

Section I. It Is Desirable to Be Holy

by Jesse T. Peck

Sin is a serious offense against God that has devastating effects on individuals and society, and it is not desirable in any form.

Scripture: Leviticus 11:44, Job 1:1, Ezekiel 36:25, Luke 1:6, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Philippians 1:21, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 11:5, James 2:23

Topics: "Christian Holiness", "Sanctification"

Description

Jesse T. Peck preaches about the possibility and desirability of achieving holiness in the sight of God. He emphasizes that God's command to be holy is achievable, as evidenced by the lives of biblical figures like Enoch, Abraham, Job, and Paul, who walked with God, exhibited faith, and maintained blameless lives. The divine promises of cleansing and sanctification, along with the prayers for sanctification found in the Bible, further support the belief that it is possible for believers to attain complete holiness through the power of God's grace.

Transcript

It is desirable to be holy, at least so it would seem to us; so, if we are not wholly mistaken, it must seem to all. Even opponents of the doctrine, must, upon sober reflection, exceedingly regret that, in their humble opinion, no available provisions have been made in the gospel, to save the soul entirely, and in this life, from so dread an evil; -- or that provision having been made, it is placed beyond our reach; -- or if entirely possible, we are so constituted that we never can, or never will, avail ourselves of it. We have often imagined that devout persons, unfortunately restricted by theological systems, must be driven again and again to search the Scriptures, and pore over the records of piety, to see whether, after all, there is not some lurking error in the view, which deprives the thirsty soul of full draughts of salvation; so abhorrent are the slightest motions of inward depravity to the truly regenerate. We shall write in harmony, therefore, with the feelings of such Christians, whatever difficulties mere theory may oppose, when we attempt to show how desirable it is to be "pure in heart." And amongst the thousands who in honest faith receive the doctrine of experimental holiness as a practical reality, there must be extremely few who, even under the greatest delusion, cherish sin -- or defend it from real affection; and yet, surely the delay, the shrinking when the subject is mentioned, and the various apologetic theories put forth, justify the conviction that the true desirableness of "a clean heart," is not appreciated by the church.

1. Let us look at the nature of sin. In principle, and in fact, it is rebellion against God. His will is revealed in the Bible. His holy law is the principle upon which the moral harmony of the universe depends; and yet sin attacks that principle -- subjects it to utter contempt, and tramples it under foot. It is the rule which binds the creature to the Creator, the subject to the sovereign, the child to the parent, the beneficiary to the benefactor; but sin, in full view of all these sacred relations, perpetrates its high enormities. Man, under its influence, says, "I know I did not create myself -- I know a Divine Power brought me into being, and that power has a right to demand all my services, but I will not yield to that demand. I acknowledge the right, and rebel against it. Those creature abilities shall serve my own purposes, my own lusts. There in heaven, and every where is my rightful Lord, the Being who holds the destinies of the universe. But I defy him! let him order as he will, I will not obey the order! I will be my own ruler! I will live as I list, in despite of him! Let him throw down his law, as a line of fire to stop me; I will rush over it! He is my Father. I am but his weak, dependent helpless child. Every day he feeds me, and every breath I receive from his Almighty Providence. See now! I will insult him -- despise him! Let him command me -- threaten me -- expostulate with me; I will resist all! He has no love that shall win me -- no terrors that shall awe me -- no authority that shall bind my will!" Such is sin, the transgression of that law which is founded upon every relation held sacred by God or man.

And it is more. There are sacred duties binding upon the moral agent. Heaven enjoins repentance, but the sinner says, "I will cling to my sins -- I do not regret them. I love them, and will repeat them as often as I have an opportunity. Heaven requires trust in the divine veracity, in his omnipotent power, and holy love; but I will not confide in him. Faith is the great want of my soul, the proffer of divine grace, the most reasonable exercise of a rational mind; but I will not trust in the Being whom I know to be unalterable truth; whose word can never fail; -- I will not rely upon the things I know to be true, and the only truths that are of inevitable and eternal moment to me. Heaven requires that I should pray, but I choose to 'restrain prayer.' -- 'who is the Lord, that I should serve him, and what profit shall I have if I pray unto him?' No confession, contrition, deprecation, or petition, shall have place in my heart, or fall from my lips. God, my bountiful benefactor, requires my affections, I see him. 'the fairest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely;' but I will not love him. I can love the creature, man; a specimen of moral deformity; myself, the very type of folly and odiousness; but not God -- the pure, benevolent, and faithful God! The great Jehovah demands that I should fear him, and though I see him clothed in majesty and strength -- with the terrors of justice flashing from his eye, yet I shall render him no filial awe. I fear my fellow man, the frown of the populace, the ban of fashion -- every thing mean and contemptible, but not God -- the righteous, sin-avenging God! It is required by him who has the right, that I should 'love my neighbor as myself;' but my neighbor -- who is he, that he should occupy my time, engross my sympathies, absorb my means, and interfere with my enterprises? If I can use him in any way, if I can compel him to supply my wants, administer to my passions, or elevate me for the adulations of my fellows, very well -- if not, I have no special interest in him." And so of every duty. Sin is neglect -- continued, obstinate, constantly recurring neglect. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

And this is not all. It is gross inward corruption. No symmetrical, beautiful human figure can illustrate it. As said the prophet, of the moral condition of the Jews, so says the truth of all who are under the influence of sin -- "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." A putrid mass of loathsome corruption! Deeply seated within the soul, lies the source of outward rebellion. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" "A corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" -- "An evil man, out of the

evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil" nothing is right within. The passions are perverted -- the affections are alienated -- the conscience is untruthful -- the will is rebellious. Wrong -- every thing wrong in the soul, and "all unrighteousness is sin."

One other thing must be said of sin, distinctly, that it may be impressively. It rejects the Son of God! It is in the light of Calvary, that all sin has its true deformity. The race are not merely the unfortunate descendants of guilty parents; -- not vile, because by inheritance doomed to be vile; -- not rebellious because hopeless. The love of God has attempted to reach them. A scheme of stupendous mercy has been devised. The only begotten has appeared in flesh. Earth has seen and felt his compassion, and received his blood! To every mortal ear the call is issued, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." The guilty are offered pardon, the rebellious mercy, the dead life, the polluted purification. It is against all this that sin persists in its obstinacy. There is no power in dying love to melt the heart! There are no charms in the Redeemer to win its affections! The gospel instructs, intreats, threatens, and commands, in vain. The vast remedial scheme, with its endless variety of expedients, involving the resources of a God, by sin is mocked, despised, and rejected. Can we -- need we say more! Is there any other light in which it appears so vile, so flagrant, so terrible?

Such is sin, as a violation. of divine law, as a neglect of sacred duty, as a principle of innate, habitual, cultivated depravity. Such is the rejection of divine compassion. Thus it "tramples under foot the Son of God." Can it be in any sense desirable? No. All will instinctively say, surely not in its grosser forms. It is offensive even to decency, in the forms of idolatry, profanity, Sabbath-breaking, disobedience to parents, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, and covetousness.

From all these we pray to be delivered; however much we may be in spirit attached to any of them. And Christians feel that, in the sense of guilt, they cannot bear it. From its condemning power, they entreat, by night and day, to be delivered. Strange, that, in any of its forms, it should be allowed a home in the soul. For the mere fact of having within, the seeds of sin, the roots of bitterness, the fountain of "bitter waters," how few of the church give themselves any heartfelt trouble, feel any pain of conscience, or engage in any struggle of prayer!

But in this form of inward depravity, is it any more desirable, any less offensive, or dangerous? It is verily the same in principle, whether within, or without. In the outward forms of hateful vice, or robed in the garb of loveliness and beauty; breaking out in rebellion, or suppressed and governed, it is the same offensive "thing that God hates." True, the condition of the sinner is by no means the same in an unforgiven, and in a pardoned state. There is rich mercy in pardon.

There are the beginnings of a complete salvation in justification. There is the earnest of a blissful immortality in regeneration. But we must not be misled by the comfort of pardon, the joy and triumph of a new birth, and the glorious hopes of immortality, to pass over with indifference the corruption which remains; to feel or suppose that God has waived, in its favor, the claims of his holy law; or that it is entitled, in any form, to our toleration, or sufferance, because we have been enabled by grace to conquer it.

We must examine it in the light of revelation, and of a convicted conscience, until we can see all its deformity. We must watch its tendencies until we can realize that it is just as corrupt and rebellious as in any condition whatever; -- that it embraces the first opportunity to flame out against God, and against the soul; that, just as in any form, it will give a welcome home to the devil, and the world; lead the spirit away from Christ and duty; chill its affections, and pervert its judgment.

Just as surely, then, as it is desirable to be delivered from sin at all, it is desirable to be delivered from all sin. Desirable, as sin is wrong in itself, odious to God, against the rights of the Savior, and at war with the operations of the Holy Spirit. Desirable, in every aspect in which it can be viewed. Desirable in proportion to its inherent malignity, its corrupting, damning power over the souls in which it is allowed to reign. O, who can look at it, and love it? Who can answer its deformity with a smile? who can permit with quiet complacency, its concentrated poison in the soul?

How exceedingly desirable is deliverance from all sin on its own account! Let each of us think, and examine, and pray, until we shall cry out for deliverance merely because we loathe it more than any thing offensive to us, in the universe of God.

2. Look at the effects of sin. Sin has interrupted the moral harmony of the universe. It has arrayed the creature against his Creator. It turned rebellious angels out of heaven, and man out of Paradise. It kindled the flames of hell, and produced all the malignity and woe of that fearful place, where "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever." It brought the death-penalty upon our race, and the curse of God upon our earth. It has arrayed man against his fellow-man, and drenched the earth in blood. It has offended the eye with sights of pollution, and the ear with sounds of cursing and blasphemy. Who can defend it? Who can look out upon its devastations, and plead for it? But let us examine its work more minutely.

First of all, it defiles what God intended to be holy. The moral nature, the conscience, the heart, -- created originally in God's own image; -- pure as the sunlight, white as the driven snow, has been corrupted by sin; has become "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Its moral vision is hence darkened. Its discriminations are inaccurate. Amid the wild confusion of principles, right and wrong, -- the endless diversity of things which ought, and ought not to be done, the soul is confused, and gropes its way in darkness, where it ought to have moved with unerring accuracy. How melancholy to see the exalted good, rejected as though it were bane to the soul; the degrading evil ceased as the richest luxury; the moral judgment misled, when the feeble desire to do right is struggling for the ascendancy! And then how corrupt and powerless the moral impulses towards the right, when clearly seen! What stronger evidence of the deep moral depravation of the soul, than that the wrong attracts, and the right repels it! How justly may the sinner say,

"I see the right, I approve it too,

I see the wrong, yet the wrong pursue."

And how little pain does the soul endure in reflecting upon its guilty decisions! Were it pure as when God created it, sin would inflict severest suffering. As the nerve shrinks from the knife, as the eye from dust or gravel, the uncorrupted conscience would writhe at the touch of crime. Now, in what myriads of instances does it delight and revel in sin! At first, perhaps, and afterwards occasionally, when the spirit of God arouses the conscience, it shrinks from contemplated wrong, and endures more or less pain upon the remembrance of offenses against the laws of God. But how soon are these kindly admonitions hushed, amid the clamors of appetite, and destroyed by the power of vicious habit! And the susceptibility of pleasure upon the performance of the right, shares the same fate, until, in point of fact, the fallen spirit is more seriously discommoded by the right, than the wrong -- the pure than the impure. These are the effects of sin upon the soul; and there are others.

The passions have shared deeply in the general depravation. The affections are perverted, are torn from God, the race, and holiness, and placed upon the world, and self. The pure and elevated benevolence which God designed to reign over the soul, has been driven from the throne, and malevolence has usurped the sway. Anger rises up where only aversion to the wrong, and pity for the offender are due. Envy stares at the successful and the happy, when congratulations and delight ought to tremble upon the lip, and beam from the eye. Jealousy sends out its venom in the stead of genial sympathy, and unwavering confidence. Pride flatters and demands, where humility and meekness ought to dwell in deep composure, and yielding simplicity. Lust burns and devours, where purity should reign. Indeed, the whole desirous and emotional man is perverted by sin. Who can vindicate the cause of such sad revulsions, such fearful wrongs, such frightful disasters?

But the sensibilities have not suffered alone. The whole intellect is involved. Its power to know, and think, and reason, is paralyzed; and eternity alone will reveal the struggles it has passed, to arouse itself from its lethargy, to open its eyes upon the light, to grapple with the mysteries of nature and of God, to solve the dark problems of science, and of life, to separate the true from the false, to correct its errors, and prevent their fatal results. Mind was intended for work, but not against such fearful odds -- to study, but not in the dark -- to expand and develop itself, but not in a state of infirmity and disease -- to rise and soar amid the splendors of the firmament, and the glories of heaven, but not against the ponderous load of sin it bears. Alas, what universal wreck in the architecture of God! What magnificent ruins reveal the perfection of the design, and the destruction of the temple! And yet we are asked to show mercy to the spoiler, and preserve for him somewhere, and for a time, at least, a sanctuary in the inner nature!

One obstinate final stand, made by this one dread enemy, must not be overlooked. He has seized the moral active power of man,-- has induced its stubborn resistance against the higher sense of duty -- against the most affectionate appeals of truth and of interest; he has taught the soul to say no, when the Bible entreats and conscience urges, and God commands. The perverted will, which originates action, which gives character and direction to the soul's doings, yields now, when it ought to be firm; stops, when it ought to advance; rushes on when it ought to pause, and fills the soul with obduracy, when it ought to be tender and submissive. These sad results of sin join with those we have named before, to condemn and denounce it.

But not only is inward depravity thus the source of wrong being, and wrong actions. It produces guilt and misery, which no language can describe. God condemns it and those who willingly retain it. However "dead in trespasses and in sins," the soul is destined some time to awake -- awake to the dread consciousness of inward wrongs, to the fearful fact of war with God. The "sting of death" is in it, and there it must inflict its terrible wounds, and infuse its malignant poison. It is "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." It is like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. "There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God." Inward conscious guilt -- the dread forebodings of coming retribution -- the horrors of endless death already begun, prey upon the soul, paralyze its energies, and destroy its usefulness. The effects of sin! Alas! who can describe them'?

Look into the suffering hearts of guilty millions, and see the storms that are raging there; -- look out upon the scenes of woe that darken the face of day; -- look into the lanes, and courts, and alleys,-- the cellars, and garrets of crowded cities; -- listen to the wail of distress, as it comes up from the couch of suffering, and of death -- to the sobs and groans and shrieks of agony, from the hearts, riven by untold calamities, or dark with corruptions, unseen but by the eye of God. Hear the angry curses, and the terrible blasphemies

which roll from the lips, designed to utter Jehovah's praise; -- see justice trampled to the earth -- mercy bleeding with wounds, inflicted by those, over whom she weeps in sympathy and love; -- see decency violated -- the poor neglected -- the weak crushed by the arm of power -- humanity outraged, and the Sovereign God despised; -- look upon "the whole creation, groaning and traveling in pain together until now," and then say if you have a plea to offer for sin,-- if for anything it has ever done, you can offer for it a vindication or excuse,-- if there be any form or degree of it, that you wish to hide in your heart.

Nay, go on to the judgment, and see its doings by the light of a burning world, and the flames of hell. Look at the pale and horror-stricken throng upon the left of the Judge; -- imagine, if you can, the agony of that suspense which awaits the final doom -- the depth of that woe which fills the guilty, as they see the multitudes of the redeemed rise up, and on wings of fire, move into the world of light, when the terrible conviction sinks into their hearts, that they can never enter there; -- think of the bolt of flaming wrath, that must strike them, as they hear the sentence, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," -- of the consuming anguish of a world of sinners, amid "the fire that shall never be quenched," and the gnawings of "the worm that never dies;" -- see the "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth" when the "smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever!" And, as upon the waves of dark damnation, their spirits rise, and cry "How long, oh Lord, how long," hear the sentence of justice, echo and re-echo from the walls of fire, "Eternity," "eternity!" and then behold them plunge again, to rage and welter, amid that sea which "burneth with fire and brimstone;" where devils live, and hiss, and curse, and rage, for ever and for ever! O, tell me, will you cherish that which has produced these scenes of woe?

Say not, sin has no power if it be subdued and pardoned. Too many have found to their sorrow, that "the least remains of sin," after regeneration, had power to germinate and produce the fruits of death. With what fearful strength will it rise, and extend, and struggle to overthrow you! How promptly will it claim affinity with the temptations of the devil, and the allurements of the world! How many, through the influence of remaining depravity, have been betrayed into angry passions, into vanity, pride, and unbridled lust! How many have gradually yielded to the suggestions of an evil heart, and found, at length, that their strength was lost, their confidence gone, their Savior grieved, and their souls brought into bitter condemnation! It is not safe to rest in this state for an hour. When we see "how great a matter a little fire kindleth," -- that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," -- how many thousands have been slain by harbored inward, foes, which have seemed to be harmless -- what a mass of backsliders there are now in the church, for the very reason, that they have been satisfied without going on to perfection, we are ready to say, Surely, it is desirable to be cleansed from all sin,-- from the last and least remains of sin. Desirable? O what desires should rise up and struggle within us -- what longings for deliverance -- what restless breathings after full redemption! When, by steady, sincere reflection, we see the effects of sin -- even of sin remaining after conversion; when, by quickened memory, we recall the wrongs and the perils of the past; -- when we look out with deep and earnest gaze, into the crimes, and woes of the world, and forward into the scenes of death and the judgment, and see the ruin which has followed in its train, we shall realize, and yet inadequately, how desirable it is, to be delivered from all sin.

SECOND: SHOWN FROM THE NATURE AND RESULTS OF HOLINESS.

1. Holiness is desirable in itself. It is purity; and we are formed to admire purity. Even the garments we wear about us are comfortable only when they are perfectly clean. If they become soiled, they are offensive. We brush them again and again, to remove from them the smallest particles of dust. If their quality will admit of it, we wash them and polish them, until they are as white as the driven snow. What comfort, what genuine satisfaction we realize, when every garment is perfectly pure; and how uneasy,

how dissatisfied with ourselves, when the dust and sweat of the day adhere to us. With what instinctive loathing do we look upon the filthy and negligent around us. They may have excellent traits of character; they may be our kindred, and we may bear them the kindest regard, but can by no means avoid that nervous shrinking, in their presence, which was designed to protect us from pollution. The residences of the vicious and degraded are odious, chiefly from their impurity, while we should wish to get out of the most splendid mansion on earth, if it were kept in a neglected and unclean condition. We feel attracted to persons of taste, on that account alone; not to those who are distinguished by self-inflation, and the airs of vanity, but to those who are neat in person. The homeliest garb is entirely acceptable, even in good company, if it is perfectly clean, while the costliest attire can in no way compensate for stains, or neglected rents. We avoid the shops, and public houses, that are filthy, and patronize, even at much greater cost, those which are neat and tasteful. Dealers, of all kinds, polish their wares to the highest degree of brightness, to meet a law of God in the human soul; and if they fall into the mire, and receive ineffaceable stains, though strong and durable as ever, they are utterly spoiled.

From physical to moral purity, the transition is easy. It is made in the Scriptures, and the illustration is remarkably significant. "Cleanse thou me from secret faults," "Come, let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool, though they be red like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow." "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanseth us from all sin." "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The soul, stained by sin, dark in moral corruption, may be "cleansed" -- "sanctified," as the impurities of a garment are cleansed by washing. And what, to the eye of a clear conscience, is more offensive than moral defilement, polluting, degrading, ruining the soul? How do we shrink from it in ourselves, or when we behold it in others. Impurity of thought, and feeling, and purpose, and motive! How it mars the perfect workmanship of God! Sinners as we are, we cannot approve it. We can but look upon it with horror, and, as our souls become enlightened, with unutterable loathing and disgust. But how lovely are the manifestations of moral purity. We pause before it with feelings of admiration, and almost of envy. In the character of a friend, it is the most attractive charm. It is the very essence and richness of moral beauty. It is the brightest splendor of angels. When we think of them, it is not chiefly as spiritual beings who "excel in strength;" -- we do not dwell upon their swiftness in motion, nor yet upon their ministering benevolence, so much as upon their unsullied purity. How charming the idea of their presence, lovely as they are in holiness. What would be the value of an angel's power, an angel's intelligence, an angel's society, if once defiled by sin -- if stained by corruption? Let the deep damnation of hell answer. No charms in an angel, amid the glories of his lofty intelligence, if once he is fallen,-- if stained by sin. Brilliant as are his powers, he is then but a devil.

And what do we most admire in the heavenly world? It may be different with others, but to us, holiness is the grand central attraction of heaven. If sin should enter it, "Ichabod" would be written upon its walls of sapphire, and the light of its glory would be exchanged for the night of perdition. The higher orders of intelligence that range the fields of light, are bright in unsullied purity. The redeemed are lovely, because "they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." And of all the attributes assembled in the awful majesty of the Triune God, there is nothing to us of such wonderful attraction, as that which compels the bright retinues of heaven to cry, "Holy! holy! holy! Lord God Almighty; which was and is and is to come." How desirable! Apart from all its amazing results, with what intense desire do we gaze upon it, and long to grasp it -- to feel its power, and revel in its essential excellence!

It is purity; and it is perfect righteousness. We desire it for this. Man's nature decides that holiness is right; that all impurity is inherently and unalterably wrong; that, while we exact purity in every thing else, the immortal soul ought not to be an exception. In the nature of God, we see an infinite reason for the righteousness of holiness. He is our Creator. No moral condition can be right but such as he could give us -- such as he could create. All our attempts to be reconciled to a state of inward impurity, are rebuked by the awful purity of Jehovah. In the nature of law, we see the eternal right of holiness. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good;" and in this incorruptible holiness we see the unalterable wrong of all impurity in character, in feeling, in desire, in action.

Who, then, can fail to be charmed by the visible beauties and the essential righteousness of holiness? He who sees nothing in it to admire; who feels no attraction from its moral power; who does not feel the force of its intrinsic loveliness, is not a Christian. It is impossible; nay, it argues a depth of corruption, and a degree of moral stupidity and death, most fearful and perilous, to be incapable of evident, inward delight, at the contemplation of holiness, and of spiritual desire to grasp it as a prize. One of the first effects of pardon and regeneration, is an inward consciousness of delight in purity; and the more thoroughly we know ourselves, the more fully we understand the depths of our own native depravity; and the more we increase in the light and power of experimental piety, the more devoutly do we love holiness for its own sake, the more ardently do we pant to possess it. If it conferred no other benefit than itself -- if there were no other blessing in it, yet, with the strongest emphasis could we say, it is desirable to be holy.

2. The Results of Holiness are Desirable. These are matters of experience. They can never be appreciated without experience. We begin to realize them at conversion when the work of holiness begins. Happiness is felt which no tongue can describe, arising partly out of relief from the enormous burden of sin, from the deep consciousness of guilt, from a terrible sense of the wrath of God, from the awful fear of punishment -- happiness produced in part by the contrast which the soul feels between a state of pardon and a state of condemnation. But, besides all this, there are the beginnings of a new and spiritual life. The present manifest workings of the Holy Spirit upon the heart and the feeling of inward renovation are all suited to the constitution of the soul. Where the power of inward depravity is broken, and the feelings, motives, and will are brought into harmony with the will of God, inward comfort and joy are the natural results. And there is happiness in faith; for we are formed to believe; -- to trust implicitly in God; and the manifestation of a Redeemer, suits precisely this propensity to confide in a power able to support and to ransom us. This is the rest of the soul. In unbelief, it is "like the troubled sea," agitated, weary, away from home, incapable of repose. In faith, the soul is at home, and must be happy. And there is happiness in love. We were made to love. The malevolence of sin is its principal virus. No man can be happy with a consciousness of hate within him. Hatred to God, to man, even to an enemy, will make the noblest soul upon earth the home of wretchedness. Love harmonizes with a sense of duty -- with the primary fundamental laws of the soul; and he who first feels the gentle, sweet, subduing power of love can hardly fail to rejoice. To all really converted we may say, "Whom [Jesus] having not seen ye love. In whom, though now ye see him not yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." And then there is bliss imparted -- direct, rich beyond description, from the resident God within the converted soul, bliss which is designed to increase forever.

But what Christian does not know that this inward joy meets with sad interruptions from the rising power of inward depravity? This, it cannot be denied, disturbs the moral harmony upon which happiness depends, renders it irregular and uncertain in proportion to its amount and force. And to give permanence and certainty to the bliss of conversion, it must be totally removed. If it were to be always kept under, if as a

source of temptation it were never to gain the mastery, the enjoyments of the soul, great as they are, would be far less than in a state of perfect purity. If salvation in part -- if the beginnings of sanctification are capable of producing so much substantial joy; how much more may be realized when the work is complete? This is clear from a priori evidence, but experience must destroy every vestige of doubt. The deep, pervading, elevating and abiding joy in the state of entire sanctification is known, is matter of fact which both really and comparatively shows how desirable it is to be holy.

But the moral power it imparts, greatly strengthens the argument. The power to glorify God is fearfully impaired by indwelling sin. The sad accusations of conscience, of history, and of revelation against believers, are in evidence of this. Sin utterly destroyed -- the soul athirst for God and swallowed up in his love, and the divine glory then rises above every other consideration in earth or heaven. With what clearness and force can the soul wholly cleansed, glorify God by reflecting his image, by presenting truthfully his power to save, by showing the divine reality -- the superhuman strength of experimental godliness. How conclusively it refutes all cavil in regard to experimental religious verities, silences infidelity, and dissipates fear by the indubitable evidence of fact which all men can see, and no man dispute. This is bringing glory to God by confounding his enemies, by demonstrating his claims and illustrating his living power to save the lost -- a style of logic which transcends all the dictations of scholasticism, and leaves nothing to desire. And how potent is the arm which is thus held out to the feeble in virtue! What encouragement to the halting and despairing! The living demonstration of the power of grace lifts up the head that was bowed down to the dust, and the sweet, inspiring language of love invites the timid forward in the way to heaven, with a charm which multitudes are unable to resist. The work of God strengthens and revives; sinners are saved by scores and hundreds, by the living power of perfect love. We have but to suppose the whole church completely redeemed, and burning with love that casts out fear, to have some idea of the power in this experience to promote the glory of God. Who doubts -- who can doubt that the aggressive energy of the church would then be in a high sense irresistible, and that the earth would soon "be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea?" The results of holiness! They can never be shown by rhetoric or logic. They cannot be appreciated without trial. We must feel the power of full salvation to know it. We must prove it when we are called to grapple with the monster death; -- must enjoy it in the thrill of delight which heaven will bring to the enraptured soul; must see it in the glory that beams from the Triune God in that bright world; -- must hear it in the songs and hallelujahs of redeemed ones, and angels, and seraphs, where "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are forever at rest." Desirable! Ah! if it be desirable to be relieved from all fear -- to be elevated to a state of calm and permanent bliss -- to be able to glorify God even in the fire -- to be ready for death without a moment's warning -- to live with God forever, it is desirable to be holy. We thus see as clearly as we may with the light allowed us, one grand claim of the central idea of Christianity.

SECTION II. IT IS POSSIBLE TO BE HOLY.

FIRST: SHOWN FROM A PRIORI PROBABILITIES.

We have endeavored to show that it is desirable to be holy. We trust that this conviction has been deepened in the minds of some who have read. We are certain that little can be done without it. If a believer can see no charms in holiness, -- nothing to be desired in a clean heart -- in being wholly the Lord's -- in perfect love, there can be no hope that he will endeavor to obtain it. He will not dwell upon it in his thoughts, -- will not study it in the revealed will of God, -- will not plead for it in his prayers. But it is manifestly improper to speak of a believer who sees nothing desirable in holiness. A man who can say, "I have no desire to be holy," cannot be a true experimental believer in Christ. The smallest degree of

justifying, saving faith brings this charming state to the view of the soul, begins within the gracious work of cleansing, and gives an enjoyment so infinitely transcending every other, that delight in holiness and a desire to obtain it in greater measure, must be identical with a state of pardon. Terrible as is the necessity, he who does not desire to be holy; must, if he would not be self-deceived, regard himself as "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity." But there are doubtless degrees of Christian desire; and it is not merely an ordinary desire for purity which will arouse the soul and excite to the right action. We have sought to exhibit the intrinsic and practical excellence of this great blessing in such strong and varied light as to stimulate this desire and make it the absorbing and permanent feeling of the soul. May we not ask you to look it over again and again, see its loveliness contrasted with all impurity,-- thank God when you see its charms and feel the power of its attractions, and, by earnest devout meditation, reading and prayer, strive to increase this desire? Let nothing divert you. Let no device of Satan deceive you. Your safety here and hereafter depends upon it.

We now present the encouraging fact that it is possible to be holy. If the desire exist, if it be strong, increasing, absorbing, then we can conceive of nothing more pertinent, more probable and pressing, than the question, is it possible? Can it be? A worm -- a sinner -- such a sinner as I! True, I have been pardoned! My Savior has shown me unexampled mercy! He has made me an heir of eternal life! And every day I am compelled to confess my heart wanderings, and my offenses before him, and humbly beg and receive his forgiveness! But then I am so unworthy,-- I am so frail and erring,-- so fallible in every thing, is it possible that I can be saved from these infirmities? No, surely. You have mistaken the question. It is not of infirmities that we speak,-- not of frailty and fallibility! These are hereditary effects of the fall -- of ancestral and personal crimes; and they are now constitutional. They may, perhaps, be partially remedied. They may be, in part or in whole, antagonized by gracious gifts. Deliverance from them is not the possibility contemplated. But your inward corruptions -- the sources of those unholy thoughts and feelings, desires, motives, and purposes, which you have so often felt, and which have so frequently manifested themselves in wrong words and actions, which explain your oft-returning listlessness, forgetfulness of God,-- dulness in devotion, levity, and worldly tendencies; which have so often grieved the Holy Spirit, wounded the Savior and exposed you to the reproaches of conscience, the hisses of sinners and devils, and to guilty apostasy! These -- ah, these inward corruptions! Can you be saved from these, so as to be really "pure in heart," -- really dead to self and dead to the world, its charms and follies, its riches and pleasures; really, all alive unto God,-- with a faith that takes him at his word, that asks and receives, and that triumphs in the flames,-- a love that absorbs the whole soul in God and makes his will your own? Can this be done? Ah, yes, you answer. This is the question, This is what I wish to know. I have so long felt the bitterness of these dregs of sin; I have so often felt the risings of carnal nature; my peace has been so frequently and sadly interrupted, all my services for my Heavenly Master have been so seriously marred, and I have, in just this way, been so grievously deceived and exposed to actual sin, that I have again and again almost despaired of salvation. I have thought, and examined, and wept, and prayed, and wondered if there was no method of relief -- no inward, radical, thorough, and permanent cure, for these fearful maladies.

We feel bound to answer, there surely is. We thank God for the clearest practicable evidence that we may be saved from all sin in this life. But for the present let us suppose that the opposite is true -- that sin may be pardoned, but not cleansed from the soul,-- that we may even increase by slow and imperceptible degrees in our power over it, and yet never reach entire deliverance from it! Let us look at the theology of this position and see whether it can by possibility be true. If so, it must be for some reasons found in the nature of God, -- in the plan of the remedial dispensation,-- in the nature of man, or in the interests of the

converted sinner.

1. If the reasons are in the nature of God, they must relate either to his ability or willingness. And shall we assert a doctrine which limits the divine power to save? No, we cannot, we dare not. He made the soul, and can change, or even annihilate it at pleasure, or he is not the Almighty. If, as it should, the question relate to the moral and official ability of the divine Savior, then it is answered in his own words, "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." No person of sound mind could therefore assert the inability of God to cleanse us from all sin in this life, and probably no one could be found formally to assert it, and yet we are greatly in error if there is not really in the church a vast amount of concealed infidelity just at this point. Have not you, reader, detected yourself in saying, it cannot be done -- not for me; it is impossible that I should become a perfect Christian? Let me beseech you never more to think thus unworthily of God your Maker, your Redeemer. At least, let this point be settled for ever. He can -- he has the power -- there are no limits to his power, none to his sovereign prerogatives, And is not this a point of exceeding importance? Does it not throw a new and glorious light upon your soul -- to admit it -- to believe it fully, unreservedly to believe it? O, what gratitude arises within you for this one triumph! Maintain it by grace divine, by humble, holy, fervent prayer, by rising, struggling faith. Maintain it against the wiles of the devil, the suggestions of your own heart, and the cavils of opposers. There is power in Christ to cleanse from all sin.

If entire salvation from sin in this life be impossible, for reasons found in the nature of God, as they cannot relate to his power, they must to his will. And how, we ask, does the intimation appear when fully expressed? God has the power to cleanse us entirely; but he is not disposed to do it! He prefers that inward corruption should remain in those he intends to save! He loves sin more than holiness! Alas! This is blasphemy; and yet who can claim that it is not God's will, that it is not his choice, his divine preference, to remove all corruption from the hearts of his people, without asserting it? No, this cannot be true. From the infinite holiness of his nature, he abhors all sin -- not any particular form of it merely, but every conceivable form, because it is sin, and he cannot prefer it to holiness. The argument from his infinite love is perfectly conclusive. With all the affection of a benevolent father, he yearns over us, and longs to see us washed and saved completely from this ruinous defilement. Yes, he is more than willing. He is anxious. He has entered upon the most stupendous system of exertion for the accomplishment of this very purpose. Think, we beseech you, of any wrong which you find in yourself -- of the least remaining depravity, and then think of the purity of God, and the efforts of his love to purify you, and see if you can say, or for a moment entertain the idea, that he is not willing to deliver you from it. No sane mind can do it. Another point of great importance is gained. Lay hold of it by a faith that will never yield. "It is the will of God even your sanctification," in the highest, fullest sense. In God, there is no barrier to the progress of this work to its entire completion. What feelings of soul does this truth originate? Are you not dissolved in humble, adoring gratitude, as you entertain it; and as putting the two great facts together you exclaim, "God is able and willing to deliver me from all unrighteousness?"

2. But can we find this impossibility in the nature of the remedial dispensation? That is, while the power and the will which our entire deliverance requires, reside infinitely in the divine nature, is the scheme of redemption such as to be of necessity only partial here? Are the provisions in their own nature defective either in efficiency, or in adjustment to the divine will? This should surely be an unworthy view of the wisdom of God -- of the efficacy of Christ's blood, and of the power of the Holy Ghost. Is it possible to conceive, strictly speaking, of a scheme of salvation that is partly, and only partly efficacious -- that can relieve us from a portion -- a large portion -- nearly all indeed, of our sins, but not from the whole of them? What is required to save a soul in any sense,-- from any part of its sins? Most evidently, satisfaction to

divine justice, a full, a perfect atonement, and an actual influence of divine efficiency; and can any thing more than this be demanded for the utmost salvation? To begin the work in its lowest degree, requires infinite love -- infinite atoning merit -- infinite efficiency, and this is all we claim, all we want for the work of entire salvation. No, there is no impossibility in the scheme itself. If it can save from a single sin, it can save from all -- if from the highest, it can from the lowest degree of impurity, and if from the vilest forms of iniquity, as in the first work of mercy in a sinner's heart, it can from the less enormous remains of the carnal mind. Let this point also rest, in the clearness and strength of your faith. The plan is no partial one; it is worthy of God. It is adjusted to the whole necessity. To attempt to limit it, is to destroy it, and this you will never do. You will rather rejoice in the clear assurance that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin; "-- that there is actually no want of your nature which is not provided for.

3. And must we stop to inquire whether, in the nature of man, there is any necessary obstacle to the full triumph of Christ in the soul? It seems hardly required, for who would say that corruption is so deep that it cannot be equalled by the atoning blood; that the stains of sin are so dark and indelible that they cannot be washed away; that such is the obscurity, the unworthiness, the weakness, the nothingness, of a poor, weeping, pleading believer, as that no power, no efficacy can prevail to make him pure? True, there may be an insuperable difficulty in man. He may decline the cleansing blood. He may refuse the saving operations of the Holy Ghost. His will may not harmonize with the will of God, and hence, though Christ is fully able and willing, yea anxious, to cleanse him entirely, it will not be done. But it is not of such a case that we are speaking. Suppose, rather, the spirit to be entirely yielding; to loathe utterly, and renounce forever, its inward depravity; to make, in the best manner possible to its graciously aided powers, an entire consecration of itself to God forever; to throw itself without reserve upon the merits of Christ for a full salvation, believing this moment that the blood is sufficient -- that it can save to the uttermost -- that it will and does now save from all indwelling sin; then, under these circumstances, is there any thing in the nature of sin, or in the enfeebled and undeserving condition of the human soul, that must and will inevitably prevent the completion of the work? No, we cannot admit it. If it were to be accomplished by human power, then the resistance would be too strong -- the work too great; but it is God who says, "Come, let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool -- though they be red like crimson they shall be whiter than snow." It is the blood of Jesus and not human merit. Then,

"My flesh which cries -- it cannot be,
Shall silence keep before the Lord,
And earth, and hell, and sin shall flee,
At Jesus' everlasting word."

4. And as to the interests of the converted soul, there can be no question. These are surely all on the side of entire salvation. No fact is more painfully evident, to the consciousness of the devout Christian, than that his remaining corruptions mar his peace, interrupt his growth in grace, and weaken the power of his faith, and his religious efforts in behalf of others. No moral necessity can be found in ourselves -- in what it is lawful or expedient for us to do, in what we can rationally hope to enjoy, or what, in this life or the next, we can reasonably dread, for our retaining aught of our inward sins. The argument is all on the other side. We are hastening to the world of retribution, where all our interests are in a world of immaculate purity. Could we but know the power of holiness to bless, our longing hearts would pant for it, until we could realize it in all its fulness.

Designedly deferring for the moment, the great divine scriptural argument, we have thus found abundant a priori reasons for claiming that the power and will of God -- the plan of salvation by Christ, and the nature and interests of man all combine and harmonize in the position, that it is possible to be delivered from all sin in this life.

SECOND: THE POSSIBILITY OF HOLINESS SHOWN FROM SCRIPTURE.

Jehovah speaks! Listen, O my soul! It is the voice of command. The authority of my Sovereign is in it. Let me bow before it with awe and reverence -- with filial confidence and love.

1. Let us examine the divine command, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." It is righteous, beyond all question. But is not this in some way an accommodated command -- applicable to ancient Israel, and relating to ceremonial purity? No, for it is repeated in the New Testament, and with all the solemnity of imperative law, to the Christian church. This is conceded. But is it not a kind of holiness which can coexist with the remains of carnal nature? Really it is not. There is no way of escape. "Be ye therefore perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation," This then is Heaven's order, not that we should be gods, or even angels, but men; purified men, holy men; so God ordains.

Let us then pause a little, for humble, sincere reflection. Would God utter impracticable orders? True, orders which were at one time practicable may be impracticable at another. For we may wickedly dispose of our ability to obey, and this will by no means discharge us from the obligation, but rather greatly increase the guilt. Such was doubtless the condition of our first parents. But would he repeat the order to fallen beings under a dispensation of remedy, amid the condemnations of the law, and the rich provisions of the gospel, with no purpose but to tantalize us? Would he teach us that it is still his will that we should be holy -- would he absolutely require it of us, and repeat the command in such a variety of forms as to preclude the possibility of mistake, yet knowing himself, and fully intending that no such thing could be possible? We cannot entertain a thought so unworthy of the God we adore. No. Let us look into that firm command, not merely with submission, but with hope. He who knows all my sins, who understands all my weakness and unworthiness, he commands me to "be holy." He from whom all my help must come -- he who knows that I can do nothing of myself, that in him alone I have redemption -- he commands me to "be holy." Then it must be possible. He to whom all things are light, who can see the end from the beginning, must have discovered some way to accomplish it. He has found out a ransom, he knows a cleansing power that is equal to the work, or he would never have spoken to my poor soul, saying, "Be ye holy." Dark as it may be before me, impossible as it may seem to cleanse one so impure as I, yet "with God all things are possible." And even in the case of a poor worm of earth, "all things are possible to him that believeth."

Let me then no longer doubt, so long as the command is on record, and I am compelled to believe it is spoken to me, I must,-- I will believe that it is possible for even me to be holy.

2. But Jehovah speaks again! Let me hear the words he utters. And will he now condemn me utterly for my helplessness? Is there no relief for this agonized heart? -- agonized because so sensibly impure. O, my heavenly Father, speak not to me in thy wrath, lest I sink to hopeless woe. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you." This is the soul of compassion,-- a voice of love, tender, holy love. "Ye shall be clean." O what could I ask more? This is the burning desire of my heart. I see these stains, these deep inward stains. Every day they seem

darker to me. I cannot bear them. I turn away from them and loathe myself on account of them. And now, I hear the omnipotent God say, "Ye shall be clean." But let me not prematurely rejoice. This is an ancient saying. It was addressed to some who were in need of cleansing, but have long since passed away. May I claim that promise? This much I dare to think. Sin is always in nature the same. If for one a complete ransom is found, I think it must be applicable to all. It was under an old dispensation, and even then it was possible to cleanse God's people, to make them "clean"--" from all their filthiness, and from all their idols to cleanse them." It must be possible, or so glorious a promise would not have been made. And if an ancient child of God might be cleansed, may not I? There is encouragement in this word, that lifts up my heart. But what does my Savior say? I want the question settled -- settled for my own soul. I hunger and thirst. O, let me hear my own Savior's voice. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Filled!" O, my Savior, this is what my soul desires. I have felt a void, a deficiency. I have been sweetly happy in a sense of pardon, in the blessings of salvation from the guilt of sin; but still I have longed for the fulness. I would have no part of my soul's capacity unoccupied for the use of the world, or the flesh, or the devil. I would be filled with God, "with all the fulness of God." And now listen, O, my panting spirit. Hear the voice of him who "spake as never man spake." "They shall be filled!" This is a divine assurance, and it shall support my faith.

But pardon my urgent inquiry. This thorough cleansing, this completion of holiness, cannot be the work of human power.

Let me see the provision which meets my craving wants. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." "The blood of Jesus!" This is the only plea for sinners. This is a finished revelation upon the subject. For there are no limits to the power of this "blood." It was designed to cover the whole ground, to make the whole, the sufficient, the only satisfaction which the law requires, the only remedy of which our fallen natures admit. What reason have I to fix any limits to its power. What peculiarity of my own depravity is excluded? Why should I admit that the atonement is complete for others and not for myself -- for a part of my sins and not for the whole -- for some period of time, and not for the present? And if there is power in the blood of Christ to cleanse me from all sin, it must surely be possible to be holy, for me to be holy, and stand complete in all the will of God.

3. And it is sweet to remember that inspired men have prayed for the accomplishment of this work in the hearts of believers. "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." How bold is the request! How confident! Not the petition of doubt or fear -- not based upon the supposition that it is a blessing to be desired, but not with expectation. It is not as much as to say, "It is to be regretted that you remain sanctified only in part. It would be glorious, if the thing were possible, for you to be sanctified wholly. If I were not fearful that it is not in accordance with the divine will, I would really ask for you the blessing of entire sanctification." No. There is nothing doubtful, no hesitancy here. Promptly, boldly, reliably, I pray "the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." It is not said, I would ask this blessing for you, were I not fearful that if you were to experience it, you would soon lose it again; if I was sure there was any method of preserving you in this exalted state. No such halting. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and preserve you blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And then, that nothing might be wanting to ensure confidence and inspire faith, he adds, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." Once more the evidence is complete. And, with humble gratitude, I assure my trembling heart, that it is possible for me to be holy in this present life.

4. This triumph over human depravity has been already achieved. in numberless instances; but, if only in one, that of itself must be conclusive. Take two passages of holy writ, one from the Old Testament, and the other from the New. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." There must of course have been a "perfect man" to "mark," -- some holy man, whose soul had been purified from its defilement, and who had become so sweet in his temper, so heavenly-minded, so full of burning love and zeal for God, that all the people knew him. It was safe to refer to him, to point him out as a model man; and derive from his exemplary life and peaceful death, the most convincing argument in favor of the same consecration, and the most powerful inducements to make it, thoroughly, and at once. Nay, it was not one man alone. So many there surely were, that any man could see them. They stood out so distinctly before the world, as the grand monuments of redemption, that David could call upon all, distant as they were from each other, to take notice of such men; to see how "perfect" they were in character, how "upright" in life, and with what "peace" they could die! This perfection, uprightness, and peace were attainable then, for men secured them, and lived as bright and burning lights in the midst of darkness.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." So said the adorable Savior; and who would wish to say there are not -- there never has been -- there never can be, any "pure in heart" on earth? Why did not the disciples say, "Lord, where are the pure in heart? We have never seen any! All the human beings we know are more or less corrupt! And if none but the 'pure in heart' can 'see God,' then, alas! no one can see him; for there are none 'pure in heart.'" Had they said this, they must have received a rebuke similar to that which followed the exclamation, "Lord, who then can be saved'?" "With God, all things are possible," even to get a rich man ready for heaven. No. It would have been just as appropriate to have said, "There are no poor in spirit," -- there are no "meek," -- there are none who "hunger and thirst after righteousness," -- none who are "persecuted for righteousness' sake," as to have said there are no "pure in heart." All these beatitudes are connected with actual conditions upon earth. There may have been none of either class in the group around the person of the Savior; but if not, they were elsewhere. If not there, they would be somewhere in the world, to pass through all these varied states; and the "pure in heart," should "see God," should be wrapped in the visions of the Infinite, by faith on earth, and without a dimming veil in glory.

But let us be still more special. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." This is the moral state which we alarm to be possible. To have the soul so completely purified as that there will be no rebellion in it, no setting up of rival authority nor of selfish, worldly plans, conflicting with those of the omniscient Jehovah; so completely subdued and renovated as to come into immediate and uninterrupted harmony with the mind of God -- to agree with God in feelings, views, purposes, efforts, and will -- "walk with God," -- elevated to the fellowship of God -- to the society of God; to enjoy the unspeakable honor of his company in the highway of holiness, "cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in." All who are thus purified will not be taken by a miracle directly to heaven, but he who went up without seeing death must have been holy before his ascension. Yes, other men had gone away from God -- deserted, abandoned, opposed him! Yet others had gone to him -- had been with him for a time -- at different times; but "Enoch walked with God." They had become -- let us speak it with reverence -- bosom companions. They were not equals. Surely not; infinity was between them. They were not equals, but "friends!" "By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death." He had, however, before this triumph, "walked with God" for many happy years!

Abraham, "the father of the faithful," -- what a finished, sanctified character did he attain! He was quite imperfect, when he began to obey God. He showed his need of entire sanctification in many instances; but his "faith" waxed stronger and stronger, until he became at last like gold tried in the fire. Read his history, watch the struggles of his giant intellect with the dim visions of glory passing before him in the revelations of God; and the triumph of his spirit, now calm, settled, strong, and living in the very atmosphere of heaven, on Mount Moriah, where the word of God was law, not to a soul of mean and cowardly submission for fear of a greater evil -- law to a soul that mounted upon the pinions of a towering faith -- that left all earthly affections below the sphere of moral sublimity to which he had ascended.

Job was "a perfect and an upright man, that feared God, and eschewed evil," not merely in the sunshine of prosperity. So deeply was his mind imbued with the spirit of loyalty, so thoroughly had he been purified from the earthliness of the carnal mind, and so profound was his knowledge of the ways of the Almighty, that no calamity could move him from his integrity. His property was swept away, his children were taken from him, his body was reduced to a mass of corruption, his friends and his bosom companion turned violently against him, yet, "in all this, Job sinned not with his lips, neither charged God foolishly." Splendid specimen of holiness on earth -- tried in the fire, and come forth as gold!

And you have not forgotten "Zechariah and Elizabeth," who "walked in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless;" unlike many of us -- delighted with some of the divine ordinances -- ready to yield most promptly and gladly to those which harmonize with what seems our present good and future safety, but most anxious to avoid those which are crossing to the flesh, and humbling to human pride. Thank God, some have been so completely baptized into the spirit of obedience as to "walk," from holy choice, "in all the ordinances of God blameless." Who shall say it is not possible?

But we must not forget the sainted Paul, whose proud, rebellious heart was humbled by a stroke of divine power, who rose from one degree of grace to another, was "changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord," until at length he could say, "I am ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." Ah, this was triumph. "I am ready!" Death has no terrors. "For me to live is Christ, but to die is gain." "I am ready!" This is the state we affirm to be possible. How could we do otherwise without rejecting history, and despising the facts of revelation?

But "time would fail us" to speak distinctly of these shining examples of entire sanctification. We long to dwell at

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