

Christian Purity

Randolph Sinks Foster

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Christian Purity

Randolph Sinks Foster

Abridged by John Paul

**Printed in U. S. A. 1944
Beacon Hill Press
Kansas City, Missouri**

Earlier Editions:

**First Edition, Titled:
Nature and Blessedness of Christian Purity
Intro. by Edmund S. Janes
New York: Harper and Brothers,
1851. 226 pp.**

**Revised Edition, Titled:
Christian Purity; Or The Heritage of Faith.
New York: Carlton and Lanahan;
Cincinnati: Hitchcock and Walden,
1869. 364 pp.**

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FOREWORD

The past generation produced some outstanding leaders and writers among the advocates of the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification. The writings of these authors are of such high rank and their value has been so tested by time that today their books are worthy to be recognized as classics in this field of religious literature. That these writings, all of which are now out of print, may be preserved and made available to the people of the holiness movement today, the publishers are presenting this series of Abridged Holiness Classics. The abridged message is that of the original author from which has been deleted material mostly applicable to the previous generation.

The man called upon to undertake the task of abridgment for the first four volumes in the series is the Rev. John Paul, who is well-known as a Bible scholar and as an authoritative preacher and teacher of the doctrine of entire sanctification. That Doctor Paul has done an admirable work will be recognized by the reader of this series which starts with the following titles: "Purity and Maturity," and "Perfect Love," by J. A. Wood; "Possibilities of Grace," by Asbury Lowrey; "Christian Purity," by Bishop Foster.

It is the sincere prayer of the publishers that these classics in abridged form will be the blessing to the readers of this generation that they were to the generation to which they were written originally.

D. Shelby Corlett Editor, Herald of Holiness

Christian Purity

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THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

(From the first edition, 1851)

The author is painfully sensible that his production has many defects, but he believes that they are such as will not be injurious to the reader -- blemishes rather than poisons. For these he asks your indulgence. Conscious of the sincerity of his motives, and hoping for the Divine benediction, he sends it forth upon its mission, trusting to find, in the day of the Lord Jesus, that it has produced some fruit. May the great Head of the Church bless both writer and reader, and bring them to that realm where they shall see eye to eye, and know as they are known!

Christian Purity

Randolph Sinks Foster

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

(From the second edition, 1869)

It is a pleasant reflection that twenty years of added experience and extended research have not materially changed the views at first expressed. The careful reexamination which we have been required to make in the preparation of the present enlarged statement, leaves not a doubt in our mind of the substantial correctness of the doctrines herein set forth. The first writing was undertaken under the inspiration, and conducted during the evolution, of an exalted experience, and amid the glow of intense zeal. The present writing is the fruit of calm study and mature and deliberate judgment. We are not aware that a single point has been relinquished or materially modified.

Christian Purity

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Chapter 1

PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS

A main object of the present volume is to gain the thoughtful attention of Christian minds (other will not be interested) to the question, What is the utmost privilege offered to faith as to spiritual healing and holy experience now, and to its answer?

The question of privilege involves, of course, the correlative question of duty. In discussing fully the one, we necessarily fix the limits of the other. The utmost contents of the privilege of faith marks the boundary of the duty of faith. The believer is under obligation to possess all, to the last degree, of that which he may possess in Christ. Present possibility of holiness determines present duty of holiness.

The question, therefore, proposed for discussion is one of great practical importance. It stands related intimately to the dearest welfare of the soul; it concerns the highest interests of the kingdom of Christ. Its correct answer or otherwise must to a large extent shape and fashion Christian experience and practice. It is impossible that it should be too earnestly pondered. The answer which it shall receive in the Christian consciousness carries in it that which will go far to determine what the Christian status shall be -- whether the piety of the Church shall be deep, earnest, Christful, or superficial, sickly, and earthy.

"The things which are seen" attract us. A dewdrop sparkling on the rose-tree awakens more admiration than the priceless ingot which may be concealed amid its roots. The unknown cannot move us. The Master tells of a man "who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it" (Matt. 13:46); and of "treasure hid in a field, the which when a man hath found he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field" (Matt. 13:44). It was not until after the pearl and treasure were discovered, and their great value known, that desires were awakened and sacrifices made for their attainment.

If the blessings of the Gospel were unconditionally without any agency of ours they were designed to be conferred upon us -- we might in that case remain contentedly ignorant of our privilege until we should find ourselves rejoicing in possession; but if, on the other hand, there are riches to be sought before obtained, blessings to be specifically solicited before given, how manifestly important that we know the value of the treasure, its nature and extent, as well as the mode of its acquisition, that we may be stimulated to the pursuit and guided in its method! If one knew that his domain embraced a mine of gold containing a million pounds, how much would he value it -- how diligently would he seek the imbedded treasure! If he supposed it contained no such wealth, it would be comparatively valueless in his eyes, and he would die without exertion. In exact proportion as the blessings of the Gospel are valuable, therefore, is it desirable that we clearly apprehend and definitely conceive them. At the present time particularly, when the mind of the Church is turned, with more than usual interest, to the subject of Christian privilege, and when the hearts of thousands in Christendom are peculiarly awake to it -- when inquiry is abroad, and action is assuming form and direction -- it becomes of deeper and wider consequence than ever before.

To say that the Church is now living, and from the time of the beginning has been living, beneath her privilege, below her mission, would certainly be but a mild and moderate though humiliating utterance of the conviction of Christendom. She has not entered upon her full heritage. She has consciously and knowingly left much land to be possessed. What is true of the aggregate of believers is mournfully true of almost each soul in the communion of Christ's body. Individual Christians

have fallen below the standard. But few exceptions, comparatively, could in truth or charity be made. Only one in a multitude, with mightier impulse and greater faith than his fellows, has nobly dared to brook the difficulties, and go up to the possession of the entire promise. These stand as so many examples of the power of faith amid surrounding sterility and desolation, and at the same time are inspiring witnesses to the Church of her privilege, and reproof admonitors of her inexcusable shortcoming.

There may have been, and doubtless has been, on the part of most Christians, a vague and indefinite idea of greater blessings, not yet included in their experience, and a general outgoing of heart after them; but there has been so much indefiniteness and vagueness on the subject of privilege and duty as to awaken neither hope nor concern; and if in some instances aspirations, and even great and distressing convictions, have been awakened .for a time, they have too often perished for want of guidance and support. No earnest Christian, I am persuaded, will dissent from these lamentable statements. They are not morbid. They are not made in a carping or faultfinding spirit. They are simply the record of a sad fact which has filled the heart of Christ and of his Church with sorrow through all the ages of Christian history.

"The actual state of education, morals and happiness in a community may be regarded as the true expression of the power of the moral and intellectual forces engaged for its improvement. The efficiency and usefulness of a Church, for instance, are precisely what the zeal, purity, and intelligence of its members can make it. We may conclude, therefore that the Christian enterprises of the present time must remain stationary, without some new accession of moral resources. If the rising generation shall come forward with only . the same degree of piety and intelligence that belong to their fathers, then the utmost that can be expected is, that the cause of religion and humanity shall not retrograde. Progress, under the circumstances supposed, is wholly out of the question. The Church is now barely able to hold its ground against the opposing forces of sin and error, or to advance with a tardy step to future triumphs; and if it is to be recruited and reinforced by such members and ministers only as already wield its destinies, it must remain in essentially the same condition, while the accession of even a few persons of deeper piety, and stronger faith, and larger views, might sweep away the obstacles that retard its progress, and open a career of unexampled success. A single individual of enlarged conceptions of duty and burning zeal for Christ, is sometimes able to communicate new spirit to a whole Church which has for years scarcely given a sign of vitality. It had just enough of moral power to maintain a bare existence, and resist the pressure from without; and now the additional impetus given by one true man of God puts every thing in motion and triumphs over obstacles. What victories then might we not anticipate, what enlargement for Zion, could the whole Christian host be induced to gird themselves with strength, and enter upon the whitening field to which they are called with something like the spirit of primitive Christianity? It would be as new life from the dead. It would be as the birth of a new dispensation. They who are ready to perish would revive again, and all the islands of the sea would rejoice" (Olin's Lectures).

We may erect churches, found charities, educate ministers, employ missionaries, print Bibles, extend far and wide all these and a thousand other appliances for the good and redemption of the race; but, though we may do incalculable good by such means, we shall fail painfully short of the glorious mission of Christianity, if we fail ourselves to see, and if we fail to make the world see, that sublime, yea, divine spiritual perfection she places . within the reach of, and' holds out in invitation to, all. Christianity possesses inferior and superior blessings; it may exist in inferior and superior degrees of development. What the world wants, what the Church wants, is Christianity in all its fullness: then, and not till then, "shall the wilderness and the solitary place be glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose." Let it not be inferred that we depreciate the ordinary but genuine experience of the Church, the common grade of Christian grace; we certainly do not, but allowing it to be all that can in

Justice be claimed for it. we only say it is not equal either to our needs or privilege: there are still greater blessings in store for us. The time has come when we need to ascend, to press up to a higher, healthier, and purer experience -- from the inferior to the superior walks.

It may be proper further and more explicitly to state here, that it is no part of our object to present a new theory, not even an improvement or essential modification of an old one; but simply to educe, in somewhat different form, what has been

exhibited by others from time to time. Gaining this, we shall have accomplished our highest aim. They, therefore, who seek for novel and startling speculations, who find pleasure only in the adventurous and rash, who delight to see the ancient and respectable torn ruthlessly away to make place for the unfledged and irresponsible, need expect no entertainment in the following pages. For such minds we have no fancy to write. But to the candid and truth-seeking and truth-loving, to the serious and thoughtful, who value truth more than singularity, we submit this, our humble effort to do good, hoping that they will find both entertainment and profit in its perusal. A word to such, and we proceed directly to our work. We are all liable, in regard to every subject, to be unduly influenced by prejudice, swayed by pre-conceptions arising from habit, constitution, education, association, and other causes. The blinding influence of these is obvious, all around us and within us, every hour. How great the heroism and preeminent the moral courage which completely exercises and casts them out of the mind! How indispensable to the highest success that this be done! No one can properly investigate a subject, or even successfully examine the researches of another, until his mind shall be so enamored of the truth as to be willing to follow whithersoever she leads.

With regard to the particular subject considered in the following pages, it may be that some of our readers, from the influence of causes unknown, have imbibed prejudices exerting an undetected but fatal power upon their whole religious character and progress; blinding them to privilege and restraining them from duty; limiting their usefulness and diminishing their enjoyments! Is it so? Will the reader make inquisition, and with a noble, Christian sincerity, worthy of himself and worthy of the magnitude of the truth involved, give himself to its discovery and open his heart to its divine impression?

It is the desire of the author in the preparation of this work, to promote the great cause of holiness in the earth, believing that he who does this is a permanent benefactor of his race. And remembering that God's children are scattered throughout the entire Church, in all the denominational divisions, it will be his effort to avoid all allusions having a tendency to inflict needless pain upon any, and at the same time to assist all in the glorious work of their common mission -- the building up of Christ's kingdom in the world, "and spreading Scriptural holiness over all lands." We shall, indeed, give our views fully and undisguisedly, but without entering at all into merely sectarian contentions, or attempting to secure denominational ends. We write for Christians, without respect to name, with no thought whatever of their peculiar badge, and with no desire to affect their particular relations, but purely to assist them in the great matter of Christian experience. Here we have a common interest, and may, without infringing personal or denominational rights, be "coworkers together," advising, comforting, reproving, and exhorting each other, and so "provoking each other to love and good works."

The subject upon which we are about to enter is quite as ample as important. To unfold it fully in all its connections, would require elaborate preliminary discussions -- discussions embracing a wide range of topics, and reaching downward to the very foundations of theology. However this might accord with our personal preferences, or please a portion of our readers, we are quite sure it would defeat our cardinal object, which is to do the greatest good to the greatest number. We must, therefore, content ourselves and indulge our friends with a direct and restricted treatise -- a simple monograph. The same consideration will likewise modify our style and mode. Aiming mainly at a practical result, we shall not seek either to be learnedly critical or rigidly systematic. Rather, it will be our effort to render what, to many minds, is perplexed and mystified, plain and intelligible; referring, as occasion may require, both to the word of God, which is religion in teaching, and to Christian experience, which is religion in practice, for the illustration and corroboration of our views. This is what the mass of Christian minds want; not speculation, not philosophy, but simply practical Gospel truth, so presented as to interest the understanding and move the heart -- privilege unfolded and duty enforced!

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Chapter 2

DISCRIMINATION OF THEORIES

In discussing the general subject indicated in the preceding chapter, we shall encounter a number of variant and contradictory theories. It will, I am certain, assist to a clearer and more satisfactory discovery of the exact truth if we present a statement of the various theories, and discriminate their specific differences. By this method our readers will be enabled to compare them, determine their relative merits, and choose from among them whatever of truth they respectively possess. In pursuing this course we may seem to commence far behind the immediate object of our treatise.

There is a class assuming the Christian name, but certainly, if entitled to that designation at all, it must be in the lowest possible sense. They hold to the doctrine that man is a spiritual being, and that he is in some sense a responsible agent, so that the moral quality of goodness or sin attaches to him, both on account of what he is subjectively in his affections and objectively in his acts. They hold also to the possibility of progress in moral excellence subjectively and objectively -- in the inward states of the heart and the outward conduct of the life. They do not, however, admit of the possibility of inward renewal or regeneration, by which the sources of the affections, which were radically corrupt, become cleansed and purified.

Next in order we come to the view maintained in common by all orthodox Christians, of whatever name or sect -- the catholic platform upon which they all stand, and whence they unitedly contend for, at least, so much of "the faith once delivered to the saints," namely, the belief that man has moral character, not only with respect to his actions, but also with respect to his affections, embracing both and equally his outward conduct and his inward nature; and further, that moral and spiritual progress is possible, not only to the extent of reformation from sinful habits, and pardon for previous sin, but also to the extent of an inward change, a radical renewal of the nature itself, by which the sources of the affections become purified, and the man is made, in a certain sense, a new creature.

This is the common ground occupied by all evangelical Christians. Three things are seen to be included in the theory: Reformation, justification and regeneration.

To this grade of moral and spiritual character all evangelical Christians believe it is possible to attain; nay, not only possible, but indispensable to present and final salvation. Nothing short of it entitles to the Christian name or admits into the Divine family. There may be slight variety in the idioms of sects, in the nomenclature of denominations, in the spoken and written parlance of the schools in theology; but in regard to the thing itself there is no difference -- there is entire harmony.

But now, starting from this common center, as to what is the specific degree of attainment implied in justification and regeneration, and as to whether any thing more or beyond is attainable in this life, are several divergent theories, more or less essentially dissimilar, and of very great moment indeed. It will, we are persuaded, subserve a good purpose to state and classify these divergencies, so as to enable us to ascertain precisely what are the various views entertained, and assist us to choose between them. There is a difference in the mode of stating what is precisely the effect of justification and regeneration upon the character of the believer.

Some contend that the believer is as completely and thoroughly sanctified in the moment when he is justified and renewed as he ever can be.

Others hold that regeneration is a renewal of the soul, a quickening, the implanting of a new life, so that it brings forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, has . victory over sin, is enabled to resist corrupt tendencies, and has joy and peace in the Holy Ghost; a change by which the preponderating tendencies are turned toward. God, the love of sin destroyed, its dominion broken, and a desire and relish for, and longing after, holiness begotten. It is their belief, however, that, while . the old sinful nature is brought under and broken, it is not dead; that sin remains alive in the members to such a degree as often to taint or corrupt the soul. That the new life is not full. They do not believe that, in the soul thus regenerate, entire sanctification has necessarily taken place, although they do allow that in some instances this may be the case.

Those, of course, who take the former view, assuming regeneration to be synonymous with "entire holiness," do not think that any thing more is necessary or possible. . Having gained regeneration, they conceive that the highest distinctive attainable state is already reached. Those, on the other hand, who take the latter view, that regeneration and entire sanctification are neither identical nor synchronic, but different and distinct, branch off from this common point into various and widely dissimilar opinions. These diversities may be classified as follows:

First. Some believe that, though regeneration does not imply entire sanctification -- is not synonymous with it -- yet it is the highest attainable state during this life; they believe it to be impossible to become entirely sanctified in this world, or until the soul is separate from the body; and further, that in death all believers will thus be made holy. These do not, of course, think that entire sanctification is to be sought for in this life; or that, if sought ever so diligently, it is to be obtained.

Second. Others still, agreeing with these in the leading idea, that regeneration and entire sanctification are not identical, do hold that regeneration is sanctification begun; and further; that sanctification will be completed just before death, by a ripeness and maturity of the graces implanted in the moment of regeneration, and that death will ensue immediately when this maturity takes place, as the ripened fruit will dislodge itself from the bough; because, being thus fitted for heaven, the soul has nothing to hinder its consummate bliss, and will rise to it immediately. All believers will live until they ripen into this maturity, and not a moment longer. These views, so apparently alike, differ in this: the former hold to a sanctification supernaturally and directly wrought in death, distinct from regeneration, and as a qualification for heaven; the latter believe sanctification to be a simple maturity of regeneration, attained by growth and time, and that then death ensues to release the purified spirit and remove it to its glorious mansion. Though seemingly small, the difference is really considerable and quite radical.

Third. Still another class differs from both the above, holding with them in common that regeneration and entire sanctification are not identical; with the last, that regeneration is sanctification begun, and entire sanctification regeneration matured or ripened into holiness: but differing from them both in this respect, that they believe that this maturity may take place long before death, and be enjoyed during life; that a person may attain to a completely sanctified state, and exemplify and enjoy it in this world. Yet in their estimation entire sanctification in all cases, and necessarily, is distinct only as a point in the progress of regeneration, not as a separate and additional work attained by gradual growth, not by direct agency.

Fourth. But finally: another class, agreeing with all the former that entire sanctification and regeneration are not identical, and with the two last named that regeneration is sanctification begun, differs from them all in that they believe entire sanctification may be an immediate or instantaneous work, and is almost, if not always, a distinct one, to be attained by the agency of the Holy Spirit, through faith, at any time when the requisite faith is exercised, and once so attained is an experience to be enjoyed during life.

In one thing the diversified theories all agree, namely, that there is such a thing as entire sanctification; that it is to be experienced by believers at some time, and by some process, before they are admitted into, and as preparatory for, heaven. They differ mainly as to the time and the manner. Very important points of disagreement indeed, but by no means so important as the points of agreement.

In addition to these points of difference are some other disagreements, as to the precise nature of entire sanctification, also with respect to the means of its attainment, retention, and other kindred subjects; these need not be stated here, as they will naturally come up when we come to treat of these subjects specifically.

The various theories are now distinctly before us. Which is true? Or what is the truth among them all? May the Infinite Spirit aid us each to know the truth; and may he so overrule our prejudices, and so deliver us from the blindness of unbelief, and so inspire us with resolute and heroic purpose, that we may follow the heaven-descended guide, until we come into the brightness of the perfect day.

Christian Purity

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Chapter 3

CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGE OR ENTIRE HOLINESS DEFINED

We assume the practicability of "entire holiness, sanctification, perfection, purity, freedom from sin," properly so called -- that these terms imply a state, distinct alike from regeneration and justification, embracing each, and superior to both. Now, how obviously proper the inquiry! What do we exactly mean by these terms? What is our idea of the state, or work, or experience they describe?

What avails argument, what profits reasoning, if the point discussed be not clearly apprehended? To prevent all reasonable ground of misapprehension as to the significance we attach to the words we employ; to leave no excuse for misconceiving the doctrine we teach, believing that when understood rightly it will find ready acceptance; to harmonize its friends and disarm its enemies; and to impress all Christians and all candid and sincere minds who have some appreciation of the blessings of our holy religion with its certain truth and surpassing beauty and loveliness, we subjoin a minute and particular statement of our meaning.

For the utmost explicitness we ask special attention to some ideas which we disclaim. If any hold them we do not.

1. We do not include in our idea of the highest attainable state of "holiness," or "entire holiness," (and we employ the phrases entire holiness, entire sanctification, perfect purity, Christian perfection, and freedom from all sin in precisely the same sense,) infallibility of the intellectual processes or faculties. We constantly admit that this is not to be expected in this life; nay more, we affirm that the most perfect and holy men are always subject to imperfections in these respects while they remain in the body; liable to be imposed upon by deceptive appearances -- to arrive at false conclusions -- to perpetrate incorrect and sophistical reasoning -- to be misled by unfaithful memory, illusory observations, erratic imaginations -- to form unauthorized surmises and suspicions -- to entertain incorrect, and even absurd opinions about many things. These we do not regard as having any more moral quality than defective sight or maimed feet. They are infirmities, or results of infirmities, of the intellectual nature, and express nothing of the moral or spiritual state of the subject.

We do recognize a direct connection between the moral condition of the soul, and the mental powers, and their operations. Sin obscures and weakens, and holiness strengthens and invigorates; sin confuses, distracts, and leads to error; holiness tranquilizes, imparts candor and carefulness, and leads to truth; but there is no such connection between holiness and infallibility of the intellectual powers, that the former insures the latter. There is nothing in a simple natural infirmity, whether of mind or body, of the nature of sin, as there is nothing in the perfection of either a faculty of the mind or a member of the body of the nature of holiness.

2. We do not include in our idea of entire holiness physical perfection. On the contrary, we think it consistent with the greatest bodily infirmity, weakness, disease, deformity, and organic and structural imperfection. These are not looked upon separately, in themselves considered, as affecting, either to completeness or diminution essential spiritual character. In our code a perfect physical man may be an imperfect spiritual man, and under most defective physical conditions may be a most complete spiritual development.

3. Our idea of a perfectly holy character does not include the idea that he will make no mistakes in the conduct of his life -- that he will always act wisely and discreetly -- or that he will never feel the risings of propensities or passions which he

may not indulge. Actions and feelings result from the views the mind takes, or the influence of unavoidable constitutional tendencies. When an improper judgment is formed, an improper or incorrect action or feeling may follow. And so long as the mind is subject to err and come to wrong conclusions, so long conduct and emotions resulting may be also improper.

4. We do not include, in our idea of entire holiness, freedom from temptation to sin and suggestions of evil. These, we firmly believe, will follow us to the last. Our Saviour "was tempted of the devil" (Matt. 4:1). "The disciple is not above his Lord" (Matt. 10:24).

It is not the office of grace to eradicate human passions. There is nothing in them, when existing in a normal state, of the nature of sin. They were at first implanted in the holy pair. They will remain in humanity while the earthy life remains. Holiness requires their proper subjugation and use. They are in their nature physical, and wholly void of moral character except as they become instruments of righteousness or unrighteousness. All temptation to evil, so long as it is external, is without sin. It becomes sin only when it finds concurrence within.

5. We do not include in our idea of holiness, impeccability, or exemption from liability to sin. On the contrary, we believe that one who is entirely sanctified may fall away, so as to lose his state -- may sin, and bring guilt and condemnation again upon his soul -- is ever liable to this, and consequently under constant need of personal watchfulness and of Divine assistance.

6. We do not include in our idea of holiness freedom from sorrow. Had there never been sin, possibly there had never been sorrow; but the holy Jesus sorrowed, so while upon earth may his disciples. "The servant is not above his Lord" (John 13:16).

7. We do not include in our idea of holiness perfection of degree, or attainment beyond which there is no progress -- a state in which the soul has gained the highest summit of holiness, the greatest reach of perfection; at which its progress will be stopped, and where it will linger in monotonous equipoise through eternity. On the contrary, we exult in the hope and belief of ceaseless progress, of interminable and everlasting advancement -- progress while we live, progress after death.

Let us now state what we do include in perfection or entire holiness.

1. We believe it a Christian's privilege to attain to a state in which he will be entirely free from sin, properly so called, both inward and outward. It is not said that evil and vicious suggestions will not be made to the soul in such a state, but both that there will be no outward compliance nor inward sympathy with the suggestion.

Perhaps there is no point of the discussion where, more opportunely than here, we can consider the precise question, Where do sin and temptation touch? or, Where does temptation culminate into sin? This is one of the most difficult and delicate points in the entire discussion. There is no difficulty at all with the proposition that temptation is not sin; nor is there any with the other proposition, that a holy being may be tempted, since both the holy Adam and the holy Jesus were tempted; in the one case before sin, and in the other without sin. The exact point of difficulty is, at what precise point along the line of temptation it is that the tempted soul begins to sin; what of influence the temptation may be supposed to have before the soul becomes tainted. It is clear that it is not at the point where the evil is suggested that sin begins, for in that case the temptation and the sin would be inseparable, if not identical; but our Lord was tempted without sinning. Is it where the evil thing suggested awakens a movement of the passion to which it is addressed? Not necessarily, we think, since any thing to be a temptation must have a natural power to awaken impulse toward it, and sin does not reside in a mere impulse of nature. We think it is precisely at that point where the soul is conscious of a disposition to yield to what it supposes to be sin, that is discovered sinfulness, and the beginning of sin.

2. But, additionally, we include in our idea of entire holiness more than mere freedom from sin in the foregoing sense. That is merely a negative view; it has a positive character. We believe it to include, in the second place, besides this, the

spiritual graces, as love, meekness, humility, and such like, in perfection -- perfection, not of measure, but of kind. By this we do not mean that these holy graces are so complete in measure and growth as to forbid higher development, so that the soul, in this state, can never love more, be more meek, more humble, more believing: in this direction we believe there will be constant progress.

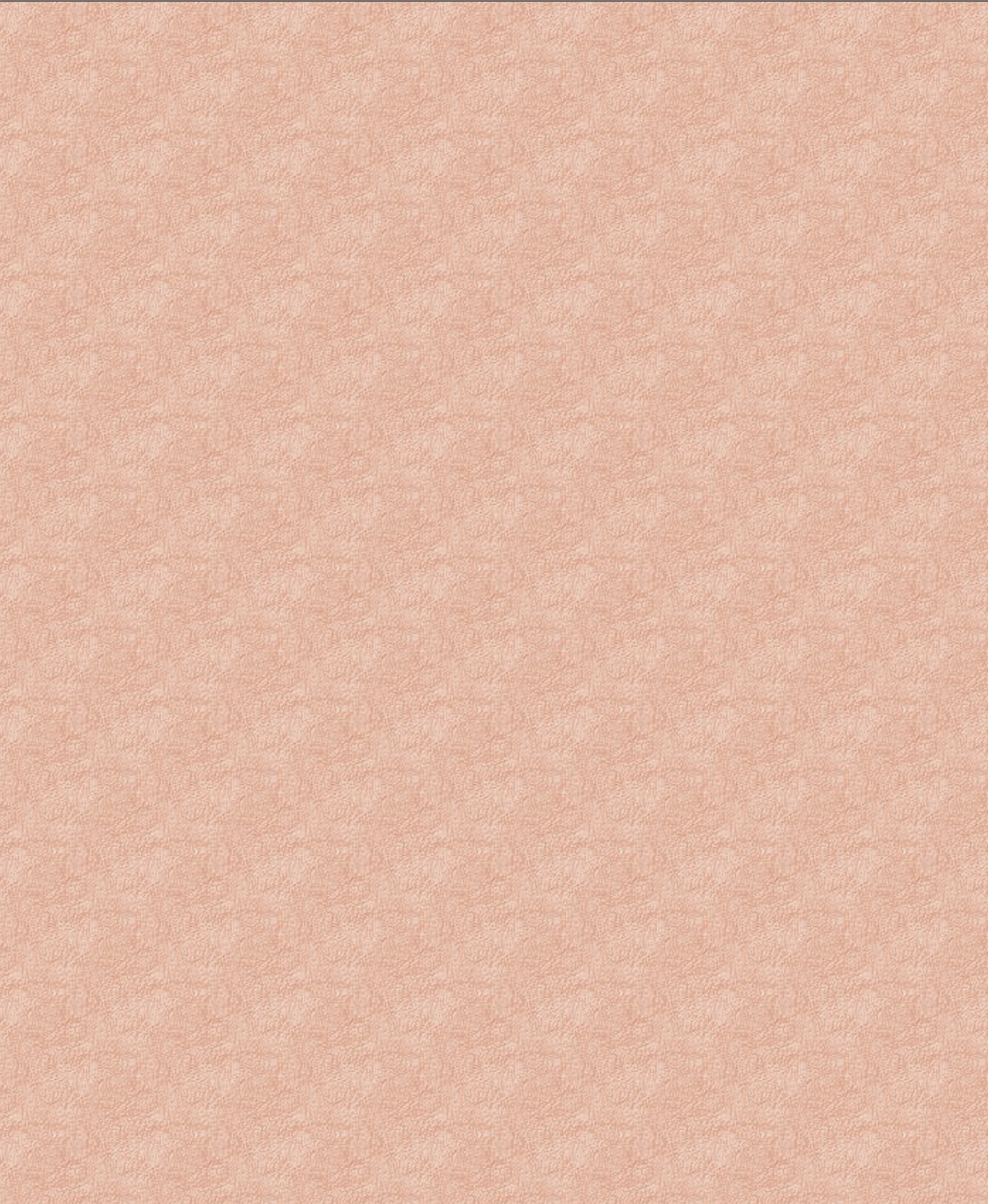
There is one thing more which ought to be taken into the account here, as having a most important practical bearing on the subject; namely, physical and mental contrarieties among men and the influences thence arising on the expression of character. The great change which passes upon souls when they are translated from sinfulness into holiness does not destroy their original or natural differences -- their mental and physical peculiarities remain. We cannot rightly judge either of ourselves or others without keeping this fact in mind. Two men equally and, if you please, entirely holy, may, under certain circumstances, appear to be quite dissimilar as to moral qualities; the one impressing us as possessing transcendent virtue, the other as possibly really bad. The reason why they so differently impress us will be found to arise from natural, and not moral, dissimilarities. One man is of a highly nervous temperament, another is as decidedly imperturbable; one is sanguine, another distrustful; one impulsive, another dispassionate: now let all these be brought under the influence of sanctifying grace; it will not change their temperaments, so that they will resemble as pieces of coin cut by the same die, or as vessels run in the same mold -- it will not remove the constitutional differences between them, but only control and regulate them.

But if the connection of the soul with the body operates these differences of manifestation, still more do the relations of the intellectual to the moral powers. One man has great wisdom, another is extremely ignorant; one understands all the proprieties of life, another is totally uninformed; one is highly cultivated, the other is untaught. . They may be, in point of fact, equally holy, but there will be a great disparity in the outward manifestations. One will appear to much better advantage than the other; one will fill our ideal of manly perfection, the other will awaken, possibly, our disgust -- not for his sins, but for his ignorance.

There is an infinite difference between an error and a sin. It is well to say, in this connection, that while holiness does not secure these nonessential accomplishments of manners, and while it does not produce in all cases precisely the same manifestations of amiability and grace, yet it imparts always, and in its fullness, the essence of all excellence, which is good will, pure love, which will constantly show itself, not perhaps in the rounded and graceful salutation, in the finished exterior, but in the unmistakable exhibition of a good and sincere heart; and further, the most accomplished and elegant character will be more accomplished by its superadded and crowning glory.

The seat of all moral quality is the soul. Properly, nothing can be said to possess moral quality but the soul. Acts indicate the moral quality of the person who performs them. They are the fruit which declares the nature of the tree. The tree nature is first and determinative of the fruit. But it is worthy of remark, that fruit is not always precisely what a superficial observer supposes it to be; and before it can be judged of properly, it needs to be critically tested by a correct standard. Equally good fruit may not be equally large and round and well-colored. The sting of an insect, or pressure of a twig, or some other exterior impingement may have blemished or dwarfed it, without damaging its flavor. It will be no fault of the tree, and will prove nothing against it, if something external has left such marks. In a world where error, and ignorance, and infirmity, leave their imprint on all that is human, it will not be wise to expect to find any thing free from such marks; but though these are found along with sin, they are not sin.

There are many phrases in common use to designate the grace of entire holiness. Perfect love, entire consecration, God reigning without a rival, perfect acquiescence in the will of God, deadness to sin, the higher life, the life of faith, entering into rest, the rest of faith, the second blessing, full salvation, are specimens. They are severally more or less descriptive, and since some form of expression must be employed to designate a specific phase of experience, it must be carping criticism that would object to the use of such or similar terms. It is not with names that we are concerned, but with that for which they stand. If any employ the above phrases, or any other of like purport, in any sense different from that which we have endeavored to set forth in the foregoing statement, we cannot be identified with them; nor can the great scriptural doctrine of Christian holiness be in any wise responsible therefor.



Christian Purity

Randolph Sinks Foster

Chapter 4

ENTIRE HOLINESS DISTINCT IN DEGREE FROM REGENERATION

There are those who hold the theory that the new birth which attends pardon is not simply all that is possible, but more, that it is also all that is necessary. We cannot think this is true either to Scripture or consciousness; and it is certainly not in accord with the general sentiment of the Church from the beginning.

Justification is a high and blissful state. The new birth, its concomitant, is a sublime and holy change of nature. It is called a translation "out of darkness into marvelous light," a new creation, a being made meet "to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints," a being "born of God," "born again," "born of the Spirit," a passing "from death unto life," quickened with Christ, and many like expressions, indicating newness and sanctity of nature, and resultant security.

But though all these things are true, we cannot for one moment doubt that the persons described by those and similar phrases are persons in whom there is remaining sin. The grounds of the conviction are, the teaching of the word of God, personal consciousness, the common confession of all believers, including the most holy, and observation.

I need scarcely insist upon this, it is so universally the faith of the Church. The difficulty, indeed, is not to convince believers that they have not yet attained to such a state of freedom from sin; but to persuade them that such a state is their privilege. They not only generally insist that they are not yet holy, but more, that they do scarcely expect to be in this life.

Let any Christian closely interrogate his experience and consciousness upon this point, and see whether the immediate response will not be, that, though "pardoned" and consciously born of the Spirit, and though living in the daily enjoyment of this grace, and going forward to perfection, still there are sinful tendencies and dispositions lurking in his heart; he is not entirely empty of sin; he is not a perfectly holy character. Let him enter into a close, faithful, and prayerful analysis of his passions, his affections, his will, his motives, and see if he will not discern remains of the sinful nature within him not entirely dead but still alive, and seeking the ascendant; as pride, envy, jealousy, anger, impatience, love of the world, dissimulation, self-willfulness, and such like. If these do not dominate or find favor, as certainly they do not, still, do they not have some place and power within him, rising up to give evidence of their presence; though bound, struggling for the mastery, often bringing him into straits, and disturbing his peace and comfort? We are conscious that such has been our experience, and must believe that it is the common experience of Christians.

But it is asked with earnestness, "Is not the work of God perfect in regeneration?" If you mean, Is not the soul regenerated? we answer, Certainly it is; but if you mean, Is it not thereby perfectly holy? we must answer, It does not so seem to us. When a soul is regenerated, all the elements of holiness are imparted to it, or the graces are implanted in it, in complete number, and the perfection of these graces is entire sanctification; and hence, we insist that entire sanctification does not take place in regeneration, for the graces are not then perfect.

With this the teachings of Scripture fully accord. Take a single passage, found in the Apostle's letter to the Christians at Corinth: "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal; as unto babes in Christ. Ye are yet carnal, for whereas there is among you envyings and strife, are ye not carnal?" (1 Corinthians 3:1). This is precisely in point. It exhibits, upon authority of inspiration, the doctrine above expressed. For first, it is certain that the persons here

addressed were believers, justified and regenerate. How else could an Apostle address them as brethren; much more, how could he expressly declare them to be "babes in Christ"? Is it possible to be a "babe in Christ" without justifying and regenerating grace? Surely no one can think so. These persons then were in Christ -- they were born again. But what next? Were they entirely holy? free from sin, inward as well as outward? Certainly the Apostle does not say so; on the contrary, he expressly says they were yet "carnal." He could not speak to them as completely spiritual, but as partly carnal; nay, he specifies what of carnality he found remaining among them, and impairing their spirituality or holiness; "for whereas there is among you envyings and strife, are ye not carnal?" Are not these "envyings and strife" tokens of a sinful nature? Indulged, are they not actual sins? are not the inward dispositions thereto inward sins? This passage then fully corroborates our expressed views, and fully authorizes us to say, that evils, opposed to complete spirituality, remain in the hearts of persons in the possession of justifying and regenerating grace.

To argue with them would only seem to be a mockery, a taunt, an aggravation of their sorrow and shame. Tell me, they would exclaim, tell me, not that I am unholy! I know it too well; but tell me, is there deliverance? show me where I may find rest. Such, I am persuaded, would be the conscious, the spontaneous view and feeling of all Christians who would be at the pains for a few moments to look within, at the heart, and back, at the experience of their pilgrimage. Such, reader, if you have not attained already that great experience set before you in the Gospel, is your present consciousness; and if you are now rejoicing in sanctifying grace, such is your recollection of the past.

Dropping for a moment all speculation, all theorizing, all thoughts of the subject as a general matter, let us come home, and hold with ourselves a practical, personal conference. We are by profession Christians; we have passed through that experimental crisis by which we know that we have passed from death unto life. We have not lost the grace of God out of our hearts. We rejoice now with a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. Nothing on earth is so dear to us as our hope in Christ. But are we entirely sanctified? The question is too sacred to be either dismissed irreverently, or answered without profound thoughtfulness. That we may bring the subject directly home, let us drop the plural and bring it directly to each soul. Are you holy? Has the work of entire sanctification by grace been wrought in your heart? Are you now living in the enjoyment of this Divine state? You will not trifle with these questions; you cannot: you may not treat with even the levity of seeming indifference to yourself, a subject of such sacred moment. Are you a minister? ponder, as in the immediate presence of God, this question: Called of God, as you are, to the most holy work of preaching holiness to men, are you yourself holy? Realize that God, the great, the adorable, is now present, looking upon you, waiting your answer. We are hurrying on to the judgment -- passing like an arrow through the air. A step, and the grave will contain us: an instant, and we shall stand before the throne: before the throne of Him who has commanded us to be holy; before the throne of Him who died for our sanctification; before the throne of Him who is ready, waiting, willing, and able to sanctify us! Are we ready?

Still, though I am constrained, for the reasons above named, to give in my adhesion to the doctrine that regeneration does not suppose entire sanctification, yet every effort I have made to define clearly to my own mind precisely what is meant by sin in believers has deepened the conviction that the subject is one of manifold difficulty, and about which there is great confusion of thought. I find evidence of obscurity in all the writings about it. The most eminent divines are not clear. They all agree in the fact; but when they attempt to explain, they become confused. The difficulty is to make plain what that sin is, from which Christian men are not free, which remains in, or is found still cleaving to, believers; how to discriminate between the some sin that is removed in regeneration and the some sin that remains. And it is just around this point that revolves the whole question of entire sanctification, both as to what it is and its possibility. It has to do with that sin that remains. It removes that remainder of sin. Regeneration took some sin away; entire sanctification takes away what was left. How importance is it that the subject should be made clear.

There are a few phrases which have come into common use, which indeed have been of ancient use, which cast a little light on the subject so far as this, that they seem to imply a generic difference between the sin which remains and the sin which is removed. The phrases are employed as descriptive of the kind of sin that remains; they are the following: "inbred sin," "remains of the carnal mind," "roots of bitterness," "seeds of evil."

They do convey some light, they furnish a hint. By examining the phrases more particularly we may find what we seek. They are like the scent which, followed, may lead to the game.

We might find still further aid by raising the fundamental question, What is sin? but our space and the object of this work forbid. The words "sin removed," and "sin remaining," are suggestive of substance; for instance, of some esse that is carried away, and of some esse that is left behind, thus grossly debauching the mind at the very start.

Here, then, we take our departure, with the remark that the term sin is used of precisely the same thing when it is predicated of that which is taken away in regeneration, as when it is predicated of that which remains to be taken away; or it is used to describe things generically different. This is . a point of some importance. If it means precisely the same thing in both cases, the explanation will be one; if it designates things generically different, it will be another.

How much cure is effected when the soul enters its heritage of pardon?

This, it seems to me, is the answer. First, God, who withdrew himself from the sinful and sinning soul, now, along with the pardon, restores himself to it, bringing light with him into it, and bringing also comfort and strength. The soul now sees things in their true light, and its disordered faculties are reduced to order; conscience is quickened and strengthened, and crowned and put on the throne, and made the recognized sovereign of the new soul; the spiritual affections are made alive and grasp their objects; a new controlling and regulating life manifests itself; it is the eternal life springing into being. The new life awakened is a life of supreme love to God and right, and its expression is worship and obedience.

But is the new life so complete as immediately to effect a perfect cure? as to remove the tokens of the old depravity? Is a perfect harmony and easy normal action of the soul's faculties at once secured? We answer, No. The disorder, in part, remains. The old rebel and usurping propensities are not cured; they are only chained. They are still alive, and make war; they clamor, and sometimes, in moments of weakness, prevail. The new order is preserved by struggle. The natural pre-eminence of sins and the power of long habit make the subjective passions like caged beasts beating against their bars; the new masters maintain their thrones with much and tireless watching. Am I not right?

This shows the soul not yet to be in a perfectly normal state; it is not just as it ought to be, and must become, in consummate holiness. When it becomes perfectly cured the propensities will no longer rebelliously strive with the conscience -- no longer have undue power; like a frenzied patient, but remaining, and becoming restored to their right condition, will ask only their normal indulgence and exercise; as was their primeval design, will awaken only their appropriate desires, and lead to their appropriate effects. Just that and no more. And what is that which will hold all in such exact and perfect equipoise and order? The undisputed supremacy of God within the soul -such an elevation and exaltation of the spiritual faculties that any prompting to any sinful act will not simply find no acquiescence, but will awaken immediate recoil, and meet with spontaneous rejection -- such a restoration of lost power that evil habits and Satanic influences will equally fail to disturb the deep and sacred equanimity. God will be all in all.

Christian Purity

Randolph Sinks Foster

Chapter 5

ENTIRE HOLINESS ATTAINABLE

Is the high state of moral and spiritual excellence described in the preceding chapter attainable in this life? This is the question we are now about to discuss.

Many specious and beautiful theories have perished for want of proof. The most magnificent structure may be valueless because of the insecurity of its foundation. Not all that is beautiful is true.

In this chapter it is our intention to present the proof upon which we rely for the support of the foregoing views. . And whence shall the proof be derived? "To whom shall we go?" Not to creeds, or decretals, or ecclesiastical canons, or councils, nor even to the testimony of those who profess to know by personal experience. There is but one foundation upon which any religious tenet can stand. To the Bible! -- what saith the Lord? All will admit the propriety of the appeal. We do not discard or disparage the opinions of the wise and good; but, however much we may esteem them, they are of no authority in matters of religious faith. We may thankfully employ them as helps, but dare not rest in them as infallible guides. We adhere to that sentiment of the illustrious Chillingworth -- a sentiment worthy to be written upon the sky, and read by all generations -- "The Bible, the Bible alone, is the religion (authoritative creed) of Protestants." Employing all lesser lights as aids, and rejoicing in them, we look away, and beyond them, for fuller illumination and sufficient instruction to Him who is the light of the world and the teacher of his people. Let us, therefore, immediately address ourselves to the study of the holy oracles, and find what they teach upon the subject.

In this treatise we shall employ both these methods for eliciting the Divine teaching; and we hope to sustain our position, not by a single and isolated declaration only, or a single inference only, but by a great number of both direct and inferential proofs of the most unequivocal and irresistible authority: declarations so various, contained in commands, promises, prayers, exhortations, statements, and narratives; and inferences so multiplied, arising from so many sources, as to convince every candid reader that the doctrine we contend for is not limited to a bare and questionable place, a doubtful and uncertain existence in the holy records, but is repletely and abundantly, as well as explicitly, embodied as a cardinal feature throughout the whole system. It breathes in the prophecy, thunders in the law, murmurs in the narrative, whispers in the promises, supplicates in the prayers, resounds in the songs, sparkles in the poetry, shines in the types, glows in the imagery, and burns in the spirit, of the whole scheme, from its alpha to its omega -- its beginning to its end. Holiness! Holiness needed! Holiness required! Holiness offered! Holiness attainable! Holiness a present duty, a present privilege, a present enjoyment, is the progress and completeness of its wondrous theme! It is the truth glowing all over and voicing all through revelation; singing and shouting in all its history, and biography, and poetry, and prophecy, and precept, and promise, and prayer; the great central truth of the system. The truth to elucidate which the system exists. If God has spoken at all it is to aid men to be holy. The wonder is, that all do not see, that any rise up to question, a truth so conspicuous, so glorious, so full of comfort.

1. This truth is directly taught in the Scriptures.

For the convenience of our readers, we will cite, in connection, a large number of passages in which the doctrine is taught.

Passages in which it is taught by command. -- "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul,

and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself" (Luke 10:27). "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16). "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). "Hear, O Israel: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and with all thy might." "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and his statutes, which I command thee this day, for thy good?" (Deut. 6:5; 10:12, 13). "Serve God with a perfect heart and willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth the imagination of the thoughts" (1 Chron. 28:9). "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12). "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and faith unfeigned" (1 Tim. 1:5). "Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor. 13:11). "Sanctify yourselves, therefore, and be ye holy. . . . And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the Lord which sanctify you" (Lev. 20:7, 8). "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:15, 16).

Passages in which it is taught in exhortation. -- "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1). "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection" (Heb. 6:1).

Passages in which it is taught in promise. -- "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah i 18). "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. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:7-9). "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18). "Whoso hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3). "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24). "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28). "And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities" (Psalm 130:8). "But whoso keepeth his word, in him is the love of God perfected" (1 John 2:5). "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24). "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 2:1; 3:8). "If, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matt. 6:22). "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12). "And this also we wish, even your perfection" (2 Cor. 13:9). "To the end that he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God" (1 Thess. 3:13). "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7). "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4:3). "God hath chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13). "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:11-16). "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:3, 4).

Passages in which it is taught in prayer. -- "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted

and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:14-21). "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ" (Heb. 13:20, 21). "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" (1 Thess. 5:23). "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. . . . I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:21, 23). "Sanctify them through thy truth" (John 17:17). "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven; deliver us from evil" (Matt. 6:10, 13).

Passages in which it is taught as having been experienced. -- "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace" (Psalm 37:37). "Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man" (Job 8:20). "And Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man, and a holy" (Mark 6:20). "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6:22). "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:24). "They were both [Zacharias and Elisabeth] righteous before God, walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6). "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. 2:20). "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17). "And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Rev. 14:5). "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (Isaiah 6:5-7). "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6).

Let the reader ponder these Scriptures. What an irresistible volume of evidence they contain. How full, how various, and how explicit! Is it possible for any one to give them even a cursory reading, and not feel that he is called unto holiness? Much more, can any one, seriously, and with devout and prayerful study, endeavor to comprehend and feel their import, and not realize that it is his privilege, his duty, to be a holy man? Surely we misjudge, or the thing is impossible. Suppose any one should appropriate these lucid and sublime Scripture expressions to himself, and profess to have attained the experience they adumbrate, would not all men understand him to make profession of holiness? Could he employ more explicit terms to declare the enjoyment of such a state, than those contained in the passages quoted? Were his object fullness, intensity, where would he go for a phrase stronger than this, "Sanctify you wholly"? or this, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin"? or this, "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God"? or this, "Perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect"? Were there but a single passage intimating this glorious truth, there might be room for hesitancy; or a doctrine so wonderful, so replete with surprises -- though repeated at distant intervals -- might startle our incredulity; but when it comes in such resistless volume, and stands out with such commanding distinctness, upon what principle can we justify suspicion or doubt?

O believer in Jesus, weary as you are of your sins, panting after deliverance from their cruel power, why shall you make limits against your own soul when God has made none? Wherefore should you take sides both against your Maker and yourself?

But shall it be assumed that strict rules of interpretation need not be applied to language uttered in prayer? that prayer is

often the blind cry of want or desire, and is not always considerate of what is possible? This is no doubt true in many cases. But is it safe or wise to interpret the prayers here cited by such a rule? Is it proper for us to tone down our prayers to a less limit than the examples furnished us in the divine word? Or shall we be guilty of employing these or similar words with our lips, meanwhile in our hearts telling the Lord that we know the language is too strong, exaggerated? that we don't mean so much, and have no hope that it will be possible to grant what we ask?

Do not all Christians rather, in their holiest hours of prayer, find their souls inspired with similar enlarged desires? Whence come they? Does not the Holy Spirit plead in us, inspiring us? Are not these most sacred pleadings his inspiration and begetting? Will it answer to take the position that they mean nothing as to possible answer? that they simply present an impossible prize to our desires, that stretching forth after it we may approach nearer to it, but with no hope of ever reaching it? Why not reach it? What shall hinder? Has God limited us? Are we straitened in him? What doth he say?

The attainableness of holiness is argued from the declarations of the Scriptures: "Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom, and sanctification, and redemption." "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." In these passages holiness is declared to be the privilege and calling of Christians, a state which it is the will of God they should enjoy. The doctrine of its practicability is as undoubtedly taught as any other doctrine in the Bible. Now these declarations are true, or they are false. If true, which every Christian at least is bound to believe, then holiness is attainable; and so our doctrine stands upon the same ground as the truth of revelation. If these declarations are false, the whole scheme is a fabrication, and we are all most sadly, most deeply deceived. No one is prepared to embrace this alternative; and rejecting it, the truthfulness of all that we contend for must be admitted.

The doctrine we contend for is further argued from the fact that ample provision is made for it: "Wherefore Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." "For this cause the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come, in unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Here the attainment of holiness is declared to be an object to secure the realization of which certain provisions are made. If the means provided are competent -- and who shall say that God has instituted incompetent means? -- then the object they provide for may be realized. If the death of Christ is not a failure, the works of the devil may be destroyed. If his suffering without the gate does not come short in its ability of his intent, the people may be sanctified.

There are a few additional considerations important in these connections, constituting inferential arguments or proofs; and these, it is believed, are sufficient, without the volume of Divine evidence set forth above, to produce conviction in every candid mind. The consequences of rejecting the doctrine for which we contend are alone sufficient, in our estimation, to cause its acceptance. We subjoin a few inferential proofs.

1. God is holy. All sin is infinitely offensive to him. He cannot prefer its existence. He must desire its nonexistence, and, as far as possible, its utter destruction. But what then? Why, manifestly this: if sin is so offensive to God that its entire removal would please him, then it may be so removed, unless it can be shown that it is a thing absolutely impossible in itself, or inconsistent with his plan of government that it should be so removed. That the thing is impossible to infinite wisdom and infinite power no one will assume. That it is inconsistent with his plan of government to bring sin to an end, is scarcely to be inferred, particularly since he has declared that his Son was given to destroy the works of the devil. But if God, from his holiness, hates sin, and from his goodness is inclined to rescue his people from its evils, and by his wisdom understands how it may be accomplished, and by his power is able to achieve it, and if the thing is not in itself impossible, nor inconsistent with his government, then certainly it may be done.

2. Again: if holiness is not attainable in this life, then it cannot be required; or if it is not attainable, and yet is required,

then an impossibility is required. if the last consequence is assumed, then it follows that God requires an impossibility.

3. A further consequence of the assumption is: if freedom from sin cannot be attained in this life, it should not be sought or prayed for. To pray for that which it is impossible, in the conviction of the mind, should be granted, is mockery -- the sheerest hypocrisy. No absurdity can be conceived of greater than that of seeking what it is certain, and known so to be, cannot be found. The consequence, therefore, of the belief that entire freedom from sin cannot be attained, must be to discourage all efforts in that direction as useless and vain; nay, to render the idea of such efforts ridiculous and absurd, and so to reconcile the mind to a sinful state.

Is the reader convinced that God requires men to be free from sin? Is he also convinced that God requires no impossibility? Then he must allow that the required state is possible. Does he believe a state of freedom from sin ought to be aspired to -- sought after? Then he must believe that it may be gained if sought.

Christian Purity

Randolph Sinks Foster

Chapter 6

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

To the doctrine taught in the foregoing chapters it is admitted there are some seeming objections, and to what truth is there not? Nor would we account them insignificant. They are not. They are weighty and serious; they are put forward by men of the highest respectability, both for scholarship and piety, and representatives of much the larger number of Christian thinkers; and however clear and conclusive we may think the reasonings upon which the doctrine is based, it is by no means complete until these objections are candidly and completely answered. The work is but half done when what we conceive to be a clear chain of scriptural and argumentative proof is presented to the reader. It is due the subject, due ourselves, and due our readers, that we give full attention to objections. If they are real, there must be some defect in our views; and no dogmatism, no assurance, no chain of reasoning will meet the case if they remain unanswered. Errorists declaim much about evidence, make great show of proof, adduce long lists of arguments, flourish trumpets of reasoning, but they avoid the rencounter with objections; they find no heart for this. The reason is obvious; much that is plausible may be said in favor of any proposition, but a real objection overturns all its sophistries, and reduces to nothing its million proofs. But the objection must be real. It is by the comparison of the reasons, pro and con, the arguments and the objections, that we shall arrive at the truth. By this patient method we shall be able to detect where the error lies, whether it be in the affirmative or negative side. Truth has no real objections, error has many. Nor would we, in meeting objections, present them in a weakened and impaired form. Let us study them in all their strength, and state them in their utmost force. This, because it is our welfare to know the truth and nothing less, nothing else.

1. The first objection offered is this: The doctrine cannot be true, because many Christians do not receive it; whole denominations of Christians do not receive it; the most learned and excellent divines in great numbers do not receive it; it is not now, and has not been, the belief of the majority of the Church. Many, who with undoubted ability and sincerity have studied the Scriptures for a whole lifetime, have never found this doctrine therein taught, but an opposite and antagonistic doctrine. How is this to be explained? Were these men, the majority, in error? Were they not equal in ability to arrive at the truth with their opposers? Were they not as candid and sincere? Why, then, must we believe they were in error?

But what, then, have we to weigh against this objection to break its force? An array of other great names, an equal amount of learning, and respectability, and candor, and application? No. This might balance, but would not settle the difficulty. We meet it with the word of the Lord! One "Thus saith the Lord," is more powerful than all the opinions of all the men the world ever contained. The objection is apparently strong, but really feeble. Feeble, because it carries the doctrine to an improper tribunal. It brings incompetent evidence. It is not a question dependent on human opinions, however respectable and worthy of credit; it appeals to one single and transcendently higher umpire -- the word of God. But what then? Who shall judge what the word of God is? Let every man examine for himself, as he that must give an account, and so judge. If he find the doctrine therein, let him embrace it; if not, let him reject it!

2. A second objection not unlike the former is alleged against this doctrine. It is this: The doctrine cannot be true because it does not accord with the experience of the Church! But few in any age have pretended to so much, and they have generally given sad and abundant proof that they were deluded. Admit all this, and what then? Does the objection destroy the doctrine? Does it impair it in the slightest degree? Certainly not. No more than the unanimous experience of all sinners that justifying grace has not been realized to them, is proof that there is no such state possible. The doctrine is not what the Church has attained, but what it is her privilege to attain; not how unholy she has been, but how holy she might

have been. The experience of the Church, as stated by the objector himself, is not that the state is not attainable, but that it is not attained. And again, it is not a question to be settled by want of experience, but by the word of the Lord, and experience corroborating the word when there is experience. Experience is not competent evidence against, but it is good proof in favor of, this doctrine. This objection, then, weighs nothing.

3. But, third, it is objected that it is contrary to the word of God. Now, if this can be shown we shall admit our error, and renounce even what we think we are conscious is the truth.

But there must be some mistake here. We have shown in a manner which our adversaries cannot gainsay, that the Scriptures authorize the doctrine, and this in a great variety of methods, with great clearness and frequency. It is not readily to be credited that the same inspired authority teaches another doctrine contrary to this so explicitly inculcated; still there may be something resembling it.

4. It is objected further, that the doctrine is promotive of pride, Phariseeism, self-righteousness: leading the possessor of this high experience to say to his brother in an inferior state of grace, "Stand by thyself; I am holier than thou." But there could not be a greater mistake than this. One of the elements of holiness is perfect humility. If any profess it, and yet are proud and Pharisaical, it is proof that they are deceived. Those, indeed, who enjoy this state of grace, may in truth believe themselves to be in a higher state than the merely justified Christian; but they know it is of grace, and, with respect to themselves, the clearer light they have received leads them to true discoveries of their own utter unworthiness.

5. It is objected, that those who make profession of holiness are not better than other people. Suppose this were admitted, (and, in many instances, there is but too much ground for the charge,) yet how does it bear against the doctrine? If all were hypocrites, or deluded, who make the profession, it does not affect the merits of the case in the slightest degree. It condemns them, but militates nothing against this. Its truth stands upon the authority of God's word -- not upon human professions. Who made us judges in the case? There is but one that judgeth, and who has said to us, Judge not. May not much that we charge as sin against good men at last be nothing more than weakness and infirmities? And again, amid the many deluded and deceived, have you found none, in the judgment of charity, who gave good evidence that they had entered into this high and holy state? Not one? If not, your position must have been unfortunate indeed. If so, you admit yourself, that in some cases there is good proof that holiness is attainable and has been attained.

6. But after all, you object the thing is impossible; that in this world a man cannot live without sin. Has God said so? If man were left to himself it might be admitted; but cannot God empower him to be free from sin? Reflect: Cannot you, by the grace of God, live one minute without sin? If a minute, can you not an hour? if an hour, a day? if a day, a year? You overlook the power of the grace of God. O that you may be led to right conclusions, and know and enjoy all that is your privilege to realize of grace here, and finally come to the enjoyment of eternal glory hereafter! Amen.

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Chapter 7

MEANS FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF ENTIRE HOLINESS

There is a phase of the subject which may better be introduced at this point than later. It is this, Is the attainment of entire sanctification instantaneous or progressive, or both? It is obvious that the question as to the means of attainment must be affected by the answer that shall be given. And there is yet another question of much importance, in order to perfect clearness, which may best be introduced here. It is this, Is entire sanctification distinct in kind from regeneration?

Entire sanctification, when attained, is not a discriminated kind of holiness from that which is imparted to the believer; it is not an experience different in its genus from that which he obtained when he was converted; it is not a birth into another kind of grace, or estate, or life, from that given before. But while regeneration and entire sanctification are the same in kind, the one being partial holiness, the other being consummate holiness, they are evidently different in degree, and are differentiated as the complete is distinguished from the incomplete. When the second stage of experience is reached, therefore, it is distinct in degree from the first, and may in a true and proper sense be called a second blessing. The cases are really different, and ought so to be recognized. The one is the culmination of the other, and ought not to be described as identical with it. If an injustice is done to the first by depreciating its kind, an injustice is done to the second by depreciating its degree. If a small aperture should be made through a wall into a dark room, some light would be admitted; if the walls were made perfectly translucent, it would be filled with light. In both cases there would be the same kind of element taken in, but in the one case it would be partial, in the other complete. There would be no difference in kind, but a marked and most important difference in degree. The second stage would be very distinguishable from the first. The blade differs from the full corn in the ear. It is the precursor of the corn, has the identical life in it which the corn has, and the corn cannot be without it; but it is not the corn. The end of the seed life is not the blade, but the corn. It is a great mistake and a great wrong to ignore this obvious distinction. Most fatal would be the blunder if the farmer should garner his blades. He might say it is the same as the corn, since it has the same life as the corn; but the mistake would be disastrous. Content with the blade, he might fail of the corn. The answer to the next question will still further illustrate this point.

Is entire sanctification a progressive or instantaneous work? This, like the former question, has been greatly confused by indiscreet words and hasty and crude generalizations.

That there is growth in holiness, we cannot imagine any Christian doubts. That growth in holiness, from the degree of it imparted in regeneration, is progress toward the completeness of it in entire sanctification, we cannot conceive a Christian understandingly to deny. All real advances along a line in the direction of a point must be approximating the point. The rill that keeps ever widening and deepening is coming to be the river. The river in its flow must be ever nearing the ocean; but the point sought differs from the several points along the line of approach; the rill differs from the river; the river is not the ocean.

Christian development differs from natural development, but there is some analogy. A seed contains a life, which when it germinates tends to maturity in a regular and fixed order of growth, and must pass over determinate and uniform stages, from the blade to the full corn, or fail and die.

If there is any analogy to this in the order of Christian development, it is not perfect. When a soul is born of God, its goal is holiness. The principle implanted in it is a principle of holiness.

The seed has germinated; it is a living seed. Its life tends to the goal of maturity, but whether it will reach that point ever or today, depends not on the seed or any determinate order of growth. There is not in the life implanted the principle of necessary growth, which determines either that it must infallibly become consummate, or in what order of time it will reach perfection. It may be blasted entirely, or it may be of starved and stunted growth, or scarcely grow at all, or it may be of healthy and thrifty growth, or it may spring from germ to ripeness with great rapidity, or it may in a single bound of life exhibit the full corn in the ear. In this it is only somewhat analogous to nature. Many conditions combine to determine the order of development both in nature and in grace. The seed must have a perfect living germ, or it will not grow at all; it must be placed in good and sufficient soil, or it will wither and die before it comes to ripeness; it must have light and warmth and rain; it must be protected from violence and encouraged by culture. The seed may be good, but if any of these other conditions be wanting it will bring forth either no fruit, or small fruit, or late and imperfect fruit, when it comes to the reaper's bosom. We think in all these respects the analogy holds substantially, and must hold, therefore, that the way to the end, or full corn in the ear, in the spiritual as in the natural, is along the line of growth; it is reached by and not without progress; it is growing up into Christ; it is first babes, then men; it is going on to perfection; it is hungering and thirsting and being filled.

We have no favor for the sentiment that growth in grace is not growth toward entire holiness. Every earnest and thrifty Christian is advancing directly toward the goal of that great experience. So taught Jesus and the Apostles:

"Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (1 Peter 2:1-3). "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:5-8). "But ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 20, 21). "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:15). "Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection" (Heb. 6:1).

But conceding all this, and dissenting with any, if there are such, who deride the doctrine of progress in holiness, or progressive sanctification, we fear that many just at this point miss their way. If the work of entire sanctification may be the end of a line of progressive sanctification, they infer that it cannot be instantaneous. This, we doubt not, is a dangerous mistake. A traveler may reach a point which lies near him by going round the globe to get to it, and every step he takes may be precisely along a line that will bring him to it, but the long journey will be a great waste of time and force. He might have reached it by a single step the day he started. We doubt not it is so in this case. There is no intelligent Christian who does not believe that advances in ripeness and holiness may be more or less rapid, varying from the slowest and most tedious, to the most vigorous and swiftest paces. This given, the problem is to find the quickest possible attainment. That the earliest possible attainment of the end is most desirable -- is duty -- we must believe.

Moreover, it is important to remember that while earnest Christians are ever advancing toward entire holiness, they will never attain it without specific effort. If they reach the goal it must be by distinct and masterful faith, by great and special seeking, not by mere lapse of time and ordinary endeavor. No one will cross this Jordan at a common pace. He must smite the waters. He must be taken into the Mount. He must be apart and alone with the Master. His soul must feel its need so urgently that nothing short of immediate and complete salvation will satisfy its craving. It must no longer be content with progressive successes, or it will never come into this Canaan. The Gospel it will need and demand is one of immediate help. Woe to the messenger who, by his teaching, encourages delay by discouraging the hope of immediate victory. Entire holiness, not at death, not at the end of a long journey, not by slow growth, however possible it may be, and even certain, but entire holiness now, the privilege and duty of all believers, we must hold is the doctrine of God, and the doctrine which needs most to be urged upon the Church which is his bride.

We hope, reader, unless you have already entered and become a dweller in the land, that you are now anxious to "pass over." But if it should be that, like Reuben, and Gad, and Manasseh, you have been content to settle down on this side the Jordan, finding it a goodly and pleasant country; and if, even yet, you should be satisfied to remain here, because "of its fertility" and abundance, we trust you will remain content no longer. Goodly, and pleasant, and abundant as you have found "Heshbon," and "Gilead," and "Bashan" -- more glorious by far than Egypt -- places of delightful rest from the toils and dangers of the wilderness; yet they are not the promised inheritance; their richness and fertility is not the exuberance of the heritage of God's people; they abound not with the "figs and pomegranates and clusters" of the covenanted possession; they are not as "Hebron" and "Bethel," as "Eshcol" and "Beulah" -- as that "Hephzibah" in which the Lord delighteth, "and which floweth with milk and honey."

Thank God, some have gone over, and are marching through the length and breadth of the land; many are going over; and many more are looking wishfully after their brethren, who have courageously advanced and taken possession. O that there may be a general movement, a simultaneous uprising, and shout of "onward" among the "sacramental host."

It is universally well enough known that faith is the condition; but where assistance is needed is, at these points; What is faith, and how may it be exercised? How often have we exclaimed, and how often have we heard others, with agonizing distress, exclaim, when exhorted to believe, to exercise "simple faith," What must we believe? how can we believe? This common, we had like to have said universal, exclamation indicates where the true difficulty lies.

While we point out certain things to be done as aids to faith, let it be remembered that these things are not supposed to be either meritorious, or performed or performable in our own strength. We can do nothing without gracious aid; we distinctly attribute all our power to work, in the way of seeking, to a gracious ability bestowed upon us, and so acknowledge whatever is done to be of grace. But as we are dependent upon grace for ability, so grace is always furnished for our use, and we need never be in any want. Thus distinctly acknowledging the whole to be of grace, we shall now state what by the aid of grace we are to do as coworkers with God: "Working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, while he worketh in us to will and do of his own good pleasure."

Faith, in order to its exercise, presupposes the knowledge of sin, and sorrow for it; the knowledge that there is a Saviour, and a readiness to embrace him. The following advices are intended to assist you to find out the way more clearly:

1. And first, endeavor to have a clear and distinct view of the thing at which you aim -have the mark definitely in your mind. How shall you obtain this definite idea? By reading, (particularly the Scriptures,) conversation, meditation, and prayer. With sincere desire, and humble prayer, you will not need to linger long; the discovery will be made.

By far the best means at this point is earnest prayer. The Holy Ghost alone can furnish the light you need. He shines most brightly in the praying soul. He best reveals sin. He most clearly presents the remedy. "He helpeth our infirmities." Linger at the gracious throne until you comprehend clearly the precise point you aim at. If we would avoid sad and hurtful blunders, great and earnest painstaking will be required here. Delusion and sin will inevitably follow hasty generalization, and the last state may be, nay, will be, worse than the first.

2. And now, having obtained a clear discovery of your privilege, in the second place, endeavor to realize your need. If you have no sense of need, you will assuredly make no progress. If, with them of Laodicea, you say, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," -- I have religion enough, I see no special reason for making so much ado about the matter, -- if such, or any thing resembling this, is your feeling, you will not soon occupy advanced ground. Seek to realize your wants. But how shall you do this? There is but one way. O that we could prevail upon you to be faithful here! Taking the twin lamps of truth, the Bible and conscience, with sincere prayers for the guidance of the Holy Ghost, make that diligent search which the importance of the case requires. Be candid with yourself. Make no extenuation, no apology, use no tenderness. Ferret every recess thoroughly; probe to the bottom; pass through every chamber of your soul; search it through and through, with a determination to know your case, to look at yourself stripped of every disguise. What do you find? Are there no idols in the sacred temple? No "images of gold?" no "Babylonish

garments?" no concealed "spies"? No pride, no envy, no jealousy, no anger, no malice, no undue love of the world, no undue desire for the praise of men, no improper ambition? Does God possess your heart without a rival? Are you wholly the Lord's? O for faithfulness! Would you attain to holiness? Linger at this point. Have no mercy on yourself, be resolved to know the worst! You may have such discoveries as will astonish and distress you; still, make diligent search. What is your example? Is it all that a Christian's ought to be? Do you daily exhibit, in the family, in the social circle, in your business, everywhere, those tempers which should adorn the Christian character? What is your influence? Is it, so far as it is under your control, always decidedly and undividedly for Christ?

And upon this point let us add, that this discovery of your destitution of holiness and sense of want should be accompanied with the deepest contrition and self-abasement -- penitence for having so long lived beneath privilege, below duty. If the work of forgiveness is preceded by godly sorrow as well as confiding faith, so also is the greater and still more glorious work of holiness; a sorrow, it may be, not attended with the same bitterness, and doubt, and fear, which usually attend initial repentance, but possessing quite as much, aye more, of grief and self-abnegation. And what more can be necessary to gain this penitence than a discovery of facts? Surely, when we see ourselves our hearts will melt within us. We shall see, nay, we shall feel, 'Tis worse than death our God to love, and not our God alone.

3. Having thus obtained a distinct view of holiness, and having made a discovery of your own wants and defects, and remaining sinfulness, you have gained an important point. The next thing to be secured is willingness. Are you now willing and desirous to be made holy? It is possible for a man to perceive his sins, and yet be unwilling to give them up. Many do this. How is it with you? Are you now willing to give up all your idols, to "cut off right arms," to "pluck out right eyes," to put to sacrifice dearest and most cherished indulgences? Look well to this! How vain to expect, or pretend even to desire, salvation from all sin, at the same time that you are harboring some in the heart! Would you be holy, you must make up your mind to the crucifixion of every sin; the very last must be surrendered, and given to the cross and spear.

Holiness! Are you willing to receive it, with all its consequences, of watchfulness, and sacrifice, and self-denial, and entire devotion of the soul and life to God? Not only are you willing, thus to be freed from sin, and to take the responsibility of holiness, but are you desirous to do so? Is it the supreme wish of your heart? Are you willing, in proof of your sincerity and preference, to accept it in lieu of every thing besides?

4. Still further; it is not only needful that you become willing and desirous upon the subject, but you must likewise come to the firm purpose and resolution that through grace you will be holy; that you will never rest short of this state; that at all hazards you will persevere, and never cease the effort until you attain. If you find it difficult to form the purpose -- if there is discernible a remaining feeling that, if you should not immediately succeed, perhaps you may give over the struggle -- pray and agonize, for the victory here; never rest until your mind is determined. Nothing great can be accomplished without resolution. An "unstable" or "double mind" cannot prosper. Be firmly resolved, therefore, that you will contend for and claim your privilege -- that you will attain.

Some commence seeking God, or engage in the pursuit of holiness, without a decided purpose to succeed. They have a will to commence working, but not a will to do all that may be necessary, to make all requisite sacrifices, to persevere through every opposition. This may be your case; if so, stop short, and resolve firmly, irrevocably, that you will be for God wholly.

The work of resisting every sin-crucifying every improper desire, being entirely for God -will meet with opposition, strong opposition; a feeble purpose will soon yield; the soul will relapse into its former state. The work will not be accomplished; not because it was impossible, but because there was not the requisite resolution. A man is dying of a tumor; he wishes it removed, and goes to a surgeon; but the knives intimidate him -- his resolution fails; he returns with the fatal tumor still upon him. Would you be holy? Learn by this illustration the value of resolution; resolution that will not cower when the knife is laid to the heart to amputate its idols!

5. The purpose now being formed, the next point is entire consecration -- the giving up of yourself to God -- your soul, your body, your time, your talents, your influence, your all; withdrawing all from the world, and from sin, and from self, and giving all in complete sacrifice to God, to be his, and his alone, forever. Will you do this? Examine yourself closely in this connection. Are you willing to devote all, entirely, forever, to the Lord? Holiness implies this: if we are not willing to make the consecration, we are not willing, and hence not ready, to receive holiness. Here, again, you will need grace to enable you to make the consecration. You cannot do it in your own strength. You will need to pray, and look to God for the assistance of the Spirit. Thus doing, bring forth every thing separately -- yourself, your family, your reputation, your property; and, with all sincerity, relinquish all claim, and surrender the whole to God, to use and enjoy them only as he directs, and with reference to his glory; never to withdraw again what you thus solemnly covenant shall be only his. Will you now do this? Is this your mind?

A word more upon this point: consecration is not sanctification, it is a part of it. Consecration is your work, God giving the requisite grace; when it is complete, entire sanctification, which is the work of the Holy Spirit, must immediately follow. But more particularly, What is consecration? It is the entire dedication of the whole person to God; in other words, -- the complete subordination of the human will to the Divine will, complete acquiescence in his will, and reference in all things to his glory. It does not imply that we retire from the world; that we give our whole time to religious exercises; that we withhold communion from our fellowmen; that we give our entire thoughts, affections, and efforts to technically religious duties; such a thing would be impracticable in this world, would conflict with the expressed will of God, and would be itself therefore sinful. We have business to do, to provide for our households and to enable us to gain property wherewith to do good; our thoughts may be given to this; we have families and friends, we may love them, and minister to them, and enjoy them; nay, these things are a part of our duty. By consecration to God, therefore, we mean simply a supreme reference to the will and glory of God in all things; using and enjoying all as he wills we should; disclaiming any rights that conflict with his rights; pursuing such business, and in such manner, as from our best light we believe is according to the will of God; using all the proceeds of our labor precisely as we believe God directs; loving those objects, and in that degree, which he approves; doing those acts which will be for his glory; living in the world, but living for God.

6. Have you a definite view of holiness? Do you realize your need of it? Are you willing to receive it? Is it your desire and purpose to persevere until you obtain it? and, in order thereto, do you realize a readiness to give up all to God, in entire consecration? If this should be your mind, one thing more and the work will be done; "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Faith is the only condition upon which the blessings of the Gospel are offered. "Justification" is by faith; "regeneration" is by faith; "sanctification" is by faith; "glorification" is by faith; by faith as the instrument, and by the blood of Jesus as the merit, and by the Spirit as the agent. Whenever faith is exercised, the work will be done. The preceding advices are only prescribed as means of assisting, as co-operating with the grace of God to bring the mind up to the point of faith, to prepare us for this saving exercise. And let it not be supposed that a long process is necessary in order to this preparation. With diligent application, and by Divine assistance, the work may soon be accomplished.

It may be important to be still more explicit at this point. Faith includes the ideas both of "belief and trust," and exists in various stages.

1. A general belief in Christ, as the Saviour and sanctifier; 2. Belief that he is able to sanctify you; 3. Belief that he is willing to do it; 4. Belief that he is able and willing to do it now, not tomorrow; 5. Belief that he has promised to do the work, and that his promise will not fail; 6. Belief that if I now have faith, he will now, this moment, do it; 7. Reliance, or trust in him now, this moment, to do, accompanied with a belief that he doeth it. Mark, that he now, when you believe according to his promise, doeth it; not a belief that it is done, but, accompanying my faith, it being a sound faith, that he doeth the work.

An error has gained considerable prevalence, and has wrought not a little evil, in relation to this very subject -- the faith

which brings the sanctifying grace.

It has been indiscreetly said, "We are to believe the work is done, and it will be done." Persons seeking the blessing have been told that they must believe they are sanctified, and they will be sanctified. What a misfortune that so great, so dangerous an error should be taught, in connection with so important a subject! What a manifest absurdity; Making our sanctification to depend upon the belief of an untruth; namely, a belief that it is now wrought, in order that it may be wrought! This is a great delusion. It is not the doctrine of the Bible. It is not, and never was, the doctrine of any branch of the Church. Some sincere and honest Christians have fallen into this delusion without perceiving its absurdity; and it has gained considerable currency. We trust it will no more find place in the language of the friends of this glorious doctrine.

The stages of faith immediately at the point of entire sanctification, and just before, and right after it, may thus be described. And let it be remembered, that when the exercise of faith takes place, it is not a mere intellectual calculation; it occurs when the soul is travailing for sanctifying power; when it is groaning for deliverance from distressing sinfulness; when it is giving up all to Christ; when it is feeling that "it is worse than death its God to love, and not its God alone"; when it is purposing to claim and obtain holiness, at all hazards. That is the state of the soul; it is now agonizing at God's altar; it is pleading for salvation, looking at the promises; the Holy Spirit is helping, imparting illumination, and strengthening the faltering faith. Now comes the moment when sanctification is about to be imparted. Now the soul believes it will be done; taking firmer hold of the promises, and looking steadfastly upon the atoning sacrifice, now the intercessor, it believes it is being done; the refining fire touches it, "as the coal Isaiah's lips"; it yields, it trusts -- the work is done; and now the soul, sanctified, believes it is done, and rejoices in the rest of faith. The belief that it will be done, that it is being done, is the trust which brings the blessing; the belief that it is done follows after. They are each distinct, though all may occur in the interval of a moment.

After noticing one more abuse we shall close the present chapter. The abuse to which I refer is, the rendering a profession of sanctification a condition of its attainment. Let those who are clear in the enjoyment of holiness declare it with becoming meekness and humility; if there is any need, when they are satisfied of their attainment, let them be advised to make a public confession. But let no man be urged to make a profession, the truth of which he does not know certainly, and which he even doubts, with the hope that profession under such circumstances will benefit. It may fasten delusion upon him, but cannot bring sanctifying grace. If you are sanctified, evidence is when it will be to the glory of God, and in a manner befitting so high a state. If you have almost attained, so as to think perhaps you are entirely sanctified, confess so much, and look for more. If you desire to be entirely sanctified, confess your desire, and contend for the witness. But never fall into the delusion that you must profess beyond what you are persuaded is true.

It is implied, of course, in all the foregoing advices, that during the time this struggle is going on, whether a longer or shorter period, you are attentive to all the means of grace, particularly prayer, reading the holy word, attendance upon the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, meditation, conversation with those who may be able to give advice, perusing books on the subject, and all other means, public and private, such as God is wont to own and bless. These things must be done until we attain, and after we attain. But let us beware that we fall not into the error of depending on forms and means. There is no doing without them, but in themselves they are nothing. They are to be received only as aids to saving, to sanctifying faith; as scaffolding about the firm wall of confiding trust. But our only help is in God, who gives efficiency to means.

No distinct chapter has been assigned to the agency of the Holy Ghost in the accomplishment of this great change. But this is not because we esteemed it an unimportant point; on the contrary, we hold it to be a cardinal truth. The Holy Ghost is the great agent in the regeneration and sanctification of souls. His power alone effects the change. Do not lose sight of this. Do not fall into the delusion that what you do will effect the work. What you want to see is, that in you there is no help; that so far as making yourself holy is concerned you can absolutely do nothing -- that this work is of God, entirely. Here, means do nothing: they only bring you to God, and he sanctifies; without them you cannot come to God, and unless you come he cannot sanctify; but your coming does not sanctify, it brings you to him who does. You employ the means only to bring you in contact with the agency. It is the fire which refines the gold. Men dig it from the earth, and bring it to

the crucible. If it is not put in the flame it will not be refined. The fire does not refine the gold unless it be brought; the bringing does not refine; it must be brought, and the fire must exert its agency. The soul is not sanctified by means, nor in the absence of them. The means are necessary to bring it to God; when it is brought, God does the work. Remember this, seeking soul; and now, having employed the means, expect God to touch you, and accomplish his promise. Look now away from means; look away from self; trust in him; yea, trust now! Fall at his feet, and he will make thee whole!

Christian Purity

Randolph Sinks Foster

Chapter 8

EVIDENCE BY WHICH ONE MAY KNOW THAT HE IS ENTIRELY SANCTIFIED

How may one know, after he shall have employed the means prescribed in the foregoing chapter, that they have been effectual -- that he has attained the object of his desires?

This is obviously an important question, contemplated in whatever light it may be viewed. To any who may be anxious upon this great subject of personal holiness it must be invested with peculiar interest. In the goodness of God, we are so constituted that we cannot rest short of a reasonable certainty in matters we deem of moment. Doubt torments before the time; uncertainty generates despair; suspense, who can bear! But bad as uncertainty is, it is better than false security! Better to be disquieted than rest upon a volcano! Unrest is preferable to slumbers beneath the avalanche!

In calling attention, therefore, to some of the evidences upon which one may conclude himself to have attained unto the experience of holiness, and in which he may securely rest, we hope to accomplish two objects. First, to prevent security upon false grounds; and, second, to encourage and lead forward trembling faith to solid rest; so aiding to convince the deluded, and comfort the sincere; to rebuke the hypocrite, and build up the true, but hesitating disciple.

Every stage of religious progress has its distinctive marks, and may be ascertained with great certainty by giving heed to these. The incipient work of the Spirit, conviction for sin -asserts itself in an unmistakable manner; penitence has its infallible signs; justification is accompanied with its appropriate witness; entire sanctification is not without proof.

One may be a child of God, possibly, without a clear and definite witness to himself; nay, we doubt not, this is so in some instances, but such cases are not common, and may generally be traced to some peculiarity of the mind itself, or to untoward circumstances.

As men differ in natural traits, habits of mind, education, and physical health, their spiritual experiences may vary; but, with few exceptional cases, a genuine experience will not fail to be supported by sufficient proof. The manner and time of the great change will not always be manifest; but the fact, as a rule, will be unquestionable.

Religious experience is authenticated to the mind in two modes: First, inwardly, by the witness of the Divine Spirit conjointly with our own spirit. Second, outwardly, by the external manifestations -- the fruits of the life. Where these are found coexisting, there will be but slight probability of delusion. The great danger is unfaithfulness in applying the tests. Under most unfortunate teaching some are hurried on to profession without a clear understanding of their own case, and perhaps, in some instances, against their own convictions, with the vain hope that it will do them good; and having made profession, under the influence of pride, and a vague conception that it will in some way help them, they are induced to continue it; meantime they give sad proof to themselves, if they would observe it, and to others, who will not fail to see it, that they are laboring under a fatal mistake. If this is so with regard to regeneration itself, it is much more likely to be so with respect to entire holiness.

When entire sanctification takes place, it will be evidenced directly and indirectly.

1. Directly, by the joint witness of God's "Spirit with our spirits" that the work is done. Where this witness is given, it is conclusive and complete. Other testimony is only requisite to assure us that we are not mistaken in supposing this. When it is certain God's Spirit attests a work, that attestation needs no corroboration. The doctrine of the direct witness of the Holy Spirit conjointly with our spirit needs no vindication here, it is clearly a Bible doctrine. "We know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us" (1 John 3:24). "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2:12). "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (1 John 5:10). "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of love, and of power, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). There is no dispute as to the fact, that the passages cited teach the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit. There is, however, a question as to whether they refer to a justified state alone. This has come to be a point of so much importance as to require extended notice.

There is no doctrine of the Scriptures more difficult to formulate than this of the witness of the Spirit, so as to make it clearly understood in what precisely it consists, and how it is rendered and cognized.

This much we may say, the method of the Spirit's witness we do not conceive to be by sensible signs. It may be accompanied by such, but is not ordinarily; not by an audible voice, not by a visible manifestation, not by a sensible touch, not any thing of this kind; and yet the witness is direct and assured, as much so as though accompanied with outward manifestations. It is a consciousness wrought in the soul that a change is effected.

One may be ready to exclaim, "How can these things be?" This is no new question. One of old, and he a ruler in Israel, propounded it to our Saviour, not, indeed, concerning the witness, but concerning the work itself. We borrow our Lord's answer: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." The fact you cannot question; the mode is a mystery. The manner of one spirit's communion with another spirit is shut away from our knowledge, but the fact of such communion is a matter of undoubted experience; the mode of the contact unknown, but the thing itself a part of consciousness.

But may one rely upon the witness here indicated? Is there not great probability of mistake? Take the blind man, whose eyes have been sealed in darkness for a life-time; whose sightless balls have rolled in rayless night; who, amid outward things, has groped his cheerless way for half a century, ever wondering what they were, what their appearance, what the beauties of color and form of which others spoke: take him out amid the splendors of the starlit sky, where millions of resplendent worlds bewilder the gaze; or lead him to the forest, or the mountain, or the river, or the ocean; or to gardens of flowers, or galleries of art; suddenly lift the vail: will he know the change? Open, among the ravishing strains of a cathedral choir, the ears of one born deaf; will he know it? Quiet the sufferings of the child of affliction, who has spent sleepless nights of pain; bring glad tidings to the broken heart; pour joy into the bosom filled with sorrow; hush the storm to the tempest-beaten voyager; lift the burden from the shoulders of the fainting; will they know it? And shall it not be known when the Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are become children of God? when the heart that was broken is bound up? when the heart that was dead is made alive? when the heart that fainted under the burden of sin, and trembled at the impending wrath of God, is lifted up, and beholds, by faith, a smiling Saviour? If the watcher knows when midnight is past, the sailor when the tempest subsides, surely the soul shall know when the morning of peace breaketh, and the storm of guilt is hushed!

But how shall one discriminate between the witness of the Spirit in justification and entire sanctification? The Spirit is given when we are justified; what more may we expect when we fully attain when holiness is brought in? When he is entirely sanctified, the same Spirit bears witness again, just as he did before; but now it is to another fact, not that he is pardoned, but that he is entirely sanctified. And if the former change was known to his own consciousness, so also will this latter be. Thus the Spirit witnesses with our spirits to our religious state whatever it may be, whether of justification merely or entire sanctification.

In this connection, and before we pass to consider the fruits of this state distinctly, we may say a word with respect to the

more general spiritual phenomena immediately attending it.

In the moment of sanctification the emotive experience is doubtless various: some are exercised in one way and some in another; some have one class of emotions, some another. There is diversity of operation both with respect to the Divine and human spirit. We may venture to suggest, however, some things very generally attending this wonderful change.

- (1.) It is, perhaps, generally immediately preceded and accompanied with unusual illumination of mind, imparting clearer and more distinct views of the atonement, the nature of holiness, and the depth of internal corruption.
- (2.) This is associated with a marked increase of faith. The soul, favored with this glorious illumination, realizes a strength of faith at which itself is astonished, which claims the promises with a certain assurance, and without a waver.
- (3.) Attending this wonderful faith is an immediate assurance wrought, as above described, by the Divine Spirit, and attested by the soul, that sin is all gone and the soul is purified. This assurance amounts to entire certainty in the conviction of the soul enjoying it.
- (4.) Then follows, in some instances, great joy and ecstasy; but this, I think, is not the general experience. Ordinarily the soul at this crisis is filled with peace rather than joy; simple rest, tranquillity, a sense of complete satisfaction, attended, in most instances, with almost no emotion, in exceptional cases only, with great rapture. The expectation of great rapture is common; this not infrequently leads to difficulty.
- (5.) All this is accompanied with a sense of the Divine presence; of communion with God, and intimacy -- oneness -- peculiar to this grace; a feeling that God is all in all; a total abandonment of self and the creature, and a delightful acquiescence in the will of God, and calm repose upon him.

And now, the soul being brought into this sense of union and communion with God, its life will be in him, and this will be evidenced further by its fruits.

II. Hence we proceed to state, in the second place, that sanctification is evidenced indirectly by its fruits. "By their fruits ye shall know them," is a good rule; and we might, with great propriety, add, by your fruits ye shall know yourselves. There are certain fruits which proceed from sanctification, which must exist where that grace itself exists, as evidences of its presence, and certain other and counter fruits, proceeding from unsanctified dispositions, which must necessarily exist where it does not, as manifestations of its absence. Now these fruits, if carefully considered, must constitute a most important branch of evidence in the case.

"By what 'fruit of the Spirit' may we 'know that we are of God,' even in the highest sense?"

"By love, joy, peace, always abiding; by invariable long-suffering, patience, resignation; by gentleness, triumphing over all provocation; by goodness, mildness, sweetness, tenderness of spirit; by fidelity, simplicity, godly sincerity; by meekness, calmness, evenness of spirit; by temperance, not only in food and sleep, but in all things natural and spiritual.

Entire sanctification is a state of absolute freedom from sin, properly so called; it will, therefore, evidence itself by the absence of sin. Any sin, whether of the motive, of the will, of the desire, or of the life, negatives its existence. To conceive of entire sanctification as coexisting with sin properly so called, is to conceive of the truth of contradictory propositions. Either it must be admitted that it is possible to men to be without sin and to live without it, or the doctrine of entire sanctification must be surrendered, for sin cannot be a constituent element of entire sanctification. Man as man is, and must continue while in the body and when out of it, a finite and limited being in all his powers. But finiteness is not sin; limitation of perfection is not unholiness. There is no need that he should remain contaminated by sin. Here is good and plain ground upon which to test ourselves; and with sincerity and care we shall be very likely to arrive at the truth. Are your motives pure? your volitions in harmony with the will of God? your desires single? your acts holy, according to

your gracious ability? are these things so unintermittently?

Your tempers. How are they? Do you become impatient under trial; fretful, when chided or crossed; angry, revengeful, when injured; vain, when flattered; proud, when prospered; complaining, when chastened; unbelieving, when seemingly forsaken; unkind, when neglected? Are you subject to discontent, to ambition, to selfishness? Are you worldly? covetous of riches, of vain pomp and parade, of indulgence, of honor, of ease? Are you unfeeling, contemptuous of others, seeking your own, boasters, proud, lovers of your own selves? Beware! These are the sediments of the old nature!

Nay, if they exist in you, in however small a degree, they are demonstrative that the old man of sin is not dead. It will be a sad mistake if you detect these evils within and yet close your eyes to them, and continue to make profession of holiness. These are not infirmities; they are indications of want of grace. Remember that secret sins -- sins unknown to all without -- sins of the imagination, of the thought, of the heart -- sins of desire and affection -- are sins. Men may not see them; in their eyes you may be blameless -- but the pure and holy God sees them, and condemns them. Until grace shall have thoroughly purged your soul, and you are made conscious thereof, you will need to cry unclean, unclean.

Your duties. How with regard to these? Do you delight in them? are they your pleasure? do they constitute your chief joy? When God evidently calls, do you go willingly, though it be through the furnace; through persecution; through losses, reproaches, sorrows? In the midst of all, is God your joy and rejoicing, and can you say, "The will of God be done" -- enduring patiently, and performing joyfully, "as seeing Him who is invisible?" Is your will as God's will? Does he find in you no murmuring, no drawing back, no displeasure; but on the contrary, submission and joy?

Your experience. How upon this point? Have you an unwavering confidence in God? Is your peace of mind full? Have you joy in the Holy Ghost? Do you have free communion with God?

Do you realize within a consciousness of purity? Though, without, there be tempest or calm, sorrow or joy, trial or triumph, do you still, in every case, find a full communion between your soul and the Divine Spirit? By this we do not mean that you are always to be happy, ecstatic; but always to realize union with God, whether you sorrow or rejoice. Do you rejoice even in tribulation? and is the life that you live altogether by the faith of the Son of God?

Are you entirely the Lord's? Ponder this question. Look well to it. Have you any thing which you do not hold in God? Are you separate from him at any point? Are you opposed to him in any thing? Are your actions and enjoyments all in unison with him? Are your influence, your property, your entire position, and your whole life, so far as you can control them, with him? Are you wholly the Lord's? In your work, in your rest, in your indulgences, in your denials, in your affections, in your volitions, in your associations, in your endeavors, are you always, everywhere, by intention and effort, in union with God?

If to the above questions you can with honesty return a favorable answer, then may you conclude that you are one with the Lord, that you are entirely sanctified.

These are severe tests, but they are not more searching than truth and honesty require. If you shrink from the ordeal, you furnish the best proof that you are cherishing delusion as to this high state. If they should seem to condemn you, be not disconsolate. You are not therefore without hope. You are still a child of grace, and what is wanting may be at the eve of completion. Only be faithful to yourself and allow no temporizing, no tenderness toward real faults, and all will yet be well.

Christian Purity

Randolph Sinks Foster

Chapter 9

HOW ENTIRE HOLINESS MAY BE RETAINED

We may not discuss here the mooted question of the possibility of a believer's final apostasy. Whatever may be the truth upon that point, all agree that during life, amid the enticements of the world and the seductions and temptations of sense, and the frailty of human weakness, the best men are liable to fluctuations of character; now drifting away and anon recovering; now aglow with holy fervors, now declining and cold; now in the mount of sacred fellowship, breathing and living the very spirit of heaven, anon in the valley, and bowing down under heaviness and manifold darkness. In these diverse states, we must believe the soul varies in sanctity, and cannot doubt that it suffers in its actual character as well as feelings. Doubtless mere changes of the emotions may exist without radical changes of character. Neither sorrow, nor temptation, nor even great heaviness of spirit, nor yet absence of conscious fellowship with God, necessarily imply either backsliding or sin. It is not of these we speak, as among the changes by which character suffers, but of those yieldings to evil influence by which we grieve the Spirit and consciously depart from God. Placed in the midst of these external evil influences, and beset with human frailties, what, we now particularly inquire, can be done in order that a sanctified soul may preserve its state and character; that it may be in the evening what it was in the morning; this week, what it was last; this year, what it was the former year? A more interesting practical inquiry could scarcely be started. We will endeavor briefly to answer it.

And we should never, when contemplating the subject of actual salvation, lose sight of the fact, that we are coworkers with God; he works, and we work with him. It is so in the incipient motions of the soul toward salvation, and so throughout all subsequent stages of the work; so in the beginning, so in the progress; so in attaining, and so in maintaining, each several state of grace. This is so plain as to need no illustration. But the question recurs, What must we do in order to retain the grace of entire sanctification?

1. We answer, first: we must acquire the habit of constant watching against sin. The tempter is a vigilant and insidious foe, ever on the alert, ever cunning, and full of artifice. We need to be as wakeful and vigilant. There is no time when he may not approach us, no place so sacred that he will not dare to intrude himself. Even in the privacy of the closet, at the communion, in the sanctuary -- when we are alone, when in society, when musing, when conversing, when preaching, when praying, when praising, when engaged in business, when seeking pleasure, when employed, when idle -- he ever lurks near us, and seeks our ruin. He often disguises his true character; sometimes appearing to us as an angel of light, using the honied tones of friendship, professing love, consulting our good, wearing the mien of disinterestedness; now flattering, that we may become vain; persuading, that we may consent; raging, that we may yield; and with a thousand other modes, seeking either to surprise, conciliate, or overwhelm us.

Some are ready to exclaim, But such watching would become wearisome, and render the service a hard and impracticable duty. No, not if the soul is free to it. No duty is oppressive if we love it. By the grace of God, inwardly helping us, and the instincts, if I may employ the term, of a sanctified soul -- by which I mean no more than its ready, almost spontaneous effort -- it may be done, and done with ease -- but even though it were wearisome, this is not our rest; and if holiness be worth possessing, it is worthy of the effort requisite to its attainment and preservation.

2. Would you maintain a sanctified state? Then must there be on your part an absolute refusal to comply with temptation under any circumstance, to any degree. The slightest compliance is death. We would impress this deeply upon your minds. It is a very different thing from the watchfulness advised above. A sentinel may be very watchful, but not faithful;

he may see the enemy, but not sound the alarm; nay, may make terms with him. You are not only to watch the approach of sin, but absolutely and totally to refuse it! It matters nothing though the temptation be powerful, though the indulgence be venial, you may not yield. You may not parley if the case is unequivocal. If doubtful, you must shun the appearance of evil. Let the purpose be inflexible, that you will not go one step -- not even look with a desire -- toward the path of the transgressor; "avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away. This is your only safety, if you would maintain your relation to God.

3. Live in the use of all the ordinary and instituted means of grace. Some who, perhaps, were truly sanctified, have committed a deplorable and fatal error upon this point. Finding themselves greatly sustained and strengthened they have vainly imagined that they need no longer employ the ordinary means. Some have been heard to say that they found no further occasion for prayer and other helps that were indispensable in a merely justified state. However sincere such may have been in the outstart of their experience, they have evidently reached a dreadful state of delusion and fanaticism. The means of grace, as instituted of God, are undoubtedly essential to spiritual sustenance when they are practicable, that is, when within reach. To neglect them is a contempt of God's gracious provisions, which must induce his displeasure; and it is a direct violation of his order, which includes the use of means as a duty, the neglect of which, therefore, is sinful.

We may name as important -

Prayer -- Prayer of all kinds, as occasion may require; but particularly closet prayer, which is only another name for inward looking to God, generally performed in secret places. This, with a sanctified soul, will become a habit; its breath will be prayer. This will be a constant, though it may be, and doubtless to some extent will be, an unconscious or rather spontaneous exercise.

Meditation -- To preserve this state much meditation and inward looking is useful. Seasons of serious thoughtfulness of this kind are indispensable to spiritual growth, and even to the continuance of spiritual life. In such retired seasons the soul takes her reckoning, resolves upon her course, and strengthens her resolution for after contests.

Searching the Holy Scriptures -- with an humble, honest, teachable spirit. This we believe an important means, in proportion as it may be practicable. It will supply the soul with armor, enlarge its powers, help it for resistance and progress, and strengthen all the elements of its life.

The Sacrament -- the holy communion. Perhaps no means will be attended with so great comfort, so much profit. Let it, therefore, never be neglected, and never idly or inconsiderately attended to, but with due preparation, and much prayer, and humiliation, and thanksgiving.

Christian communion -- or conversation and intercourse with those who enjoy, or are seeking, a high spiritual state. This is of great value. It encourages, strengthens, and corrects. Reading religious biography is of this kind. It is communion with the holy dead, as conversation with the living is communion with them. Holy men of old "spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard" them! so let us do, and the Lord will hear us also, and, when he hears, will bless.

Still, much discrimination needs to be practiced here. Many excellent people are not judicious counselors. Some are wanting in judgment; some, fanatical, or morbid, or ignorant, or narrow-teaching for commandments the traditions of men; bearing self-invented burdens and imposing them upon others; not wise, however good. One needs to use discretion in no case so much as upon this subject in the choice of his friends. Beware of new lights -- of bold, confident, forward persons, self-constituted teachers -- separatists, censorious, opinionated Pharisees. Beware of cant, of sanctimoniousness, of party shibboleths, of names. These are not of Christ and tend to harm. Be simple, sincere, and earnest; and in quietness, and without a "Lo here!" or "Lo there" of ostentatious display, in the use of divinely appointed means pursue your course. You cannot fail of success.

4. Consecutive, or rather perpetual, consecration. This, to some, may seem to be included in the resolute resistance of every approach of sin. However this may be, it does not do away with the need of the remark we wish to make under this head. Entire consecration, as a means to the attainment of sanctification, has been explained in another connection; what we wish now to say is, that it is a means, and an indispensable one, of its preservation. It is so vital that the state cannot exist a moment in its absence. Hence, let it be remembered that the consecration which precedes this state is likewise to continue in the same degree after it is gained, for its perpetuation. It is a constant, uninterrupted, and unending consecration; a point carried on into an endless line.

5. The life of holiness is eminently a life of faith. We have before said it is attained by faith; we now say it cannot continue a moment without faith; faith is its very root and sap. The same faith which at first introduced the principle preserves it. But we are not, therefore, to suppose the soul must always be in painful endeavor. Faith, in the heart of a Christian, operates when he does not think of it, produces fruits without his consciousness.

Faith is not something which one having learned how to use, he is enabled to sin, and get rid of his sin dexterously -- enabled to renounce or soil, and then restore, sanctity at will. Rather, it is that mysterious hand by which the holy soul clings to God amid all temptation, and so is kept from sin.

6. Acquire the habit of living by the minute. Learn the secret of that wise counsel, when properly understood, "Be careful for nothing." Not that you are to be careless; but let each minute provide for itself. Let it not be supposed that you are not to act for the future, but act by the minute. Take care of this moment now, while you have it, and the next when it comes; you will not then neglect any. You can live this minute without sin! Is it not so? Do it, then. Never mind what is before you. Do not sin now. When each successive minute comes, do likewise. If you will do this, you will not sin . at all.

It is implied in all these advices, of course, not that your efforts efficiently keep you, but instrumentally: you employ the means, God is the efficiency. He gives you the power to work; and when you work, he co-works with you and in you. So you "are kept by the power of God, through faith."

We will append to this chapter a remark upon the subject of regaining this grace, if at any time it should be lost. There is some difference of opinion among Christians as to the extent of lapsing or falling away possible after conversion. We need not say that we are among the number who believe in the possibility of entire apostasy; upon this belief, however, in these connections, we do not insist. We only avow our belief that a merely justified Christian may sin against God and forfeit the grace of justification; and, further, that a sanctified Christian may lose the grace of sanctification, yet, and also of justification. Sanctification includes justification; it may be lost, and justification retained; or both may be lost at one and the same time. Not every thing that would mar a perfectly holy character would destroy the filial relation of the believer; as that relation subsisted prior to entire sanctification, so it may remain when that state is marred -- ceases.

Now, in answering the question, How may one who has enjoyed the grace of entire sanctification, and lost it, be restored? it is obvious reference must be had to the extent of his lapse, the condition into which he has fallen. Much more may be necessary for one than for another -- a different kind and amount of effort. One has fallen from the summit of a mountain into a deep gulf at its base; another has just perceptibly declined slightly down its slope; one will need much more to regain the apex than the other.

Has one who was evidently a truly sanctified child of God fallen entirely away, become sevenfold more the child of the devil than he was before? In addition to the enormity of his sins, has he continued long in this state? How dreadful his condition! One is almost ready to conclude there is no mercy, no salvation for him; "that to renew him again to repentance is impossible." We would not go so far; yet we think the chances are, he never will be restored. Should he, however, in his abyss of sin, ever awake, and think of returning to his injured and dishonored Saviour, deep and painful will be his conviction; broken, indeed, will be his heart; his cry will ascend as from the very belly of hell; and the probabilities are, he will find trouble and sorrow. Not because the Saviour will be less merciful, but because he will find it hard to confide in mercy which has been so much abused. Not because the blood of Jesus will be ineffectual to wash

away his sins, but because he will find it difficult to avail himself, by faith, of that blood which has been trampled beneath unhallowed feet. Should one who has fallen so deplorably chance to read this page, we would speak to him in behalf of his abused Lord; and yet our words shall be kind. See what you have done! How great is your sin! Think of other days. Call to mind the goodness of God. Behold yourself now! Are you overwhelmed? -- filled with shame and sorrow? It is well. Will you return? Will you come back to the arms of your slighted Saviour? Do you say, How can I? -- there is no mercy. Say not so. There is mercy, if you have a heart to seek it. Come as first you came. The same Saviour can still save, his blood will still be efficacious. You need to commence again at the beginning, to relay the foundations; but do this, and all will be well. The cup is bitter, but you need to drink it, the path thorny, but you must travel it. It may be your sorrows will be greater than before: you must suffer them. But this one thing remember, and let it sustain you: if you will retrace your steps, if you will make the needful efforts, you may again be happy.

But your case is not that which is described above; the advice does not meet your particular want. You have not entirely forsaken the Saviour. You are still a Christian, in the enjoyment of a good hope, outwardly witnessing a good profession, and inwardly enjoying some of the sacred influences of the Spirit; but you are not in the high grace of a former experience.

The love of the world in an undue measure, yielding to the force of some temptation, neglect of some duty, want of watchfulness, has laid waste your confidence. You have departed in some degree from God; your thoughts, or your affections, have been given to an improper object; you have preferred your own will to the will of God in some particular, you have let in vanity or sloth, pride or impatience, uncharitableness or selfishness; you have ceased to be entirely the Lord's; guilt has ensued, condemnation is upon you. You feel it; you are unhappy. You do not doubt your relation, but all is not right within. Humble yourself before God, confess your fault, return: wherein you have departed in thought, affection, volition, or deed, at once correct the wrong, and expect God to renew you again. There may be times and circumstances when the confession of your departure to the Church may be necessary. If it has been manifest, it will bring your profession into discredit, and if secret, it must violate your own sense of propriety should you continue the profession without an admission of your temporary departure. So soon as you return heartily to God he will return to you: but it must be a full, hearty, entire return; not a mere desire, not a convulsive effort, not a declaration, not a semi-sincere and half-earnest thing; you must come as first you came, with an entire offering, and God will accept it. If you shall find great difficulty, as perhaps you may -- it is possible even more than at first, for your reproof -- you must overcome, overcome as at first, not in your own strength, but in the strength of God, which will become yours, by the use of the means with which you are sufficiently acquainted.

And should any who have lapsed from this blessed experience chance to read these pages, we would say to them, Return; retrace your steps. You cannot, whatever other Christians may do, find rest in an inferior state. You know the more excellent way. Duty calls you with a tenfold voice: do not turn away, be not overcome with discouragement, let not self-upbraidings hinder you. You now know the cause of your loss -- you may succeed better -- try again. Privilege invites, duty points the way, your unsatisfied heart urges, the Spirit moves -- do not delay.

Whatever be the extent of your departure, whether of long or short duration, into more grievous or less guilty backslidings; whether you have lost all, or only a part of your religious character, stop now. Go not one step farther. Turn at once to your dishonored Saviour; bring back your heart, guilty as it may be, and become his again. Think not your case is hopeless. It may be deplorable -- dreadful. You may have deeply grieved the Spirit, reproached the Redeemer, insulted the Father; still, if you will return, there is no occasion for despair. See how much is involved, and, as you would not risk your undoing, make haste to find what you have unhappily forfeited.

Look before you. It is high time that you awake out of sleep. What you do must be done now. A moment, and it may be too late. O that we might feel how much depends upon immediate and thorough action; how much and earnestly we are called to work now, and to work diligently, seeing that "the night cometh, in which no man can work!"

Christian Purity

Randolph Sinks Foster

Chapter 10

HINDRANCES TO THE PRESENT ATTAINMENT AND PERMANENT RETENTION OF HOLINESS

Why is not this high and desirable experience generally attained by Christians? This is a point worthy of more extended consideration than can be bestowed upon it in this connection; yet here we may venture to suggest a few reasons. The two cardinal reasons were hinted at in the introductory chapter to this work; a failure clearly to apprehend privilege, and consequent insensibility to obligation. But these causes of neglect and immaturity arise out of others, and produce, in their turn, a complication of other and inferior hindrances. The reason why Christians generally are not entirely sanctified is not because it is not their privilege; not because they have sought for this great blessing earnestly and persistently, and have failed to attain; not because of the insufficiency of ordained means to bring them to its possession; not because they do not need it; not because God does not will it; not because the blood of Jesus was not shed for it; not because the Holy Spirit is not able to effect it; not because duty does not require it; none of these. It is not because Christians do not, on the whole, prefer holiness; not because they would not wish to be delivered from sinfulness; not because they are entirely without efforts in this direction. Most Christians, perhaps there are no exceptions, do have hours of deep and earnest solicitude, and crying to God; do mourn over their short-comings, and cherish habitual aspirations and longings after a higher state -- a state faintly apprehended, and fitfully sought after. But they do not succeed, in a majority of instances, until near the close of life, perhaps in the very struggle of death, for many painful reasons, among which we may name particularly the following:

There is an obvious reason why this experience is not ordinarily attained at the same time that regenerating grace is; namely, the mind of the penitent is not turned to it distinctly at all; perhaps not one in a thousand ever think of it at that time. Their whole effort is directed to the gain of pardon and reconciliation. For this they pray, and weep, and mourn. The cry of their heart is, "God be merciful to me a sinner," "Save, or I perish." Their faith is kept upon this one object. Allowing, therefore, entire sanctification to be a distinct work, as we do, and allowing that its condition is faith, it is no marvel that it is not obtained synchronically with pardon. It is not asked for, it is not believed for; it is not, of course, bestowed.

His soul rests for the present in perfect peace. Time passes on, temptation comes, and now he feels an inward motion -- the uprising of some unholy temper. This first motion to evil is followed by others of the same kind; and the young convert awakes to the fact that there are lurking enemies within him, seeking to bring him again into captivity. He is surprised to find that, though he cannot doubt his pardon, (if indeed the new discovery does not awaken doubt,) and though conscious of the great change he has experienced, and though assured of the love of God, yet he is not entirely sanctified. He awakens to the consciousness of an evil lying deep within -- entrenched in his very nature. The discovery brings distress. It is not enough that he is pardoned, he now feels that he must also be healed.

But hindrances arise; and alas, but too generally, hindrances which long keep the enemy in possession of the heart, so as to disturb its peace, and divide its empire.

The first hindrance we shall name is that of defective and unsound teaching, and, consequent upon this, confused and incoherent views; as expressed in another connection, privilege is not apprehended, duty is not enforced. There is not sufficient plainness and simplicity in the teaching of the pulpit. The doctrine is too much taken from its connections, and presented in such a manner as to intimidate and confuse, rather than enlighten and encourage. The subject is mystified,

and made to assume the character of the marvelous and impracticable; whereas it should be placed before Christians in simple earnestness, as a part of their common privilege and calling.

Without startling them with it as a far-fetched novelty, as a thing to be speculated about, it should be kept before them, in connection with other doctrines and duties, as the great point to which they are constantly to aim, and which, in the use of the means, they are to expect momentarily. Let it thus be insisted upon in simple, honest earnestness, and multitudes will seek and find the blissful experience.

2. A great hindrance has arisen to the progress of this work from the manifest extravagances and inconsistencies of some who make a profession of it -- extravagances more in language than conduct, evincing ignorance, pride, and presumption; and inconsistencies of life and temper, convicting them either of hypocrisy or delusion. These causes have done much to disgust and injure honest and sincere minds, occasioning them to look upon the whole subject either with doubt or fear.

Identifying the doctrine and experience of holiness with the imperfections and improprieties alluded to above, and attaching, as a consequence, a kind of opprobrium to the profession, many have turned away from the whole subject with a strong distaste, if not absolute disgust. This is not excusable. We do not apologize for it. But it is not unnatural that it should be so.

What are called schools have been formed: a class of Christians have separated themselves from their brethren, and this has brought them and their profession into discredit. We must believe it has greatly, though we are convinced not intentionally, injured this work of God. Their influence among their brethren is impaired, and what of good is in them is lost.

But having thus candidly admitted a great hindrance as originating with those who profess this grace, we must, with equal candor and no less pain, record another and more fatal hindrance, coming from the ranks of Christians making no such profession. Some of these, having become prejudiced against the doctrine, and particularly against the profession, from the causes above alluded to, have indulged in a spirit and strictures both discreditable to themselves and injurious to others; in some cases bestowing upon the whole subject sneers and contemptuous epithets, and so grieving the Spirit of grace, and discouraging and absolutely intimidating those who would seek and enjoy its blessed experience.

But the great hindrance is in ourselves; we are not willing, we will not consent. We speak of Christians generally. Many Christians seem desirous to get along with as little religion as possible, just so they may not forfeit their hope; others have higher aims; they wish to be exemplary, and will not be satisfied without the comforting influence of the Spirit; but the number is comparatively small who honestly desire, and earnestly endeavor after, entire consecration -after all the mind that was in Christ. Satan may not be tolerated, but Christ does not reign without a rival. Self assumes a part of the government; and while we would not for any consideration allow Satan to divide the sovereignty with Christ, we most earnestly contend to divide it ourselves. What a fatal mistake! How much of loss and unhappiness it causes to ourselves! how much of good it prevents with regard to others! We must have a little of our own will with regard to our property, our time, our indulgences; we must spare some of our lusts, not quite put them to death; we cannot quite consent that the Lord should be all in all; in most things he may govern, but in some (minor things, to be sure) we must have it our way. Here is the great cause why we do not become wholly the Lord's -- we cannot quite crucify self.

Consider what is required of you; ponder well your responsibility; and with your eye upon the present, and your mind upon the future, act nobly your part. Contend for the mastery. Other hindrances than those named may appear; doubtless this will be so. But what then? Shall they prevail? Duty is plain. Privilege is manifest. A thousand voices urge you forward. An Omnipotent hand is at your command. Go forward. The greater the hindrance the greater the triumph, and the more glorious the reward. Be animated to effort, and may you prevail! Remember in whom is your strength, and doubt not.

Christian Purity

Randolph Sinks Foster

Chapter 11

ADVICE TO CHRISTIANS PROFESSING THIS HIGH ATTAINMENT

Christians often need to be admonished; and not always the less so, because of the greatness of their attainments. Admitting, as we do, that no degree of religious progress precludes mental imperfection and infirmity, even the most mature Christians may need counsel and advice; and whether they need it or not, they will, in proportion to their humility and self-distrust, thankfully receive it, when given with good intent and in a proper spirit.

It is believed that you are sincere in your profession, and that you well understand your state. You are not fanatics, not enthusiasts, not pretenders. You are God's sanctified children. Your faith has claimed, and your hearts fully embraced, the promises. You know the power of God, and are "made partakers of the Divine nature." You live, yet not you, it is Christ that liveth in you; and the life you live is a life of faith in the Son of God. But you are yet in the world; your warfare is not finished, your work not done. There are duties, trials, sufferings, responsibilities, and privileges still before you, more, and greater, it may be, than if you stood in a greatly inferior lot. The strongest and best-armed battalions are usually stationed in the most exposed and dangerous part of the fight. You ought to know, and doubtless do, that many eyes are upon you; that your position is a shining one; that you are "compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses" -witnesses thronging the earth, ascending from the pit, and clustering from the skies, gazing upon you with very different feelings but with a common interest. How much depends upon your action! How important that you stand nobly to your post! You will need much grace, much heroism, more than the martyr's firmness. If you fall, or even waver -- you are a standard-bearer -- great will be the sensation. If you stand firm, great will be your recompense in that day.

Having found the invaluable prize of holiness, nothing is so desirable to you as its extension among your fellowmen. For this you live; for this you labor, and toil, and pray; watching for it, as they that watch for the morning." Great is your responsibility in these connections, great your peril. It will be well to keep this before your minds, and lay it away in your hearts.

Would you retain the high state to which, in the unspeakable mercy and goodness of God, you have been lifted, and would you cause others to see, and take knowledge of you, that you have been with Jesus, to feel the power and influence of your piety, heed further the following advice.

Do not attach too much importance to profession; here is one point where you are likely to be misled, hence the greater need of caution. Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher found it necessary to advise a discreet and cautious, a well-timed profession, in their day; the admonition is certainly quite as much needed now. There may be times when, if you live in this grace, it will be well and profitable to declare it; but there will be other times when you should not introduce it. Let your life generally declare for you; and when the circumstances seem to demand spoken testimony, be careful that it be not overwrought, that it be free from ostentation, that it be in great humility and self-abasement. Do not fall into the delusion that specific profession should be confidently and often repeated. Depend upon it, it will savor more of pride than grace; it will influence to the injury rather than the advancement of the cause, and especially if your tempers and manner of living leave any just ground of doubt as to your enjoyment of so great grace. You are tempted that it is for the glory of God. There is room for doubt whether this is not sometimes a snare. Do not, at your peril, if in your family, or business, or in any of the walks of life, or if in your inward tempers, you find ground for suspicion of yourself, do not imagine to repair this suspicion by the boldness of your profession. This is nothing short of delusion, and cannot help

you, but must involve you in real condemnation. Always remember your numerous and, it may be, great frailties, and know that men see them and take account of them. There is one consideration which will bear weight with you; allowing that boldness would answer for you, it certainly would not answer for all. Yet the very ones who ought to be silent will be most likely to imitate you. It would, therefore, be better for you to give no countenance to their imprudent and injurious rashness, by observing the utmost prudence in the manner of your own witnessing. Upon this subject Mr. Wesley holds the following language:

"Suppose one had attained to this, would you advise him to speak of it?"

"At first, perhaps, he would scarce be able to refrain, the fire would be so hot within him; his desire to declare the loving-kindness of the Lord carrying him away like a torrent. But afterward he might; and then it would be advisable not to speak of it to them that know not God; (it is most likely it would only provoke them to contradict and blaspheme;) nor to others, without some particular reason, without some good in view. And then he should have special care to avoid all appearance of boasting; to speak with the deepest humility and reverence, giving all the glory to God."

Be not over anxious to believe you are entirely sanctified. Rather wait in earnest prayer and trusting in God until you have a clear witness. Do not refuse to believe when there is evidence to justify faith, but neither hasten to believe in advance of the evidence. Never forget that the faith which saves, in none of its stages, has regard to yourself, but to God. It is not to believe that you are justified or sanctified, but to trust in God for the blessing you desire. How most ruinous is that instruction which turns the eye of the inquirer away from God to himself, teaching him to believe something with regard to himself, rather than to cling alone to God! It may distress you for a time to be without the witness you desire, but it is a small matter compared with the work itself; hence, be much more concerned about the latter than the former.

Do not depreciate the blessing of justification. Great wrong has been unwittingly done by unadvised teachings and expressions on the part of those who profess a higher state of grace, with regard to ordinary Christian experience. This is, and always must be, fruitful of several injurious results.

Justification is sometimes represented as an unsafe state -- as but little better, if any, than impenitency; and Christians not actually in the enjoyment of, or earnestly seeking after, a higher state of grace are considered but little more secure than the men of the world. This is most unwise.

Justifying grace is a great blessing; it cannot be too highly prized. A justified soul cannot be lost if it does not fall; it has a title to heaven; no power can deprive it of its inheritance. In this it is no less secure than the entirely sanctified soul. It does not, indeed, enjoy all that it might and should enjoy here; but still it is not without high and glorious blessings. But will the merely justified get to heaven without sanctification? By no means; but they will be sanctified. They are God's children; they cannot, if they do not forfeit the relation, fail of the inheritance. Holiness is a privilege, as such let it always be taught. But that justification, if retained, will infallibly bring its possessor to heaven is no less a truth, and it must never be surrendered.

And we subjoin here this other remark: many Christians who make no pretensions to a higher state than that of ordinary Christian experience do certainly live in such a manner, and evince such deep and earnest piety, as to make them compare favorably -- nay, I may say with advantage -- with most of those who claim, and it may be justly, to have made higher attainments; it becomes us, therefore, to be cautious how we pass condemnation upon them.

A word of counsel to those who do not profess to have attained. If you are a Christian you feel the need of entire conformity to the will of God in all things; you would not intentionally injure or hinder, but would in every way promote this great work, both in yourself and others. This is your feeling, we know; but it may be you are, nevertheless, under influences which lead you astray. Have you not allowed yourself to become indifferent to the great work of holiness, or, it may be, even prejudiced against it? Do you not sometimes speak of it in an unbecoming manner? I have sometimes heard even ministers say, with a sneer, of some erring, or it may be not erring, Christian, He is a sanctified one! How such

conduct must grieve the Spirit of God! How unbecoming even a mere disciple of Christ, and how much more uncomely in a minister who believes and preaches this glorious doctrine! As you love God, and would not grieve his Spirit; as you love the Church, and would not let down or bring contempt on the simplicity and purity of religion, be cautious how you feel and speak in this connection. Be not a shame to yourselves in thus setting the seal of hypocrisy on your own profession. Rather, forgetting the things which are behind, press forward to the mark of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus. O rest not until you attain to this glorious experience! If others who profess it come short of living it, and so fill you with sorrow and almost impatience, do you obtain it, and live it before them, and cause your silent example, and not your indifference, to be their reproof. And I beg of you to remember to what you are called; and as you love God and hope for his smiles, do not permit yourself to come short.

You may pass along with some comfort and good hope, and with some progress, but be not satisfied until you attain fully. Any thing short of holiness is not the end of your faith.

Christian Purity

Randolph Sinks Foster

Chapter 12

MOTIVES TO ENTIRE HOLINESS

Motives to holiness! Where shall we not go to find them! What direction shall we take to elude them? . Are they not everywhere? Do they not come down from the heavens, and spring up from the earth? Do we not feel them within; and behold them without us? Is there any thing that has a voice that does not enforce them? Do not even mute and dumb things urge them, with silent but persuasive eloquence? What is heaven but an eternal monument of its glory? What is hell but a terrible and endless declaration of its necessity? The happiness of the former and the anguish of the latter equally impress it upon the hearts of thoughtless mortals. Indeed, turn where we will, whether to time or eternity, to the throne or the abyss, a million arguments commend it to us, a million preachers urge it upon us.

If the constitution of the universe and the history of Providence unite to impress a single great lesson upon mankind, it is that which is considered in these pages -- the beauty and utility of holiness; if they combine to constitute one great motive, it is a motive to holiness. But for the deep-seated perversity of our fallen nature, nothing more would be requisite; the sermon of a ceaselessly-preaching universe would prove effectual; Providence would not teach in vain; the cry that comes from above and beneath, from within and without, as from the grave and the judgment, from heaven and hell, and from all regions, and from all beings, admonishing us in solemn language, "Be ye holy," would sink deep into our hearts. Alas! we have no ear for the solemn discourses; the great sermon proceeds; we heed it not. God preaches in all nature, in all providence; we hear him not. Death, and judgment, and eternity, and heaven, and hell, prolong the discourse; but we close our ears against them. Our own hearts take up the theme, and every throb enforces it; but we smother the voice, and will not hearken.

But, reader, turning away from these general reflections, let us invite your attention to a few, a very few, of the motives we desire particularly to bring to your consideration.

1. What ought to be an irresistible motive to holiness is found in its own essential nature, its intrinsic excellence and glory.

Are single virtues, separate and alone, worthy of love -- entitled to the homage of our hearts, as fidelity, charity, filial affection? Do ye yield to these an involuntary admiration wherever found? How much more should we esteem the constellation of all virtues in a single heart! If we pause to contemplate with delight a solitary grace, blooming alone amid a desert waste, with what greater delight should we behold an oasis, where all the graces bloom in perfection of beauty together, shedding their blending fragrance over one lovely spirit!

What would you not give if that spirit were yours? If it might be purchased, would worlds, were they in your possession, be too great a price? You attach value to wealth, beauty, learning, good name, happiness. It is well. These are all desirable; but how less than dust in the balance are they compared with conscious, inviolable virtue! Would you not prefer to be the hero of a single virtue, rather than conqueror of the world? -- a martyred Paul, shining in radiant vestments, rather than a bloody Alexander, dazzling with the splendors of conquest? Why do you attach the idea of beauty and glory to angels? Is it not because they are holy -- because they love with perfect love, adore with perfect adoration, and glow with perfect fervor? If they sing sweetly, is it not because they feel purely? Is it not holiness which spreads joy over all the celestial regions? which causes the gush and rapture of the skies? which kindles the luster and awakens the song of heaven? which suffuses the very spirit of Jehovah with his ineffable glory, and the spirits of all his

holy worshippers with inexpressible and everlasting bliss? Surely, if this be so -- and who can doubt it? -- we are correct when we assume that there is, in the very nature of holiness, an infinite motive to its gain. Rubies are not so precious, and nothing that can be desired can be compared unto it.

2. But if holiness is urged upon us from a consideration of its own intrinsic excellence, much more is it from the fact that God requires it. Let us pause here, for one moment, and take in the impression of this truth. God not only prefers that we, his creatures, should be holy, but he requires it; his authority commands it. Who ever resisted his command and prospered? Reader, know you not that God is now speaking to you? Will you hearken? What does he say? Hear him, and ponder: "Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." Is this God's speech? What does it require of you? Do not, at your peril, hasten away: Do not treat it with contempt. Remember who it is that speaketh. What will you say to him? He commands you to be holy. What will you answer him? You must answer. Will you refuse? Look well to your position. Project your thoughts forward; let your mind take in what surrounds and what lies before you, and answer to yourself the question. Can you afford to be indifferent, or even for a moment longer fail of your privilege? Let your decisions be reached in the presence and under the eye of God.

3. The interest of your Master's cause requires it; and the common glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. How can we glorify God fully without entire consecration and perfect conformity to his entire mind and will? Will not every manifest, nay, even every secret defect, mar and sully the cause and honor of our Redeemer? We are his witnesses, called to be the lights of the world: "If the light that is in us be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Men will take knowledge of us, and thence draw their conclusions; the consequences will not terminate with ourselves; they will reach forward to the vitals of the cause.

The lives of Christians, practical exponents as they are of the principles and spirit of our religion, are among the great agencies for the conversion and sanctification of the world. Books and sermons may be resisted; even tears and entreaties may be despised; but the silent and unostentatious influence of holy lives will speak a language to the heart it cannot easily gainsay, a language which will sound on when we sleep in the dust. The dim tracery of words will be washed away and effaced from memory; but the deep lines of a beautiful example, chiseled into the heart, will remain forever. It is holiness, not the profession of it, that will give us influence both with God and men: winging our prayers with faith, and our counsels with wisdom, deriving power from above, and sending out from us currents of influence through the earth.

4. But especially we derive motives to a higher life and more entire consecration from the circumstances which surround us.

Never, since the beginning, as we believe, was there a more interesting, a more important period, than the present moment. Contemplated in any aspect, it is pregnant and portentous: a grand culminating point is undoubtedly approximating; never, therefore, did the Christian Church need to be so wide awake, so much alive, as now. Like a majestic vessel riding into harbor under the pressure of a fierce storm and full sail, the world seems nearing the port of destiny; she needs now, if ever, experienced and adroit hands to bring her safely and speedily to the mooring. The great harvest is ripe, waving with world-wide expanse. Sturdy reapers are wanted. The materials are gathered, and the temple is rising up out of the midst of them -- builders are in demand.

The Church is not ready to meet the demands of the times. And her want is in a vital point, it is radical -- at the heart. Not that she is more deficient now than formerly. This we do not believe. We are not of those who ask, "Why were the former days better than these days." The Church of Christ, if we judge correctly, was never more vital than at the present moment; but her demands have increased more rapidly than her piety. Extraordinary times demand extraordinary means. Napoleon overran and subjugated Europe with his veteran legions; but they stood still before Wellington, they were not ready for the crisis at Waterloo.

Now is the time when every soldier of Jesus should be at his post, should have on the whole armor, should do valiant battle for the Lord, proving himself a man. See how God has honored us; what a breach he has given us to fill! O that we

may feel our mission, and rise up and gird ourselves to honor it! Now the world wants men, full-grown Christian men, not babes or dwarfs. The man who will dignify his position at this crisis, or even hereafter, must be worthy of it. If we would do any thing, men of God -- if we would not be ciphers in the glorious strife -- if we would not die without issue -- we must prepare for the portentous day in which God has seen fit to give us existence. Every thing now is in earnest. Quick time is the watchword. What we do must be done quickly; a moment, and the opportunity rushes past us; a moment, and we are gone; a step, and the grave contains us. If we would make impression for God, for man, we must strike now. O that we could awake and see and feel the mighty verities thronging around us, and display for once that noble and glorious spirit which becomes sons and daughters of the Most High! Every thing else will perish. Our fortunes, our heroic deeds, our distinctions -- these will all sink down to be remembered no more; what we do here, and in this cause, will live forever; the waves we create here will roll on in widening circles through eternity.

5. And let us look away for a moment into that glorious eternity; is there no motive here? How evanescent and transient are all things beneath the sun! You may live without holiness here -you cannot hereafter. Would you see the value of holiness, linger here. Pursue the upward destiny of a soul brightening under the smile of God forever, see its ever-increasing and unfolding beauty, hear the ravishing melody of its triumphant song. The ages flee away; but mightier than decay, stronger than death, the soul lives on, ascending, widening its circle, becoming more and more like God, and losing itself ever in his ineffable radiance. Such is the destiny of a soul washed in the blood of Jesus. Behold, on the other hand, a soul darkening under the frown of Jehovah. Ages fly away: its darkness broods darker still, its sorrow gathers down in denser folds: it is lost. The lengthened periods of eternity roll by, but they bring no redemption; deep, dark, dismal gloom settles around its sphere forever. Learn by the contrast the value of holiness. Its presence is life -its absence is eternal death. Could you pursue this contrast through eternity -- could you have but a faint glimpse of the reality -- you would no longer rest, but fly in trembling haste to a Saviour's wounds for shelter and for life.