

How a State of Entire Sanctification May Be Retained

by George Ridout

To retain the blessing of perfect love, one must maintain a continuous, entire consecration, live a life of prayer and self-denial, and be vigilant and watchful in the sanctified life.

Scripture: Proverbs 4:23, Isaiah 26:3, Matthew 4:1, Romans 8:14, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Corinthians 10:5, Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8

Topics: "Entire Sanctification", "Holy Living"

Description

George Ridout preaches on the importance of retaining perfect love by maintaining complete submission to God and simple faith in Christ, emphasizing the need for continuous consecration, faith, confession, self-denial, watchfulness, and obedience to the Holy Spirit. He highlights the significance of resisting temptations, living in the spirit of prayer, laboring for the salvation of sinners, and opposing sin in all forms without compromise. Ridout stresses the necessity of clear testimony to sanctification, the power of prayer, the importance of holiness meetings, and the value of reading holiness literature to deepen one's understanding and experience of God's grace.

Transcript

The following is quoted from the book "Perfect Love" by Rev. J. A. Wood:

"There are many who once enjoyed the blessing of perfect love who have now lost it. Some have received it several times, and, after all, are now without it. "The conditions of retaining perfect love, like the conditions of retaining justification, are the same as those by which it was obtained; namely, a complete submission of the soul to God, and simple faith in Christ for present salvation. "This submission and faith, graduated by increasing light and grace, must continue through life if perfect love be retained.

"To retain this grace you must maintain a continuous, entire consecration -- a complete self-abandonment to God. 'The altar sanctifieth the gift;' and it is only when our all is upon the altar of consecration that we can be in a state of sanctification. No part of the price can ever be taken back if we would retain the 'Witness' of perfect love. Your consecration must continue complete, corresponding with increasing light, through all your life; and you will have occasion to watch yourself, and guard this point thoroughly. Keep yourself, your all, submitted to God.

"To retain full salvation, you must continue to believe. 'The just shall live by faith.' 'We are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.' "As soon as people cease to believe, they lose the blessing; for 'we stand by faith.' Sanctified Paul said: "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God."

"Faith is the vital bond between the sanctified soul and God; and by it we are to abide in Christ, as the branch abides in the vine. "To retain 'the Witness of the Spirit,' and continue in the light of purity, you must confess it. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.' "The fear of man often hinders people from this duty. This fear, which brings a snare, must be overcome. Many have resisted the Holy Spirit when they ought to have confessed the blessing; and in this way have lost it. Confessing Sanctification does not exalt self: it humbles the soul, and gives glory to God. "The call for clear witnesses is more imperative in some places than in others, as in many places the witnesses for perfect love are very scarce and greatly needed.

"Again, the soul must live constantly in the spirit of self-denial. We must deny ourselves of everything sinful, and also of everything doubtful. "And he that doubteth is damned (condemned) if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Thousands have fallen by lawful things. It is not expedient for a sanctified soul to indulge in every gratification which is not expressly forbidden in Scripture. We are to 'abstain from all appearance of evil.' "The sanctified soul must live in a spirit of watchfulness. Watch over your heart, and keep it 'with all diligence.' Watch over your lips, and be jealous of your tongue, and guard against a light and trifling spirit, by which multitudes have fallen into darkness and ruin. "Foolish talking," "jesting," and "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

Many today, are trying to do the impossible -- keep spiritual while fellowshiping the world! No Christian can retain a "fervent (God's standard for justification is "fervent") justified experience who feeds 'his (or her) soul on the "funnies," (sillies) baseball, football, boxing, the races, or any other form of popular sports, any more than an athlete can maintain his excellent health and strength who feeds his body on garbage! "Watch for seasons of prayer and special communion with God. Watch for opportunities of doing and receiving good. Watch against the allurements of the world, and against everything that is sensual, and has a tendency to lull the soul to sleep. Watch against temptations, and resist them in a moment -- steadfast in the faith. 'Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' "The purified soul must be faithful to the teachings and drawings of the Holy Spirit. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.'

We must follow the Spirit of God, let consequences be what they may. The Holy Spirit will remind you of duty; you must instantly obey. "The Spirit is very easily grieved,. and you must promptly attend to all his teachings, or you may in a moment forfeit full redemption. "His chosen emblem is the tender dove, and it will take its flight if its gentle monitions be not heeded. "The Spirit teaches and guides mainly by illumination, and little by impression. "He throws light upon nature and providence, but especially upon the Scriptures and our minds, illuminating the sacred page and our path, leading us to truth and duty. His teaching always accords with the Word, hence we are not to look for dreams, visions, or impressions; these may have served their purpose in the earlier and darker dispensation. We have now, the voice of the Spirit -- the Bible. No measure of the Spirit can supersede the written Word." We should never assume "wisdom above what is written." "The Holy Scriptures must be read daily. The Word of God is the voice of the Spirit. He is grieved when the truth is neglected or disobeyed.

"The Bible is soul-food. Perfect love will require nourishment daily. If you do not feed it with Bible truth it will die." "Holiness furnishes a strong appetite for spiritual nourishment. Those who have been the clearest in perfect love are those who have paid the greatest attention and deference to the Word of God. The Bible is a well of living water. You will need to draw water daily out of this well of salvation; you can never drink it dry. The Bible is your chart and compass, and you will have occasion to examine it daily. "To retain the blessing of perfect love, you must constantly aim at growing in grace. There is no standing still in religion. If we are not advancing we are retrograding. Many people have lost 'The Witness of the Spirit' by not pressing after a greater fullness. "Christian holiness secures the best possible preparation for growth in grace; and there are heights and depths, and lengths, and breadths of the love of God, to which we must be constantly aspiring. If we do not press after them, we shall be likely to go backward and lose what we have before attained. "John Wesley says: 'It is impossible to have a glorious witness to pure love, and retain it, without growing therein."

"The sanctified soul must live constantly under a sense of the presence of God. Always remember, 'Thou, God, seest me!' You are watched and seen every moment by an eye a million times keener than the eyes of angels -- the infinite eye of the all-seeing God. If you knew that a legion of angels were watching you every moment, how careful you would be to act right! Remember you are always in God's immediate presence. "A life of prayer must be led. You must be a man of prayer. Pray early in the morning, and, if possible, remain some time on your knees with God. This will prepare you for the day. "Pray often, and then prayer will be a delight. Stay with God in prayer -- stay until he melts you, and then stay when you are melted, and plead with him, and he will answer, and you will be transformed, renewed, and strengthened. "To retain holiness of heart you must labor faithfully for the salvation of sinners. It is the nature of perfect love to long for the salvation of souls; and if you do not go out with God for the salvation of men, your love will cool into apathy and indifference, and you will lose the evidence of entire sanctification altogether. When your heart yearns over sinners, go to God and pray; then go to sinners with manly sympathy, and you will find it an excellent means of grace to your soul. "It will be a holy oil that will anoint you. You must also seek to lead saints into this grace.

Mr. Wesley says: "One great means of retaining what God has given, is to labor to bring others into this grace, and to profess it to all mankind." "To retain sanctification, you must oppose sin of every name and kind, without any compromise. "Like our Lord, you must show it no quarter, at any time, or anywhere, either in or out of the church. In respect to sin and holiness, it is eternally true that 'No man can serve two masters.' You must know no exceptions, either in high places or in low, in great things or little things, among enemies or friends. Your duty is plain -- 'Abstain from all appearance of evil.'

The sainted Southern preacher and author of the last generation, Rev. J. O. McClurkan, in his book, "How to Keep Sanctified," says: "The conflict is not over when you enter the sanctified life. The enemy within has been cast out, but sin in a thousand different forms lurks about you. To retain a pure heart requires the utmost vigilance. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' "The Israelites did most of their fighting after entering Canaan; but few conquests were made in the wilderness. It takes the grace of entire sanctification to guarantee continuous victory in a land of walled cities, giants, and thirty-one kings. You will have endless opposition, keener trials, and more severe temptations in a life of holiness. But the gift of the Holy Spirit makes every man a soldier, and Christ in the heart causes him to be more than a conqueror. "Storms may rage, men scoff, and devils howl, but hid in the pavilion of the Divine Presence you have perfect peace. "You do the committing: he does the keeping." "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless."

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee."

"Temptation: Immediately after our Lord was baptized with the Holy Ghost he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

"Temptation is of divine appointment, hence there is no sin in being tempted. You sin only when you yield to temptation. "For instance, Satan may torture you with suggestions of evil thoughts, desires, or feelings. "Failing to get you to indorse them, he will turn accuser, saying, 'You are a pretty Christian. Ha, ha, ha! Professing sanctification! Why, you hypocrite, it is doubtful if a person having such thoughts as you have was ever justified.' The devil has met many entering the threshold of a holy life and driven them back into the wilderness with just such accusations.

"First tempting you to sin, but failing at this point, he would persuade you that the temptation itself is a sin. You can't prevent the devil bringing his children and leaving them on your door-step, but you don't need to bring them in and adopt them as your own. "Evil suggestions do not become yours until you put your endorsement on them.

"The 'holiest people are often the most fiercely assaulted by the devil. he shoots his biggest guns not at the babes in Christ but at those who are pressing on to know the fullness of God. It may be that as we advance in the kingdom of grace we have to grapple with a class of devils stronger than those we met in the beginning of our Christian life.

"This much we know, the nearer we get to God the less we have of temptation on the physical side. He often comes as an angel of light in the person of some dear friend, some long established habit, some cherished wish or desire. Then again he clothes himself in such reasonable, proper, and commendable attire that, if possible, 'he would deceive the very elect; yet the Spirit-filled soul will be able to recognize and resist him. 'For we are not ignorant of his devices.'

"Avoid laying too much stress on your feelings; as there are no two people alike, so there will be no two experiences exactly the same. The Lord gives to each such as he needeth. Perhaps those who seek certain good feelings have the least of them. Fix your eyes on Jesus, then the whole body will be full of light. Seek him rather than his gifts. Having him, all his gifts are yours." Madame Guyon said that the Lord sometimes withdrew all her joyous emotions, that she might be drawn closer to him.

"You entered the sanctified life through consecration and faith. It is retained the same way. Remember the gift must stay on the altar. It is so easy to compromise a little here and there -- the world creeps in and Jesus goes out before you are aware of it. Take an inventory once in a while to make sure that property, church, family, plan of life, likes and dislikes, are all kept on the altar. "Should you find at any time that you have taken something off the altar, put it back instantly. Whatever he tells you to do, do it; don't try to dodge it, nor postpone it, nor excuse yourself from it, but do it at once.

"Cultivate the habit of trusting God regardless of emotions. You doubt God just in proportion to what you require apart from the Word to make you believe it."

Some one asked Mr. Muller the secret of his strong faith. He replied: "By standing firm amid severe testings." Abraham staggered not at the promises. There would be more Abrahams if there were more who would stand such testings. It is hard to believe, looking at the difficulties; the longer you look, the bigger they become. But when your eye and heart rest on Jesus, faith follows as a natural result. Peter did

not begin, to sink until he got his eyes off Christ on the waves. In a meek, humble, joyful spirit, tell what the Lord has done for you. Don't shun the word "sanctification," nor any other term that the Spirit uses in designating this great work. It is God's term, and can not be improved by us. At the same time don't be in bondage to any particular one of the many phrases which abound in the Word.

"Perfect love," a "pure heart," "holiness;" "life more abundant," "the gift of the Holy Ghost," and sanctification," are a few of the many Bible terms which may be used in testifying to the "second work of grace." It is better, however, for the benefit of those to whom you speak, to use the word "sanctification" than these others, because it is generally understood to embrace the system of truth emphasized by the holiness movement. The devil seems to hate it more than all the rest, and as the "offense of the cross" has shifted to this despised doctrine, there is a peculiar blessing attending the clear, definite testimony to sanctification. Hence watch, for an insidious fear of criticism may lead you to avoid this important word even before you are aware of it.

"Frances Willard received the blessing in Evanston, and soon after went to Lima, N. Y., to become preceptress of Genesee Wesleyan Seminary. She was advised to keep still about sanctification because of the Methodists in those parts. It was cruel advice. She writes: 'I kept still until I soon found that I had nothing to keep still about. The experience left me. That sweet pervasiveness, that heaven in the soul, of which I came to know in Mrs. Palmer's meetings, I do not now feel.' The sainted Fletcher lost this blessing four or five times by not testifying to it."

Dr. Sheridan Baker says: "Clear testimony to full salvation is so opposed by Satan, is so distasteful to a church, and is so much discouraged by many who are reputed wise and good, that more lose the blessing of entire sanctification by ambiguity and indefiniteness in testimony than by any other and perhaps by all other causes put together." Dr. Carradine says: "Very long and sorrowful indeed is the list of preachers and laymen, men and women, who possessed the blessing of sanctification, hid the talent in a napkin, tried to live the experience, toned it down in various ways to suit family, friends, and church, until at last they awoke to see that the star had disappeared, the angels had vanished into the skies, and the glory had departed. "If we follow faithfully the divine plan of witnessing, not only with the life but the lips, certain gracious and blessed results will be left at once to arise and increase as the days go by. One will be a sense of increased light and gladness with every occasion of witnessing.

"Each time the duty is performed the Spirit will smile upon the soul well pleased. Another result will be a growing freedom, or sense of religious liberty. "A third effect will be a consciousness of increasing strength. The testimony may be modestly and simply given; but if uttered clearly and unctuously, it will never fail, but hearts will be stirred and souls set to panting after this great grace of God. The song will reach the heart, the arrow will strike the mark, the testimony, in a word, will never fall to the ground. God will take care of it. "When family, pastor, and church are grieved at a definite testimony, it is so natural to evade a little until the heart grows cold and the lips silent.

"When the high priest entered the holy of holies he wore a garment on the borders of which hung pomegranates and bells, twelve of each, alternating, the former typifying the fruitful life, the latter the testimony. First, the pomegranate of holy living, then the clear ring of the bell of witnessing. The two go hand in hand. When the bells ceased to ring the people knew that the high priest was dead." "Notwithstanding the busy toils and cares of the day, keep in close touch with God through these stated interviews, and by living in a constant spirit of prayer. Some people rush to their knees without taking time to read the Bible, thereby losing the most effective preparation for prevailing prayer. A reverent study of

the Word opens the way for mightiest prayer. God speaks to you through the Scriptures. You speak to him through prayer; then the blessed Holy Spirit witnesses to the Word in the palace of the soul.

"Take time to be alone. Make much of the still hour. Get right quiet before God. Bid all other voices be silent, that he may speak to you. "Many live in such a rush that they miss that delicate finish of character, that far-reaching view of God, the massive strength, the fervid piety, the unutterable depth of love and tenderness of spirit, the triumphant faith and profound repose which are the results of frequent interviews and long communings with God. Men like Knox, Luther, Wesley, Elijah, and John the Baptist owe much of the heroic grandeur of their ministry to the long seasons spent in retirement with God." Mr. Moody says that the Bible read without much prayer makes an intellectual Christian, while a great deal of prayer with but little study of the Scriptures will produce fanatical Christians.

"Let your words be seasoned with salt. Determine that through an indwelling Christ your language shall be chaste, discreet, tender, and helpful. What marvelous good can flow from a single tongue! "Let your words, like the gulf stream, flow through the ocean of a wicked world only to cheer, comfort, strengthen, and bless. "Live a moment at a time. 'Be careful for nothing.' 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink.' We borrow most of our trouble.

A quaint old writer has said that God would not give grace for borrowed trouble. "We are constantly climbing mountains that we never reach, crossing swollen streams which we will never see, and fearing things that will never happen. "Attend holiness meetings. It may be said that all gospel services are holiness meetings. To a certain extent this is true, but it is needful to have special services where the deeper phases and experiences, of Christianity can be studied, discussed, and taught -- a place where kindred spirits may talk together of the precious truths which would be offensive to many in the promiscuous assemblies. "Should there be no such meeting in your vicinity, start one, even if you have to begin in your own home. Where there are but few interested, the cottage meetings will do more good than if conducted in public buildings.

"Two can claim the promise. Don't be discouraged at the indifference manifested by your brethren and sisters in the Lord, but pray right on, and God will sooner or later answer by fire. "Read holiness literature. Keep supplied with a variety of the many excellent papers and books devoted to holiness. Merely skipping over them will not yield much profit, but thoughtful, prayerful study will find something new, stimulative, and helpful in each." If you purchase but one book, let that be "The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life." Next to the Bible, it is the best book published -- in the author's opinion. It is not the best book to lead you into the experience, but it will throw a flood of light on how to keep it.

"Mind the checks. Walk in the Spirit. When you start in the wrong direction he will gently pull the bit. You are indulging in certain conversation; suddenly there is a gentle pressure on your spirit to refrain. Mind the checks. "You are pursuing certain lines of thought; there comes a mild pressure on the heart to desist. Mind the checks. You are engaged in certain transactions, when lo! 'the still small voice' whispers 'Stop!' Mind the checks. By this means God will keep you from sin. Know his voice and instantly obey. When these tender admonitions are given by the Spirit, you disregard them, and backsliding begins." Avoid the extremes in dress. Shun the gay worldly attire so conspicuous today, on the one hand, and the slovenly garb on the other. "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart . . . even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

Tithing is a means of grace. Students of the Scriptures believe that the Jews, under the Mosaic law, contributed to the church, the poor, and other causes, the total sum of three-tenths from their income. "Surely in the face of such thrilling examples we can not afford to pay less than one-tenth of our income. Then whatever we contribute beyond this becomes a free-will offering. "Keep a strict account with yourself, putting the tithe of your entire income into the Lord's treasury, then making free-will offerings as you can from time to time." Men active in lodges are seldom very spiritual. As a rule, when the lodge goes up Christ goes down in their devotion. Steer clear of these things.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. The Christian's Sabbath is a day for worship and spiritual exercises and not visiting and worldly diversions. You will find it difficult to remain sanctified and affiliate with the old rum-soaked, godless political parties. A strange sight to see -- after praying three hundred and sixty-four days that God would blot out the awful curse of liquor, the Christian marches to the polls on the three hundred and sixty-fifth day, arm in arm with the brewer and distiller, and votes their ticket to keep their liquor party in power. If you vote to keep the liquor political party in power, you are responsible for the accursed traffic. Be a Prohibitionist! It is the only way to keep out of the whiskey business.

We have nothing to do with results -- if our party is not elected. Our part is to do right. Results belong to God. This book is written for Christians, so nothing has been said about tobacco. Intelligent Christians do not raise, buy, use, or sell this narcotic weed. In spite of the fact that denominations, teaching and professing to believe and experience the blessing of heart holiness, are now allowing their members, who clerk in grocery stores, to sell tobacco across the counter. No person, young or old, who loves God with all his heart, soul and mind and his neighbor as himself, can keep the smile of God and any experience of grace, if he sells to another what he knows will injure his neighbor. Love forbids it.

"Walk in the light. Things will be constantly coming up that you must lay aside. Possibly you did things yesterday that you can't do today without condemnation. Keep under the searchlight of the Holy Ghost. Seek to see yourself more and more as God sees you. The time is short. Soon you will stand before the Lord. Do your best through his strength for this poor, blind, wretched, sinful world. God grant that it may be so. Amen."

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