

# Section I. Appeal to Professors of Perfect Love

by Jesse T. Peck

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of holding on to faith and trust in God's promises, and the need to resist the devil's attack on faith and Christian charity.*

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 4:3, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, 1 Peter 3:15, 1 John 4:18

**Topics:** "Perfect Love", "Christian Unity"

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## Description

Jesse T. Peck preaches about the importance of upholding the profession of holiness in the face of opposition and skepticism. He emphasizes the need for faith to be tested, especially in the firm trust in Christ's cleansing blood, and the perseverance required to maintain the sanctified state amidst doubts and trials. Peck warns against the dangers of schism within the church, urging believers to guard against divisive tendencies and to uphold unity in the body of Christ. He stresses the necessity of vindicating the sacred profession of holiness through the spirit of perfect love, which shines as a testimony to the world and serves as a powerful defense against skepticism and opposition.

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## Transcript

You are doubtless aware that the devil is still your enemy. He is surely not less so from the fact that you have utterly rejected him, and consecrated yourselves wholly to the Lord. Indeed, if before the moment of complete salvation he had reasons for malice and alarm, he has much stronger ones since. Hence those feelings of dismay, of "heaviness through manifold temptations," which sometimes beset you with peculiar power when you are aware of no disobedience, when you have been living closely with God.

1. But especially your faith will be tried. The direct point of union between your consecrated souls and God, is firm trust in the "blood that cleanseth from all sin." It is therefore not unlikely that this will be early and artfully assailed. Before you are aware of the cause, you will be conscious of a suspicion, that the cleansing efficacy of Christ's blood is not what you have supposed it to be. When you feel that you have nothing else to depend upon, that you have great need of present help and support, you will perhaps feel a hesitancy in trusting in Christ. You will be conscious of an effort to do it, and it will require some time, and possibly a struggle in prayer, before this sense of complete reliance is restored. You will probably not at first feel inclined to doubt the general efficacy of the atonement. But the query will be, does it avail for me? Now, at this moment, may I claim it as my own? Would it not be presumption? I am so unworthy; I have been so imperfect. Even when in sincere purpose I have been entirely devoted to God, my failures have been so numerous, so evident to others, can I venture to trust in this blood for present entire

sanctification? I fear to do it! At least, I must have time to reflect and improve before I can venture! And if you yield thus far, you will find yourself inclined to go further. The suggestion will assume a bolder form. Can any blood cleanse sinful man? At all events are not most, or even all of those who think they are cleansed from all sin, mistaken? And at best, must it not require time, long continued sorrow, long and severe self-discipline, great power of pious habit, before any work of grace can wholly purify the soul?

But, brethren, beware. Here is a plain denial of the merits of Christ, and the efficacy of his blood. It seems plausible at first ; the veriest humility indeed! But it is certainly a suggestion of the devil. What! is this a limited atonement? Must we depend partly upon this and partly upon something else, for full redemption? Does it avail for me at one time, and not at another? Who says this? God does not. The Bible does not. Experience does not. Surely none but the deceiver can originate so unworthy a suggestion. The testimony of eternal truth is, that the blood of Christ is precisely the demand of justice, the full demand, at all times, for all persons. True, the condition must be met. But the question is not, whether this blood will cleanse those who reject it, who do not apply it, who do not "walk in the light, as God is in the light," who do not confess their need of it. It is simply and exclusively whether it avails for me if I do trust it? Whether, if by a true evangelical faith I take it now, just as I am, without reservation for my sanctification, it really is so? Whether if I walk in the light, the blood does verily now cleanse me from all sin? God forbid that I should doubt it! If I do, I cannot refer that doubt to any want of power in the infinite Savior, to any limit to the merit of his blood, to any want of veracity in him, to any intimation in his holy word. It is false -- maliciously and dangerously false. It can have but one origin. It is a temptation. It is a trial of faith. It should be recognized as such instantly, and by an act of the will, the very thought should be dashed aside. The tempter may be foiled by seizing some precious promise, and presenting it to the throne, and holding it there with steady hand until you feel it is redeemed.

But here will arise a modified form of the temptation. One promise after another is suggested and laid aside. This, says the tried spirit, is very precious, but it is not for me! Nor this! Nor this! And so on until all that come to mind are exhausted! And at last there arises a general fear that the whole system will prove a failure! The suggestion is distinct and alarming, -- "These assurances will never be realized!" What surer evidence can there be that this doubt is false, than that it questions the word of Jehovah? It certainly comes from the father of lies. We must contradict it. The veracity of God cannot fail. He does redeem all his promises. The experience of thousands attests it. And it is a grievous sin to hearken and yield to this temptation. No marvel that he who does it, is so soon prostrate in the mire. The devil has charged God falsely, and one of his own dear children has credited the charge! adopted it! vouched for it! Alas for our weakness! Alas for our folly! Unbelief, the most unreasonable, the most ruinous of all our sins, and yet the most common, the most probable. How much more consistent with our own ignorance, with true humility of heart, to say, in firm sincerity,

"Lord, I believe thy every word,

Thy every promise true;

and we can believe it. We can see that every promise is true. Indeed we are convinced of its truth, by the reason which has grasped a revelation, by the impressions of the eternal Spirit on our souls, by the living words spoken in our hearts, by a thousand redemptions of his sacred pledges to our own spirits. It is only by bewildering temptations direct from Satan, that the holy Christian can be induced to falter in his faith. Confusion of mind brings on darkness and fear, and the word verily believed is not voluntarily trusted, -- the Savior accredited, is not freely and fully relied upon. But it is in no sense necessary to fall at this point.

Let the soul be alive to recognize the temptation; let it instantly assert that whatever doubts the word of God is false,-- that whatever shakes the faith in the present available truth of Jehovah's promise is from beneath; let the eye be fixed upon the sprinkling blood, -- the prayer be breathed to Heaven for help, -- remembering above all that blessed word, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you; draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you."

But in connection with this trial of your faith in the efficacy of the blood and the verity of the word, will come the artful suggestion that you are not sanctified wholly, -- that you have somehow forfeited the blessing, or that you prematurely believed at first, and hence have been deceived yourselves, and have deceived others by false testimony. Now we do not mean that every conviction that you are not holy, is a temptation, -- that every fear as to the present or past, is necessarily an ungrounded fear. For doubtless it may in some instances be true, that the blessing has been lost, or that it has been claimed where it did not exist. All cases of this kind can be traced and identified, and have their remedy. But apply the tests. We address those who profess the great blessing, and would assist them in guarding against a snare of the devil. Is the thought accompanied by a desire of evil, -- a desire to seek gratification in some forbidden object -- a secret wish that you had never taken the responsibilities of a holy life upon you, -- that you might somehow be honorably discharged from them? Then you have reason to fear. Whatever may have been your former state, you are now doubtless without the evidence of entire consecration. You can probably remember some instance of yielding when you were tried, -- of unbelief which grieved the Holy Spirit -- and perhaps of some bolder form of sin which has shorn you of your strength. O repent, and hasten again to the sacred fountain. May God help you. Redeem your solemn vows before it is too late.

But on the contrary, is this suggestion a source of grief to you? Do you feel that if it should prove to be true, it would rob you of your chief glory; that it is directly against all the desires and inclinations of your soul; that, whether true or false, you would not for the world distrust your Savior, or grieve his Holy Spirit; that whether for life or death your all is still the Lord's, and, whatever is the issue, no word of your solemn vow which consecrated all to God shall ever be revoked? Then "thank God and take courage." You are only walking through the fire, and if there be no shrinking "when you are tried, you shall come forth as gold." You deceived in the faith that you are wholly the Lord's, when you have been distinctly conscious of a divine testimony to the fact, and are actually bringing forth the scriptural fruits of perfect love! Deceived in claiming "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace" when you rely wholly upon the merits of Christ and the promise of his word for this very thing! Deceived in obeying the divine command, "Reckon ye yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord," when you shrink from the very thought of sin as from deadly poison, and your whole soul is absorbed in doing the will and promoting the glory of God! Impossible. Lie low at the Savior's feet till the storm is over-past. Watch closely the motions of your own spirit, and of the Spirit of God. You will feel the witness in the very midst of the temptation, and triumph in the very face of the foe. As to the past, have no argument with the devil. You live by the moment; your present consecration, your present acceptance, your present witness, is all you need. Be content with that; it would be enough to complete the bliss of an archangel. The past is with God; there leave it with filial confidence. The devil, who would defraud you of your present treasure, would certainly misrepresent all that has been done to obtain it.

One other form of this trial we feel bound to mention. Where the tempter cannot unsettle the present, nor destroy the past, he makes desperate exertions to overcast the future with clouds of darkness. He starts the suspicion that our weakness will some time yield; but this is all idle. The one good and reliable rule of living by the moment will destroy the temptation. He suggests that the cause of experimental holiness

cannot succeed, -- that it is unpopular, -- that special attempts to promote it destroy the influence of men, -- that possibly its friends have acted unwisely in bringing it so prominently forward, and thus exposing it to the special assaults of the world -- that a more discreet policy is much easier for us, and more useful in the end! Alas! what a concatenation of misrepresentations is here! And yet we seriously fear that many of our dear brethren are yielding to the fatal delusion. What if it be unpopular? Is not that an evidence in its favor? Make holiness too prominent! It is that one blessing and life "without which no man shall see the Lord." Expose it to the attacks of the world! It is the grand element of our moral power. Easier to propose and be responsible for a lower standard! Yes, if we call a compromise with the devil ease. Will never succeed! Then no more souls will get to heaven. Must be given up! Then the word of God must fail.

No, it will not, cannot fail. It is God's special care on earth. It is the great end of the atonement. It is the glorious work of the church. It is the centre and sun of the Christian scheme. Then "listen not to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely." True, it must be slow in progress while the practical opposition to it is so immense! It is not the choice of poor blind man even if a religion is to be adopted. But it will not show passionate resentment. It will not yield to discouragement. It will bear itself meekly, but firmly, until its triumph is declared from the throne of the omnipotent Judge in the ears of an assembled world.

Such briefly are the leading temptations to which you are exposed for the trial of your faith. If you yield to them, the sacred cause will mourn; the church will feel the loss of your moral power; fearful struggles between light and darkness, hope and fear, are before you; and God's Holy Spirit will be grieved. If you bear up against them courageously, the holiest triumphs await you.

Have you endured "the trial of your faith" without yielding? If so, you have proved that it "is much more precious than of gold that perisheth;" if not -- if you have at least allowed "an evil heart of unbelief," in "the blood that cleanseth," in the word that promises, in the fact of your entire sanctification, or in the filial triumphs of holiness, then, alas! you will, not, without recovery, share in the further trials peculiar to this holy state. You will rather become the sources of them! And if there be no rallying of personal, appropriating faith, those children of God, with whom you have been so closely and tenderly identified in the experience and sufferings of holiness, will soon begin to feel the weight of your influence upon their tried hearts; -- silently at first, -- unintentionally upon your part, -- only through the inferences of others, drawn from your decline, which can by no means be hid, but at length openly, and even bitterly, we fear; as it is matter of painful experience that the severest trials of these we are addressing, come from those who have at some time professed entire sanctification! If any of you are really shorn of your strength, you will have no direct interest in the cautions which follow. We must, however, in passing, beg you to think, to remember, to repent, to cry to God, to reconsecrate your all, to believe again for entire salvation, and plunge again into the open fountain.

2. But, brethren, you who have thus far "kept the faith," your Christian charity will be tried. "We cannot admit, for a moment, that the great blessing you have experienced, has the slightest tendency to produce uncharitable feelings towards other Christians. It is so charged, we know; but if in any instance there has been apparent reason in the accusation, it has arisen, we are sure, either from the plain and pointed reproofs which brethren, burning with love, have felt obliged to give, to manifest "sin in believers," or backslidden professors; or from a reprehensible censoriousness, which has resulted, not from holiness, but the want of it. If there be any state in which the Christian's heart is literally filled with that charity which "thinketh no evil," it is that of entire sanctification; and yet this very charity is destined in every case to be severely tried.

Apparent indifference, and even opposition to holiness, will try your Christian charity. You preach, for instance, with your soul penetrated with the convictions, and your heart overwhelmed with the feelings of experimental holiness. You explain to your brethren their honored privilege. You support it by the most indubitable arguments. You appeal to the Searcher of hearts for the sincerity of your motives. You bring into requisition the holy Scriptures, the views and experience of "the eminent dead," and the very faith of the church to which your brethren have voluntarily and solemnly subscribed; and after all no general permanent interest is awakened. Only a few are melted under the power of the truth. A smaller number still are sufficiently impressed to say a word upon the subject afterwards; whereas the great mass of church members reveal apparent contentment in a state of partial sanctification perhaps look coolly upon your exertions for the advance of the sacred cause; give you reason to believe that they pity you for the manner in which you are wasting your efforts and influence; indicate personal aversion to you; speak triflingly of your profession in your absence, and reproachfully of your character before some, who, for kind or vicious reasons, report it to you; and finally come out in open opposition to your views and efforts, and evince, with more or less severity, the spirit of persecution to you, on the account of your determined support of the great doctrine of experimental holiness. Earnest and frequent prayers and exhortations, and especially the declaration of experience, but increase these demonstrations.

And here comes the trial. You deeply feel that these brethren are in error. You feel that they wrong you; that they wrong the truth of God; that they wrong the church and the world; and especially that they wrong the Savior, who with affectionate entreaty offers his blood to cleanse them from all sin. You plausibly argue, that if they were Christians they would love holiness; that they could not oppose it; and it is even unaccountable that they should be indifferent to it.

But, beware; the tempter is at hand. Your Christian charity is in the furnace here. Grant, as we must, that no true Christian can voluntarily resist what he recognizes as holiness, can indulge in a persecuting spirit towards even the feeblest of Christ's "little ones," or uncharitably and wantonly sacrifice the reputation of his brother; grant, that whoever does this, reveals an unconverted or a fallen state, or destroys his justification before God, and that there are many such among those whose relations to the work of holiness even now so strongly tax your charity; yet allow us humbly to submit; you cannot certainly know the motives of men. God has not made you a "judge over them." Nay, he has expressly forbidden you to judge. You, most of all, should heed that peremptory command of the Savior, "Judge not that ye be not judged." Be assured there is nothing incompatible with this high behest in that other declaration, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Observe; "ye shall know them," (false prophets,) which may not require that you should "judge" and denounce them; besides, "fruits" which show them to be really bad men, must not mean any merely accidental or isolated facts in their history. A uniformly bad and unholy life alone, in the midst of flattering words and high professions of goodness, would show them to be the "wolves in sheep's clothing," to whom our Savior referred, and of whom he bade his disciples "beware," But such surely are not our dear brethren in the church of God.

So far should we be in any truly Christian state from allowing hasty conclusions against those who oppose us, that we should seek with anxious care to account for their positions upon other principles. May there not be something in us that in part explains their aversion to the experience we recommend -- some want of meekness under trials, of humility in prosperity, of gentleness in our manners, or kindness and sympathy in our mode of teaching the truth? Or if we have in no sense sinned in these particulars, still must we not admit that there is enough of general infirmity and of peculiar weakness about each of us to excuse, to some extent, though not justify, the criticisms practiced upon us? And must it not be confessed

that there are few of us who exhibit so uniformly the holy power of perfect love, as to place our position utterly beyond the reach of cavil? May not some of our brethren really and from honest hearts differ from us in relation to the mode of teaching and promoting the doctrine, and hence place themselves in apparent opposition to the cause of holiness, while in reality they are in favor of it, and opposed only to what they deem our peculiarities? We are persuaded that this is the case with thousands; and if so, it would be a grievous wrong to condemn them as apostates, or refuse to acknowledge them as in any sense coadjutors in the great work of "spreading scriptural holiness over these lands."

And suffer us in all kindness to suggest, that, in very many instances, this apparent or real opposition to active and specific efforts for the promotion of holiness as a separate blessing, may be accounted for in various ways, which will leave ample ground for confidence in the piety of our brethren. Poor human nature is very weak and erring, with the best of intentions; and whatever of this great evil may be set down to this fact, will save our mutual Christian confidence. Besides, these masses are confessedly sanctified but in part, and what more natural than that remaining corruptions should tend to the very results of which we complain? What more natural than that the burning truths poured upon the souls still unsanctified, should rouse more or less of resistance? In such a state, the first instinct is self-defense, vindication, and even resentment! It furnishes indeed sad evidence of the truth of the doctrine, and of the necessity of effort, but it may not prove these persons in a state of unpardoned guilt. They doubtless often condemn themselves for all this folly, repent of it in deep anguish of spirit, secretly before God; and yet, perhaps, were they are aware of it, detect themselves in framing theories of holiness, accommodating to their condition, and persuading themselves to believe that there is something forbidding, injurious and unnecessary in any specific and formal efforts to promote entire sanctification. Even in your own past experience, it is not unlikely you may find some reason for a charitable construction of this dreadful evil. It is probable that your own minds have, at different times, even in a truly converted state, felt more or less of this very aversion, and been guilty of these same inconsistencies; if not, you have special reasons to thank God for the grace that has saved you from them.

We have said these things, not to convince you that all your opponents are true and honest Christians; for alas! we are very well aware that this cannot be claimed. Doubtless, many oppose holiness because they hate it, and oppose you, because they know and feel that you represent it; but surely no member of the church of God ought, upon slight grounds, to be charged with so heinous a crime; and it may be safely assumed, that where such depravity exists, it will show itself also in other ways, and by some means attract the attention of those who are responsible for the discipline of the church.

Nor would we wish to diminish your aversion to sin even in others, or to a love of sin wherever it may be found. To inspire charity for what is wrong in itself, or dangerous in its tendency, especially if it is found in the church, is no part of our object. Against every thing of this kind, those who are perfect in love must, upon all proper occasions, bear a decided and unflinching testimony; and even when disapprobation may not express itself directly in words, the life, the spirit, the countenance must be an unequivocal reproof to all attempts, formal or otherwise, at compromise with the devil. The danger of quiet, and of all efforts to evade responsibility, in an unsanctified state, must be pressed home upon the hearts and consciences of our brethren, "whether they will hear or forbear." This is no time for indecision. To give even an implied approval or consent to the indifference or opposition of the church or individual, to the experience and spread of holiness, would bring evil upon your own conscience which you would be unable to bear.

But we have made these suggestions to show that you may be saved the pain, -- the wrong of sweeping condemnations, by sound thinking, by careful analysis of character, by the true authority of history, and by

the light shed upon the ways of even regenerated men, by the word of God. We wish to guard brethren against general conclusions adverse to the piety of individuals, from the simple fact, that they do not harmonize with them. God is, we trust, graciously carrying on a work in their hearts, which will finally remove all their inward aversion to the thing itself, and to all scriptural modes of promoting it; and however much you may condemn their course, you will surely not be uncharitable to them; you will rather rejoice to believe that there is much good being done, besides that which is done by the special advocates for present distinct action in favor of holiness; and if men will not go as far in doing good as they ought to, you will bid them God-speed as far as they do go. You shall thus disarm prejudice, or at least clear your own souls. Are any among you inclined to despair of the goodness of all who blindly resist this work? allow us to hope that these cautions may not prove in vain. Your Christian charity is passing a severe ordeal. It may be destined to something severer still; but "You will come forth as gold." You will pity where you cannot approve. You will grieve over those whose lives, as a whole, compel you to think them destitute of true piety. You will charitably distinguish between the resistance made to your particular mode of promoting holiness, and opposition to the work itself. You will carefully and rigidly scrutinize your own hearts and lives, -- your modes of doing your heaven-commissioned work, to see how much there may be calculated to discredit it, and what you can lay aside as needlessly offensive. You will sincerely rejoice in all the good you find in those who oppose you, and in all the good they may do to the souls of others. You will yield nothing of the great fundamental truths of the gospel to the demands of men, even Christian men. You will compromise no duty. You will remit no efforts to urge forward the glorious work of entire salvation from sin to gratify your dearest friend or bitterest enemy. To all unmerited condemnation let every true Christian reply, "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self; for I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord." Let all heed the injunction: "Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart."

3. Your Christian patience will be tried. "In your patience possess ye your souls," is an inspired direction given because it is needed. No Christian can be innocently fretful. Not even natural disposition can be an excuse for it. It always includes more or less of untruthfulness, of exaggeration, of censoriousness. It engenders "anger, malice, strife, and every evil work." Those who give way to it, however great the provocation, must mourn the hidings of the divine countenance -- must lament in bitterness so great a folly, or soon be numbered with apostates.

But you, who are wholly consecrated to God, cannot be impatient even in feeling without the greatest danger. It is no doubt greater harm to speak complainingly and censoriously, than to have the feeling and suppress it; for if you indulge in such language even to your dearest friends, you will start suspicion in relation to your profession; and much more will the sacred cause be wounded in the presence of enemies, or of those who look with doubt upon the doctrine, the experience, and the profession of holiness.

But have you not sometimes thought that the feeling of impatience if it be suppressed is wholly innocent? Beware, brethren. Precisely here is the snare of the devil. When your evidence of perfect love is clear, and your soul is complete in all the will of God, do the petty annoyances of life affect you? Can you not endure even the most unreasonable provocations from servants, friends, or enemies, in perfect calmness? Make the very sweetness of your temper and the gentleness of your manner, a powerful rebuke to sin, and a palliative to the misfortunes of those around you?

But if you are conscious of something more than inward sorrow for the wrongs that others inflict upon you and upon themselves, -- of something different from the purest love to those who annoy you, -- if you feel

your dissatisfaction with them so great as to incline you to repay them for the trouble they have made you, to annoy them in return, to resent your injuries, though you do not utter a complaining word, you may be sure something is wrong. It is the heart, the inner man, upon which the eye of God is fixed.

True, the connection between the feelings and the words, the thoughts and the actions, is so close that they are not easily separated. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and "he that offendeth not in word nor in tongue, the same is a perfect man." You will, therefore, not long retain the feelings of resentment with which the enemy has inspired you within your own breast. Your countenance, your movements, your tones of voice, and finally, your words, will show that you are inwardly wrong.

O the calmness of love! The sweetness and power of purity! But this rich and heavenly grace cannot be left to itself. In this world of sin it must be severely tried. The rashness of friends and the virulence of foes will attack it. The want of harmony around you will powerfully tend to unsettle the harmony within. Worn and exhausted vital energies will expose it. Enfeebled and irritable nerves will surely try it. Through all these, and a thousand nameless ills, the tempter will assault a meek and quiet spirit.

But if you keep your unity with Christ, if in all this you have no other will than the will of God, the temptation will fail. You may be conscious of inward pain, but not of resentment; of inward grief, but not of anger; of the strongest disapprobation, but not of ill-will. Love, deep and melting love, will pervade the soul under the keenest sufferings, and the severest provocations. It will illuminate the countenance, sweeten the temper, soften the words, and throw a charm over the scenes of wretchedness itself!

It is well to guard against the assaults of the enemy made directly by whispers of evil when none but spirits are near you, or indirectly through persons and things around you. Indeed you must "watch," or be taken by surprise. The great security, however, is in living faith that renounces self, and casts the soul wholly upon the Lord.

But the patience of the wholly sanctified is destined to other trials. When the clear light breaks in upon the soul, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost resolves all doubts, and reduces the whole problem of Christian perfection to complete simplicity, we feel that the work is easy for all the church of Christ. We think it can be readily explained. We hope soon to induce others to accept the same relief from the evils of a divided heart, and even expect to see the work of holiness spreading like a flame throughout the land. But alas! the trial soon shows the intractableness of the materials, and the unskillfulness of the workmen. The tears which gush out in response to deep-felt sympathy and melting love soon dry up. The confidence you have inspired is soon followed by suspicion, neglect, and finally opposition; and the amazing truth comes home to your hearts with the most pungent sorrow that you are destined to general defeat; that only a few will be fully roused and brought into the perfect liberty of holiness; that some of these will soon become inconsistent in life, and treacherous in heart, and join the ranks of opponents; that neither a year nor an age will suffice "to spread scriptural holiness over these lands." And then comes on the discouragement. The temptation falls upon the soul with fearful power, it is all a failure! We can't succeed! The church will go on in its worldliness until awaked by the trump of judgment! The little that we can do is of no avail and we may as well give over our efforts, do what we can in the ordinary way, and trouble ourselves no further! Here again is the fatal snare. Alas, brethren, whence do you get this suggestion? Does God say so? Does he say, I have tried for years to make men holy, and have only succeeded in a few instances, I will therefore give it up? Does the Savior make the difficulties of his undertaking the reason for abandoning it? No. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged until he have set judgment in the earth." You will never be fully like your Master until you can learn to both work and wait -- work as though the salvation of the world

depended upon your efforts, and wait as though it were a most willing life-labor to be the means of saving a single soul; "knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

4 Your Christian firmness will be tested. The apparent want of success will try it. How often has it already been suggested to you to detach yourself from a cause that is so unpopular! Better to abandon an enterprise that meets with so little favor from the mass of professing Christians, and from which you can see so little evident fruit. And neglect will try your firmness. Your preaching, your exhortations, your personal entreaties to awake to the necessity of holiness, will be heard with indifference, or, if felt for the time, will not generally be acted upon. If you introduce the subject in private conversation, it will soon be superseded by something else, and thus you will be tempted to yield the point and say no more. Sometimes also you will meet with direct opposition, -- opposition in doctrine, in experience and practice, -- perhaps from those who have been baptized in the faith of the church, who have avowed before the altar of God their belief in the power of Christ to cleanse from all sin, who have solemnly affirmed that they "expected to be made perfect in love in this life, and were then groaning after it!" But will you give it up? When you first read, in the word of God, "it is his will even your sanctification," did you say, I will believe this until some of my brethren deny it or explain it away? When you first began to cry out, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," did you add, if it shall be found popular to have clean hearts? When you made your consecration, was it with the reservations of expediency? When you first lifted up your voice and cried to the church, "Be ye holy for God is holy," was it with the intention to desist as soon as it should appear that only a few would heed the solemn appeal? No, verily. Then you would have been ashamed at the very thought of such gross inconsistency. Why then do you now tremble to find yourself so nearly alone? Why are you now secretly looking out for a way of retreat when the battle begins to rage? O, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage." "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you;" for really it cannot be denied that to many professors of perfect love this language is exactly appropriate.

5. In the struggle in which, you have engaged, your perseverance will be severely tested. Have you not marked how many who have entered the path of holiness have finally abandoned it? Have you not seen how many have brought disgrace upon this sacred profession by their inconsistencies, by their want of sound discretion, by their instability? Has not your heart been grieved by the sad exposures of this holy cause from the infidelity of its friends? And will you add one more to the number of the unfaithful? God forbid it. Is it not true that God requires holiness, that he holds it out to every believer by the most charming promises of the gospel? Is it not true that the large majority of real Christians are yet without it, that in consequence of its neglect the church is loaded with a body of death, filled with backsliders, and comparatively powerless for the great purpose to which she is ordained of Heaven? Is it not true that, by keeping silence, by waiving the claims of entire sanctification, you may deprive many of the advantage of your experience, deaden the work in your own soul, and finally lose your evidence as others have done? For Christ's sake, "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord."

**SECOND: HOLINESS MUST NOT BE TAKEN OUT OF ITS PROPER CONNECTIONS.**

That there is a tendency to this, can hardly be denied. When we are thoroughly roused by the Spirit of God, from a state of comparative indifference to lively Christian activity, and enter upon a course of searching inquiry into the deficiencies of the past, and the depth and extent of our privilege, as a natural and first effect, we sink amazingly in our own eyes; and happy for us if, through the device of the devil, the work of God already done in our hearts, and still in progress, does not go down with self! Surely, we are in great danger of blindness here. Many have been the sufferers who, in the very struggle for "a clean heart," have been led to depreciate their past religious experience, until they grieved the Spirit, and reached a state of complete despair. But if the soul escapes this snare and the work goes on, the glory of holiness becomes entirely absorbing. Oh, how deep, and rich, and full its blessings. Completely enamored with its charms, and awed by its overpowering grandeur, one may very well say, -- give me this, and I want nothing besides. It is not wonderful that, in such a state, this one object should completely occupy the mind. And when this absorbing desire is gratified, the danger is not entirely past. We do not mean the danger of over-estimating the grace of perfect love. This, we are sure, is impossible. We mean simply the danger of making it the whole of the Christian scheme. It is doubtless the very centre and soul of the scheme, -- the grand aim of remedial love in reference to sinners. But it is not the whole. Other fundamental principles, however accessory and subordinate to this, have their place in the system, -- their importance to the unconverted, to the justified, and to the wholly sanctified -- their demands upon us, upon all, for attention, enforcement, and defense.

If now, as ministers or members of the church, we should become so entirely engrossed with the charms of perfect love as to lose sight of its accessories -- if our minds should be so occupied with the one thought -- the one doctrine, vast and comprehensive as it is, that we could preach upon no other theme, converse or pray only about holiness, the precious truth would doubtless suffer in our hands. We do not believe the many are liable to fall into this error. Far otherwise. It must rather be confessed with sorrow that much the greater numbers are in danger of the opposite extreme; -- that they do not feel the charm of Christian purity drawing them for months, and even years together, to preach a single sermon or speak upon its distinctive character and claims; -- that numerous Christians and large congregations are permitted to sit under the ministry for many years, perhaps for life, without being impressed even once with the glorious truth that entire deliverance from sin in this life is their blood-bought privilege, their indispensable duty. This undoubtedly is the great evil of the pulpit and the church. But for the present we address a different class -- a class to whose course and bearing we attach the greater importance, from the very fact that it is small. Indeed, it would seem that the church cannot well bear the misdirection of the smallest part of those labors which are especially designed to promote experimental holiness. To aid one beloved brother, who has to any extent impaired his usefulness by becoming, in an unfortunate sense, a man of one idea, in recovering from this dangerous tendency, would, as we believe, be a work of incalculable usefulness.

Let us then with great plainness point out the indications of this error. You have proved by blessed experience the power of holiness. Of course you love it. The theme attracts you wherever mentioned. A sermon in which it is truthfully presented, -- a prayer in which it is earnestly asked, -- a conversation in which it is sincerely discussed, -- or a book in which it is clearly explained and ably enforced, has, for that very reason, a special interest for you; and the more so as you meet with so little of this, and so much of everything else. This is unquestionably right. Would that a similar love of holiness pervaded the whole church. But, if now you detect in yourself a secret disrelish for any other theme, -- if you perceive a lurking desire to avoid delivering or hearing those discourses which dwell upon any of the innumerable other Bible topics, which, though intimately related to this one, are in some sense distinct from it, -- if you are conscious of an aversion to experience, though sincerely related, which falls short of the highest standard

revealed in the gospel, or a general distrust of the religion of those who make no special efforts for the promotion of holiness, -- if you feel an inaptitude, -- an inward disqualification for labors that aim directly at the hearts of sinners, -- that seek their awakening and conversion, the reclamation of backsliders, the confirming of the weak and the growth in grace, however gradual, of the truly regenerated; if any of these or kindred tendencies begin to develop themselves to your consciousness, then be on your guard. Precisely here is the snare of the devil.

To any who may be thus enticed we beg leave most affectionately to submit the following suggestions:

1. These feelings of aversion are clearly wrong. You once felt them to be so. At their first appearance they startled you. You cried out to God against them, -- struggled against them and got the mastery over them. But since, they have seemed more plausible, and you may have even admitted them into the elements of your religion, and persuaded yourself that you were greatly subserving the cause of holiness, by giving to it your exclusive attention, and virtually proscribing every thing else! Alas! my brother, see what these things are to which you have acquired this aversion; -- feeling for sinners -- "exhorting, entreating, rebuking with all long-suffering and doctrine," -- "supporting the weak," -- "raising up the bowed-down -- holding up the feeble hands and confirming the feeble knees, strengthening the things that remain that are ready to die" -- the very work in which your blessed Master was engaged while on earth, and is to this hour, and which he has entrusted to his church. Surely you will not permit the existence of this feeling of exclusiveness, opposed directly, as it is, to the humane and heavenly mission of our holy Christianity.

2 It is inconsistent with the claims of holiness which demands only its own position. It supersedes no doctrine of the gospel. It is instead of no other work of grace. It acknowledges the atonement, conviction, repentance, justification by faith, regeneration, adoption, sanctification commenced, and growth in grace. Nay, more. It depends upon all these. It cannot exist without them, and hence requires its advocates to bend their energies, to a very large extent, to the work of producing and maintaining them. As the grand preliminaries to entire sanctification, they must be insisted upon. Holiness is offered directly to but few. The great mass of the world cannot receive it. An immense previous work must be accomplished before it would be of any avail to urge upon them the doctrine of holiness. And this previous work is of the utmost importance in itself, and in its relation to the sanctified state. No well instructed advocate of holiness can therefore be devoted directly only to that work. The claims of holiness extend in the fullest degree to the preparation of men for its experience, as well as to the completion of the work in the hearts of true believers.

3. There is danger in the spirit which we wish in all humility to guard against, -- danger to the soul that entertains it; as its immediate effect is to destroy the basis of his own experience and produce uncharitable tempers, -- danger to the souls of others whose salvation from the guilt of sin is thus neglected, -- and danger to the cause; for its enemies wield these inconsistencies against its advocates and against the cause itself. So soon as any of us can patiently speak of and hear nothing else, then we cease to be respectfully and profitably heard upon this subject.

These remarks we have addressed to the few who are in danger. Let no one charge these errors upon the professors of holiness generally. They understand their calling better, and seek to check the first beginnings of exclusiveness, though they originate in the very ardor of love for this glorious grace. They may be depended upon to labor anywhere, and with due regard to circumstances, for the promotion of the whole and every part of the Christian scheme.

### THIRD: BEWARE OF SCHISM.

This caution may startle you. You will say at once, "Schism in the body of Christ is a crime -- a grievous offense against God and man, of which we would no more be guilty than of blasphemy. It separates the hearts of brethren. It stirs up jealousy, pride and strife, making enemies of friends." It will therefore surprise you to see that you are thought to be in danger from a spirit that is, in every respect, so utterly foreign from that of perfect love! But, brethren, let us lie low, and humbly inquire at the foot of the cross. We may detect evil where we least suspect it, and you are not afraid to know the truth. You do not start back indignantly at the intimation that the arts of your tempter may lead your poor weak human nature astray, and scornfully refuse to investigate. No, God forbid. All this belongs to the unsanctified heart Your very profession implies that you are teachable as a child.

All evil, to be understood and avoided, must be traced to its source. The beginnings of a vice may be tolerated, and at length cordially entertained, by those who would shrink with horror from its developments. Let us, therefore, search for the origin of schism in the church, and see whether we can discover any thing against which we have reason to guard.

1. Differences in doctrine may lead to division in feeling and in action. Indeed, it cannot have escaped the notice of even superficial observers, that those who have the same views of the great truths and minor details of the gospel, very naturally adhere to each other. Hence it is that brotherly love is easier between members of the same, than of different denominations. Similarity of opinion, perhaps more than any thing else, groups men naturally together in separate church organization. Hence, when they begin to differ upon those points which harmonize them, they feel the tendency to separate. If issues are made, and controversy arises, the danger of alienation increases, until, from this cause alone, all the dreaded evils of a torn and distracted church may arise.

Now, history shows that we are at all times liable to this, and that caution is always appropriate. But let us examine our special exposures from different views of the doctrine of holiness. We have observed with some concern an increasing disposition to derive or modify our opinions from the cast of our own minds. To some, the idea of any separate and special attention to the work of holiness is disagreeable, and hence the tendency to magnify all the evils which have been incidentally connected with such efforts. Indeed, the decided influence of this feeling of aversion, in producing the opinion that sanctification and regeneration are identical, -- that no Christian has need of being cleansed from impurities, cannot be doubted by a logical mind or a careful observer. This same reluctance to act may account also for the opinion that, though the work of sanctification is not completed in conversion, its progress and perfection are implied and secured in the converted state, Without fixing the eye upon it, -- without hungering and thirsting after it, -- without praying, agonizing and believing for it; -- that with ordinary faithfulness the work will be gradually, but imperceptibly accomplished, and that it is useless, nay, even vicious, to think of it, speak of it, labor for it distinctively.

On the other hand, an individual filled with the joy of perfect love may feel a strong security against the power of sin. He sees nothing in his own heart that can permit affinity with the devil; and, taking his principles from the cast of his own mind, he believes that there is a state of grace which is beyond the reach of contingency, and thus looks upon all acquisitions less than this as defective Christianity.

Now, the source of all these novelties in doctrine is evidently relying upon our own minds to teach us the truth, -- looking at certain facts, tendencies and preferences within, -- admiring them, -- supposing them to

be general instead of simply special or individual, as they are, and announcing as general principles our own conceits. But the opinions of individuals formed from this variable standard are nearly as various as their numbers. Hence issue controversies and alienation of feeling, to the great injury of the church.

The Bible is the only standard of doctrine. No schism can be truly grounded in it. Let us cease from ourselves, and go to the fountain. In this way only can we see eye to eye, and save the church from hazardous speculations and experiments. Opinions above holiness are just as dangerous and as inevitably false as opinions below it. Innovations which claim to free humanity from its frailties, its liabilities to error, and its exposure to sin, are as perilous to the souls of men as those which would reconcile the claims of God and the provisions of the gospel with willful transgression, or voluntary remaining depravity. God's word gives not the slightest countenance to either, though a man's own feelings and opinions may.

Let no one say, "I cannot help my belief." Nay, but you have adopted an unauthorized standard of faith. Every one of us can, if we will, renounce this standard, and go to the living, unchangeable word. The fathers may tell us much truth, but they may also tell us error. Creeds and standard authors may be true exponents of Bible doctrine, but only so far as they are, can they be relied upon to aid our investigations, and teach us the way of full salvation. The mature views of Wesley may be regarded as a clear, safe and full exhibition of the teachings of revelation upon the great doctrine of holiness. But we dare not appeal to his writings as the authoritative teaching on this vital subject. We can claim nothing more than that he was made by the grace of God a very transparent medium through which divine light poured out from the Bible upon the world. It is only because he kept so closely to the Scriptures in his exposition of the doctrine, that so much safety, harmony and prosperity have resulted from strict adherence to his standard, and we have been involved in endless questions and imminent peril by stopping a particle below or passing a step beyond it. We say his standard -- we mean nothing more nor less than the Bible. If we keep to this we may stop all our controversies, repudiate all improvements, and simply pray for, believe for, and experience that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord," and in our mission of love, "spread scriptural holiness over these lands." If we speculate, argue, and array man against man, we shall fail to experiment, and live this glorious blessing, and shall rend the Body of Christ.

2. A want of charity may lead to schism. Should brethren who cannot, or do not, see alike upon the great liberty of the gospel, indulge personal aversion to each other, -- should they unkindly question each other's motives or sincerity, speak lightly of their professions, or dwell upon their frailties, nothing could be more certain than distraction and ultimate serious division in the church of God. Should you, my brethren, who profess perfect love, conceive the impossibility of bringing up the great body of the church to the standard which you have reached in experience, and hence feel like giving them up, and begin practically to withdraw yourselves from them, you would inevitably bring upon yourselves the crime of schism. Any thing like the spirit, "Stand aside, I am more holy than thou," is unworthy of you -- is a device of the devil to cut you off from the sympathies of the church in general, and destroy your usefulness. We do not deny that there may be society, even in the church, which you cannot intimately fellowship. We know it is possible that conduct may be tolerated by feeble and unfaithful discipline, which it will be your imperative duty, in meekness, to reprove. We are aware that there is a very important sense in which distinctness from worldly professors is indispensable to your retaining the blessing of perfect love. But surely you will not be known from the rest by any want of Christian charity, or by anything like a spirit of proscription. This is certainly not in the grace you have professed. It is no part of it. It may be artfully made to supersede it, and you may thus become a victim to a most ruinous delusion.

True, you are to be distinct from worldly professors, but it will be by "denying yourself of all ungodliness and worldly lust, and living soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world." You must be distinct even from justified Christians, but only by being more deeply humble; by greater simplicity and sweetness of spirit; by loving them more tenderly, and laboring for them and the world more indefatigably and successfully than would otherwise be possible. Thus not schism, but strong and indissoluble Christian union, will be the result of increased attention to the doctrine of holiness.

3. Any organization of the friends of holiness as a distinct work, is highly dangerous. It must lead to invidious distinctions which are by no means intended by the friends of the measure. It must place distance, more or less, between the members of such associations and their brethren, and lead to jealousies, heart-burnings and divisions. It must cut off from the sympathies of the masses, those whose special graces are intended by our heavenly Father to be like leaven in the measures of meal -- to permeate the entire church.

The example of Mr. Wesley furnishes no precedent for such a measure; for surely there is a wide difference between the moral and religious condition of the evangelical churches of the present day, with all their imperfections, and the secular, worldly and corrupt establishment within which he formed his societies. Besides, he organized upon no one idea, however central and controlling. His special fellowship included distinctly and professedly the whole scheme of gospel morality and piety, as every Christian fellowship should, all tending, to be sure, "to spread scriptural holiness over these lands." This very organization and other evangelical churches exist for us, rendering any other unnecessary.

As the advocates of entire sanctification, we have no new revelations for the world; no novel doctrines to advance; no startling discoveries in the means of grace. Our object is as old as the date of redemption. Our prayer for ourselves is the same as that breathed by the devout psalmist, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," -- for others, identical with that of the apostle, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly;" and of the adorable Savior, "Sanctify them through thy truth, -- thy word is truth." Our theory is as simple, as comprehensive, as powerful, and as true, as the apostolic announcement, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Here we have solid rock. Here let us stand against the powers of earth and hell. Don't let us add a thing -- venture a single speculation, or attempt a single improvement; but exert all our energies, and all the power of our faith, to get the blood applied to our own hearts and the hearts of others. Nothing more than this, and, in the name of God, nothing less.

So shall not "our good be evil spoken of," and the doctrine of evangelical holiness preached, experienced, extended, shall prove in the future as, in its purity, it has in the past, the highest conservative power of the church.

#### FOURTH: THIS SACRED PROFESSION MUST BE VINDICATED.

It cannot be taken simply upon its own strength. It speaks of a work of grace so naturally improbable -- so far from being true of the great mass of believers, that no mere declaration can command the faith of the world. It must be confessed that, to all but thinking minds, sound theologians, or persons of deep experience, the probabilities are against it. There is much plausibility in the thought that human depravity is so deep, so all-pervading, so concealed, and human consciousness and reason are so defective that a man may even honestly think he is cleansed from all sin when he is very far from it. Indeed, without good and sufficient sustaining evidence, the profession cannot be received. There are many known defects in human nature in its best earthly condition, which, however capable of clear and satisfactory explanation by

the acute theologian, are most naturally attributed, by the world, and even professors of religion, to remaining depravity. The credibility of this great work must not, therefore, be made to rest upon a priori evidence. The only cause which men can see, and which they are disposed to take into the account, does not contain the alleged effect -- does not suggest it, but quite the contrary. And it is not discreet to overtax the faith of men, especially of sincere men. The effect is always adverse to the intention.

Besides, it must not be forgotten that men generally are in an unbelieving state with regard to this blessing. As there is no a priori probability, so far as they can see, that any man is sanctified wholly, so there is no a priori tendency in them to believe it, upon any evidence whatever. The minds of most men are skeptical upon this point, as upon most others, involved in experimental Christianity, not only from inward corruption, which spontaneously resists all truth, but from choice and habit. It is self-reproving to admit that a state of purity so superior to their own is practicable and within their reach -- that before their eyes there are demonstrations of a power, available to all sinners, which might long since have restored them to the image of their Maker; and hence that they have assumed a fearful responsibility in remaining so long under the total or partial influence of inward sin. They choose, therefore, in self-defense to deny the fact. And this, commenced so early, has been persisted in so long, that it has become a fixed habit of the mind. It is the first result of listening to a profession of perfect love, and is so much a part of the man, that he is likely to have no idea of the sophistry he is practicing upon himself. He would, it is true, be startled by the thought of denying that it is desirable to be delivered from all sin, -- that it is possible, -- that it is necessary; but really feels that he has no reason, even to apologize, for denying positively that any man on earth is delivered from all sin! How general this skeptical tendency is, we need not attempt to show you, brethren. You have met it everywhere. You have felt its chilling effects in the very bosom of the church. Hard enough to endure, coming from an unbelieving world, it has grieved you to the heart when you have been compelled to recognize it in the looks, the words, and the conduct of those you tenderly love in the membership, and even in the ministry.

One other consideration we must mention. There is opposition to holiness of which its professors must become the direct objects. No man can, even as an advocate, and much less by open profession, identify himself with a cause which contains so much of reproof to sin, and which presents an antagonism so direct and palpable to the endeared vices and palliated corruptions of the world, without feeling the force of its self-respect, of its deeply rooted prejudices, and of its challenged resentment. "The world will love its own and them only." And just in proportion as we dissent from its fashionable sins, we shall provoke its resistance.

Now, to meet this opposition with mere profession -- to expose ourselves to the charge of gross inconsistency, presenting no evidence of the reality which we formally claim, is not only to secure the contempt of men, but to endanger the system which we so totally misrepresent. Opposition to a mere fiction is an easy task. To disprove and hold up to ridicule, claims which have no real foundation, requires no skill in logic, no deep malice at heart. But the grievous fact is, that, from precisely this position, multitudes impose upon themselves and others by arguing from the concrete to the abstract, -- from the particular to the general; and hence they say, with an air of triumph, here is another demonstration of the utter falseness of this dogma of Christian perfection, -- of the utter impracticability of this, as well as all other schemes of human perfectibility. Against all this, which so clearly disregards the testimony of revelation, and dishonors the Savior, it is of no use to oppose mere profession. If this is all, it is better to suffer in silence, or to be content with opposing true logic to sophistry, and battling by sound theological laws for the truth, as it is in Jesus. All these facts, in the state and tendencies of the world, we adduce, not

to discourage profession. Far from it. We have shown that all consistent profession of religion is an attempt, in humbleness and sincerity, to tell the truth, and the more profound and pervading the truth, the more gratefully and joyously should we tell it. We admit and even urge that we are not excused from being living witnesses to the fact that the blood of Jesus has cleansed us from all sin, by the knowledge that our testimony will be rejected, -- that men will take occasion to attack, with renewed zeal and bitterness, the glorious doctrine of full salvation. Truth is not responsible for error; the right for the wrong; light for darkness. The faithfulness of the Savior, of his apostles, and martyrs was the occasion of bitter revilings, of fearful blasphemy and murder! but the cause lay deep in the hearts of corruption whence these bitter wrongs arose. No; we are to declare the whole counsel of God, whether men will hear or forbear. With all the solemnities of sworn witnesses, we are bound at the proper time to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." The testimony of the Spirit is to be honored for its own sake ; and on the naked authority of this inward witness, whatever our stage of advancement, we are to tell what the Lord hath done for our souls.

But this is not our own defense. Profession is not our weapon, but the simple exposure of the object of attack. This is the thing to be vindicated against the improbabilities in the nature of the case; against the natural skepticism and the sinful opposition of men; and the vindication is practicable; the means of successful and triumphant vindication are within our reach, and we are under the most sacred and imperative obligations to use them, for the honor of our revered principles, for the protection of our individual rights, for the deliverance of souls from the power of sophistry, the dominion of prejudice and the oppression of the devil, and for the glory of Christ, whose blood, in spite of all cavil and neglect, has power to cleanse from all sin.

1. The spirit of the sanctified must vindicate the profession. Such amazing grace cannot be hid in the heart. A light so pure, and bright, and constantly increasing, will shine out to the view of men. A tree so good will bear good fruit.

The spirit which characterizes the man wholly sanctified, is a clear and steady vindication of his profession. It is the spirit of love -- of perfect love. There is a marked difference between the love which is the fruit of partial, and that which is the result of entire sanctification, -- love which may co-exist or alternate with fear, and "perfect love which casteth out fear." It is much weaker, and hence more easily overcome. It is indeed warm, and fresh, and glowing, when the soul is first converted ; and would seem to be able to contend with men and devils.

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