The work of Satan is to be crushed and destroyed. Praise the Lord!

This promise, repeated, diversified, and enlarged, is made clearer and clearer as the time rolls on. We notice the development of the promise in the covenant of circumcision made with Abraham. We cannot enter into it so fully here, suffice it to say that circumcision (as baptism) is an outward sign of an inward spiritual work. Paul in his letter to the Romans (2:28) explains its spiritual significance. Let us hear him in his own words: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter."

Thus as time goes on transition is made from the animal to spiritual sacrifices; progress is made from the visible to the invisible in worship; and from outward washings of the body to the inner spiritual cleansing of the soul. Thus revelation progresses and expands and clarifies until the people are ready to understand and to receive such promises as these: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." (Ezekiel 36:25) And again, "Come now, and let us reason together saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." (Isa. 1:18) And yet once again: "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people." (Jer. 31:33)

These promises cannot be understood to teach a salvation of less than perfect holiness unless we take the Rationalistic position that they are figurative, and consist only of hyperbole and Oriental exaggeration, and therefore are practically meaningless, or else take the other Ritualistic view, and decide that they refer only to ceremonial washings and temporal blessings.

Either of these views, however, is in contradiction to the general trend of Bible teaching, and so discredit the Bible, and take away the spiritual significance of the whole redemptive scheme. And especially as we contemplate them in connection with and in reference to, certain New Testament promises and exhortations which we will notice later.

We might dwell longer upon the teachings of the symbols of holiness used in the Bible, such as blood, water, oil, and fire, all of which teach a state of holiness as contemplated by God and provided for in His great plan of redemption; but time forbids in this treatise. But in conclusion we shall simply direct attention to that which has been suggested before, that, while the Old Testament types, shadows, and symbols all teach God's purpose of holiness for man, but, (especially the older ones) contain no specific promise of help, the later New Testament promises assure us of such help. By way of illustration we call attention to the language of Paul to the Thessalonians, (I Thess. 4:7) in which he says, "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but to holiness"; and then in the following chapter (5:24) sums up or epitomizes the whole teaching of the Bible along this line in these comforting, assuring words, "Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it."

Many more New Testament promises might be cited supporting this fact, but these introduced are sufficient to establish the fact that not only is God concerned with our holiness enough to desire and to demand the same, but that He has made ample provision for its attainment and perpetuation. What more can we ask? Jesus stands ready here and now to fulfill the promise last quoted. It is for us to accept or reject, with all the consequences of acceptance or rejection. Which will we do?

Charles Wesley, that noted hymn-writer of Methodism, sets forth at once the general conception of this doctrine and the cry of the soul for this experience in that standard hymn of the church which runs as follows and with which we close this chapter.

"O for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free,
A heart that always feels thy blood
So freely spilt for me!

A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
My great Redeemer's throne;
Where only Christ is heard to speak,
Where Jesus reigns alone;

A humble, lowly, contrite heart,
Believing, true, and clean,
Which neither life nor death can part
From Him that dwells within;

A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love divine;
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of thine!

Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart;
Come quickly from above,
Write thy new name upon my heart,
Thy new, best name of Love."

-- Charles Wesley

* * * * *

02 -- ATTAINING UNTO HOLINESS

"O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles." (Psalm 43:3)

Since, as we have seen, holiness is a necessity in order to the fulfilling of the great plan and purpose of God for us, and since God in his infinite wisdom, power, and love has so made provision for it, it is well that we look for awhile at the method or process of obtaining this grace. And be it understood in the beginning, that all of God's laws operate along well-defined lines; that is to say that accompanying every promise or provision there are corresponding conditions which must be met in order to realize the promise or provision. This holds good with all the promises of

the Word. So in order to obtain the grace or blessing of holiness it is necessary to meet certain conditions, to make some necessary adjustments to realize the fulfillment of the promise.

In I John 1:9 we have the specific promise of forgiveness of sins, and cleansing from all unrighteousness. It does not require a course in philosophy to see that the heart which has been pardoned for all its transgressions and cleansed from all its iniquity has surely entered into a state or condition of holiness or purity. To decide less than this is to do violence to the commonly accepted meaning of words. If that promise be true; if there be such a state or condition of heart, (and who can conclude otherwise in the light of this Scripture?) then what are the steps or conditions through which it is obtained? And first of all let us notice that it requires,

1. A COMPLETE RENUNCIATION OF SIN.

This is a gospel requirement and means as suggested, the complete abandonment of sin. It allows no compromise, no dallying or tampering with sin in any form. Until the seeker has fully made up his mind to renounce all sin, both public and private, there is no hope for his salvation.

Moreover this renunciation must be voluntary. God never coerces the will, forces the affections, or chains the imaginations. He will never without our concurrence tear idols from our hearts, separate us from evil associations, or break us away from unlawful dissipations. But all glory to His name, He will, if we renounce sin and concur and co-operate with Him, accomplish wonders, even miracles, in removing habits, propensities and tendencies from our hearts and lives, and will enable us to do things otherwise impossible.

Let us note some promises and challenges of the Word in this direction. And first we will notice the language of Isaiah 55:7. "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God for he will abundantly pardon."

Here we see that the great blessing of pardon and the extension of mercy depends entirely upon whether we will "forsake our way" and whether we will "return unto the Lord" in all that that implies. The forsaking of sinful ways and thoughts according to this text is made a term upon which mercy is extended to us.

The above injunction applies as we can readily see to sinners. But we find the same injunction is imposed upon believers, only it is made more stringent and comprehensive. Notice the language of Second Corinthians, sixth chapter, and verses fourteen to seventeen which read, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath

the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you."

We need not recapitulate these commands at length, but suffice it to add that no companionship with unbelievers, no fellowship with unrighteousness, no communion with darkness, no agreement with evil will be tolerated. A complete, willing, and sacred separation from all evil is made the terms upon which God will receive us.

Once more let us note the prayer of Paul for the Thessalonians (See I Thess. 5:23) "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly" etc. is immediately preceded by the very emphatic command, "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

Without further amplification it will be seen that there is no progress toward the goal of holiness apart from a complete renunciation and abandonment of sin in every form. This is fundamental. Unless this is done there can be no hope of advancing unto holiness. We fear that one reason why so many fail to attain unto this grace is because so few, comparatively speaking are willing to pay the price of a full, complete, willing renunciation of sin.

This renunciation of sin has its foundation principle in the fact of the incompatibility of sin and holiness. It is impossible for God to sanctify so long as we tamper or toy with sin. We repeat, there must be complete renunciation of all sin.

But someone objects and says, "Are we not required to forsake sin utterly in order to be saved at all? Is not the renunciation of sin necessary in order to forgiveness and regeneration?"

Certainly. We are not at this point distinguishing between regeneration and sanctification. We are merely setting forth the antecedent conditions of holiness. It is true we must utterly forsake sin, every known sin, in order for pardon and regeneration. It is our own feeling that a good case of old-fashioned Holy Ghost conviction wilt in a large measure at least take us out of the sin business; but conversion, regeneration does certainly come after our faithful promise to God to forever cease from sin.

But the question may arise, why then introduce this thought here in connection with the thought of holiness? There is a reason for doing so.

In the first place regeneration is holiness begun. The work of regeneration, pardon, etc. is the initial step toward the experience of holiness. Let this fact be observed by those who falsely accuse the advocates of holiness of minimizing the experience of regeneration. Not so. No true advocate of holiness ever disparages the experience of regeneration. On the contrary we insist that a real genuine case of

regeneration is antecedent to, and necessary for the experience of sanctification. Regeneration must precede sanctification.

It is true that the regenerate soul, having forsaken all known outward sin, and having received pardon for all his past sins, adoption into the heavenly family, the regenerating touch upon his life, and the witness of the Spirit to this great work, is more sensitive to the appearance, the character, the heinousness of sin than ever before, consequently he quickly discerns the inherited tendencies to sin within him, and leads him as we shall see later to a fuller, more complete renunciation than was before possible. Thus he is led on to a second definite epochal crisis in his experience in which he definitely seeks and obtains a cleansing from inward depravity as surely and as consciously as he experienced his pardon from his committed sins.

Time and space forbid an elaborate treatment of this subject here, but a few thoughts in this connection seem necessary.

It is almost superfluous to state that in God's great provision for the needs of man such provision is fully adequate to those needs. And in contemplating man's needs of redemption we notice that his need is two-fold. In the Fall, man who was created in "righteousness and true holiness," (Eph. 4:24) so forfeited his relation to God that he lost the holy character with which he was created, and became depraved and corrupt. Not only did he become sinful by nature, but because of his disobedience and the natural working out of this inner sinful depraved nature, he became a sinner by practice as well.

It certainly requires no extensive theological argument to prove that this is our condition by reason of our inheritance from Adam, today. We are born into this world with a sinful nature, a tendency toward sin, a sinful proclivity which manifests itself early in life. We observe it in the spiteful, stubborn, willful manifestations of children. That peevish, ugly temper; that determination to have its own way; the cantankerous spirit we see manifested when its will is crossed compels us to admit that though the child has not yet arrived at the age of accountability and is therefore not yet accounted responsible for its action, is while innocent, nevertheless impure. No one surely will be foolish enough to believe, much less advocate that such a condition of heart or nature is pure and holy, and needs no operation of divine grace upon it to fit it for the company of angels and a holy God and an eternal abode in the holy atmosphere of heaven.

It is needless to add that with such a condition within, and with all the avenues of temptations without, it is only a matter of time until these lead us to open, willful disobedience to God's laws, and we thus become sinners by practice as well as by nature. And it is also needless to say that this condition is universal. Isaiah (53:6) says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." We all by sad experience know only too well that this is true. Everywhere we observe this sad fact. Outbroken, shameless sin is to be seen on

every side. And worse still is the awful condition of heart which lies at the bottom of all this sin.

Thus it will be readily seen that man's need is twofold. First then in order to a restoration of fellowship with God he must needs forsake his sins and receive God's pardon for sins committed and acceptance into the family of God. And then further he needs the cleansing of the Blood of Atonement from the inherited depravity of his nature.

Thus it will be seen that in the working out of God's plan for man's holiness there must be at least two definite epochal experiences of grace, namely, (1) pardon, and (2) cleansing. We Will deal with these more in detail as we proceed. Just here let us observe that both these experiences, these operations of divine grace are necessary to that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." And first let us notice the work of:

REGENERATION

We have noticed this, or at least suggested this work previously. Under this term we are including all those works of divine grace which are coetaneous and which we usually group together and speak of as conversion. It is that work of divine grace in which, in answer to a genuine repentance, complete renunciation of sin as noticed above, and a faith in Jesus Christ as an atoning Saviour, the past actual sins of the life, both of omission and commission, are pardoned and blotted out of God's book of remembrance, and buried forever in the sea of his forgetfulness; the soul is justified, that is he is accounted as if he had never sinned. Also at the same time he is given a new life, is regenerated; and he is adopted into the heavenly family. He is now a new creature indeed, a child of God, having new desires, new ambitions, new loves, so that he realizes that "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17) A new life is begun. A new relationship is established between the soul and God. And who can estimate or express the glory of such an experience?

As previously observed this grace is obtained only through the fulfilling of certain conditions. We have already suggested these conditions. At the risk of being tedious we venture to repeat somewhat. First John, first chapter, and verse 9, first part of the verse suggests the method of procedure in order to be regenerated. "If we confess our sins." Yes, there must first be real, genuine repentance; a real sorrow for sin. We cannot dwell here on the elements of repentance further than to say there is included in genuine repentance not only a godly sorrow for sin, sorrow because we have sinned and not only because we have been detected, but also a complete forsaking of sin, and honest renunciation of all sin as we noted at some length before, a confession of sin, a restitution and making right as far as possible all wrongs committed, a calling upon God for pardon and acceptance, and an active faith in believing on Jesus for immediate salvation. All these must precede as

necessary antecedents to pardon, necessary because apart from these there could be no correct attitude, no procuring attitude towards God.

But now assuming that pardon has been received; that the soul has emerged from the old life of sin into a new life of peace, joy, and acceptance with God. What, if anything is required further to attain unto that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord?"

In answering this question it will be necessary to again observe man's twofold need, and also what the effect of regenerating grace has been upon the life and nature of the soul receiving it.

We have noticed that pardon extends to all actual or committed sins of the life. This is true. The pardoned soul stands before God in the same condition so far as penal desert is concerned, as if he had never sinned. He is justified. He is ready to begin anew with the favor and blessing of God upon him.

But what about his sinful nature? Has that been changed? Was that included in the pardon of his sins?

To answer that, we must consider the meaning of the word pardon. What does it mean or include? If we should be required to define it we might say that it means to forgive; to refrain from exacting a penalty; to give up or cease from resentment on account of wrong committed.

From this definition we see that pardon or forgiveness applies to offences committed, and which of course implies personality. It could not be applied to inanimate objects without personality, nor to a state or condition not the result of personal action. In other words pardon cannot be granted for an act we never committed, and for which we are not responsible. So then, pardon cannot extend to the carnal nature, the inherited depravity or sinful proclivity of our hearts. We never committed that. It is ours by inheritance. Therefore it must be dealt with in an altogether different way. Thus we are led up to the second epochal experience in the plan of God for man's holiness, which is that of:

1. ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION OR CLEANSING

For convenience and brevity we are using the terms Entire Sanctification and Cleansing as synonymous terms. In a later chapter we will endeavor to deal more minutely with the different aspects of this grace, and will go into deeper detail as to its effects or results, and with the manner or method of obtaining the experience. So with this brief setting forth of our purpose we will proceed.

We have seen that pardon does not, because of its own nature apply to the carnal nature, by which we mean that inner uncleanness, the sinful tendency with which we are born. We say uncleanness, because surely no one who understands

the nature of this "old man" of the heart can say that it is in harmony with the nature of God and therefore is holy. No one surely would predicate a holy character to that nature within us, and which we all recognize as being in the language of the old hymn, "prone to wander."

No, that nature must be cleansed away, must be eradicated. "It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. 8:7) It can not be "held down" or regulated. True, in regeneration we are given power to master this carnal nature, 'but it exists there, always an annoyance and a hindrance, yea, a real menace to our spiritual life. We never can be at our best with this nagging thing present. We cannot take it to heaven with us because heaven is forever closed against anything which defileth, and such a rebellious, unholy, selfish nature would soon ruin the peace and harmony of heaven itself. No, it must be banished; we must be rid of it somehow. But when and how?

Referring again to I John 1:9, the last part of the passage gives us a suggestion; "And, (in addition to pardoning our sins) to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Yes, thank God! He promises not only to forgive us all our past sins, and by placing His Spirit within us enable us to live righteously, thus cleansing us outwardly, but to cleanse us from, all inward depravation, thus making us holy.

As to the time when this is to be accomplished only a word is necessary, especially to those of the Methodist persuasion. In the Historical Statement of the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal church the view of that body is set forth in the following language:

"In 1737 they (John and Charles Wesley) saw, likewise, that men are justified before they are sanctified," etc. This is the commonly accepted doctrine of Methodism, and of practically all evangelical churches, the chief point of difference being as to how long after justification it occurs, or whether it takes place at all in this life. Old-time Methodists and others spoke of this experience as a "second work of grace," quoting John Wesley who referred to it as a "second work of grace properly so called."

This expression calls attention to the fact that it is a distinct and separate epochal experience of grace, dealing with a separate need of man's nature, and but another step in the great plan and purpose of God in working out man's fitness to dwell with Himself. It is not simply "a blessing." There may be and should be many, many blessings in the life of the redeemed soul, but there must be two epochal experiences of grace namely, pardon (or conversion) and entire sanctification (or cleansing).

But as we have before pointed out, there are certain definite conditions to be met in order to obtain this grace. If God purposes that we be holy; if He has made the necessary provisions for our holiness; and if there are certain requirements to

this end, then we should be very much concerned as to what these requirements are.

As already shown, a previous experience of genuine regeneration is necessary as an antecedent to sanctification. Much confusion and misunderstanding and consequent discouragement is caused because people are not clear here. Many who have never been really converted, or who perhaps have backslidden become seekers for this experience, and mistake their conversion or their reclamation for sanctification and later are confused because they do not have the experience they expected. No, we repeat, a genuine experience of regeneration, up to date and consciously enjoyed is the first requisite. Then there are some other requirements in order to be wholly sanctified that we desire to mention, leaving the consideration of the grace itself to a later discussion. And first, after a genuine experience of conversion there must be,

2. A CONVICTION OF ITS ATTAINABILITY

"He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6) First of all we must believe that such an experience is possible. Apart from this we fail utterly. Many are kept out of the experience just because they doubt its attainability.

It seems to be a characteristic of human nature that we never seek what we deem to be impossible or impracticable. It seems to be a law of nature that we act only in the prospect of success. A great reason why many do not press onward into the experience of perfect love or holiness is that they have never caught the vision of the possibility of attaining unto this state. Doubt will forever bar us out.

Then this conception must be a present one. We must be persuaded of the possibility of attaining unto holiness or the probabilities are that we shall never really seek the experience. We may desire it, yes, long for it. And I am persuaded that every really regenerated soul longs for this experience. In his seeking for pardon he saw only the penalty of his sins hanging over him. His cry was that of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." It is not in the nature of the case for him to seek purity ahead of pardon, but the reverse. Not until after he has been pardoned, and has tasted of the goodness of God will he be impressed with the idea of being as one good brother expressed it "all the Lord's." But once he has been pardoned and has started out to serve God, in a short time he will be convinced of the existence of a "something" within him which is at variance with his spiritual mind, and which hinders and hampers him in his spiritual service. So that soon, consciously or unconsciously he begins to cry for deliverance. He cries with Paul, (Rom. 7:24) "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And if the light of a full salvation is presented to him he is glad to go on to a full deliverance from all sin and impurity.

I am more and more convinced that opposition to holiness arises either from misunderstanding or ignorance of the experience on the one hand, or from the promptings of an unregenerate heart of carnality on the other. That is to say that if a person understands the teaching and opposes it, it is because he has never been really converted or else is backslidden in heart. The usual tendency of the truly regenerated heart is toward holiness. He yearns for the fullness of God.

But with all our longing for purity, with all our praying for it, we may fail of obtaining. Until we are convinced that there is a possibility of entering into such a state now we shall never definitely seek for nor find the experience as a blessed reality.

And not only must we be persuaded in a general way, but it means that the conception of personal holiness must prevail. That is to say that we must feel doyen deep in our hearts, and not simply with an intellectual conception only, that there is such an experience, that it is for me, and that it may be realized now. This intensely personal element of all experiences of salvation seems in many places to have almost disappeared. Men are seemingly expecting revivals of religion, if they come at all, to break upon the masses rather than upon individuals. We need somehow to be brought back to the conception of salvation, of holiness as an intensely personal affair which must be wrought out between the individual and his God.

In conclusion upon this point permit me to say that it is my own earnest conviction that this persuasion, this conviction of the attainability of personal holiness will be wrought upon the truly honest heart if that heart will but permit the Holy Spirit, whose work it really is, to have His way with it. One of the functions of the Holy Spirit as expressed by Jesus Himself (John 16:13) is to lead into all truth; and I am fully persuaded that if we will earnestly pray, really open the door of our heart to the truth and do not resist; if we will willingly follow the leadings of the Spirit of Truth, read our Bibles, we will be led to see and feel the attainableness of the experience of holiness as our heritage, here and now. The arguments set forth in Chapter 1 under the direction of the Holy Spirit will soon convince us of our privilege.

Then as a still further requisite for entering into this experience there must be:

3. A DEEP SPIRITUAL HUNGER.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness" is the great condition upon which the promise "for they shall be filled" depends. And there is implied in this positive declaration the opposite condition, namely, that those who do not thus hunger and thirst, shall fail of this glorious, blessed filling. This is clear. Apart from a real hunger for holiness we can never receive it. It is next to impossible to elicit gratitude for food from one who is sated with food, and who

does not in the least feel hunger. Of course the proprieties may suggest a show of gratitude and call forth a formal expression of thanksgiving, but real thankfulness comes when there has been the satisfying of a real felt need. So that there must be in order to receive the blessing of holiness a real hunger in the soul for the experience.

This last statement prepares the way for another observation. Not only must there be a hunger, but it must be a real heart-hunger. A mere intellectual hunger will not suffice. It is true that the experience of holiness viewed correctly from the standpoint of God's purpose, its nature, and its effect, does have, to the thinking, inquiring individual an alluring influence. By this we mean that the benefits, the advantages of a holy life are sufficient of themselves to appeal to the intelligence of men. But to desire to be holy simply from the standpoint of its advantages, to seek it merely from the dictates or promptings of the intellect alone is to fall below the standard of "hungering and thirsting" of the Scripture referred to above.

No, there must be such a yearning, such an intense longing, such a soul hunger for holiness as will lead the individual to an abandonment of himself and all he possesses that he will cry out as one dear brother who was seeking, "anything Lord, just so I may come into possession of this pearl of great price." But if there be no such hunger manifest in the soul, who is to blame? Am I as an individual responsible?

There are many factors entering into the answer to this question which times and space forbid our taking up here. Suffice it to say that there rests upon every individual a certain responsibility in this direction which he cannot shift to another, nor ignore. There is an obligation to our own souls which we as individuals must meet.

To illustrate. We agree that there is a sense in which we as normal individuals are responsible for normal physical appetites. Physical hunger is natural to a healthy body. If we discover that our appetite is failing, or that there is not the normal relish for food that we usually enjoy, it is a good indication that there is somewhere an unhealthy condition which is responsible for such a loss; and therefore it is our duty because of the obligation which rests upon us to care for our bodies, to investigate and to take measures to remedy a condition which is responsible for the loss of a normal appetite.

Likewise in our spiritual life, if there be a lack of spiritual appetite which hungers for the deep things of God, or yearns for holiness of heart and life, it is incumbent upon us to look carefully into the condition which causes the lack of spiritual hunger.

The normal condition of a spiritual life is one of continual progress and growth. If our lives are characterized by a complacency which causes us to settle

into a state or condition of satisfied inactivity in which we are not yearning for true holiness, we need to be concerned as to our spiritual status.

Thus it will be seen that if our hearts are not cleansed; if in our better moments we recognize the need of a deeper work of God's grace within us; and if in the face of such a condition we do not experience a yearning desire, a real heart hunger for relief from such a state, we sin against our soul if we do not concern ourselves with discovering the cause for the failure of spiritual appetite and hunger.

We fear that there is much unwholesome satisfaction of soul, a sorrowful lack of heart hunger for holiness for which in the last analysis there is no excuse. Others may be remiss in their duty, and no doubt there is much of this in different quarters; but at last we, individually must recognize our obligation to keep alive within ourselves a healthy, normal spiritual appetite.

This is all the more urgent if we recognize our need of, or a lack of holiness in our lives. It is then, in a very special sense, our obligation that we encourage the hunger for holiness. This can be accomplished only by spiritual exercise, by which we mean the laying hold of everything which will contribute to our spiritual growth and development; the employment of every means of grace, prayer, Bible study, meditation, the services of God's house, in short availing ourselves of every privilege accorded us. It is in so doing that we "go on unto perfection" as we are commanded in the Bible.

We can as surely put an end to all desire for holiness through inattention, inactivity or worldliness, as we can end physical life by persistent failure to partake of material food, air or exercise.

Then a fourth necessity to the attainment of holiness we note is that of:

4. A COMPLETE CONSECRATION.

Under this head we include all that is meant by a complete yielding of ourselves and all we possess unto God. In a later chapter we will deal more explicitly with this subject. Suffice it for the present to say that it means placing our all upon the altar. It means placing at the disposal of God our time, our talents, our means, our ambitions, ourselves, to be used when, where, and how God may choose. It means simply the abandonment of our all to God for time and eternity; it is to "crown him Lord of all" in our lives; leaving it all to Him as to where we shall go, what we shall do or say, being what He would have us to be under all circumstances and conditions; leaving it wholly to Him where we are placed in life, what we are to do, and whatever of blessings He may choose to give or to withhold from us, or to be willing to suffer whatever He may see fit to send upon us.

The process of such a consecration is beautifully illustrated in the giving of a deed to a portion of property. In giving a deed for a property we do some things

very definitely. First, we clearly describe the property, giving its location, its measurements; and as we recognize that measurements are often inaccurate, we provide against such an emergency by stating measurements as "more or less." We provide against future changes or improvements by stipulating "with all appurtenances thereto belonging." In short we leave no room for ambiguity or future contingencies, but forever relinquish all claim whatsoever.

So in consecrating ourselves to God we do likewise. We describe the property, MYSELF; we give the location, HERE AND EVERYWHERE; we include the measurements, ALL OUR TALENTS AND ABILITIES; and for fear of inaccuracies we include ALL THAT I AM AND ALL THAT I MAY BECOME. We put in all that we have and in anticipation of future changes we stipulate, "all the appurtenances thereto belonging"; that is, not only all that I have, BUT ALL THAT I EVER HAVE OR HOPE TO HAVE. Then as a final act we forever relinquish all claim to the whole and cry,

"Here I give myself to Thee;
Friends and time, and earthly store;
Soul and body Thine to be
Wholly Thine forever more."

Moreover such a dedication must be a free-will, glad, willing offering, in no sense a compulsory one. "God loveth a cheerful giver" has as full application to an act of consecration as to the giving of material gifts. Yes, we are to give ourselves, our all, as a willing, glad, free-will offering to God for time and eternity.

And then as a last condition to the attainment of holiness as a definite experience in life we notice:

5 THE EXERCISE OF FAITH.

Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, (2:8) writes, "By grace are ye saved through faith." While it is by the unmerited favor or grace of God that we are saved, it is through faith in Christ that we realize our salvation. It is the touch of faith that brings healing.

True faith includes all the previous steps of preparation. It is by faith that we advance from one step to another. But there comes the last act of faith. It is trust as the last link in the chain of faith that brings the answer.

Faith is difficult of definition or explanation. It is that peculiar "laying hold," that present appropriation of the promises of God that brings the realization of them to our consciousness.

And then faith has its conditions. It implies a strict obedience to all the steps before mentioned. That is to say that if in obedience to the leading of the Spirit we utterly and forever forsake sin; completely and fully renounce it in every form; if we

permit ourselves to be convinced as to the attainability of holiness as an experience in life; if we have and encourage a deep spiritual hunger for such an experience; and if we fully and unreservedly abandon ourselves in a full, complete consecration; then are we in a position to believe God for present victory. These all lead up to a present faith, and we are enabled to put into the present, into the NOW, the exercise of a faith, a trust in God and His promise that brings the blessing. It is taking God at His word; the resting assured that the work is done. And that faith brings the victory.

We have hinted that true faith depends upon the following out of the other preceding steps in salvation. This we firmly believe. And it is our conviction that the reason why some have so much difficulty in believing for victory in any experience of salvation is that there is yet something remaining to be done on their part. That as yet they are hardly on believing ground. Perhaps sometimes our exhortations to seekers at an altar to believe are premature. Believing seems to be the natural thing when all other conditions are fully met.

CONCLUSION

These are the necessary steps to the attainment of the experience of full salvation or holiness. Since as we have seen, it is the plan and purpose of God for us that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, and that God in His infinite wisdom, power and love has made adequate provision for every need of man's soul, has provided every means necessary to his holiness, and has placed these provisions within the reach of every one, thereby insuring the possibility of attainment unto every soul; that such holiness is the passport to heaven as well as the enduement for service here; since it is the infinite concern of the holy Trinity; the realization of the highest good to man both for time and eternity, how interested we should be in entering into this grace as a present, definite, conscious experience. With what earnestness we should follow after it. With what determination we should "go on unto perfection."

The prayer of the text,-- "O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me: Let them bring me unto thy holy hill," should be the constant, persistent cry and ambition of our hearts until we realize its fulfillment in actual experience.

* * * * *

03 -- ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

"Follow peace with all men and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14. R.V.)

Having considered the question of holiness from the standpoint of the purpose and intention of God, and noted not only the purpose but the provision

which God has made for its attainment, let us next direct our attention to the grace itself.

In the preceding chapter we dealt with the process of attainment to this experience, the substance of which is, that through a full and complete consecration of our all, and faith 'in the atoning blood of Jesus we enter into this experience. Any regenerate soul, clear and definite as to his justification who will "yield himself unto God as those that are alive from the dead," (Rom. 6:13) and who will present himself "a living sacrifice," (Rom. 12:1) and who will by faith appropriate the promise of God who is pledged not only to "forgive us our sins" but also to "cleanse us from all sin," (1 John 1) will come into the experience of holiness with all that that implies or means.

In this discourse we are concerned chiefly with the consideration of the grace or experience thus attained, and with the help of the Holy Spirit will consider the subject of holiness from three angles or aspects of the experience.

As a general text we turn to Ephesians, fifth chapter, and the twenty-fifth to the twenty-seventh verses inclusive: "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

This Scripture declares that provision is made in the Christian covenant for the completeness of the Saviour's work as the perfect application of His atonement to the believer. Consideration of this purpose of God was given in Chapter 1.

God never does an imperfect work. Therefore the salvation which He planned, and which He effects is a perfect salvation. Nothing short of this conception of the work of God satisfies the thought of man. God is a God of perfection.

First of all God seeks to win the allegiance of man. Man by reason of the fall is alienated away from God. His sinful tendency leads him into actual sin, so that as we have before noticed he becomes a sinner by practice as well as by nature. Also we have observed the universality of this fact. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." (Isa. 53:6). Man in his unregenerate state is in rebellion against God and His government. First of all he must surrender to God, renounce his allegiance to Satan, and declare his allegiance to God. And God in His infinite goodness and love receives him when in true repentance and faith he so surrenders. As a result the soul is justified; it is regenerated; and the justified soul is adopted into the heavenly family, to all of which the Holy Spirit bears witness. Then, if He be allowed, God designs to work out in the believer so justified, the full benefits of His atonement.

As before suggested the work can be viewed in three aspects or from three angles or viewpoints. These are: (1) The complete destruction of sin. (2) The entireness of our consecration to God. (3) The state of consummate holiness to which the character of the saint may be formed in this life.

The different terms applied to this experience in some measure describe the various privileges of the atonement. While these different terms in a general way mean the same and are often used interchangeably, and are usually regarded as being synonymous, yet each seems to have a specific meaning of its own, which render them in a measure different from, the other. Each term therefore having a special or specific meaning of its own, describes a different aspect of the experience. The particular terms which are commonly employed in speaking of this experience are, Entire Sanctification, Perfect Love, and Holiness. To my mind it is no accident that these terms are employed. Each has a special significance as we shall endeavor to show.

We do not wish however to be understood as suggesting three works or even three parts of the same work. The work is one work. The experience is one experience. All the elements or aspects of this experience are so interrelated as to be inseparable. There can be no such thing as entire sanctification apart from the possession of perfect love; and no such thing as perfect love apart from holiness; and no experience of holiness apart from entire sanctification of the heart.

But there are three aspects of the experience, three viewpoints from which we desire to consider the experience as a whole. The first of these is that of cleansing, or the complete destruction of sin in the heart as we have before noticed. So for our first consideration let us notice the thought of:

ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

In the language of the text from the twelfth chapter of Hebrews quoted at the beginning of this chapter, we have used the Revised Version rendering, "Follow peace with all men and THE SANCTIFICATION without which no man shall see the Lord." In the old Methodist Catechism sanctification is defined as "That act of divine grace by which we are made holy." The definitions found in the standard dictionaries are practically the same. Each define sanctification as an act, through which and by which the soul is made pure and holy, or by which the soul as well as material objects, is set aside for holy uses or purposes. In this connection it refers primarily to the act of divine grace in cleansing the heart from all sin and impurity, hence made holy.

The virtue of the atonement administered by the Holy Spirit, is set forth in the scriptures as effecting the complete destruction of sin. This is everywhere declared to be the design of redemption. Any other construction is not only disappointing to the mind and thought of man as he contemplates redemption, but is without adequate scriptural basis. It would be a reflection upon the holiness of God and

also upon his omnipotence to assume that anything less than such destruction was planned or effected by the atonement.

Not only so, but the cleansing of the believer is shown by the above Scripture to be the necessary preparation for the future life; "Without which no man shall see the Lord."

Then again the entire removal of sin from the nature is nowhere connected with any other means than the word of God received in faith and proved in experience. These thoughts prepare the way for some observations in regard to the subject of cleansing. And first note:

1. The Work of Christ Has For Its End The Removal of Sin from The Nature of Man; From the Nature of the Believer In This Present Life.

This end of His work is kept constantly before us. Generally viewed this is an uncontested truth. All are ready to agree that this is Christ's great purpose and work. That for this He came into the world. That for this He died upon Calvary. We cannot decide otherwise if we credit the plain statements of the Bible. Let us cite a very few of these proof texts: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1:21) Again in 1 John 3:8; "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Certainly no one will question the fact of sin and depravity being the "works of the devil."

But While there is general agreement upon the fact that the removal of sin is the end and purpose of Christ's work, the controversy is over the time and manner of its removal; some holding that it is gradual and progressive, and some that it is instantaneous; some that it is effected in time, while others defer it to the hour of death. The Roman Catholic belief is that it is effected after death by means of Purgatorial fires. Thus we have differing ideas, and consequent disagreement and controversy.

It seems clear however from the last mentioned Scripture that the manifestation of Jesus to destroy the works of the devil, refers not only to the whole empire of sin and rebellion in the history of the race, but to the evil in the individual Christian as well. A study of the context supports this view. In verse five of the same chapter we read, "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins." Thus it is referred to the individual cleansing from sin. The Scripture quoted above, (Matt. 1:21) has the same application. Sinless Himself, He is to make His people sinless.

Pursuing this thought throughout the chapter we find from verse nine that it is impossible to maintain our relation to God, to enjoy His fellowship or to have communion with Him if we commit sin, either in the outward act or inward principle; that holiness is necessary to a correct relation with God. Also that the final and distinguishing mark of the Christian is the absence of sin in the outward

manifestation or in the inward condition is shown in verse ten: "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness (outward) neither he that loveth not (inward) his brother."

The writer to the Hebrews says that He came to "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." (9:26) The term "put away" we are told is a stronger term than simply 'to remove; it has all the force in the original of abolish. In fact it is the same term, which John Baptist employed when he called attention to Jesus as the "Lamb of God that taketh away (abolisheth) the sin of the world." (John 1:29) It is so given in the Greek and is so quoted by John Wesley and that noted commentator of Methodism, Adam Clarke:

Paul in his epistle to Titus in speaking of Jesus Christ says of him, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Good works here is conclusive evidence that the purifying process is while we are here upon earth, alive and capable of good works. John in his first epistle in that much-quoted passage, (1:7) declares that such cleansing is from "all sin"; whether of guilt before God, or its power in man. Paul declares this to be the design of our crucifixion with Christ. Notice his language as recorded in Romans, sixth chapter, the sixth and seventh verses: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." That we should not only be free from the slavery of sin, but also that which enslaves us should be destroyed.

John gives this as the purpose of his writing when he declares, (I Jn. 2:1) "My little children these things write I unto you that ye sin not." And Paul exhorts, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." And John introduces us to a remedy if we should sin. (I John 2:1) Not that we must of necessity sin, or that it is impossible not to sin, but that there always being a possibility of sinning, we may sin, and if we should sin there has been a remedy provided in mercy for such an emergency. Just as upon every bottle containing a poison there is placed the name of the special antidote with directions how to proceed in case the poison is taken, so that serious results may be averted; not that because of this provision we must of necessity take the poison, or that it is impossible not to take it, but since there is always the possibility remaining of taking it by mistake or otherwise, if we should take it, there is an antidote which may be administered.

More of such evidence might be introduced, but these scriptures already cited are sufficient to establish the doctrine that there is cleansing provided for all sins committed here in this present life.

Next let us observe that this doctrine has also to do with original sin. To all who have made any worth-while study of the question of sin it is plain that theologically speaking, sin is of two general classes: (a) actual sins, either of omission or commission, and (b) the inherited, inbred, or as we sometimes express

it, inherited depravity or original sin. It is that inherited tendency to evil; that propensity toward sin with which we are born; that proneness to wander away from God which we have within us from birth, we classify as original or birth sin. Very soon this tendency, sinful in its nature, leads us to the commission of actual personal sin, so that "all we, like sheep have gone astray." "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23) We then have added to the sinful nature within us, actual committed sin. It is of this inherited or original birth sin that we now speak: And permit us to repeat, that the doctrine of cleansing from sin has to do with this original sin also. "If we confess our sins, (actual) he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and (in addition) to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (original sin) (I Jn. 1:9). Notice in this Scripture the use of the term "forgive" as applied to actual committed sins, (plural) and the word "cleanse" to that which we inherit (singular).

There are two aspects of original sin. First, there is the individual portion of the common heritage, or that which is particular to the individual. Then there is secondly the common sin which infects the whole race throughout its whole history. To illustrate briefly, the first is that unholy temper or passion which leads the individual into wilfully committed sin; that unclean, impure propensity which is contrary to the spirit of love, and which by nature is within the individual regenerate heart. The second is to be seen in the sinfulness of the race as a whole which causes the innocent to suffer for the guilty. Let us take a simple concrete illustration:--

Here is an unsaved family. Neither the husband nor the wife has salvation. The father is a confirmed drunkard. The wife falls under conviction, seeks the Lord and is beautifully saved. In her regenerated experience she discovers that within her heart there yet remains a spirit of impatience, even anger that manifests itself upon provocation. This impurity is the first aspect of original sin which we have noted. But the wife learns further of the cleansing power of the Blood, plunges into the fountain, and is cleansed from all sin. But the unregenerate, drunken husband still continues in his sin, continues to drink and to return to his family to give vent to his unholy anger upon his helpless wife and children, abusing them and driving them out into the cold. The Spirit-filled wife, having been cleansed and filled with the love of God, no longer feels the anger and impatience of other days, but realizes that only love and compassion and every fruit of the Spirit is manifest. She has been cleansed from every evil and sinful tendency and propensity. But let us observe that nevertheless it does not free her from the pain of the cruel treatment of her drunken husband. She still continues to suffer from the cruel blows and the cold when she and her little ones are driven out of doors into the chilling storm. She and her innocent children must continue to suffer on the account of the sin of the race manifested in the sins of that unsaved, drunken father. This is the second aspect of original sin which infects the race as a whole.

As we at once perceive, this last aspect of original sin will never be abolished until that time of which it is written, "Behold I will make all things new." (Rev. 21:5)

Sin will continue to exist in the world until the Millennium. Of course we recognize that this is not in accord with the popular post-millennial doctrine of today, but we are convinced that it has the support of Scripture.

In a measure we shall suffer from this second aspect of original sin as long as we live. We shall in some measure continue to suffer from the effects or results of our former sins, even though they be forgiven; we shall stiffer in greater or less degree because of the sins of others, the innocent for the guilty. There is a sense in which we are numbered with the transgressors and must bear the results of their sins. Even Jesus was so numbered. (See Isa. 53:12) He suffered in body because of the evil in men's hearts that caused them to drive the nails through His hands and feet, and to thrust the cruel sword into His side.

But though He was numbered with the transgressors, He was not reckoned with them. So with us. Even though there be a measure of the penalty not yet taken away, such as temptation, infirmity, poor judgment, etc., all of which in the last analysis are the results of sin, and will abide until the time of the final redemption; although as a race we have many besetments, and must needs continue to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses," we can take courage and realize that though we are numbered with the transgressors we are not reckoned with them, and that there is a better outlook ahead, better promises given us.

Now we come back to the thought of the first aspect of original sin, and with joy and gladness we learn that the sin principle, the propensity to sin, the sin that dwelleth in the ME of the soul, the flesh with its affections and lusts, (See Gal. 5:16-18) is to be abolished. Thank God! It is to be abolished by the Spirit of Holiness when his purifying grace has its perfect work.

Then a third encouraging fact which presents itself is that the scene of this purifying is on the earth. Everywhere the scene of the Saviour's atoning sacrifice is set forth as the scene of His redemptive power. Else the sacrifice of Jesus might have taken place in heaven. As the earth was the scene of His sacrifice, so also the earth is the scene of His great redemption.

Only one redemption is reserved for His Second Coming,-- that of the redemption of the body. (Rom. 8:23) We have referred to this before. No other redemption is referred to that day, All other phases of redemption are to be on earth and before that day.

This truth needs no other corroboration. The earth is almost universally regarded as the scene of probation and preparation; the next world is to be a sphere of fruition and judgment. There is no hint in the scriptural history of redemption that the finished triumph of the Deliverer from sin is never to be known in this world,-- rather the contrary is taught. But this leads us to the next consideration,--

2. That Full Deliverance from Sin is Both Required and Promised As the Preparation for the Final Admission Into the Presence of God.

Let us note again in this connection that which we have already made mention, that a state or condition of holiness is required as a fitness for admission into a holy heaven. This fact is clearly stated in the language of the text, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." We find it specifically commanded in I Peter 1:16, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

Both this warning and this command had been anticipated by the promise of Jesus in His wonderful Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8) A very cursory study of these Beatitudes will reveal that they all are for this life; and that this special blessing is no more reserved for the world to come than any of its companions. The blessedness of seeing God is not postponed until the next life, but in a very real sense is enjoyed here.

It is needless here to enter upon a discussion of the reasons for this requirement. Suffice it to state that it is necessary for final admission into the presence of God, for entrance into heaven itself. And this is true because:--

(a) It is founded in the nature of God Himself We have given some attention to this fact in Chapter 1 and need not be repeated here.

(b) That heaven is a holy place.

(c) That heaven is peopled by holy beings.

(d) That there the inhabitants are ruled by a holy God.

(e) And that all contrary to holiness is to be forever barred out.

Turning to Revelation 21:27 we read, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie."

Again it is interesting and suggestive to note that the prayers of Jesus and Paul especially are used as vehicles in teaching and enforcing this truth. And certainly it is safe to assume that whatever these prayed for it is reasonable to expect.

As an illustration let us direct our attention to the matchless intercessory prayer of Jesus for His disciples as recorded in the familiar seventeenth chapter of John. After expressly stating that they were "not of the world" even as He was not of the world, (See verses 14 and 16) He proceeds to pray for their sanctification. Not that they should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil of the world. (See verses 15 and 17)

Nor does His petition for their sanctification include only his disciples and terminate with them, but carries over to those who through their teaching and testimony should believe; for we notice in verse 20 that He prays, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." Thus all believers from the disciples on down to the present and on into the future are included in His prayer for sanctification; even to you and to me today.

In the holy relation thus established there is shown a mystical union existing between God and man resembling that of the Trinity. "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us," (verse 21). Needless to say that such a union as is here described could not exist where sin exists. The infinite holiness of God is incompatible with sin; so that antecedent to such a condition or state must be the act or process of the cleansing of the heart as a necessary preparation for such union.

Moreover this union, this state of purity is shown conclusively in verse 21 to be for us while in this world. "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me." No opportunity for the world to see and believe if such is to be deferred to a time after death. No, it is to be now, in this world.

Language can go no higher than this in describing an ideal; and Paul, both in his teaching and in his prayers does not fall below that ideal. In practically every one of his epistles he puts forth a petition for the sanctification of those to whom he writes. Notice his language to the Thessalonians, first epistle, third chapter, twelfth and thirteenth verses: "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love... to the end that he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God."

Also note his exhortation in the opening verses of the fourth chapter:-- "We beseech you brethren and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God even your sanctification."

Again in writing to the Ephesians he exhorts them, (chap. 3:16-20) "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love... might be filled with all the fulness of God." And then he closes with the benediction of verse twenty, "Now unto Him that is able to do," etc., clearly implying not only the divine ability, but the willingness and readiness of God to cleanse from all unrighteousness, and to fill with all the fulness of Himself.

Not only so, but the scriptures present a sinless state as actually attained in this life.

John in his first epistle, fourth chapter and eighteenth verse writes: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear." This not only implies divine love in the heart, but the present-tense form of the verb "casteth" implies the same as a present attainment. The whole context of this verse shows that the casting out of fear is the casting out of sin which is the cause of fear. Nothing in the Bible is plainer than this testimony concerning this blessed Christian privilege.

This is also Paul's experience. Writing to the Galatians, (2:20) he says, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." O what a testimony to the indwelling of the Christ following the crucifixion of the old self-life!

In chapter five and verse seventeen he complains of a condition from which he seeks release. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things ye would." And then in the next chapter, verse fourteen he proclaims his deliverance, having been crucified unto the world and the world unto him by Jesus Christ in whose cross alone he glories.

Thus the scriptures teach a complete deliverance from all sin here and now. Not simply a state or condition to be aspired and approximated unto and never fully attained, but a definite, conscious experience wrought in the heart and life through the power of the Holy Ghost to be possessed and enjoyed now in this life. A little bit of heaven as it were in which to go to heaven.

And now a last word as to the agency of its accomplishment. And in this connection let it be observed that,

3. No Instrumentality In the Impartation of This Grace Is Ever Referred to But the Gospel And Its Agencies Consciously Received.

In other words our sanctification is accomplished only through conscious faith and acceptance of the provisions of the gospel. There are certain conditions to be met, certain adjustments to be made in order for us to appropriate these provisions. These steps on man's side have been outlined in Chapter 2 and need not be repeated. Sufficient it is to say that these conditions and these requirements are revealed in the Word of God. Here we find the way described. And we may note that there is no other way. All other proposed ways are but the inventions of men. The various theories and ways proposed by men are unavailing. Only as we meet these conditions set forth in the Word of God and exercise faith in God and His plan can we ever hope to be sanctified.

Now there are many instrumentalities of grace, but only one remedy for sin. The Spirit may lead us by different agencies and through differing instrumentalities, but always to the same remedy.

Let us note by way of illustration the discipline of affliction. By this we mean not only physical affliction, although that may be included, but it also includes the affliction of soul as well. We have in mind the affliction referred to in James, fourth chapter, ninth verse: "Be afflicted and mourn and weep." That discipline which is necessary to harmonize the will of man to the will of God; that affliction by which we are made "conformable unto his death."

O, how many of us can look back to periods, periods which now we feel to have been too long, when our souls were thus afflicted; times when we were desiring the baptism with the Holy Ghost and the cleansing of our hearts as a conscious experience, and the discipline of soul which we suffered before we could see our way clearly into the experience, or could bring our wills to the point of absolute consecration to all the will of God. Yet we thank God for the discipline, for the conscious discipline which brought us to the place and point of consecration. Such discipline is necessary, for us.

For those who advocate the death theory of sanctification, that is that we are made holy just before or just as we pass out of this life, let us note that death is not conscious discipline. And inasmuch as there must be this conscious discipline, death cannot be an instrumentality through which we are sanctified. This must be accomplished, if at all, before dissolution.

Then death is not the putting off of the "old man" of sin. The notion that we cannot be separated from the evil of our nature until we are separated from the flesh is a relic of Gnosticism. Let it be heralded abroad that there is salvation from all sin both committed and inherited while we are in this life through the efficiency of the blood of Jesus Christ.

There are two main aspects in which this "body of sin" referred to in the scriptures has been viewed, namely, first the physical body subject to the sinning soul; and secondly the figurative "old man," the carnal nature which we have at birth by reason of the Fall.

It is to this latter aspect to which we give attention at this time. We are persuaded that sin does not reside in the physical flesh; that the regenerated soul is given grace to keep under and to overcome the fleshly appetites and to so discipline the physical that no wilful outbroken sin be committed. Yet we find living along with the new man after regeneration a "something" which is not subject to the law of God, and as Paul puts it, "neither indeed can be." It is this "something" living simultaneously with the new man after regeneration that is not only a hindrance to our best service and development spiritually, but is neither a necessity nor an unavoidable encumbrance. It is the carnal nature, the "old man" a proscribed, doomed, and superfluous offender, ample provisions having been made for his elimination. And it is the blessed privilege of the believer through the provisions of divine grace to be relieved of this hindrance, of this "old man of the sea," and best

of all it may be in this life before death. Praise the Lord! No virus or germ requiring physical dissolution to exterminate him; only the Blood of Jesus.

Sin is a disorder of the soul which restoration of the will to the divine will perfectly restores. Nor is there any need of Purgatorial fires to accomplish this purification. Only the power of an infinite, almighty, omnipotent God is necessary.

Moreover let us note that according to the scriptures the only court of such preparation is in this life. There are no waterpots of cleansing "after the manner of the purification of the Jews at the threshold of the eternal temple; no final baptism at the gate of heaven. All such preparation must be made here. Revelation discloses the gratification in heaven of every unsatisfied hope; but never of the deliverance from sin after death. This must be accomplished before that time. We hear beforehand of the rejoicings of Paradise; but they do not rejoice because that at last sin has been overcome. That has been overcome previously.

Jesus at His second coming is foretold as coming "without sin unto salvation." (Heb. 9:26-28) He has already provided for the putting away of sin by His sacrifice; but at His second advent He will put away all evil by casting out all that offends.

But His redeemed ones will not be so. In them indwelling sin will be sought for and not found, having been abolished from their souls and lives while on earth. Glory to God!

And now we close this chapter as we began it, by quoting the words of the text, using the Revised Version which shows conclusively the necessity of such cleansing, and proving by implication the possibility of it while on earth.

"Follow peace with all men and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord."

* * * * *

04 -- PERFECT LOVE

"I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1)

In the preceding chapter we noticed that one great aspect of full salvation is a perfect cleansing from all sin. We now direct our attention to another aspect of the experience commonly expressed as Perfect Love. The experience of full salvation or entire sanctification is often called by that term. Our application of this aspect would perhaps be more easily recognized by the term consecration.

Usually we speak or think of consecration as the human side of the transaction through which God works to produce within us the grace or experience of perfect love. This is true. But it seems to us that there is a close relation between consecration and perfect love. We are persuaded in our own mind that the attitude of perfect love is beautifully expressed in the text which is an exhortation to consecration. Reread this text carefully and prayerfully.

Consecration defined is, "To offer or devote to God's service or worship; to dedicate." Consecration therefore expresses a twofold idea. First, there is that which God ordains by His own sovereign power, will, or authority. Examples of this we find in the requirement that the first-born be dedicated to God. (See Exodus 13:2 and 12). The whole race to be dedicated to worship. (Ex. 19:6). The Levites and the family of Aaron to be dedicated or set apart for a special office or work. (Num. 1:49 and 3:12). And Christ Himself was set aside and devoted to death.

The second idea is expressed by what man dedicates of his own free will and choice. We have numerous examples of this in the scriptures. Among these we notice as prominent the dedication of Samuel by Hannah. (1 Sam. 1:11-22). Another instance is that of the Nazarite who devoted himself for special service for a time. (Num. 6:13). And the Hebrews who devoted their fields, cattle, etc. to the service or worship of God. (Lev. 27:28). All these represent a voluntary, willing dedication to God of the things thus dedicated. And this dedication gives us an idea of the consecration of the text.

In reality such a consecration or dedication precedes our cleansing, but is so bound up with it as to be inseparable. In fact such consecration involves perfect love. And it is our personal belief that God helps us in our consecration; and that it would be hardly possible for man to thus consecrate or dedicate himself apart from divine assistance. But thanks be to God, He is ever ready to help the earnest struggling soul. And if we mean really to consecrate ourselves to Him He will help us to do so.

Then it is important that we notice that perfect love is commanded. All through the scriptures there is the command specifically given or implied to a consecration and perfect love to God. No lower standard is set up; and the heart of man would not be satisfied with anything less than that. Such would be a reflection upon the perfect holiness and love of a holy God. And in this connection it is well for us to note:--

1. THAT THE LOVE OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IS THE SAME AS HIS LOVE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

One of the attributes of God is His immutability, -- His unchangeableness. He is the same "yesterday, today and forever." Therefore His love is unchanging. Whatsoever His love required in the Old Testament is required in the New Testament.

Our love is not to be simply an emotion, a sensibility, or even the energy of our own will alone. But our devotion to God must partake of all these. It must be a holy emotion, something of which we are conscious or sensible, and upon which and into which we put our will. Notice the language in Deuteronomy, chapter ten, verse twelve:-- "And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul."

Or that more familiar but similar command of Deut. 6:5,-- "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all soul, and with all thy might." Which same command Jesus gave to the lawyer as the First and Great Commandment. (Matt. 22:37).

If this Old Testament commandment was binding then, how much more is it in the New Testament dispensation? God's love is the same and the demands of that love remain unchanged.

Such a love makes service a joy without fear. It is the "new commandment" which John gave (13:34). It is that which promotes Christian unity as nothing else can. It is being "hid with Christ in God." (Col. 3:3). It is the measure of individual privilege. It is ours to wonder at, to accept, to attain and to enjoy. Praise the Lord!

2. ITS PERFECTION IS IN ITS SOLENESS AND SUPREMACY.

The perfection of love is not to be reckoned or measured by its intensity, because that is ever increasing as we go on with God. Neither is it to be measured by its emotion, for that is variable. But because it is supreme, above all else, with all the heart; because it transcends all other love, it is perfect. Jesus' command (Luke 10:27) shows it is to be supreme; "With all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind."

As we have before suggested the perfect love of God helps us to meet the conditions for this great requirement and possession, for it is promised in Deuteronomy, thirtieth chapter, and sixth verse, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul."

Does this seem impossible? However difficult it may appear, God's assisting grace will enable us to make the adjustments necessary to its attainment. Hear the words of J. A. Wood in that classic, "Perfect Love," page 50 in which he says:--

"To love the Lord with all our heart is to love Him to the extent of the powers and capacity we actually possess, no more, no less. To love Him with more than all our heart, beyond our power and capacity would be an absurdity; and to love Him

less than to the extent of our capacity and power, our actual ability, would be short of the divine requirement."

Again we repeat that God's infinite perfect love and grace enables us to love Him to the extent of our capacity. Praise His Name!

Again we note that the Spirit of God as the spirit of love and consecration is poured out upon the church. And God is abundantly and perfectly able to fill our hearts with divine love. To believe less than this is to reflect upon the love and the omnipotence of God. So with confidence and assurance we can say that God is able and willing to fill us with perfect love. Let us note further concerning this:--

(a) The Love of God Works In Us.

"We love him because he first loved us," (1 John 4:19) O, the wonderful, matchless love of God which reaches out and woos and loves us ahead of our love for Him. This is the doctrine of Prevenient Grace, or the love of God given to us antecedent to our turning to Him, and is set forth in the Articles of Religion of the Methodist church, (Par. 68) in the following language:--

"The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing (assisting) us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will."

We can ever thank God for His prevenient grace, for the love that precedes ours, and enables us to believe and appropriate His promises.

This love is revealed to the soul for its conversion. It is shed abroad in the soul of the regenerate, (1 John 4:16) and is to be perfected in us. (1 John 2:5) It is manifested as the instrument for our sanctification. It is the "verily" for the rebuke of unbelief, and for encouragement. Then again we notice:--

(b) That It Is The Perfected Return of Love. That is to say that not only is God's love to us and in us perfect, but our love to God is made perfect. We love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind, a thing which I feel would be impossible apart from God's assisting grace. O, the matchless love of God that thus helps us in our helplessness! It introduces the soul to so many privileges, among them being that blessed experience set forth in 1 John 4:18, "Perfect love casteth out fear."

A third observation we note here is one that has been referred to before, but which we feel needs repetition. Namely:

3. THE HOLY GHOST USES LOVE AS THE INSTRUMENT IN OUR CONSECRATION.

Consecration is impossible apart from love. It seems to us to be a contradiction to think of making a consecration to a being we do not love. We consecrate because we love. It is easy to give gifts to our earthly friends or loved ones. It is a joy to do so. And it is a joy to consecrate all to God if we love Him. And it has always seemed to us personally that love should be the chief motive in consecration. And we cannot but feel sometimes when we hear folk say that it is hard to consecrate to God that it may be possible that there is a lack of love for Him. Prevenient Grace will help us at this point if we are really in earnest.

Moreover such a consecration in addition to being full, complete, and willing, must be perpetual, for all time and eternity. No temporary time-limited consecration will suffice. It must be forever. We have no sympathy or confidence in the periodic "consecration" services held in many churches; they seem to us to be mere farces. God surely demands something more stable and permanent than that.

No man or woman if sane and normal would consent to exchange marriage vows for a time, even for a period of years. No! Such vows are to be perpetual, "until death do us part." And our consecration must be like that.

But now a great question arises in the minds of some. Is this experience possible,-- and now? Yes. dear heart it is possible and possible now. The whole tenor of New Testament teaching upon this subject forbids any other interpretation. On the contrary it teaches the unbroken, perfect, concentrated, uninterrupted consecration of the soul to God. And this possibility is shown in many ways. Among these we call brief attention to the following:--

(a) The Spirit's Honor Requires It.

The Holy Spirit's dispensation is primarily for man in this world. We are living in that dispensation now. The Holy Spirit is the great Executive of the Godhead for the carrying out of the plan of God for man in this life. His work is to be accomplished in us here and now. There is no operation of His grace save in this life. No saving operation of grace beyond the tomb. And as such it must have an end. Just as life upon the earth has an end, just so there comes an end to the operations of divine grace. If the Spirit's work is not accomplished in us in this life it will never be accomplished. Hence the Spirit's honor demands that His work be wrought out within us here and now. To decide otherwise is to dishonor the Spirit.

Another proof of the present possibility of this experience is to be found in the fact that:--

(b) Paul's Prayers Were Invariably For It. We have noticed this fact before. We note that these prayers of Paul are but the echo of the wonderful Intercessory prayer of Jesus recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, especially verses 17 to 21.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: That they all might be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also might be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

We notice the echoes of that prayer in the prayers of Paul when he prays that the people may be "rooted and grounded in love"; That "Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith"; That they might "comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length and depth, and height"; and that they might be "filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. 3:17-19)

In his other epistles we find Paul praying the same prayer in substance for those to whom he writes. Now if it be impossible to have such a love here, why would Jesus and Paul pray for it?

The inevitable conclusion is that inasmuch as Jesus and Paul prayed for it, it is attainable now. Then again we find that:--

(c) Human Nature Confirms It.

The constitution of the human mind is for unity. Disunity or confusion is not normal. Man is at his best only when unity prevails. Such unity is to be found in the love of God, which Paul describes (Col. 3:14) as "the bond of perfectness." The Psalmist sensed this need when he prayed (Ps. 86:11), "Unite my heart to fear thy name." The demand of human nature for unity finds its answer in the experience of perfect love.

Carrying our investigation a little farther we find in Jesus,

(d) The Supreme Example.

Jesus is everywhere and perhaps universally acknowledged to be our Great Example. This is true in practically all lines of moral conduct; and along the line of perfect love we hear Him saying as he concludes the humble loving service rendered his disciples when He washed their feet, (John 13:15) "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." He is our example of perfect love toward God and man.

John tells us in his first epistle, second chapter, fifth verse, that "In Him verily is the love of God perfected." And in the fourth chapter and twelfth verse of the same epistle he tells us that "God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." Yes, Jesus is our great example and pattern of perfect love.

We have already hinted at what we might introduce as another proof of the possibility of attaining unto perfect love in this life, that of:--

(e) Aspiration.

This is one of the strong proofs of its attainability unless we conclude that God awakens within us desires that cannot be gratified or met, to deliberately mock us. All normal souls have an inner desire or yearning for holiness and perfect love. All of us I presume, in the early joy of our salvation, had, and in some manner, perhaps not fully recognized by ourselves, expressed a desire to be "all the Lord's"; have yearned to be better and better; to go on with God. This is but a Spirit-inspired longing for holiness, purity, perfect love. Pope in his work on theology says:-"Many of those who most unlovingly oppose this teaching have in their hearts the secret rebuke of their opposition."

Yes, the aspiration of the regenerated heart is for purity, and any rebellion against this aspiration is an abnormality.

(f) Faith.

The honor put upon faith is such as to warrant the utmost expectation and sanction of the highest doctrines of Scripture. Three statements of Jesus confirm this. Let us notice them.

(1) As to the uprooting of sin. He gave to His disciples who prayed for faith for conquering their uncharitableness, the teaching of the extirpation or eradication of the sin principle by faith when he describes "faith as a grain of mustard seed" accomplishing the apparently impossible. God always honors faith, and to aspire to and to exercise faith for the experience of perfect love guarantees its attainment.

(2) As to the performance of supernatural duty represented in the casting out of devils, hear Him as He says the same thing, if our faith be as a grain of mustard seed it shall prevail; and

(3) He climaxes this teaching in the strong language of Matthew 21, verses 21 and 22: "Verily, I say unto you, if ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

What might we not expect from such statements from our Lord Himself? Surely if God honors faith to such an extent, may we not reasonably expect Him to honor the faith of the hungry soul who prays for perfect love?

And lastly this fact is proven by:--

(g) Christian Life and Experience.

This is not to be ignored altogether. We are willing to accept other testimony, so why not this? History is but recorded testimony. Many of the activities of life are conducted upon the basis of the testimony of others. Shall we ignore the testimony of the saints of all ages? In my opinion one of the proofs of the fallen condition of man is the fact that men will accept the testimony of their friends along almost any line except their testimony in regard to their religious experiences. Such an attitude is not fair nor just.

We have a few outstanding examples in the scriptures of the experience of Christian Perfection. Job is one. The opening words of the Book of Job tell us that "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright."

We have not the time to introduce the testimony of such saints of God down through the centuries as Wesley, Knox, Whitefield, Foster, Mallilieu, Bounds, and the thousands of others, hosts of such alive and active today, who bear humble testimony, supported by unimpeachable lives, to the gracious experience of perfect love. The experience of full salvation, entire sanctification, holiness, or perfect love is incontestably supported by the testimony of human experience. Praise the Lord!

Let us close the chapter by a glance at the extent of consecration. Enough has been said already to prove conclusively that briefly stated it comprehends all. Love prompts and demands a willing, complete, consecration of our all to God.

Frances Ridley Havergal sums it up so beautifully in those lines which have become a classic, words which have been quoted and sung, and which so beautifully describe what consecration is, that we close this chapter with those lines, italicizing the words of special import. Let us study them carefully and prayerfully.

**"Take my life and let it be,
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.**

**"Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.**

**"Take my voice and let me sing,
Always, only, for my King.
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages for Thee.**

**"Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.**

**"Take my will and make it thine;
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is thine own;
It shall be thy royal throne.**

**"Take my love? My Lord I pour
At thy feet its treasure-store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.**

-- Frances Ridley Havergal.

*** * * * ***

05 -- CHRISTIAN PERFECTION OR HOLINESS

**"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."
(Jesus, Matt 5:48)**

"Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14)

We are dealing in this chapter with the state or condition of holiness to which the character of the saint may be formed, or to which it may attain in this life. We usually speak of this state as that of Christian Perfection.

In preceding chapters we have noticed that it is first a state in which the heart is wholly cleansed from sin, or a state or condition of heart purity.

Secondly, it is a state in which the heart is filled with perfect love to God and man. This we usually speak of as a state of perfect love. The resulting condition, in which the heart cleansed from all sin and filled with perfect love, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit is usually referred to as Christian Perfection or Holiness.

It will now appear why the different terms applied to this experience are used. Each one, though sometimes used to describe the experience as a whole, has its peculiar significance, and more properly sets forth a particular phase or aspect of the work. Thus Entire Sanctification has particular reference to cleansing; Perfect Love refers especially to the filling of the heart with the Holy Spirit of love which we noticed in the preceding chapter; and Christian Perfection describes or applies to the state or condition resulting from such cleansing and filling. While all these

terms are used synonymously, we feel that they have certain specific meanings describing specific works of the Spirit, and that the whole result is a state or condition of holiness. It is this meaning or application which we attach to the term holiness in this chapter.

Now without too much repetition let us note some observations concerning this state, considering both the positive and the negative aspects of the experience. First let us observe that--

Perfection Is The Goal of A Possible State.

This is an undeniable fact. The maturity of the Christian privilege is set before believers as the goal of evangelical aspiration. Even the opponents of holiness as a definite work of grace instantaneously bestowed and enjoyed in this life, have perfection as their goal, to be aimed at, approximated unto, striven after, if never fully realized in this life.

This perfection as evangelical and the effect or result of divine grace, is estimated according to a gracious interpretation of law fulfilled in love. And it is well for us to note with respect to this perfection,

(a) That it is a limited perfection,-- not absolute; and (b) It is in all respects accommodated to a probationary condition,-- not finished.

Much confusion has arisen in the minds of some concerning seemingly contradictory statements of Paul in Philippians, chapter three, and verses twelve and fifteen, and which have to do with the thought before us. In verse twelve Paul speaks of a perfection not as yet attained; and in verse fifteen he refers to a perfection already attained, not only by himself, but by others also. How can we explain this seeming inconsistency?

Briefly stated, (and a careful study of the context will sustain this view) Paul is speaking in verse twelve of a finished perfection to be accomplished at the resurrection of the dead, and to which of course Paul had not as yet attained. This for the sake of clearness we may call glorification, which to all yet living is future. In verse fifteen he is referring to a state of Christian Perfection which he and others around him were experiencing, and which had been already attained, and which therefore was a present experience. So Paul, instead of confusing the idea of perfection as here before us clarifies it, differentiating as he does between a Christian and a finished perfection. Then we may notice further that it is (c) of universal application extending to the entire life and relations of life.

Now let us notice some failures commonly made in the setting forth of this doctrine. And first of these we find to be: (a) Representing the Spirit as setting forth an ideal or goal unattainable in this life. In other words the idea of perfection we find throughout the Bible is not intended or expected to be attained unto in this life, but

is simply an ideal toward which we are to approximate as nearly as we can. We once heard a preacher in a sermon on Christian perfection say that the ideal of perfection was too high for human attainment, and that all that Jesus meant when He said, "Be ye perfect" (text) was that with Him as our example we were to strive to imitate His perfections as well as we could, but not to hope for attainment in this life. Incidentally we note that this preacher was an advocate of the doctrine of sinning and repenting every day in thought, word and deed.

It is unnecessary to say more along this line. Previous arguments concerning cleansing and perfect love as a present experience will suffice. Sufficient it is to say, and that without fear of successful contradiction that no real desire for holiness is vain; and that we can attain unto it in this life.

Another failure in presenting this truth is (b) that of interpreting every text that in any way refers to perfection as teaching holiness.

Not all texts prove holiness. They are not intended to prove it. While the whole tenor of Bible teaching is holiness, not every individual text teaches it. To so interpret is to invite confusion and misunderstanding. We must be wise when it comes to the matter of scriptural interpretation. The Holy Spirit must be our guide and instructor here especially. The Holy Spirit is the author of Scripture, and He must be its interpreter.

But while every text may not teach holiness we can be assured that there are sufficient scriptures given to justify us in all we have said,-- and more. We need not "strain a point" anywhere to prove holiness. There are many injunctions and commands which clearly indicate and prove conclusively that,

- (a) There is such a state or condition;
- (b) That it is attainable in this life; and
- (c) That it is not optional, but obligatory.

All these propositions are supported and proven by one command recorded in I Peter, 1:10, "Be ye holy."

If there be no such condition as holiness then this command is superfluous, and God is charged with inconsistency in commanding us to attain unto a state which is not.

If there be such a state, but not attainable, then again there is no need for the command, and we are forced to conclude against the justice of a God who would require of us the impossible.

Then again the imperative form of the command indicates that it is obligatory. It is no more optional than any other imperative command. It is as binding and obligatory as the "Thou shalt" or the "Thou shalt not" of the Decalogue.

Our second observation is:

This Perfection is Evangelical.

That is to say that it is distinguished from every kind of perfection which is not of grace; and that it bears the impress of the condescension and loving-kindness of God. It is not a perfection as we speak of perfection in other things, but a perfection accommodated to our fallen condition. Mark the word,-- not lowered, but accommodated. A perfection which has a consummation in this life and also in the life to come.

We may perhaps understand the nature of this perfection better by taking a negative and then a positive view of it. And first let us consider it negatively, that is what it is not.

First let us notice that it is not Absolute Perfection. In this respect none but God is perfect; for absolute perfection demands a completeness; a state in which there is nothing wanting; of such a nature that nothing needs to be added, subtracted, or modified in any way. The human mind can not grasp the idea of absolute perfection. Between the highest degree of human perfection and the perfection of God there is the difference between the finite and the infinite. We repeat, only God has absolute perfection. Certainly no rational, thinking being would predicate such a condition to humanity. No, this perfection is not absolute perfection.

Then again, it is not Angelic Perfection, or the perfection of angels. J.A. Wood, the author of "Perfect Love" says in this connection:

"Angels are a higher order of intelligences. They are innocent and sinlessly pure. Their services are performed with a precision and a rectitude not possible to mortals."

Therefore Christian Perfection is a perfection according to the capacity of man, and not according to the perfection of an angel or glorified saint.

Nor yet is this perfection Adamic Perfection, or the perfection which Adam possessed before the Fall. In that fall the race suffered untold loss. Sin has left its mark upon the race. No matter how completely we may be saved from sin, still its mark is upon us. Sin may be illustrated by nails driven into a post. The nails may be removed, but the nail-holes, the scars remain. Similarly sin as the result of the Fall has left its mark indelibly upon the race. This is evident in the imperfect judgment, the frailty of the human body and mind. So that there is a wide difference between a

pure-hearted Christian saved by grace and an unfallen Adam in the glory of Paradise. No, Christian Perfection is not synonymous with Adamic Perfection.

There are other negative qualities of perfection which we may notice briefly in passing. Among these might be noticed:--

It is not a perfection above temptation. In other words we shall always be subject to temptation. No sane advocate of holiness teaches that we shall be above temptation. Even Jesus was led away into the wilderness and tempted. We read that "He was tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin."

We should observe however that temptation to the sanctified soul while a real temptation is from without. It is not the promptings of an inner carnality, for that has been destroyed; but it is from the outside. However by being fortified from within, the temptation while perhaps severe, is restricted; for we read: (1 Cor. 10:13)

"God will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Thank God for that promise. It encourages us under the stress of the hard tests and temptations of life.

It is not a perfection that frees us from mistakes and errors. No, we shall still be subject to mistakes. I have sometimes felt that my life has been largely made up of mistakes. Mistakes distress us, and drive us to our knees in prayer. But we can rejoice that our mistakes are not reckoned against us as sins having penal desert, and we may profit by the painful lessons they often teach us. But although we may make mistakes we may learn valuable lessons from them as to how to avoid them in the future. Christian perfection will not render us immune from mistakes, but will help us immensely against repetitions of these mistakes in the future.

It is not a perfection of Judgment or Knowledge. Just as we are still liable to mistake and error, so shall we still be subject to errors of Judgment. How often even in our sanctified experience have we acted in good faith, exercised our best judgment, only to discover that our judgment was at fault; and what we had done with the best of motives and intention we discovered later was not the best thing to do. Imperfect judgment or knowledge was responsible for our failure.

Then it is not a perfection above the possibility of sinning. We realize that sometimes people receive the impression that to be sanctified wholly renders us immune to temptation and above the possibility of sinning. Nothing is farther from the truth than this. No sane teacher of holiness teaches this. This is a fanatical teaching set forth by some unsafe preachers or teachers, but it has no foundation in Scripture, reason or experience.

Sometimes the Scripture found in 1 John 3:9 especially the last part of the verse, "he cannot sin because he is born of God," is interpreted to mean that the true Christian is above and beyond the ability to sin. But this Scripture teaches nothing of the kind. A little common-sense reasoning, a careful study of the context will reveal a truth here which is neither fanatical or unscriptural, but merely the plain teaching that we cannot sin and be a Christian any more than we can steal and be honest, or to wilfully tell a lie and be truthful. No, we never get beyond the ability to sin, but thank God we can through grace get to where we need not sin.

Other fallacies are sometimes urged as results of perfect love which we must dismiss with but a mere mention of them. That it is a perfection which places us beyond the danger of falling away is one of them. As can readily be seen the possibility of sinning as noticed above carries with it the possibility and therefore the danger of falling away. We have no place in our thinking for that pernicious doctrine of "once in grace always in grace," which would be true if any state of grace could take us beyond the possibility of sinning or falling away.

Neither is it a state beyond the need of Atonement. All truly spiritual Christians recognize the constant need of the precious blood; and their sense of dependence is more acute in the experience of perfect love than ever before. The language of their heart is beautifully expressed in that hymn of the church,--

"I could not do without thee
O Saviour of the lost,
Whose precious blood redeemed me
At such tremendous cost;

"Thy righteousness, thy pardon,
Thy precious blood must be
My only hope and comfort,
My glory and my plea."

The wholly sanctified heart is keenly conscious of its momentary need of being continually under the precious blood of atonement.

Lastly we notice the objection sometimes heard that Christian perfection teaches a state or condition beyond growth or further development. This is another fallacy, for to the contrary it is a condition or state favorable to growth. Purity does not necessarily mean maturity. The immature fruit may be and is perfect at any stage of its development, but requires time for growth and development, to mature and ripen, likewise the heart made pure and perfect is in a condition to grow far beyond what it would be hindered by carnality. A clean, cultivated garden has more opportunity to grow and develop than a weedy uncultivated one.

But now a word on the positive side, -- what it is. And as we have before noticed, and need not repeat at length save to recapitulate briefly it is two things:-- (1) A Cleansing From All Sin. And it is also, (2) The Possession of Perfect Love.

These we have already considered. Now to borrow from J. A. Wood in his book "Perfect Love" we find that this love is perfect in quality, having no alloy. It is perfect in quantity, filling the heart. It is a progressive love in that we go constantly forward "growing in grace" and love daily. Not perhaps always consciously, but nevertheless surely growing. And this love "casts out fear." All slavish, servile, harmful fear is cast out so that life becomes tranquil, quiet, peaceful. This freedom from servile fear induces a loving filial fear of God which is satisfying and wholesome.

Then perfect love brings out the evidences of our salvation more clearly to us. We have said very little or nothing in these chapters concerning the Witness of the Spirit, or the fact that we can know when we are saved or sanctified. It is not our purpose to enter into a discussion of that doctrine now, except to say that one of the outstanding doctrines of our faith is that it is a matter of conscious knowledge that we are saved or sanctified. The thought here is that this witness is made more clear and definite when we enjoy a full salvation. Just as increased light in a room brings into clearer view the furniture in the room, so the increased light of a full salvation causes the facts of our experience and the evidences of our salvation to become clearer in our consciousness. No wonder that Fanny Crosby should break forth into joyous praise in that well known hymn. "Blessed assurance! Jesus is mine!" Perfect love in the heart helps us to realize more clearly and distinctly God's presence and blessing.

Perfect love detaches the affections from forbidden things. It destroys a relish for carnal and worldly things. While it is true we turn away from sinful things at regeneration, and "old things are passed away, and all things become new," perfect love takes us a step farther into the renunciation of things otherwise legitimate, but which are not for the best interest of our lives or service to God. Paul says, we remember, that "All things are lawful unto me but all things are not expedient. Perfect love will enable us to cease to relish even the legitimate things if we discover or are led to see that they are not expedient.

Not only are we spoiled for worldly pleasures while in the glow of a perfect love, but many times these things lose the interest and pleasure we once enjoyed in them if we backslide. The memory of the blessed experience we once enjoyed spoils for us the enjoyment of those things as we before enjoyed them. A backslider is miserable. He does not enjoy the blessings of salvation, and the memory of such joy spoils his relish and enjoyment of sinful or worldly things.

On the contrary perfect love changes radically our enjoyments. We have considered most of this ground before. While this is effected in great measure at our regeneration, it is intensified at sanctification. Our enjoyments now are purely

religious or spiritual. Truly therefore to the unsaved or even to the unsanctified regenerate we are often a "peculiar people." But thank God! the enjoyments of a pure heart are sweet, rational, and unwasting. And best of all they last.

As a third and concluding quality of perfect love we notice that it is a state or condition of rest. In Hebrews 4:9 we read, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." This rest, in store for "the people of God" or believers is to be realized through an entire consecration and faith in the promises and is too blessed for explanation. It is better felt than told. Briefly epitomized it means a rest from the conflict between the will and conscience; a rest from the unholy promptings of the carnal nature; a rest from the disquietude of temporal interests, The disturbing, disquieting things have given place to a quiet, restful assurance of God's presence and care, and a wholesome dependence upon God for all things.

This is a brief, incomplete outline of the experience of full salvation. It cannot be told. It must be experienced to be rightly understood and appreciated.

But we thank God that it is not limited. It is for all. None are debarred or excepted. All may possess it. And bless God! we need not wait longer for it. It is for us now. It can be ours for the price of a full, complete consecration of our all to God, and a present faith in his promises. Do you have it? Do you want it? Are you willing to pay the price for it? These are momentous questions for us.

Let us close this meditation together with a hymn by Charles Wesley which has been sung by the saints down through the years, and which has become a classic in holiness hymnology:

"Jesus, Thine all-victorious love
Shed in my heart abroad;
Then shall my feet no longer rove
Rooted and fixed in God.

"O that in me the sacred fire
Might now begin to glow,
Burn up the dross of base desire,
And make the mountains flow!

"O that it now from heaven might fall,
And all my sins consume!
Come, Holy Ghost, for thee I call;
Spirit of burning come!

"Refining fire, go through my heart;
Illuminate my soul;
Scatter thy life through every part,
And sanctify the whole.

**"No longer then my heart shall mourn,
While purified by grace,
I only for His glory burn,
And always see His face.**

**"My steadfast soul, from falling free,
Shall then no longer move,
While Christ is all the world to me,
And all my heart is love."**

-- Charles Wesley

*** * * * ***

THE END