

# Blameless, Not Faultless

by Thomas Cook

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*Thomas Cook's sermon emphasizes that while Christians strive for holiness, they remain blameless through grace despite human imperfections.*

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 16:7, Psalm 19:12, Proverbs 16:2, Matthew 5:48, 1 Corinthians 13:4, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 1:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 10:14, 1 John 1:8

**Topics:** "Christian Holiness", "Godly Perfection"

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## Description

Thomas Cook delves into the concept of holiness, emphasizing that it involves being blameless but not faultless, as grace does not make individuals infallible. He explains that while we may have experienced the grace of God, we will still have human weaknesses and imperfections until we are made faultless in the presence of God's glory. Cook highlights the importance of intentions over results, stating that God values the purity of our motives and intentions, even when our actions may be flawed. He stresses that perfect love is not about flawless achievement but about sincere efforts to please God, likening it to a blind child's imperfect but cherished attempt to write a letter to their father.

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## Transcript

C. H. Spurgeon once wrote as follows: "There is a point of grace as much above the ordinary Christian as the ordinary Christian is above the world." Of such he says: "Their place is with the eagle in his eyrie, high aloft. They are rejoicing Christians, holy and devout men doing service for the Master all over the world, and everywhere conquerors through Him that loved them." The experience to which Mr. Spurgeon refers has been described as the higher life, entire sanctification, Christian perfection, perfect love, the rest of faith, and by numerous other names or terms. Modes of expression have been selected by various Christians which have best coincided with their theological views. There may be shades of difference in their import, but, generally speaking, the terms mean one and the same thing. We do not contend for names. It is immaterial which expressions are employed; the main point is, do we possess the experience designated by these terms, and which is recognized and professed by Christians representing all our Churches? A profound and widespread interest has been awakened in this subject, and one of the most hopeful signs of the times is the obvious endeavor which is being made by teachers of various schools of thought to preserve the "unity of the spirit," and harmonize any conflicting view which may remain.

When used in a general sense, the word "holiness" includes whatever is connected with Christian life and character. Thus interpreted, it may be applied to any and all stages of religious life and development. But

the term is used in a more definite sense to describe an experience distinct from justification -- a sort of supplemental conversion, in which there is eliminated from the soul all the sinful elements which do not belong to it, everything antagonistic to the elements of holiness implanted in regeneration. It includes the full cleansing of the soul from inbred sin, so that it becomes pure or free from sinful tendency. Says Thomas Carlyle: "Holy in the German language -- Heilig -- also means healthy; our English word whole -- all of one piece, without any hole in it -- is the same word. You could not get any better definition of what holy really is than healthy, completely healthy." We do not say that this definition embraces all that we mean by holiness -- it does not. The experience includes also the gracious endowment of perfect love, and the abiding fullness of the Holy Spirit. To explain more in detail in what sense the Scriptures teach this to be a present duty and privilege and to meet the difficulties of those who really and honestly desire to understand the doctrine, is our purpose in these pages. To hit a mark we must know where it is. We walk faster when we see plain, definite steps. We must know what we want, and seek that. Unless we can separate the experience from its accidental surroundings, confusion is sure to follow. We may not be able to understand the doctrine in all its relations and bearings, but we need to have before our minds some distinct point of attainment. Just as the pressing of men to an immediate and definite point of conversion produces immediate and definite results, so it is with Christians. When a definite point is presented as immediately attainable, distinct and definite experiences follow. Prayer is no more at random. The blind man cried for "mercy," but "mercy" was too general a prayer. Jesus wanted to know what special kind of mercy the man desired. When he asked for mercy which took the form of the gift of sight, that special bestowal was granted.

It will help us to understand what holiness is if we mention a few things which are often mistaken for it. It is told in the life of Tauler that a layman, rich in the grace of God, who had heard him preach, asked him, "Sir, I beg you for God's sake to preach us a sermon showing us how a man may attain to the highest and utmost point it is given to us to reach in this present time." Tauler's discourse giving his answer was in twenty-four divisions. All who seek the highest degree of holiness feel that there must be limitations. To be holy is to be

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Grace does not make men infallible. Sin has so perverted our moral and spiritual powers, that we shall never in this present life be free from infirmities of human nature. Whatever our experience of the grace of God may be, the liability to error will cling to us until this mortal puts on immortality. Infirmities have their ground in our physical nature, aggravated by intellectual deficiencies. They are the outflow of our imperfect moral organization-the scars of sin which remain after the wound has been healed. Smallpox may be healed, but it leaves its mark. A cut limb may be cured, but the scar remains for ever. The pitcher of our human nature, which was broken when Adam fell, may be put together again, but it will never have the true ring it had before it was broken. To regain that it must be handed over to the Potter to be ground to powder and entirely reconstructed. Then, when death has reduced us to dust, and the Divine Potter has re-made us, body as well as soul, we shall be "presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy;" but "until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," all we can hope for is to be preserved without blame.

Before his fall Adam was complete in his mental structure, in the enthronement of his moral sense, and in the harmony and balance of all his faculties. He could reason rightly and always judge correctly, and therefore was adapted to the law of perfect obedience. He might be without fault, and because he might be was required to be so. But through lack of knowledge, defective memory, a fallible judgment, slowness

of understanding, and numerous other infirmities, we are as liable to err as it is natural for us to breathe; and every error is a breach of the perfect law which allows no deviation from perfect rectitude. It is because it is impossible for us to keep the old Adamic law -- the law of innocence, or the Paradisaical law, as it is called -- of which every mistake and infirmity is a breach, that we are placed under another law -- the law of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. This law is graciously adapted to our diminished moral and intellectual capacity, dwarfed and crippled as it is by original and actual sin. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." "Fulfil ye the law of Christ, the perfect law of liberty." The only perfection possible on earth is a perfection of love; of motive, of intention. Our service of perfect love may be marred and defective, but God looks now not so much at what we do, as at what we intended to do. Given a pure and devoted heart, it is not so much successful achievement He looks for as right motives and intentions. If the want to sin is sin, may we not say that the purpose or the want to please God is accepted, even when we blunder and make mistakes? See that blind girl arranging strings across a sheet of paper. She wishes to write a letter to her father. By means of the strings she feels the way to keep as straight as possible. When the father receives that letter is he angry because here and there it is disfigured by a little blot or crooked line? Of course he is not! He prizes that marred, defective writing of his blind child more than the most clerk-like communication of that week. He keeps it among his treasures. The perfection of it, in his eyes, is not the beauty of the well-formed letters or the cleanliness of the page, but the beauty of love, which just did its best to spell out its heart despite its blindness.

And again we say, God looks less at results than intentions. Perfect love is not always successful achievement; it is childlike purpose, a sincere aim in all we do to please God. Your child may make a blunder and need a lesson, but for all that, win a kiss, as the child who put her mother's boots into the oven to warm, that she might be comfortable when she went out. The boots were altogether spoiled, but what mother could blame her child whose intentions were so good? And this is how God weighs our actions. The world often blames His people when He does not. Those around us look at outward appearances; God looks at the heart. They see what we do; He sees why we do it. What a mercy it is He did not command us to walk before the world and be perfect! Walk before Me is the command; and all who love Him with a perfect heart, and thus know "truth in the inward parts," are accepted of Him as fulfilling the law.

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