

Christian Perfection

by Asa Mahan

Christian perfection is the state of being in which an individual's moral and Christian character is 'perfect and entire, wanting nothing,' achieved through the consecration of the whole being to Christ and the perpetual employment of all powers in his service.

Scripture: Isaiah 6:5, John 17:20, Romans 8:3, Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:23

Topics: "Christian Perfection", "Entire Sanctification"

Description

Asa Mahan preaches about the attainability of Christian Perfection, emphasizing that the provision for entire sanctification is made in the Gospel and that believers are called to aim for perfect holiness. He highlights the prayers, promises, and examples in the Bible that support the belief that some individuals, like Paul and John, did attain to a state of entire sanctification in this life. Mahan challenges Christians to trust in the promises of God, pray fervently, and believe that God's grace enables them to overcome sin and walk in perfect holiness.

Transcript

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

BY ASA MAHAN, D.D.

Complete text but edited and updated

FOREWORD TO THE 1962 REPRINT

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

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

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

"Christian Perfection" is a small book, but it has been much sought after by saintly scholars. It is being reproduced unabridged through the good providence of God and the kindness of W. Reed of Wales who has loaned his copy for this reprint.

The Reverend H. E. Schmul

124 Georgetown Rd.

Salem, Ohio

LONDON, DEC. 1, 1874.

DEAR BROTHER WARNER,

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

Yours in the hands of Christ,

ASA MAHAN.

INTRODUCTION.

MORE than twenty years ago a good brother said to us, "I have a good book here I will give you, and if you will read it through on your knees it will do you five pounds' worth of good." We wanted to get good, and accepted the book; it was "Christian Perfection, by Dr. Mahan." We read it through on our knees, and got good good, not to be balanced by five-pound notes. We knew something of the experience of Christian Perfection, and this book greatly tended to show its scriptural foundation, and to establish us in the faith. We never read any other book through on our knees, save our Bible; we have thus read that annually every year since, and every year of our life are more fully convinced that it is God's will that His people should be fully saved from all sin, and be "filled with the Holy Ghost." During the last twenty years we have read almost everything on the subject we could lay our hands on, but on the whole, know of no human production which more clearly sets forth the scriptural character of this great grace than does the present work. Meeting with the author, he readily gave us permission to reprint his work, for the edification and salvation of those interested in the subject.

The question is not, "What is the experience of the Church?" but, "What are the provisions of grace?" The experience of the Church may be far too low, and must never be our standard of appeal. God has more light to pour upon the world than we have yet seen; and more grace to bestow than we have yet received. The question with which we should approach God's word is, "What is my Father's will concerning me?" George Fox, the Quaker, preached the Gospel of salvation from sin Antinomians met him at his open air meetings, and contended that we could never get further in this world than, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" They would proceed to quote passages which they supposed supported their views,

but the Quaker stopped them with, "Nay, friend, thou must not take God's Holy Word to prove thy dirty doctrine!" And he was right. God's Holy Word enjoins a holy religion. A good brother says: "The doctrine we contend for is not limited to a bare and questionable place, a doubtful and uncertain existence in the holy records, but is repeatedly and abundantly. explicitly, and with great clearness embodied as a cardinal feature throughout the whole system. It breathes in the prophecy thunders in the law murmurs in the narrative whispers in the promises supplicates in the prayers sparkles in the poetry resounds in the songs speaks in the types glows in the imagery voices in the language and beams in the spirit of the whole scheme, from its Alpha to its Omega from its beginning to its end. Holiness! Holiness needed! Holiness required! Holiness offered! Holiness attainable! Holiness a present duty a present privilege a present enjoyment, is the progress and completeness of its wondrous theme! It is the truth glowing all over webbing all through revelation; the glorious truth which sparkles, and sings, and shouts in all its history, and biography, and poetry, and prophecy, and precept, and promise, and prayer; the great central truth of the system. The wonder is that all do not see, that any rise up to question, a truth so conspicuous, so glorious, so full of comfort."

The experience of Dr. Mahan, as related towards the end of the work, goes to show that the reception of this grace was to him what the Old Methodists would call the "Second Blessing." He was a Professor in a College, and a successful Minister of the Gospel, and yet but a babe in grace. He had pointed many sinners to Christ for justification, and yet often felt as if he would give the world, if he had it, if some one would help him into the enjoyment of that which he dimly saw was in reversion for him. However, the time of his deliverance came, and now for about forty years he has lived and preached on a higher plane, and has seen a complete revolution of thought on this subject in the Church with which he is associated. His testimony is the more important, in the estimation of some persons, coming as it does from outside Methodism, and yet according with her acknowledged standards. A good brother said to us, some time since, when we had been insisting on the doctrine as a present privilege, to be received at once by faith, that there were some amongst us who were teaching that it was a grace into which we were to grow, but he had always believed we were to receive it at once as God's gift, and then grow in it. That was evidently Mr. Wesley's view of the subject. In the early part of the Methodist Revival, many were brought into the enjoyment of full salvation. Concerning these, he said:

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

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

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

GEORGE WARNER.

65, Stepney Green, London, E.,

January, 1875.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

DISCOURSE I.

THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Matt. v:48.

Two important features of this passage demand our special attention: 1. The demand, "Be perfect." 2. The nature and extent of the command; "even as your Father in heaven is perfect." In other words, we are here required to be as perfect, as holy, as free from all sin, in our sphere as creatures, as God is in his as our Creator and our Sovereign.

My design in the present discourse is to answer this one question, What is perfection in holiness? In answering this inquiry, I would remark, that perfection in holiness implies a full and perfect discharge of our entire duty, of all existing obligations in respect to God and all other beings. It is perfect obedience to the moral law. It is "loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and our neighbor as ourselves." It implies the entire absence of all selfishness, and the perpetual presence and all-pervading influence of pure and perfect love. "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

In the Christian, perfection in holiness implies the consecration of his whole being to Christ the subjection of all his powers and susceptibilities to the control of one principle, "faith on the son of God." This is what the moral law demands of him in his circumstances. Were the Christian in that state in which he should "eat and drink, and do all that he does for the glory of God," in which his eye should be perfectly single to this one object; or in which the action of all his powers should be controlled by faith, which works by love, he would then, I suppose, have attained to a state of entire sanctification his character would be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Every duty to every being in existence would be discharged.

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

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

Hence I remark that perfection in holiness does not imply, that we now love God with all the strength and intensity with which redeemed spirits in heaven love him. The depth and intensity of our love depend, under all circumstances, upon the vigor and reach of our powers, and the extent and distinctness of our

vision of Divine truth. "Here we see through a glass darkly; there face to face." Here our powers are comparatively weak; there they will be endowed with an immortal and tireless vigor. In each and every sphere, perfection in holiness implies a strength and intensity of love corresponding with the reach of our powers, and the extent and distinctness of our vision of truth in that particular sphere. The child is perfect in holiness who perpetually exercises a filial and affectionate obedience to all the Divine requisitions, and loves God with all the powers which it possesses as a child. The man is perfect in holiness who exercises the same supreme and affectionate obedience to all that God requires, and loves him to the full extent of his knowledge and strength as a man. The saint on earth is perfect, when he loves with all the strength and intensity rendered practicable by the extent of his knowledge and reach of his powers in his present sphere. The saint in heaven will be favored with a seraph's vision, and a seraph's power. To be perfect there, he must love and adore with a seraph's vigor, and burn with a seraph's fire.

To present this subject in a somewhat more distinct and expanded form, the attention of the reader is now invited to a few remarks upon 1Thes. 5:23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The prayer of the apostle for Christians here is, in the language of Dr. Scott, that the "very God of peace" "would sanctify them wholly, and in respect to their entire nature, as consisting of a rational and immortal soul, an animal life, with its various sensitive appetites, and a material body; that every sense, member, organ, and faculty might be completely purified, and devoted to the service of God; and that thus they might be preserved blameless till the coming of Christ." In short, the prayer of the apostle is, that all the powers and susceptibilities of our being may not only be purified from all that is unholy, but wholly sanctified and devoted to Christ, and for ever preserved in that state. Now, the powers and susceptibilities of our nature are all comprehended in the following enumeration: the will, the intellect, and our mental and physical susceptibilities and propensities. The question to which the special attention of the reader is invited is this: When are we in a perfectly sanctified and blameless state, in respect to the action of all these powers and susceptibilities?

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

2. That we "be preserved blameless" in regard to our intellect, does not imply that we never think of what is evil. If this were so, Christ was not blameless, because he thought of the temptations of Satan. Nor could the Christian repel what is evil, as he is required to do. To repel evil, the evil itself must be before the mind, as an object of thought.

To be blameless in respect to the action of our intellectual powers, does imply, 1. That every thought of evil be instantly suppressed and repelled. 2. That they be constantly employed on the inquiry, what is the truth and will of God, and by what means we may best meet the demands of the great law of love. 3. That they be employed in the perpetual contemplation of "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," in thinking of these things also. When the intellectual powers are thus employed, they are certainly in a blameless state.

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

powers and laws of our being forbid. Nor, in that case, could we obey the command, "Rejoice with those that do rejoice, and weep with those that weep." Nor does it imply that no feelings can exist in the mind, which, under the circumstances then present, it would be improper to indulge. A Christian, for example, may feel a very strong desire to speak for Christ under circumstances when it would be improper for him to speak. The feeling itself is proper. But we must be guided by wisdom from above in respect to the question, when and where we are to give utterance to our feelings.

That our feelings and mental susceptibilities be in a blameless state, does imply, 1. That they all be held in perfect and perpetual subjection to the will of God. 2. That they be in perfect and perpetual harmony with the truth and will of God as apprehended by the intellect, and thus constituting a spotless mirror, through which there shall be a perfect reflection of whatsoever things are "true," "honest," just," "pure," "lovely," and of "good report."

4. That our "bodies be preserved blameless," does not, of course, imply that they are free from fatigue, disease, or death. Nor does it imply that no desire be excited through our physical propensities, which, under existing circumstances, it would be unlawful to indulge. The feeling of hunger in Christ, under circumstances in which indulgence was not proper, was not sinful. The consent of the will to gratify the feeling, and not the feeling itself, renders us sinners.

That we be preserved in a sanctified and blameless state in respect to our bodies, does imply, 1. That we endeavor to acquaint ourselves with all the laws of our physical constitution. 2. That in regard to food, drink, and dress, and in regard to the indulgence of all our appetites and physical propensities, there be a sacred and undeviating conformity to these laws. 3. That every unlawful desire be instantly suppressed, and that all our propensities be held in perfect subjection to the will of God. 4. That our bodies, with all our physical powers and propensities, be "presented to God as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable," to be employed in his service.

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

REMARKS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DISCOURSE II.

PERFECTION IN HOLINESS ATTAINABLE.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." Matt. v:48.

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

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

The question now returns, Is perfection in holiness, in the sense of the term as above explained, attainable in this life? That it is attainable, I argue from the following reasons:

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

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

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

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

2 Cor. 7:1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." If to "escape the corruption that is in the world through lust," and to be "made partakers of the Divine nature," to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," and to "perfect holiness," do not imply entire sanctification, how, I ask, can that

doctrine be expressed? That the Christian may be thus sanctified is the declared object for which the promises were given. Who will deny that they are adequate to this object? Unless they are thus inadequate, perfection in holiness is, in this life, practicable to the Christian.

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

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

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

What the new covenant is, we learn from Jer. 31:31-34, and Heb. 8:8-11, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt (which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord); but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more."

The following blessings, specifically promised in this covenant, demand our special attention: 1. A confirmed state of pure and perfect holiness, such as the first covenant, or moral law, demands "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." 2. The pardon of all sin, or perfect justification "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more." 3. The perpetual fruition of the Divine presence and favor "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." 4. The general spread of the Gospel among mankind "All shall know me."

We will now notice the relations of these two covenants.

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

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

1st, The old covenant requires perfect holiness. Its language is, "Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God;" "He that kept the whole law, and yet offends in one point, is guilty of all."

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

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

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

Again, 2nd, The old covenant or moral law requires not only perfect, but perpetual holiness. Gal. 3:10, "Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

The new covenant, on the other hand, promises not only perfect but perpetual holiness. Jer. 32:39, 40, "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." If, to give to Christians one heart and one way, that they may fear God for ever, and never depart from him, does not imply, not only perfect, but perpetual holiness, we may truly say that language cannot express that idea.

Ezek. 37:23, "Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions." Every one will perceive, that if the Holy Spirit has not here given us the promise, not only of perfect, but perpetual holiness, he has made as near an approach to it as is in the power of language to make, and that, if he had designed to express that promise, no stronger language could possibly have been used.

The same truth is taught with equal distinctness in Isa. 59:21, and Luke 1:74, 75, "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." "That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."

I cite but one other passage under this head a passage, which, if we had none others of the kind in the Bible, would place the doctrine under consideration upon an eternal rock. 1Thes. 5:23, 24, "And the very

God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calls you, who also will do it." Here we have, 1. A prayer for perfect and perpetual holiness, dictated by the direct inspiration of the Spirit of God. Who can believe that the Holy Spirit has dictated a prayer which is not "according to the will of God," and which he requires us to believe that God will never answer by the bestowment of the blessing "desired of him?"

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

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

II. We have the same evidence from Scripture, that all Christians may, and that some of them will, attain to a state of entire sanctification in this life, that we have that they will attain to that state in heaven. No passages can be adduced which more positively affirm the latter than the former. Any principles of interpretation that will show that such passages as I have cited, and shall hereafter cite, do not prove the practicability of perfect holiness here, will annihilate all evidence that heaven itself is a state of perfect and perpetual purity.

An objection, deserving a passing notice, is sometimes brought to the view of the new covenant here given. This covenant, it is said, is applicable to the Jews only. To this position I reply,

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

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

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

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

* [I have recently learned that certain objections to the views of the "two covenants," presented in this volume, have been started by some, on account of the declaration of Paul, Heb. 8:13, "In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now, that which decayes and waxes old is ready to vanish away." If the old covenant is the moral law, does not the apostle, it is asked, here affirm its abrogation? In reply, I would remark, that the old covenant, as shown in this discourse, is the moral law, with the types and shadows of the ancient dispensation annexed to it. It includes, therefore, not only the "ten commandments," but all the precepts of the Pentateuch, together with the whole ritual of Moses. All these together, considered as a system of moral influences for the moral renovation of man, constituted the old covenant. The moral law, as embodied in the ten commandments, was, by way of eminence, called the covenant, because it embodied the most essential elements of that covenant. Now, the moral law, considered as a rule of action, constitutes an essential element of both covenants, the new as well as the

old. In this sense it can never "wax old," nor be abrogated. But, contemplated as a part of the ancient dispensation, and as a part of a system of influences for the moral renovation of man, it has, together with the entire ritual of that dispensation, already "waxed old and vanished away."]

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

Again, 2 Cor. 13:11, "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." Why except the first of these precepts, and maintain that obedience to all the rest is expected? How could the expectations of the spirit be more clearly indicated, respecting the precept, "Be perfect," than by clustering it, in this manner, with other precepts, in respect to which we know that such expectations exist?

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

1Tim. 6:13, I 4, "I give thee charge, in the sight of God, who quickenes all things, and before Jesus Christ, who, before Pontius Pilate, witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." The command here referred to, as any one will see, who will read the context, includes everything required of Christians. Let us suppose that Timothy had answered this epistle, informing Paul that he had read his charge with solemn interest, and that, by the grace of God, he expected to keep it. What should we think, if, in Paul's second epistle, such a rejoinder as this were found: "Timothy, your letter to me has filled me with amazement and sorrow of heart. You have become a wild fanatic a Perfectionist. How could you have misunderstood me so much, as to suppose that I ever dreamed that you would expect to keep that awful charge?" Why should we be shocked at such a reply? Simply because we cannot believe that such a charge could be dictated by the Spirit of God, not only in the absence of all expectation that it would be kept, but with the intention of impressing the subject with the opposite belief.

IV. I argue, that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, from the fact, that the attainment of this state in this life is the declared object for which the Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of God's people, and for which all the gifts that Christ bestowed upon the Church when he ascended up on high were conferred. Eph. 3:14-21, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye,

being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Also Eph. 4:11-16, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lay in wait to deceive; but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

To be "filled with all the fullness of God" implies, unquestionably, that we be put in possession of all the moral perfections of God, as far as finite can resemble infinite; which can be nothing less than entire perfection in holiness. The same thing is, with equal manifestness, implied in the phrases "unity of the faith," "unto a perfect man," and "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Verses 14-16, chap. 4, make it undeniably evident that these passages are to be understood with reference to this life.

Now, that Christians may attain to this state of perfect holiness, is the declared object for which the Holy Spirit is here represented as dwelling in the hearts of God's people, and for which the ministry of reconciliation, etc., was conferred upon the Church, by our Savior, when he "ascended up on high, and gave gifts unto men." Thus Christ expressly adapted means to an end, which means are inadequate to that end? If not, perfection in holiness is not only to be regarded as attainable, but to be expected, in this life.

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

Again, John 17:20-23,----"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they, also, may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

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

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

Col. 4:12 "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, salutes you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Heb. 13:20, 21 "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." The prayer of the apostle, in 1 Thes. 5:23, is also distinctly before the reader's mind, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly," etc. On these, and kindred passages, I remark

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

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

3. Let us suppose that God has revealed to us the fact, that he has made no provision for the bestowment of a certain blessing upon us; that whatever our prayers, intentions, and efforts actually may be, infinite wisdom has unchangeably determined to withhold the grace necessary to its attainment in this life.

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

VII. I infer that perfect holiness is attainable in this life, from the many promises of Scripture which are conditioned on this state. For example, Isa. 26:3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee." Matt. 6:22, "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." 2 Cor. 13:11. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." Phil. 4:6, 7,--"Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus." All the blessings promised in such passages, of which the Bible is full, are conditioned, directly or indirectly, on the existence of perfect holiness in the subject. When, for example, God promises "perfect peace to those whose minds are stayed on him," the condition of the promise is, of course, perfect faith, or confidence; because the want of such confidence would forfeit the blessing, or render the enjoyment of it an impossibility. So also the "single eye," the command, "be perfect," and "be careful for nothing," etc., directly require the same thing, a state of perfect holiness. Does God promise to his people, in this life, blessings of infinite value, upon conditions which he requires them to regard as impracticable? What is this but the most solemn mockery conceivable? A parent continually holds before his children promises of the richest blessings in his power to bestow, but all pledged upon the conditions with which he holds it criminal in them to believe they will ever comply. What would he thought of such a parent? Shall we charge such conduct upon God?

In reply to the above argument, it is sometimes said that Christians do experience the fulfillment of these promises in proportion to their fidelity. Very true, I reply. This fact, however, does not in the least diminish the force of the argument, as above stated. God does hold out the richest blessings upon the definite condition of perfect holiness in us. Now as is true, according to the common theory, he requires us to believe that these blessings are proffered upon a condition with which we shall not comply, what is this, I ask again, but the most solemn mockery conceivable?

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

1. That from what the sacred writers have left on record in respect to the provisions and promises of Divine grace, from their prayers, exhortations, precepts, etc., in respect of this identical subject; in short, from the fact that this particular subject was the special theme of their meditations, discourses, and prayers, we ought to conclude, in the absence of positive proof to the contrary, that they did attain to this state, just as, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, we ought to conclude that they died in the triumphs of faith.
2. The fact, that some of them are said to have fallen into sin in some particular instances, is no evidence at all that they did not subsequently attain to a state of entire sanctification, any more than the sins of Paul previous to his conversion are proof of his want of holiness subsequent to that event.
3. There is no positive evidence on record that many of those men did not attain to this state, any more than there is that they did not "die in faith."
4. There is, on the other hand, positive evidence that some of them did attain to this state. To show this, I begin with the character of Paul, as drawn by the pen of inspiration. In respect to this apostle, I remark 1. That there is but one act of his entire Christian life, on record, which is of a doubtful character. I refer to the controversy with Barnabas. 2. With this exception and whether it be an exception, is, to say the least,

doubtful his character, as presented by the sacred historian, is "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." 3. The testimony of the apostle to his own attainments, shows that he had arrived to a state of entire sanctification. Gal. 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith on the Son of God." I Thes. 2:10, "Ye are witnesses, and God, also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe." 1Cor. 4:4, "I know nothing by myself," i.e., I am conscious of no wrong. Acts 20:26, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure of the blood of all men." Now, who would dare to apply such language to himself, who was conscious of being in any other than a state of entire consecration to Christ? How can he be "pure of the blood of all men," who is constantly failing in his duty? And we do fail in our duty to men, when we are not wholly consecrated to Christ. How can he be conscious of no wrong, and affirm of himself that he lives "holily, and justly, and unblameably," not in the sight of men merely, but also in the sight of God, who is conscious of daily and hourly departures from the rectitude required by the Gospel? Who, let me ask, in view of the character of Paul, as drawn by the pen of inspiration, and of his own testimony to his own attainments, will dare to lay sin to his charge, or affirm that he did not arrive to a state of perfect consecration to Christ?

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

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

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

Isa. 6:5-8, "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the

altar. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged."

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

Other cases might be cited; but these must suffice.

IX. I argue that perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, from the fact, that no one can point out any incentive to sin, from within or around him, for which a specific remedy is not provided in the Gospel. Do our lusts rebel? We are told, that if "Christ be in us, the body is dead because of sin;" that "the old man is crucified with him;" and that if we will "walk in the spirit, we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Do the world and Satan entice? We are assured that "this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith;" that "stronger is he that is in us, than he that is in the world; and that, when we have "put on the whole Armour of God," we shall be able, with the shield of faith, to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." In short, from whatever source temptation to sin arises, we are assured that God will not "suffer us to be tempted above what we are able," but will, "with the temptation, make way for our escape." With Christ within us, and these "exceeding great and precious promises" around us, we are commanded to "reckon ourselves dead indeed to sin, and alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ." In the presence of such facts and promises, who would dare to say to the Christian, It is impracticable for you to "cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh, and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God?"

X. I argue that perfection in

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