

Sanctification

I will remind you of some points that have been settled in this course of study. The true intent and meaning of the law of God has been, as I trust, ascertained in the lectures on moral government. Let this point, if need be, be examined by reference to those lectures. We have also seen in those lectures what is not and what is implied in entire obedience to the moral law. In those lectures and also in the lectures on justification and repentance, it has been shown that nothing is acceptable to God as a condition of justification and of consequent salvation but a repentance that implies a return to full obedience to the moral law. It has also been shown that nothing is holiness short of full obedience, for the time being, to the moral law. It has also been shown that regeneration and repentance consist in the heart's return to full obedience, for the time being, to this law.

We have also examined the doctrine of depravity and seen that moral depravity, or sin, consists in selfishness and not at all in the constitution of men; that selfishness does not consist in the involuntary appetites, passions, and propensities but that it consists alone in the committal of the will to the gratification of the propensities. We have seen that holiness consists not at all in the constitution of body or mind but that it belongs, strictly, only to the will or heart and consists in obedience of will to the law of God as it lies revealed in the intellect; that it is expressed in one word, love; that this love is identical with the entire consecration of the whole being to the glory of God and to the highest well-being of the universe; or in other words, that it consists in disinterested benevolence.

We have seen that all true saints, while in a state of acceptance with God, do actually render for the time being full obedience to all the known requirements of God; that is, that they do for the time being their whole duty—all that God, at this time, requires of them. We have seen that this obedience is not rendered independent of the grace of God but is induced by the indwelling spirit of Christ received by faith and reigning in the heart. This fact will be more fully elucidated in this discussion than it has been in former lectures. A former lecture was devoted to it, but a fuller consideration of it remains to be entered upon hereafter.

The Principal Terms to be Used in This Discussion

Here let me remark that a definition of terms in all discussions is of prime importance. Especially is this true of this subject. I have observed that almost without an exception those who have written on this subject dissenting from the views entertained here do so upon the ground that they understand and define the terms sanctification and Christian perfection differently from what we do. Every one gives his own definition varying materially from others and from what we understand by the terms, and then he goes on professedly opposing the doctrine as inculcated here. Now this is not only utterly unfair but palpably absurd. If I oppose a doctrine inculcated by another man, I am bound to oppose what he really holds. If I misrepresent his sentiments, "I fight as one that beateth the air." I have been amazed at the diversity of definitions that have been given to the terms Christian perfection, sanctification, etc., and to witness the diversity of opinion as to what is and what is not implied in these terms. One objects wholly to the use of the term Christian perfection because in his estimation it implies this and that and the other thing, which I do not suppose are at all implied in it. Another objects to our using the term sanctification because that implies according to his understanding of it certain things that render its use improper. Now it is no part of my design to dispute about the use of words. I must however use some terms, and I ought to be allowed to use Bible language in its Scriptural sense as I understand it. And if I should sufficiently explain my meaning and define the sense in which I use the terms and the sense in which the Bible manifestly uses them, this ought to suffice. And I beg that nothing more or less may be understood by the language I use than I profess to mean by it. Others may, if they please, use the same terms and give a different definition of them. But I have a right to hope and expect, if they feel called upon to oppose what I say, that they will bear in mind my definition of the terms and not pretend as some have done to oppose my views while they have only differed from me in their definition of the terms used, giving their own definition varying materially and, I might say, infinitely from the sense in which I use the same terms and then arraying their arguments to prove that according to their definition of it, sanctification is not really attainable in this life, when no one here or anywhere else that I ever heard of pretended that in their sense of the term it ever was or ever will be attainable in this life and, I might add, or in that which is to come.

Sanctification is a term of frequent use in the Bible. Its simple and primary meaning is a state of consecration to God. To sanctify is to set apart to a holy use—to consecrate a thing to the service of God. This is plainly both the Old and the New Testaments use of the term. The Greek word *hagiazō* means to sanctify, to consecrate, or devote a person or thing to a particular, especially to a sacred, use. This word is synonymous with the Hebrew *ka dash*. This last word is used in the Old Testament to express the same thing that is intended by the Greek *hagiazō*, namely, to consecrate, devote, set apart, sanctify, purify, make clean or pure. *Hagiasmos*, a substantive from *hagiazō*, means sanctification, devotion, consecration, purity, holiness.

From the Bible use of these terms it is most manifest that sanctification does not imply any constitutional change, either of soul or body. It consists in the consecration or devotion of the constitutional powers of body and soul to God and not in any change wrought in the constitution itself. It is also evident from the Scriptural use of the term that sanctification is not a phenomenon or state of the intellect. It belongs neither to the reason, conscience, nor understanding. In short, it cannot consist in any state of the intellect whatever. All the states of this faculty are purely passive states of mind and of course, as we have abundantly seen, holiness is not properly predicable of them.

It is just as evident that sanctification in the Scriptural and proper sense of the term is not a mere feeling of any kind. It is not a desire, an appetite, a passion, a propensity, an emotion, nor indeed any kind or degree of feeling. It is not a state or phenomenon of the sensibility. The states of the sensibility are, like those of the intellect, purely passive states of mind as has been repeatedly shown. They, of course, can have no moral character in themselves. The Bible use of the

term when applied to persons forbids the understanding of it as consisting in any involuntary state or attitude of mind whatever.

The inspired writers evidently used the terms which are translated by the English word *sanctify* to designate a phenomenon of the will or a voluntary state of mind. They used the term *hagiazō* in Greek and *kaudash* in Hebrew to represent the act of consecrating oneself or anything else to the service of God and to the highest well-being of the universe. The term manifestly not only represents an act of the will, but an ultimate act or choice as distinguished from a mere volition or executive act of the will. Thus the terms rendered *sanctified* are used as synonymous with loving God with all the heart and our neighbor as ourselves. The Greek *hagiasmos*, translated by the word sanctification, is evidently intended to express a state or attitude of voluntary consecration to God, a continued act of consecration, or a state of choice as distinct from a mere act of choice, an abiding act or state of choice, a standing and controlling preference of mind, a continuous committal of the will to the highest well-being of God and of the universe. Sanctification as a state differing from a holy act is a standing, ultimate intention and exactly synonymous or identical with a state of obedience or conformity to the law of God. We have repeatedly seen that the will is the executive or controlling faculty of the mind. Sanctification consists in the will's devoting or consecrating itself and the whole being, all we are and have so far as powers, susceptibilities, possessions are under the control of the will, to the service of God, or which is the same thing, to the highest interests of God and of being. Sanctification then is nothing more nor less than entire obedience, for the time being, to the moral law.

Sanctification may be entire in two senses: (1) in the sense of present, full obedience, or entire consecration to God; and (2) in the sense of continued, abiding consecration or obedience to God. Entire sanctification when the terms are used in this sense consists in being established, confirmed, preserved, continued in a state of sanctification or of entire consecration to God.

In this discussion then I shall use the term entire sanctification to designate a state of confirmed and entire consecration of body, soul, and spirit, or of the whole being to God—confirmed, not in the sense (1) that a soul entirely sanctified cannot sin, but that as a matter of fact, he does not and will not sin. (2) Nor do I use the term entire sanctification as implying that the entirely sanctified soul is in no such danger of sinning as to need the thorough use and application of all the means of grace to prevent him from sinning, and to secure his continued sanctification; (3) Nor do I mean by entire sanctification a state in which there will be no further struggle or warfare with temptation or in which the Christian warfare will cease. This certainly did not cease in Christ to the end of his life nor will it with any being in the flesh; (4) Nor do I use the term as implying a state in which no further progress in holiness is possible. No such state is or ever will be possible to any creature for the plain reason that all creatures must increase in knowledge, and increase of knowledge implies increase of holiness in a holy being. The saints will doubtless grow in grace or holiness to all eternity; (5) Nor do I mean by the term entire sanctification that the entirely sanctified soul will no longer need the continual grace and indwelling Spirit of Christ to preserve it from sin and to secure its continuance in a state of consecration to God. It is amazing that such men as Dr. Beecher and others should suppose that a state of entire consecration implies that the entirely sanctified soul no longer needs the grace of Christ to preserve it. Entire sanctification, instead of implying no further dependence on the grace of Christ, implies the constant appropriation of Christ by faith as the sanctification of the soul.

But since entire sanctification as I understand the term is identical with entire and continued obedience to the law of God and since I have in lectures on moral government fully shown what is not and what is implied in full obedience to the law of God, to avoid much repetition in this place I must refer you to what I have there said upon the topics just named.

The Real Question Now at Issue

It is not whether a state of present full obedience to the Divine law is attainable in this life. For this has, I trust, been clearly established in former lectures. It is not whether a state of permanent, full obedience has been attained by all or by any of the saints on earth. But the true question at issue is, Is a state of entire, in the sense of permanent, sanctification attainable in this life?

If in this discussion I shall insist upon the fact that this state has been attained, let it be distinctly understood that the fact that the attainment has been made is only adduced in proof of the attainability of this state, that it is only one of the arguments by which the attainability of this state is proved. Let it also be distinctly borne in mind that if there should be in the estimation of anyone a defect in the proof that this state has been attained, still the integrity and conclusiveness of the other arguments in support of the attainability will not thereby be shaken. It is no doubt true that the attainability of this state in this life may be abundantly established entirely irrespective of the question whether this state has ever been attained. The true question is, Is a state of entire, established, abiding consecration to God attainable in this life in such a sense that we may rationally expect or hope to become thus established in this life? Are the conditions of attaining this established state in the grace and love of God such that we may rationally expect or hope to fulfill them and thus become established or entirely sanctified in this life? This is undoubtedly the true and the greatly important question to be settled.

Entire Sanctification Is Attainable in This Life

It is self-evident that entire obedience to God's law is possible on the ground of natural ability. To deny this is to deny that a man is able to do as well as he can. The very language of the law is such as to level its claims to the capacity of the subject, however great or small that capacity may be. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Here then it is plain that all the law demands is the exercise of whatever strength we have in the service of God. Now as entire sanctification consists in perfect obedience to the law of God and as the law requires nothing more than the right use of whatever strength we have, it is, of course, forever settled that a state of entire sanctification is attainable in this life on the ground of natural ability.

This is generally admitted by those who are called moderate Calvinists. Or perhaps I should say it generally has been admitted by them, though at present some of them seem inclined to give up the doctrine of natural ability and to take refuge in constitutional depravity rather than admit the attainableness of a state of entire sanctification in this life. But let men take refuge where they will, they can never escape from the plain letter and spirit and meaning of the law of God. Mark with what solemn emphasis it says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." This is its solemn injunction whether it be given to an angel, a man, or a child. An angel is bound to exercise an angel's strength; a man, the strength of a man; and a child, the strength of a child. It comes to every moral being in the universe just as he is, where he is, and requires not that he should create new powers or possess other powers than he has, but that such as his powers are, they should all be used with the utmost perfection and constancy for God.

The provisions of grace are such as to render its actual attainment in this life the object of reasonable pursuit. It is admitted that the entire sanctification of the church is to be accomplished. It is also admitted that this work is to be accomplished, "through the sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth." It is also universally agreed that this work must be begun here and also that it must be completed before the soul can enter heaven. This then is the inquiry: Is this state attainable as a matter of fact before death?

Bible Argument

I come now to consider the question directly and wholly as a Bible question, whether entire sanctification is in such a sense attainable in this life as to make its attainment an object of rational pursuit. It is evident from the fact expressly stated that abundant means are provided for the accomplishment of this end. Ephesians 4:10–16:

He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. 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.

Upon this passage I remark:

(1) That what is here spoken of is plainly applicable only to this life. It is in this life that the apostles, evangelists, prophets, and teachers exercise their ministry. These means therefore are applicable, and so far as we know, only applicable to this life.

(2) The apostle here manifestly teaches that these means are designed and adequate to perfecting the whole church as the body of Christ, "till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

(3) Now observe—these means are for the perfecting of the saints till the whole church as a perfect man, "has come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." If this is not entire sanctification, what is? That this is to take place in this world is evident from what follows. For the apostle adds, "that we henceforth be no more 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."

(4) It should be observed that this is a very strong passage in support of the doctrine, inasmuch as it asserts that abundant means are provided for the sanctification of the church in this life. And as they whole includes all its parts, there must be sufficient provision for the sanctification of each individual.

(5) If the work is ever to be affected, it is by these means. But these means are used only in this life. Entire sanctification then must take place in this life.

(6) If this passage does not teach a state of entire sanctification, such a state is nowhere mentioned in the Bible. And if believers are not here said to be wholly sanctified by these means and of course in this life, I know not that it is anywhere taught that they shall be sanctified at all.

(7) But suppose this passage to be put into the language of a command, how should we understand it? Suppose the saints commanded to be perfect and to "grow up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," could anything less than entire sanctification be understood by such requisitions? Then by what rule of sober criticism, I would inquire, can this language used in this connection mean anything less than I have supposed it to mean?

But let us look into some of the promises. It is not my design to examine a great number of Scripture promises, but rather to show that those which I do examine fully sustain the positions I have taken. One is sufficient, if it be full and its application just, to settle this question forever. I might occupy many pages in the examination of the promises for they are exceedingly numerous and full and in point. But my design is at present to examine somewhat critically a few only out of the many. This will enable you to apply the same principles to the examination of the Scripture promises generally.

I begin by referring you to the law of God as given in Deuteronomy 10:12: And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?

Upon this passage I remark: It professedly sums up the whole duty of man to God—to fear and love him with all the heart and all the soul. Although this is said of Israel, yet it is equally true of all men. It is equally binding upon all and is all that God requires of any man in regard to himself. Continued obedience to this requirement is entire sanctification in the sense in which I use those terms.

See Deuteronomy 30:6: And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine hearts, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

Here we have a promise couched in the same language as the command just quoted.

Upon this passage I remark: It promises just what the law requires. If the law requires a state of entire sanctification or if that which the law requires is a state of entire sanctification, then this is a promise of entire sanctification. As the command is universally binding upon all and applicable to all so this promise is universally applicable to all who will lay hold upon it. Faith is an indispensable condition of the fulfillment of this promise. It is entirely impossible that we should love God with all the heart without confidence in him. God begets love in man in no other way than by so revealing himself as to inspire confidence, that confidence which works by love.

Now here there is no perceivable reason why we should not understand the language of the promise as meaning as much as the language of the command. This promise appears to have been designed to cover the whole ground of the requirement. Suppose the language in this promise to be used in a command or suppose that the form of this promise were changed into that of a command; suppose God should say as he does elsewhere, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul." Who would doubt that God designed to require a state of entire sanctification or consecration to himself? How then are we to understand it when used in the form of a promise? If his bountifulness equals his justice, his promises of grace must be understood to mean as much as the requirements of his justice. If he delights in giving as much as in receiving, his promises must mean as much as the language of his requirements.

This promise is designed to be fulfilled in this life. The language and connection imply this: "I will circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." This in some sense takes place in regeneration, but more than simple regeneration seems here to be promised. It is plain, I think, that this promise relates to a state of mind and not merely to an exercise.

This promise as it respects the church at some day must be absolute and certain. So that God will undoubtedly at some period beget this state of mind in the church. But to what particular individuals and generation this promise will be fulfilled must depend upon their faith in the promise.

See Jeremiah 31:31–34: Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt, (which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord;) but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After these days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of this, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Upon this passage, I remark: It was to become due or the time when its fulfillment might be claimed and expected was at the advent of Christ. This is unequivocally settled in Hebrews 8:8–12, where this passage is quoted at length as being applicable to the gospel day. This is undeniably a promise of entire sanctification. It is a promise that the "law shall be written in the heart." It means that the very temper and spirit required by the law shall be begotten in the soul. Now if the law requires entire sanctification or perfect holiness, this is certainly a promise of it, for it is a promise of all that the law requires. To say that this is not a promise of entire sanctification is the same absurdity as to say that perfect obedience to the law is not entire sanctification, and this last is the same absurdity as to say that something more is our duty than what the law requires, and this again is to say that the law is imperfect and unjust.

A permanent state, or entire sanctification, is plainly implied in this promise. The reason for setting aside the first covenant was that it was broken: "Which my covenant they brake." One grand design of the new covenant is that it shall not be broken, for then it would be no better than the first. Permanency is implied in the fact that it is to be engraven in the heart. Permanency is plainly implied in the assertion that God will remember their sin no more. In Jeremiah 32:39–40, where the same promise is in substance repeated, you will find it expressly stated that the covenant is to be "everlasting" and that he will so "put his fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from him." Here permanency is as expressly promised as it can be.

Suppose the language of this promise to be thrown into the form of a command. Suppose God to say, "Let my law be within your hearts and let it be in your inward parts and let my fear be so within your hearts, that you shall not depart from me. Let your covenant with me be everlasting." If this language were found in a command, would any man in his senses doubt that it meant to require perfect and permanent sanctification? If not, by what rule of sober interpretation does he make it mean anything else when found in a promise? It appears to be profane trifling when such language is found in a promise to make it mean less than it does when found in a command.

This promise as it respects the church at some period of its history is unconditional and its fulfillment certain. But in respect to any particular individuals or generation of the church, its fulfillment is necessarily conditioned upon their faith. The church as a body have certainly never received this new covenant. Yet doubtless multitudes in every age of the Christian dispensation have received it. And God will hasten the time when it shall be so fully accomplished that there shall be no need for one man to say to his brother, "Know the Lord, for all shall know him from the least to the greatest."

It should be understood that this promise was made to the Christian church and not at all to the Jewish church. The saints under the old dispensation had no reason to expect the fulfillment of this and kindred promises to themselves because their fulfillment was expressly deferred until the commencement of the Christian dispensation.

It has been said that nothing more is here promised than regeneration. But were not the Old Testament saints regenerated? Yet it is expressly said that they received not the promises. Hebrews 11:13, 39–40: These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and

confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Here we see that these promises were not received by the Old Testament saints. Yet they were regenerated. It has also been said that the promise implies no more than the final perseverance of the saints. But I would inquire, did not the Old Testament saints persevere? And yet we have just seen that the Old Testament saints did not receive these promises in their fulfillment.

I will next examine the promise in Ezekiel 36:25–27: Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will be given you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.

Upon this I remark: It was written within nineteen years after that which we have just examined in Jeremiah. It plainly refers to the same time and is a promise of the same blessing. It seems to be admitted, nor can it be denied, that this is a promise of entire sanctification. The language is very definite and full. “Then,”—referring to some future time, when it should become due, “will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.” Mark the first promise, “ye shall be clean.” If to be “clean” does not mean entire sanctification, what does it mean?

The second promise is, “From all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you.” If to be cleansed “from all filthiness and all idols” be not a state of entire sanctification, what is?

The third promise is, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you an heart of flesh.” If to have a “clean heart,” a “new heart,” a “heart of flesh,” in opposition to a “heart of stone,” be not entire sanctification, what is?

The fourth promise is, “I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”

Let us turn the language of these promises into that of command and understand God as saying, “Make you a clean heart, a new heart, and a new spirit; put away all your iniquities, all your filthiness, and all your idols; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them.” Now what man in the sober exercise of his reason would doubt whether God meant to require a state of entire sanctification in such commands as these? The rules of legitimate interpretation would demand that we should so understand him.

If this is so, what is the fair and proper construction of this language when found in a promise? I do not hesitate to say that to me it is amazing that any doubt should be left on the mind of any man whether in these promises God means as much as in his commands couched in the same language. For example, see Ezekiel 18:30, 31: Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

Now that the language in the promise under consideration should mean as much as the language of this command is demanded by every sober rule of interpretation. And who ever dreamed that when God required his people to put away all their iniquities, he only meant that they should put away a part of them. This promise respects the church and it cannot be pretended that it has ever been fulfilled, according to its proper import, in any past age of the church. As it regards the church at a future period of its history, this promise is absolute in the sense that it certainly will be fulfilled.

It was manifestly designed to apply to Christians under the new dispensation rather than to the Jews under the old dispensation. The sprinkling of clean water and the outpouring of the Spirit seem plainly to indicate that the promise belonged more particularly to the Christian dispensation. It undeniably belongs to the same class of promises with that in Jeremiah 31:31–34, Joel 2:28, and many others that manifestly look forward to the gospel day as the time when they shall become due. As these promises have never been fulfilled in their extent and meaning, their complete fulfillment remains to be realized by the church as a body. And those individuals and that generation will take possession of the blessing who understand and believe and appropriate them to their own case.

I will next examine the promise in 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24: 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. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

Upon this I remark: It is admitted that this is a prayer for and a promise of entire sanctification. The very language shows that both the prayer and the promise refer to this life as it is a prayer for the sanctification of the body as well as the soul; also that they might be preserved, not after, but unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a prayer of inspiration to which is annexed an express promise that God will do it. Its fulfillment is, from the nature of the case, conditioned upon our faith, as sanctification without faith is naturally impossible. Now if this promise, with those that have already been examined, does not honestly interpreted, fully settle the question of the attainability of entire sanctification in this life, it is difficult to understand how anything can be settled by an appeal to Scripture.

There are great multitudes of promises of the same import to which I might refer you and which, if examined in the light of the foregoing rules of interpretation, would be seen to heap up demonstration upon demonstration that this is a doctrine of the Bible. Only examine them in the light of these plain, self-evident principles and it seems to me that they cannot fail to produce conviction.

The apostles evidently expected Christians to attain this state in this life. See Colossians 3:12: Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

Upon this passage I remark: It was the object of the efforts of Epaphras and a thing which he expected to effect to be instrumental in causing those Christians to be “perfect and complete in all the will of God.” If this language does not describe a state of entire, in the sense of permanent, sanctification, I know of none that would. If “to be perfect and

complete in all the will of God” be not Christian perfection, what is? Paul knew that Epaphras was laboring to this end and with this expectation and he informed the church of it in a manner that evidently showed his approbation of the views and conduct of Epaphras.

That the apostles expected Christians to attain this state is further manifest from 2 Corinthians 7:1: 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.

Now, does not the apostle speak in this passage as if he really expected those to whom he wrote, “to perfect holiness in the fear of God”? Observe how strong and full the language is: “let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.” If “to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh, and all filthiness of the spirit, and to perfect holiness,” be not entire sanctification, what is? That he expected this to take place in this life is evident from the fact that he requires them to be cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh as well as of the spirit. This passage plainly contemplates a state as distinguished from an act of consecration or sanctification, that is, it evidently expresses the idea of entire, in the sense of continued, sanctification.

All the intermediate steps can be taken; therefore the end can be reached. There is certainly no point in our progress toward entire sanctification where it can be said we can go no further. To this it has been objected that though all the intermediate steps can be taken, yet the goal can never be reached in this life, just as five may be divided by three *ad infinitum* without exhausting the fraction. Now this illustration deceives the mind that uses it as it may the minds of those who listen to it. It is true that you can never exhaust the fraction in dividing five by three for the plain reason that the division may be carried on *ad infinitum*. There is no end. You cannot in this case take all the intermediate steps because they are infinite. But in the case of entire sanctification, all the intermediate steps can be taken for there is an end or state of entire sanctification and that too at a point infinitely short of infinite.

That this state may be attained in this life I argue from the fact that provision is made against all the occasions of sin. Men sin only when they are tempted either by the world, the flesh, or the devil. And it is expressly asserted that in every temptation provision is made for our escape. Certainly if it is possible for us to escape without sin under every temptation, then a state of entire and permanent sanctification is attainable.

Full provision is made for overcoming the three great enemies of our souls, the world, the flesh, and the devil: (1) the world—“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith.” “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ”; (2) the flesh—“If ye walk in the Spirit, ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh”; (3) Satan—“The shield of faith shall quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” And, “God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”

God is able to perform this work in and for us. See Ephesians 3:14–19: 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.

Upon this passage I remark: Paul evidently prays here for the entire sanctification of believers in this life. It is implied in our being “rooted and grounded in love” and being “filled with all the fullness of God” that we be as perfect in our measure and according to our capacity as he is. If to be filled with the fullness of God does not imply a state of entire sanctification, what does? That Paul did not see any difficulty in the way of God’s accomplishing this work is manifest from what he says in the twentieth verse: “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.”

Death Is Not a Means of Sanctification

The Bible nowhere represents death as the termination of sin in the saints, which it could not fail to do were it true that they cease not to sin until death. It has been the custom of the church for a long time to console individuals in view of death by the consideration that it would be the termination of all their sin. And how almost universal has been the custom in consoling the friends of deceased saints to mention this as a most important fact that now they had ceased from sin! Now if death is the termination of sin in the saints and if they never cease to sin until they pass into eternity, too much stress never has been or can be laid upon that circumstance, and it seems utterly incredible that no inspired writer should ever have noticed the fact. The representations of Scripture are all directly opposed to this idea. It is said, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord for they rest from their labors and their works do follow them.” Here it is not intimated that they rest from their sins but from their good works in this life, such works as shall follow not to curse but to bless them. The representations of Scripture are that death is the termination of the saint’s sufferings and labors of love in this world for the good of men and the glory of God. But nowhere in the Bible is it intimated that the death of a saint is the termination of his serving the devil.

The Bible representations of death are utterly inconsistent with its being an indispensable means of sanctification. Death is represented in the Bible as an enemy. But if death is the only condition upon which men are brought into a state of entire sanctification, its agency is as important and as indispensable as the influence of the Holy Ghost. When death is represented in the Bible as any thing else than an enemy, it is because it cuts short the sufferings of the saints and introduces them into a state of eternal glory—not because it breaks them off from communion with the devil! How striking is the contrast between the language of the church and that of inspiration on this subject! The church is consoling the Christian in view of death that it will be the termination of his sins—that he will then cease to serve the devil and his own lusts. The language of inspiration, on the other hand, is that he will cease not from wicked but from good works and labors and sufferings for God in this world. The language of the church is that then he will enter upon a

life of unalterable holiness—that he shall then and not till then be entirely sanctified. The language of inspiration is that because he is sanctified, death shall be an entrance into a state of eternal glory.

Ministers are certainly bound to set up some definite standard to which as the ministers of God they are to insist upon complete conformity. And now I would ask, what other standard can they and dare they set up than this? To insist upon anything less than this is to turn Pope and grant an indulgence to sin. But to set up this standard and then inculcate that conformity to it is not as a matter of fact attainable in this life is as absolutely to take the part of sin against God as it would be to insist upon repentance in theory and then avow that in practice it is not attainable. And here let me ask Christians what they expect ministers to preach? Do you think they have a right to connive at any sin in you or to insist upon anything else as a practicable fact than that you should abandon every iniquity? I ask by what authority can a minister preach anything less? And how shall any minister dare to inculcate the duty as a theory and yet not insist upon it as a practical matter, as something to be expected of every subject of God's kingdom?

The Expectation of Sin Begets Apathy

A denial of this doctrine has the natural tendency to beget the very apathy witnessed in the church. Professors of religion go on in sin without much conviction of its wickedness. Sin unblushingly stalks abroad even in the church of God and does not fill Christians with horror because they expect its existence as a thing of course. Tell a young convert that he must expect to backslide and he will do so of course, and with comparatively little remorse, because he looks upon it as a kind of necessity. And being led to expect it, you find him in a few months after his conversion away from God and not at all horrified with his state. Just so, inculcate the idea among Christians that they are not expected to abandon all sin, and they will of course go on in sin with comparative indifference. Reprove them for their sin and they will say, "Oh, we are imperfect creatures; we do not pretend to be perfect nor do we expect we ever shall be in this world." Many such answers as these will show you at once the God-dishonoring and soul-ruining tendency of a denial of this doctrine.

A denial of this doctrine prepares the minds of ministers to temporize and wink at great iniquity in their churches. Feeling as they certainly must if they disbelieve this doctrine that a great amount of sin in all believers is to be expected as a thing of course, their whole preaching and spirit and demeanor will be such as to beget a great degree of apathy among Christians in regard to their abominable sins.

If this doctrine is not true, how profane and blasphemous is the covenant of every church of every evangelical denomination. Every church requires its members to make a solemn covenant with God and with the church in the presence of God and angels and with their hands upon the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of the blessed Jesus "to abstain from all ungodliness and every worldly lust, to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Now if the doctrine of the attainability of entire sanctification in this life is not true, what profane mockery is this covenant! It is a covenant to live in a state of entire sanctification, made under the most solemn circumstances, enforced by the most awful sanctions, and insisted upon by the minister of God distributing the bread and wine. Now what right has any minister on earth to require this unless it is a practicable thing and unless it is expected of him who makes the vow?

Suppose when this covenant was proposed to a convert about to unite with the church, he should take it to his closet and spread it before the Lord and inquire whether it would be right for him to make such a covenant and whether the grace of the gospel can enable him to fulfill it? Do you suppose the Lord Jesus would reply that if he made that covenant, he certainly would and must, as a matter of course, live in the habitual violation of it as long as he lives and that his grace was not sufficient to enable him to keep it? Would he, in such a case, have any right to take upon himself this covenant? No, no more than he would have a right to lie to the Holy Ghost.

A Christian Must Aim at the Attainable

It has long been maintained by orthodox divines that a person is not a Christian who does not aim at living without sin—that unless he aims at perfection he manifestly consents to live in sin and is therefore impenitent. It has been said, and I think truly, that if a man does not in the fixed purpose of his heart aim at total abstinence from sin and at being wholly conformed to the will of God, he is not yet regenerated and does not so much as mean to cease from abusing God. In *Barnes' Notes* upon 2 Corinthians 8:1, we have the following: The unceasing and steady aim of every Christian should be perfection—perfection in all things—in the love of God, of Christ, of man; perfection of heart and feeling and emotion; perfection in his words and plans and dealings with men; perfection in his prayers and in his submission to the will of God. No man can be a Christian who does not sincerely desire it and who does not constantly aim at it. No man is a friend of God who can acquiesce in a state of sin and who is satisfied and contented that he is not as holy as God is holy. And any man who has no desire to be perfect as God is and who does not make it his daily and constant aim to be as perfect as God may set it down as demonstrably certain that he has no true religion.

Now if this is so, I would ask how a person can aim at and intend to do what he knows to be impossible. Is it not a contradiction to say that a man can intend to do what he knows he cannot do? To this it has been objected that if true, it proves too much—that it would prove that no man ever was a Christian who did not believe in this doctrine.

To this I reply: A man may believe in what is really a state of entire sanctification and aim at attaining it, although he may not call it by that name. This I believe to be the real fact with Christians; and they would much more frequently attain what they aim at did they know how to appropriate the grace of Christ to their own circumstances. Mrs. President Edwards, for example, firmly believed that she could attain a state of entire consecration. She aimed at and manifestly attained it and yet such were her views of constitutional depravity that she did not call her state one of entire sanctification. It has been common for Christians to suppose that a state of entire consecration is attainable, but while they believe in the sinfulness of their natures, they would not of course call even entire consecration, entire sanctification. Mrs. Edwards believed in, aimed at, and attained entire consecration. She aimed at what she believed to be attainable and she could aim at nothing more. She called it by the same name with her husband who was opposed to

the doctrine of Christian perfection, as held by the Wesleyan Methodists, manifestly on the ground of his notions of physical depravity. I care not what this state is called if the thing be fully explained and insisted upon together with the conditions of attaining it. Call it what you please, Christian perfection, heavenly mindedness, the full assurance of faith or hope, or a state of entire consecration; by all these I understand the same thing. And it is certain that by whatever name it is called, the thing must be aimed at to be attained. The practicability of its attainment must be admitted or it cannot be aimed at. And now I would humbly inquire whether to preach anything short of this is not to give countenance to sin?

The Gospel Has Overcome Sin

Another argument in favor of this doctrine is that the gospel, as a matter of fact, has often not only temporarily but permanently and perfectly overcome every form of sin in different individuals. Who has not seen the most beastly lusts, drunkenness, lasciviousness, and every kind of abomination long indulged and fully ripe, entirely and forever slain by the power of the grace of God? Now how was this done? Only by bringing this sin fully into the light of the gospel and showing the individual the relation which the death of Christ sustained to that sin.

Nothing is wanting to slay any and every form of sin but for the mind to be fully baptized into the death of Christ and to see the bearings of one's own sins upon the sufferings and agonies and death of the blessed Jesus. Let me state a fact to illustrate my meaning. An habitual and most inveterate smoker of tobacco of my acquaintance after having been plied with almost every argument to induce him to break the power of the habit and relinquish its use in vain, on a certain occasion lighted his pipe and was about to put it to his mouth, when the inquiry was started. Did Christ die to purchase this vile indulgence for me? The perceived relation of the death of Christ to this sin instantly broke the power of the habit and from that day he has been free. I could relate many other facts more striking than this where a similar view of the relation of a particular sin to the atonement of Christ has, in a moment, not only broken the power of the habit but destroyed entirely and forever the appetite for similar indulgences. And in multitudes of cases when the appetite has not been entirely slain, the will has been endowed with abundant and abiding efficiency effectually to control it. If the most inveterate habits of sin and even those that involve physical consequences and have deeply debased the physical constitution and rendered it a source of overpowering temptation to the mind can be and often have been utterly broken up and forever slain by the grace of God, why should it be doubted that by the same grace a man can triumph over all sin and that forever?

If this doctrine is not true, what is true upon the subject? It is certainly of great importance that ministers should be definite in their instructions; and if Christians are not expected to be wholly conformed to the will of God in this life, how much is expected of them? Who can say, Hitherto canst thou, must thou come, but no further? It is certainly absurd, not to say ridiculous, for ministers to be forever pressing Christians up to higher and higher attainments, saying at every step you can and must go higher, and yet all along informing them that they are expected to fall short of their whole duty that they can as a matter of fact be better than they are, far better, infinitely better; but still it is not expected that they will do their whole duty.

I have often been pained to hear men preach who were afraid to commit themselves in favor of the whole truth and who were yet evidently afraid of falling short in their instructions of insisting that men should stand "perfect and complete in all the will of God." To be consistent they are evidently perplexed and well they may be for in truth there is no consistency in their views and teaching. If they do not inculcate as a matter of fact that men ought to do and are expected to do their whole duty, they are sadly at a loss to know what to inculcate. They have evidently many misgivings about insisting upon less than this and still they fear to go to the full extent of apostolic teaching on this subject. And in their attempts to throw in qualifying terms and caveats, to avoid the impression that they believe in the doctrine of entire sanctification, they place themselves in a truly awkward position. Cases have occurred in which ministers have been asked how far we may go, must go, and are expected to go in dependence upon the grace of Christ and how holy men may be and are expected to be, and must be, in this life. They could give no other answer to this than that they can be a great deal better than they are. Now this indefiniteness is a great stumbling block to the church. It cannot be according to the teachings of the Holy Ghost.

The tendency of a denial of this doctrine is, to my mind, conclusive proof that the doctrine itself must be true. Many developments in the recent history of the church throw light upon this subject. Who does not sense that the facts developed in the temperance reformation have a direct and powerful bearing upon this question? It has been ascertained that there is no possibility of completing the temperance reformation except by adopting the principle of total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks. Let a temperance lecturer go forth as an evangelist to promote revivals on the subject of temperance—let him inveigh against drunkenness while he admits and defends the moderate use of alcohol or insinuates, at least, that total abstinence is not expected or practicable. In this stage of the temperance reformation, everyone can see that such a man can make no progress, that he would be employed like a child in building dams of sand to obstruct the rushing of mighty waters. It is as certain as that causes produce their effects that no permanent reformation could be effected without adopting and insisting on the total abstinence principle.

And now if this is true as it respects the temperance reformation, how much more so when applied to the subjects of holiness and sin. A man might by some possibility even in his own strength overcome his habits of drunkenness and retain what might be called the temperate use of alcohol. But no such thing is possible in a reformation from sin. There is no temperate indulgence in sin. Sin as a matter of fact is never overcome by any man in his own strength. If he admits into his creed the necessity of any degree of sin or if he allows in practice any degree of sin, he becomes impenitent, consents to live in sin, and of course grieves the Holy Spirit; the certain result of which is a relapsing into a state of legal bondage to sin. And this is probably a true history of many professed Christians in the church. It is just what might be expected from the views and practice of the church upon this subject.

The secret of backsliding is that reformations are not carried deep enough. Christians are not set with all their hearts to aim at a speedy deliverance from all sin, but on the contrary are left and in many instances taught to indulge the expectation that they shall sin as long as they live. I probably never shall forget the effect produced on my mind by reading when a young convert in the diary of David Brainerd that he never expected to make any considerable attainments in holiness in this life. I can now easily see that this was a natural inference from the theory of physical sinfulness which he held. But not perceiving this at the time, I doubt not that this expression of his views had a very injurious effect upon me for many years. It led me to reason thus: if such a man as David Brainerd did not expect to make much advancement in holiness in this life, it is vain for me to expect such a thing.

Adopt the Principle of Total Abstinence

The fact is if there be anything that is important to high attainments in holiness and to the progress of the work of sanctification in this life, it is the adoption of the principle of total abstinence from sin. Total abstinence from sin must be every man's motto, or sin will certainly sweep him away as with a flood. That cannot possibly be a true principle in temperance that leaves the causes which produce drunkenness to operate in their full strength. Nor can that be true in regard to holiness which leaves the root unextracted and the certain causes of spiritual decline and backsliding at work in the very heart of the church. And I am fully convinced that until evangelists and pastors adopt and carry out in practice the principle of total abstinence from all sin, they will as certainly find themselves every few months called to do their work over again, as a temperance lecturer would who should admit the moderate use of alcohol.

Again, who does not know that to call upon sinners to repent and at the same time to inform them that they will not and cannot and are not expected to repent, would for ever prevent their repentance? Suppose you say to a sinner, "You are naturally able to repent; but it is certain that you never will repent in this life, either with or without the Holy Spirit." Who does not see that such teaching would prevent his repentance as surely as he believed it? To say to a professor of religion, "You are naturally able to be wholly conformed to the will of God; but it is certain that you never will be, in this life, either in your own strength or by the grace of God"; if this teaching be believed, it will just as certainly prevent his sanctification as the other teaching would the repentance of the sinner. I can speak from my experience on this subject. While I inculcated the common views, I was often instrumental in bringing Christians under great conviction and into a state of temporary repentance and faith. But falling short of urging them up to a point where they would become so acquainted with Christ as to abide in him, they would of course soon relapse again into their former state. I seldom saw, and can now understand that I had no reason to expect to see, under the instructions which I then gave such a state of religious principle, such steady and confirmed walking with God among Christians, as I have seen since the change in my views and instructions.

The Conditions of This Attainment

A state of entire sanctification can never be attained by an indifferent waiting of God's time nor by any works of law or works of any kind performed in your own strength irrespective of the grace of God. By this I do not mean that were you disposed to exert your natural powers aright, you could not at once obey the law in the exercise of your natural strength and continue to do so. But I do mean that as you are wholly indisposed to use your natural powers aright without the grace of God, no efforts that you will actually make in your own strength or independent of his grace will ever result in your entire sanctification.

Not by any direct efforts to feel right. Many spend their time in vain efforts to force themselves into a right state of feeling. Now it should be forever understood that religion does not consist in mere feeling, emotion, or involuntary affection of any kind. Feelings do not result from a direct effort to feel. But, on the contrary, they are the spontaneous actings of the mind when it has under its direct and deep consideration the objects, truths, facts, or realities that are correlated to these involuntary emotions. They are the most easy and natural state of mind possible under such circumstances. So far from its requiring an effort to put them forth, it would rather require an effort to prevent them when the mind is intensely considering those objects and considerations which have a natural tendency to produce them. This is so true that when persons are in the exercise of such affections, they feel no difficulty at all in their exercise, but wonder how anyone can help feeling as they do. It seems to them so natural, so easy, and, I may say, so almost unavoidable that they often feel and express astonishment that anyone should find it difficult to exercise the feelings of which they are conscious.

The course that many persons take on the subject of religion has often appeared wonderful to me. They make themselves their own state and their interests the central point around which their own minds are continually evolving. Their selfishness is so great that their own interests, happiness, and salvation fill their whole field of vision. And with their thoughts and anxieties and whole souls clustering around their own salvation, they complain of a hard heart that they cannot love God, that they do not repent and cannot believe. They manifestly regard love to God, repentance, faith, and all religion as consisting in mere feelings. Being conscious that they do not feel right as they express it, they are the more concerned about themselves, which concern but increases their embarrassment and the difficulty of exercising what they call right affections. The less they feel, the more they try to feel—the greater efforts they make to feel right without success, the more are they confirmed in their selfishness and the more are their thoughts glued to their own interests; and they are, of course, at a greater and greater distance from any right state of mind. And thus their selfish anxieties beget ineffectual efforts and these efforts but deepen their anxieties. And if in this state death should appear in a visible form before them or the last trumpet sound and they should be summoned to the solemn judgment, it would but increase their distraction, confirm and almost give omnipotence to their selfishness and render their sanctification morally impossible. It should never be forgotten that all true religion consists in voluntary states of mind and that the true and only way to attain to true religion is to look at and understand the exact thing to be done and then to put forth at once the voluntary exercise required.

Not by any efforts to obtain grace by works of law. Should the question be proposed to a Jew, “What shall I do that I may work the work of God?” he would answer, Keep the law, both moral and ceremonial; that is, keep the commandments.

To the same inquiry an Armenian would answer, Improve common grace and you will obtain converting grace; that is, use the means of grace according to the best light you have and you will obtain the grace of salvation. In this answer it is not supposed that the inquirer already has faith, but that he is in a state of unbelief and is inquiring after converting grace. The answer, therefore, amounts to this: you must become holy by your hypocrisy; you must work out sanctification by sin.

To this question most professed Calvinists would make in substance the same reply. They would reject the language while they retained the idea. Their direction would imply either that the inquirer already has faith or that he must perform some works to obtain it; that is, that he must obtain grace by works of law.

A late Calvinistic writer admits that entire and permanent sanctification is attainable, although he rejects the idea of the actual attainment of such a state in this life. He supposes the condition of attaining this state or the way to attain it is by a diligent use of the means of grace and that the saints are sanctified just so far as they make a diligent use of the means of sanctification. But as he denies that any saints ever did or will use all the means with suitable diligence, he denies also, of course, that entire sanctification ever is attained in this life. The way of attaining it, according to his teaching, is by the diligent use of means. If then this writer were asked, “What shall I do that I may work the works of God?”—or in other words what shall I do to obtain entire and permanent sanctification? His answer, it seems, would be: “Use diligently all the means of grace”; that is, you must get grace by works, or with the Armenian, improve common grace and you will secure sanctifying grace. Neither an Armenian nor a Calvinist would formally direct the inquirer to the law as the ground of justification. But nearly the whole church would give directions that would amount to the same thing. Their answer would be a legal and not a gospel answer. For whatever answer is given to this question that does not distinctly recognize faith as the condition of abiding holiness in Christians is legal. Unless the inquirer is made to understand that this is the first, grand, fundamental duty without the performance of which all virtue, all giving up of sin, all acceptable obedience is impossible, he is misdirected. He is led to believe that it is possible to please God without faith and to obtain grace by works of law. There are but two kinds of works—works of law and works of faith. Now if the inquirer has not the “faith that works by love,” to set him upon any course of works to get it is certainly to set him to get faith by works of law. Whatever is said to him that does not clearly convey the truth that both justification and sanctification are by faith without works of law is law and not gospel. Nothing before or without faith can possibly be done by anyone but works of law. His first duty, therefore, is faith; and every attempt to obtain faith by unbelieving works is to lay works at the foundation and make grace a result. It is the direct opposite of gospel truth.

“What Must I DO?”

Take facts as they arise in every day’s experience to show that what I have stated is true of almost all professors and nonprofessors [of faith]. Whenever a sinner begins in good earnest to agitate the question, “What shall I do to be saved?” he resolves as a first duty to break off from his sins, that is, in unbelief. Of course his reformation is only outward. He determines to do better—to reform in this, that, and the other thing, and thus prepare himself to be converted. He does not expect to be saved without grace and faith, but he attempts to get grace by works of law. The same is true of multitudes of anxious Christians who are inquiring what they shall do to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. They overlook the fact that “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith,” that it is with “the shield of faith” they are “to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” They ask, Why am I overcome by sin? Why can I not get above its power? Why am I thus the slave of my appetites and passions and the sport of the devil? They cast about for the cause of all this spiritual wretchedness and death. At one time they think they have discovered it in the neglect of one duty and at another time in the neglect of another. Sometimes they imagine they have found the cause to lie in yielding to one temptation and sometimes in yielding to another. They put forth efforts in this direction and in that direction and patch up their righteousness on one side while they make a rent in the other side. Thus they spend years in running round in a circle and making dams of sand across the current of their own habitudes and tendencies. Instead of at once purifying their hearts by faith, they are engaged in trying to arrest the overflowing of the bitter waters of their own propensities. Why do I sin? they inquire; and casting about for the cause, they come to the sage conclusion, It is because I neglect such a duty, that is, because I do sin. But how shall I get rid of sin? Answer: By doing my duty, that is, by ceasing from sin. Now the real inquiry is, Why do they neglect their duty? Why do they commit sin at all? Where is the foundation of all this mischief? Will it be replied, the foundation of all this wickedness is the force of temptation—in the weakness of our hearts—in the strength of our evil propensities and habits? But all this only brings us back to the real inquiry again, How are these things to be overcome? I answer, by faith alone. No works of law have the least tendency to overcome our sins, but rather to confirm the soul in self-righteousness and unbelief.

Without Faith, All Else Is Vain

The great and fundamental sin which is at the foundation of all other sin is unbelief. The first thing is to give up that—to believe the Word of God. There is no breaking off from one sin without this. “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Thus we see that the backslider and convicted sinner when agonizing to overcome sin will almost always betake themselves to works of law to obtain faith. They will fast and pray and read and struggle and outwardly reform and thus endeavor to obtain grace. Now all this is vain and wrong. Do you ask, shall we not fast and pray and read and struggle? Shall we do nothing but sit down in antinomian security and inaction? I answer, you must do all that God commands you to do, but begin where he tells you to begin and do it in the manner in which he commands you to do it, that is, in the exercise of that faith that works by love. Purify your hearts by faith. Believe in the Son of God. And say not in your heart, “Who shall ascend into heaven that is to bring Christ down from above or who shall descend into the deep, that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The

word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart that is, the word of faith which we preach.” Now these facts show that even under the gospel almost all professors of religion, while they reject the Jewish notion of justification by works of law, have after all adopted a ruinous substitute for it and suppose that in some way they are to obtain grace by their works.

A state of entire sanctification cannot be attained by attempting to copy the experience of others. It is very common for convicted sinners or for Christians inquiring after entire sanctification in their blindness to ask others to relate their experience, to mark minutely the detail of all their exercises, and then set themselves to pray for and make direct efforts to attain the same class of exercises, not seeming to understand that they can no more exercise feelings in the detail like others than they can look like others. Human experiences differ as human countenances differ. The whole history of a man’s former state of mind comes in, of course, to modify his present and future experience, so that the precise train of feelings which may be requisite in your case and which will actually occur, if you are ever sanctified, will not in all its details coincide with the exercises of any other human being. It is of vast importance for you to understand that you can be no copyist in any true religious experience and that you are in great danger of being deceived by Satan whenever you attempt to copy the experience of others. I beseech you, therefore, to cease from praying for or trying to obtain the precise experience of any person whatever. All truly Christian experiences are, like human countenances, in their outline so much alike as to be readily known as the lineaments of the religion of Jesus Christ. But no further than this are they alike, any more than human countenances are alike.

But here let it be remembered that sanctification does not consist in the various affections or emotions of which Christians speak and which are often mistaken for or confounded with true religion, but that sanctification consists in entire consecration and consequently it is all out of place for anyone to attempt to copy the feelings of another, inasmuch as feelings do not constitute religion. The feelings of which Christians speak do not constitute true religion but often result from a state of heart. These feelings may properly enough be spoken of as Christian experience for although involuntary states of mind, they are experienced by true Christians. The only way to secure them is to set the will right and the emotions will be a natural result.

Not Depending Upon Any Instrumentality

Not by waiting to make preparations before you come into this state. Observe that the thing about which you are inquiring is a state of entire consecration to God. Now do not imagine that this state of mind must be prefaced by a long introduction of preparatory exercises. It is common for persons when inquiring upon this subject with earnestness to think themselves hindered in this progress by a want of this or that or the other exercise or state of mind. They look everywhere else but at the real difficulty. They assign any other and every other but the true reason for their not being already in a state of sanctification. The true difficulty is voluntary selfishness or voluntary consecration to self-interest and self-gratification. This is the difficulty and the only difficulty to be overcome.

Not by attending meetings, asking the prayers of other Christians, or depending in any way upon the means of getting into this state. By this I do not intend to say that means are unnecessary or that it is not through the instrumentality of truth that this state of mind is induced. But I do mean that while you are depending upon any instrumentality whatever your mind is diverted from the real point before you and you are never likely to make this attainment.

Not by waiting for any particular views of Christ. When persons in the state of mind of which I have been speaking hear those who live in faith describe their views of Christ, they say, Oh, if I had such views I could believe; I must have these before I can believe. Now you should understand that these views are the result and effect of faith in the promise of the Spirit to take of the things of Christ and show them to you. Lay hold of this class of promises and the Holy Spirit will reveal Christ to you in the relations in which you need him from time to time. Take hold, then, on the simple promise of God. Take God at his word. Believe that he means just what he says and this will at once bring you into the state of mind after which you inquire.

Not in any way which you may mark out for yourself. Persons in an inquiring state are very pat, without seeming to be aware of it, to send imagination on before them to stake out the way and set up a flag where they intend to come out. They expect to be thus and thus exercised—to have such and such peculiar views and feelings when they have attained their object. Now there probably never was a person who did not find himself disappointed in these respects. God says, “I will bring the blind by a way that they know not. I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them and not forsake them.” This suffering your imagination to mark out your path is a great hindrance to you as it sets you upon making many fruitless and worse than fruitless attempts to attain this imaginary state of mind, wastes much of your time, and greatly wearies the patience and grieves the Spirit of God. While he is trying to lead you right to the point, you are hauling off from the course and insisting that this which your imagination has marked out is the way instead of that in which he is trying to lead you. And thus in your pride and ignorance you are causing much delay and abusing the long-suffering of God. He says, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” But you say, no—this is the way. And thus you stand and parley and banter while you are every moment in danger of grieving the Spirit of God away from you and of losing your soul.

If there is anything in your imagination that has fixed definitely upon any particular manner, time, or place, or circumstance, you will in all probability either be deceived by the devil or be entirely disappointed in the result. You will find in all these particular items on which you had laid any stress that the wisdom of man is foolishness with God—that your ways are not his ways, nor your thoughts his thoughts. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than your ways and his thoughts higher than your thoughts.”

But this state is to be attained by faith alone. Let it be forever remembered that “without faith it is impossible to please God,” and “whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.” Both justification and sanctification are by faith alone. Romans 3:30: “Seeing it is one God who shall justify the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith”; and

chapter 5:1: “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Also, chapter 9:30–31: “What shall we say then? that the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, who followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law.”

But let me by no means be understood as teaching sanctification by faith as distinct from and opposed to sanctification by the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of Christ or which is the same thing, by Christ our sanctification, living and reigning in the heart. Faith is rather the instrument or condition than the efficient agent that induces a state of present and permanent sanctification. Faith simply receives Christ as king, to live and reign in the soul. It is Christ, in the exercise of his different offices and appropriated in his different relations to the wants of the soul, by faith who secures our sanctification. This he does by Divine discoveries to the soul of his Divine perfections and fullness. The condition of these discoveries is faith and obedience. He says, John 14:21–23: He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, (not Iscariot), Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

To ascertain the conditions of entire sanctification in this life we must consider what the temptations are that overcome us. When first converted, we have seen that the heart or will consecrates itself and the whole being to God. We have also seen that this is a state of disinterested benevolence or a committal of the whole being to the promotion of the highest good. We have also seen that all sin is selfishness or that all sin consists in the will’s seeking the indulgence or gratification of self, that it consists in the will’s yielding obedience to the propensities instead of obeying God as his law is revealed in the reason. Now who cannot see what needs to be done to break the power of temptation and let the soul go free? The fact is that the department of our sensibility that is related to objects of time and sense has received an enormous development and is tremblingly alive to all its correlated objects, while by reason of the blindness of the mind to spiritual objects it is scarcely developed at all in its relations to them. Those objects are seldom thought of by the carnal mind and when they are, they are only thought of. They are not clearly seen and of course they are not felt.

The thought of God, of Christ, of sin, of holiness, of heaven, and hell, excites little or no emotion in the carnal mind. The carnal mind is alive and awake to earthly and sensible objects but dead to spiritual realities. The spiritual world needs to be revealed to the soul. That soul needs to see and clearly apprehend its own spiritual condition, relations, wants. It needs to become acquainted with God and Christ, to have spiritual and eternal realities made plain and present and all-absorbing realities to the soul. It needs such discoveries of the eternal world, of the nature and guilt of sin, and of Christ; the remedy of the soul as to kill or greatly mortify lust or the appetites and passions in their relations to objects of time and sense; and thoroughly to develop the sensibility in its relations to sin and to God and to the whole circle of spiritual realities. This will greatly abate the frequency and power of temptation to self-gratification and break up the voluntary slavery of the will. The developments of the sensibility need to be thoroughly corrected. This can only be done by the revelation to the inward man, by the Holy Spirit, of those great and solemn and overpowering realities of the “spirit land” that lie concealed from the eye of flesh.

We often see those around us whose sensibility is so developed in some one direction that they are led captive by appetite and passion in that direction in spite of reason and of God. The inebriate is an example of this. The glutton, the licentious, the avaricious man are examples of this kind. We sometimes, on the other hand, see by some striking providence such a counterdevelopment of the sensibility produced as to slay and put down these particular tendencies, and the whole direction of the man’s life seems to be changed; and outwardly, at least, it is so. From being a perfect slave to his appetite for strong drink, he cannot without the utmost loathing and disgust so much as hear the name of his once-loved beverage mentioned. From being a most avaricious man, he becomes deeply disgusted with wealth and spurns and despises it. Now this has been effected by a counterdevelopment of the sensibility, for in the case supposed, religion has nothing to do with it. Religion does not consist in the states of the sensibility nor in the will’s being influenced by the sensibility; but sin consists in the will’s being thus influenced. One great thing that needs to be done to confirm and settle the will in the attitude of entire consecration to God is to bring about a counterdevelopment of the sensibility so that it will not draw the will away from God. It needs to be mortified or crucified to the world, to objects of time and sense, by so deep and clear and powerful a revelation of self to self and of Christ to the soul as to awaken and develop all its susceptibilities in their relations to him and to spiritual and Divine realities. This can easily be done through and by the Holy Spirit who takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us. He so reveals Christ that the soul receives him to the throne of the heart to reign throughout the whole being. When the will, the intellect, and the sensibility are yielded to him, he develops the intelligence and the sensibility by clear revelations of himself in all his offices and relations to the soul, confirms the will, mellows and chastens the sensibility by these divine revelations to the intelligence.

The Spirit Teaches of Christ

We need the light of the Holy Spirit to teach us the character of God, the nature of his government, the purity of his law, the necessity and fact of atonement—to teach us our need of Christ in all his offices and relations, governmental, spiritual, and mixed. We need the revelation of Christ to our souls in such power as to induce in us that appropriating faith, without which Christ is not and cannot be our salvation. We need to know Christ, for example, in such relations as the following:

As King, to set up his government and write his law in our hearts, to establish his kingdom within us, to sway his scepter over our whole being. As King he must be spiritually revealed and received.

As our Mediator, to stand between the offended justice of God and our guilty souls, to bring about a reconciliation between our souls and God. As Mediator he must be known and received.

As our Advocate or *Paracletos*, our next or best friend, to plead our cause with the Father, our righteous and all-prevailing advocate to secure the triumph of our cause at the bar of God. In this relation he must be apprehended and embraced.

As our Redeemer, to redeem us from the curse of the law and from the power and dominion of sin, to pay the price demanded by public justice for our release, and to overcome and break up forever our spiritual bondage. In this relation also we must know and appreciate him by faith.

As the propitiation for our sins, to offer himself as a propitiatory or offering for our sins. The apprehension of Christ as making an atonement for our sins seems to be indispensable to the entertaining of a healthy hope of eternal life. It certainly is not healthy for the soul to apprehend the mercy of God without regarding the conditions of its exercise. It does not sufficiently impress the soul with a sense of the justice and holiness of God, with the guilt and desert of sin. It does not sufficiently awe the soul and humble it in the deepest dust to regard God as extending pardon without regard to the sternness of his justice as evinced in requiring that sin should be recognized in the universe, as worthy of the wrath and curse of God, as a condition of its forgiveness. It is remarkable and well worthy of all consideration that those who deny the atonement make sin a comparative trifle and seem to regard God's benevolence or love as good nature, rather than as it is, "a consuming fire" to all the workers of iniquity. Nothing does or can produce that awe of God, that fear and holy dread of sin, that self-abasing, God-justifying spirit that a thorough apprehension of the atonement of Christ will do. Nothing like this can beget that spirit of self-renunciation, of cleaving to Christ, of taking refuge in his blood. In these relations, Christ must be revealed to us and apprehended and embraced by us as the condition of our entire sanctification.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit thus to reveal his death in its relations to our individual sins and as related to our sins as individuals. The soul needs to apprehend Christ as crucified for us. It is one thing for the soul to regard the death of Christ merely as the death of a martyr, and an infinitely different thing, as every one knows who has had the experience, to apprehend his death as a real and veritable vicarious sacrifice for our sins as being truly a substitute for our death. The soul needs to apprehend Christ as suffering on the cross for it or as its substitute so that it can say, That sacrifice is for me, that suffering and that death are for my sins; that blessed Lamb is slain for my sins. If thus fully to apprehend and to appropriate Christ cannot kill sin in us, what can?

We also need to know Christ as risen for our justification. He arose and lives to procure our certain acquittal or our complete pardon and acceptance with God. That he lives and is our justification we need to know to break the bondage of legal motives and to slay all selfish fear, to break and destroy the power of temptation from this source. The clearly convinced soul is often tempted to despondency and unbelief, to despair of its own acceptance with God, and it would surely fall into the bondage of fear were it not for the faith of Christ as a risen, living, justifying Savior. In this relation, the soul needs clearly to apprehend and fully to appropriate Christ in his completeness as a condition of abiding in a state of disinterested consecration to God.

We need also to have Christ revealed to us as bearing our griefs and as carrying our sorrows. The clear apprehension of Christ as being made sorrowful for us and as bending under sorrows and griefs which in justice belonged to us tends at once to render sin unspeakably odious and Christ infinitely precious to our souls. The idea of Christ our substitute needs to be thoroughly developed in our minds. And this relation of Christ needs to be so clearly revealed to us as to become an everywhere present reality to us. We need to have Christ so revealed as to so completely ravish and engross our affections that we would sooner die at once than sin against him. Is such a thing impossible? Indeed it is not. Is not the Holy Spirit able and willing and ready thus to reveal him upon condition of our asking it in faith? Surely he is.

We need to apprehend Christ as the one by whose stripes we are healed. We need to know him as relieving our pains and sufferings by his own, as preventing our death by his own, as sorrowing that we might eternally rejoice, as grieving that we might be unspeakably and eternally glad, as dying in unspeakable agony that we might die in deep peace and in unspeakable triumph.

"As being made sin for us." We need to apprehend him as being treated as a sinner and even as the chief of sinners on our account or for us. This is the representation of Scripture, that Christ on our account was treated as if he were a sinner. He was made sin for us, that is, he was treated as a sinner or rather as being the representative or as it were the embodiment of sin for us. O! this the soul needs to apprehend—the holy Jesus treated as a sinner and as if all sin were concentrated in him on our account! We procured this treatment of him. He consented to take our place in such a sense as to endure the cross and the curse of the law for us. When the soul apprehends this, it is ready to die with grief and love. Oh, how infinitely it loathes self under such an apprehension as this! In this relation he must not only be apprehended but appropriated by faith.

We also need to apprehend the fact that "he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"; that Christ was treated as a sinner that we might be treated as righteous; that we might also be made personally righteous by faith in him; that we might inherit and be made partakers of God's righteousness, as that righteousness exists and is revealed in Christ; that we might in and by him be made righteous as God is righteous. It needs to embrace and lay hold by faith upon that righteousness of God which is brought home to saints in Christ through the atonement and indwelling Spirit.

We also need Christ revealed to the inward being as "head over all things to the church." All these relations are of no avail to our sanctification only in so far forth as they are directly and inwardly and personally revealed to the soul by the Holy Spirit. It is one thing to have thoughts and ideas and opinions concerning Christ and an entirely different thing to know Christ as he is revealed by the Holy Spirit. All the relations of Christ imply corresponding necessities in us.

When the Holy Spirit has revealed to us the necessity and Christ as exactly suited to fully meet that necessity and urged his acceptance in that relation until we have appropriated him by faith, a great work is done. But until we are thus revealed to ourselves and Christ is thus revealed to us and accepted by us, nothing is done more than to store our heads with notions or opinions and theories while our hearts are becoming more and more at every moment like an adamant stone.

I have often feared that many professed Christians knew Christ only after the flesh; that is, they have no other knowledge of Christ than what they obtain by reading and hearing about him without any special revelation of him to the inward being by the Holy Spirit. I do not wonder that such professors and ministers should be totally in the dark upon the subject of entire sanctification in this life. They regard sanctification as brought about by the formation of holy habits, instead of resulting from the revelation of Christ to the soul in all his fullness and relations and the soul's renunciation of self and appropriation of Christ in these relations.

Christ is represented in the Bible as the head of the church. The church is represented as his body. He is to the church what the head is to the body. The head is the seat of the intellect, the will, and in short, of the living soul. Consider what the body would be without the head and you may understand what the church would be without Christ. But as the church would be without Christ, so each believer would be without Christ. But we need to have our necessities in this respect clearly revealed to us by the Holy Spirit and this relation of Christ made plain to our apprehension. The utter darkness of the human mind in regard to its own spiritual state and wants and in regard to the relations and fullness of Christ is truly wonderful. His relations, as mentioned in the Bible, are overlooked almost entirely until our wants are discovered. When these are made known and the soul begins in earnest to inquire after a remedy, it needs not inquire in vain. "Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend up to heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above; or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart."

Oh, how infinitely blind he is to the fullness and glory of Christ who does not know himself and Christ as both are revealed by the Holy Spirit. When we are led by the Holy Spirit to look down into the abyss of our own emptiness—to behold the horrible pit and miry clay of our own habits and fleshly and worldly and infernal entanglements, when we see in the light of God that our emptiness and necessities are infinite, then, and not till then, are we prepared wholly to cast off self and to put on Christ. The glory and fullness of Christ are not discovered to the soul until it discovers its need of him. But when self in all its loathsomeness and helplessness is fully revealed, until hope is utterly extinct as it respects every kind and degree of helping ourselves, and when Christ, the all and in all, is revealed to the soul as its all-sufficient portion and salvation, then, and not until then, does the soul know its salvation. This knowledge is the indispensable condition of appropriating faith or of that act of receiving Christ or that committal of all to him that takes Christ home to dwell in the heart by faith and to preside over all its states and actions. Oh, such a knowledge and such a reception and putting on of Christ is blessed. Happy is he who knows it by his own experience.

It is indispensable to a steady and implicit faith that the soul should have a spiritual apprehension of what is implied in the saying of Christ that all power was delivered unto him. The ability of Christ to do all and even exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think is what the soul needs clearly to apprehend in a spiritual sense, that is to apprehend it not merely as a theory or as a proposition but to see the true spiritual import of this saying. This is also equally true of all that is said in the Bible about Christ, of all his offices and relations. It is one thing to theorize and speculate and opine about Christ and an infinitely different thing to know him as he is revealed by the Holy Spirit. When Christ is fully revealed to the soul by the Comforter, it will never again doubt the attainability and reality of entire sanctification in this life.

When we sin, it is because of our ignorance of Christ. That is whenever temptation overcomes us, it is because we do not know and avail ourselves of the relation of Christ that would meet our necessities. One great thing that needs to be done is to correct the developments of our sensibility. The appetites and passions are enormously developed in their relations to earthly objects. In relation to things of time and sense, our propensities are greatly developed and are alive; but in relation to spiritual truths and objects and eternal realities, we are naturally as dead as stones. When first converted if we knew enough of ourselves and of Christ thoroughly to develop and correct the action of the sensibility and confirm our wills in a state of entire consecration, we should not fall. In proportion as the law-work preceding conversion has been thorough and the revelation of Christ at or immediately subsequent to conversion full and clear, just in that proportion do we witness stability in converts. In most if not all instances however, the convert is too ignorant of himself and of course knows too little about Christ to be established in permanent obedience. He needs renewed conviction of sin, to be revealed to himself and to have Christ revealed to him and be formed in him the hope of glory before he will be steadfast, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

It must not be inferred that the knowledge of Christ in all these relations is a condition of our coming into a state of entire consecration to God or of present sanctification. The thing insisted on is that the soul will abide in this state in the hour of temptation only so far forth as it betakes itself to Christ in such circumstances of trial and apprehends and appropriates him by faith from time to time in those relations that meet the present and pressing necessities of the soul. The temptation is the occasion of revealing the necessity, and the Holy Spirit is always ready to reveal Christ in the particular relation suited to the newly developed necessity. The perception and appropriation of him in this relation under these circumstances of trial is the *sine qua non* of our remaining in the state of entire consecration.

Christ Sustains Our Sanctification

The foregoing are some of the relations which Christ sustains to us as to our salvation. I could have enlarged greatly, as you perceive, upon each of these and easily have swelled this part of our course of study to a large volume. I have only touched upon these relations as specimens of the manner in which he is presented for our acceptance in the Bible and by the Holy Spirit. Do not understand me as teaching that we must first know Christ in all these relations

before we can be sanctified. The thing intended is that coming to know Christ in these relations is a condition or is the indispensable means of our steadfastness or perseverance in holiness under temptation—that when we are tempted from time to time, nothing can secure us against a fall but the revelation of Christ to the soul in these relations one after another and our appropriation of him to ourselves by faith. The gospel has directly promised in every temptation to open a way of escape so that we shall be able to bear it. The spirit of this promise pledges to us such a revelation of Christ as to secure our standing if we will lay hold upon him by faith as revealed. Our circumstances of temptation render it necessary that at one time we should apprehend Christ in one relation and at another time in another. For example, at one time we are tempted to despair by Satan's accusing us of sin and suggesting that our sins are too great to be forgiven. In this case we need a revelation and an appropriation of Christ as having been made sin for us; that is, as having atoned for our sins—as being our justification or righteousness. This will sustain the soul's confidence and preserve its peace.

At another time we are tempted to despair of ever overcoming our tendencies to sin and to give up our sanctification as a hopeless thing. Now we need a revelation of Christ as our sanctification, etc.

At another time the soul is harassed with the view of the great subtlety and sagacity of its spiritual enemies and greatly tempted to despair on that account. Now it needs to know Christ as its wisdom.

Again, it is tempted to discouragement on account of the great number and strength of its adversaries. On such occasions it needs Christ revealed as the Mighty God, as its strong tower, its hiding place, its munition of rocks.

Again, the soul is oppressed with a sense of the infinite holiness of God and the infinite distance there is between us and God on account of our sinfulness and his infinite holiness and on account of his infinite abhorrence of sin and sinners. Now the soul needs to know Christ as its righteousness and as a mediator between God and man.

Again, the Christian's mouth is closed with a sense of guilt so that he cannot look up nor speak to God of pardon and acceptance. He trembles and is confounded before God. He lies along on his face and despairing thoughts roll a tide of agony through his soul. He is speechless and can only groan out his self-accusations before the Lord. Now as a condition of rising above this temptation to despair, he needs a revelation of Christ as his advocate, as his high priest, as ever living to make intercession for him. This view of Christ will enable the soul to commit all to him in this relation and maintain its peace and hold on to its steadfastness.

Again, the soul is led to tremble in view of its constant exposedness to besetments on every side, oppressed with such a sense of its own utter helplessness in the presence of its enemies as almost to despair. Now it needs to know Christ as the good shepherd, who keeps a constant watch over the sheep and carries the lambs in his bosom. He needs to know him as a watchman and a keeper.

Again, it is oppressed with the sense of its own utter emptiness and is forced to exclaim, I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. It sees that it has no life or unction or power or spirituality in itself. Now it needs to know Christ as the true vine from which it may receive constant and abundant spiritual nourishment. It needs to know him as the fountain of the water of life and in those relations that will meet its necessities in this direction. Let these suffice as specimens to illustrate what is intended by entire or permanent sanctification being conditioned on the revelation and appropriation of Christ in all the fullness of his official relations.

Objections Answered

I will consider those passages of Scripture which are by some supposed to contradict the doctrine we have been considering. First Kings 8:46: "If they sin against thee (for there is no man that sinneth not), and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near," etc.

On this passage, I remark: That this sentiment in nearly the same language is repeated in 2 Chronicles 6:36 and in Ecclesiastes 7:20 where the same original word in the same form is used. These are the strongest passages I know of in the Old Testament and the same remarks are applicable to the three. I will quote, for the satisfaction of the reader, the note of Dr. Adam Clarke upon this passage and also that of Barclay, the celebrated and highly spiritual author of *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, and let me say that they appear to me to be satisfactory answers to the objection founded upon these passages:

Clarke: " 'If they sin against thee.'—This must refer to some general defection from truth; to some species of false worship, idolatry, or corruption of the truth and ordinances of the Most High; as for it, they are here stated to be delivered into the hands of their enemies, and carried away captive, which was the general punishment of idolatry, and what is called, [verse 47,] acting perversely and committing wickedness.

" 'If they sin against thee, for there is no man that sinneth not.' The second clause, as it is here translated, renders the supposition in the first clause, entirely nugatory; for, if there be no man that sinneth not, it is useless to say, if they sin; but this contradiction is taken away, by reference to the original *ki yechetau lak*, which should be translated, if they shall sin against thee; or should they sin against thee, *ki ein adam asher lo yecheta*; 'for there is no man that may not sin'; that is, there is no man *impeccable*, none *infallible*; none that is not liable to transgress. This is the true meaning of the phrase in various parts of the Bible, and so our translators have understood the original, for even in the thirty-first verse of this chapter, they have translated *yecheta*, if a man trespass; which certainly implies he *might* or *might not* do it; and in this way they have translated the same word, if a soul sin, in Lev. 5:1 and 6:2; 1 Sam. 2:25; 2 Chron. 4:22; and in several other places. The truth is, the Hebrew has no mood to express words in the *permissive* or *optative* way, but to express this sense it uses the *future* tense of the conjugation *kal*.

"This text has been a wonderful strong-hold for all who believe that there is no redemption from sin in this life; that no man can live without committing sin; and that we cannot be entirely freed from it till we die.

"1. The text speaks no such doctrine; it only speaks of the *possibility* of every man's sinning; and this must be true of a state of *probation*.

"2. There is not another text in the divine records that is more to the purpose than this.

“3. The doctrine is flatly in opposition to the design of the gospel; for Jesus came to save his people from their sins, and to destroy the works of the devil.

“4. It is a dangerous and destructive doctrine, and should be blotted out of every Christian’s creed. There are too many who are seeking to excuse their crimes by all means in their power; and we need not embody their excuses in a creed, to complete their deception, by stating that their sins are unavoidable.”

Barclay: “Secondly,—Another objection is from two passages of scripture, much of one signification. The one is 1 Kings 8:46: ‘For there is no man that sinneth not.’ The other is Eccl. 7:20: ‘For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not.’

“I answer,—

“1. These affirm nothing of a daily and continual sinning, so as never to be redeemed from it; but only that all have sinned, that there is none that doth not sin, though not always so as never to cease to sin; and in this lies the question. Yea, in that place of the Kings he speaks within two verses of the returning of such with all their souls and hearts, which implies a possibility of leaving off sin.

“2. There is a respect to be had to the seasons and dispensations; for if it should be granted that in Solomon’s time there were none that sinned not, it will not follow that there are none such now, or that it is a thing not now attainable by the grace of God under the gospel.

“3. And lastly, this whole objection hangs upon a false interpretation; for the original Hebrew word may be read in the potential mood, thus,—There is no man who may not sin, as well as in the indicative; so both the old Latin, Junius, and Tremellius, and Vatablus have it, and the same word is so used, Ps. 119:11: ‘Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee’—in the potential mood, and not in the indicative: which being more answerable to the universal scope of the scriptures, the testimony of the truth, and the sense of almost all interpreters, doubtless ought to be so understood, and the other interpretation rejected as spurious.”

Whatever may be thought of the views of these authors, to me it is a plain and satisfactory answer to the objection founded upon these passages that the objection might be strictly true under the Old Testament dispensation and prove nothing in regard to the attainability of a state of entire sanctification under the New. What! does the New Testament dispensation differ nothing from the Old in its advantages for the acquisition of holiness? If it be true that no one under the comparatively dark dispensation of Judaism attained a state of permanent sanctification, does that prove such a state is not attainable under the gospel? It is expressly stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews that “the old covenant made nothing perfect but the bringing in of a better hope did.” Under the old covenant, God expressly promised that he would make a new one with the house of Israel in “writing the law in their hearts,” and in “engraving it in their inward parts.” And this new covenant was to be made with the house of Israel under the Christian dispensation. What then do all such passages in the Old Testament prove in relation to the privileges and holiness of Christians under the new dispensation?

Whether any of the Old Testament saints did so far receive the new covenant by way of anticipation as to enter upon a state of permanent sanctification, it is not my present purpose to inquire. Nor will I inquire whether admitting that Solomon said in his day that there was not a just man upon the earth that liveth and sinneth not, the same could with equal truth have been asserted of every generation under the Jewish dispensation. It is expressly asserted of Abraham and multitudes of the Old Testament saints that they “died in faith, not having received the promises.” Now what can this mean? It cannot be that they did not know the promises, for to them the promises were made. It cannot mean that they did not receive Christ, for the Bible expressly asserts that they did, that “Abraham rejoiced to see Christ’s day”—that Moses, and indeed all the Old Testament saints, had so much knowledge of Christ as a Savior to be revealed as to bring them into a state of salvation. But still they did not receive the promise of the Spirit as it is poured out under the Christian dispensation.

This was the great thing all along promised, first to Abraham or to his seed which is Christ. Galatians 3:14, 16: “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of man; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.

And afterward to the Christian church by all the prophets. Acts 2:16–21: But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days (saith God), I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy; and I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come; and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Acts 2:38–39: Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Acts 3:24, 26: Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.” “Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

And lastly, by Christ himself, which he expressly styles “the promise” of the Father. Acts 1:4–5: And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

They did not receive the light and the glory of the Christian dispensation nor the fullness of the Holy Spirit. And it is asserted in the Bible, “they without us,” that is, without our privileges, “could not be made perfect.”

The next objection is founded upon the Lord's Prayer. In this Christ has taught us to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Here it is objected that if a person should become entirely sanctified, he could no longer use this clause of this prayer, which, it is said, was manifestly designed to be used by the church to the end of time.

Upon this prayer I remark: Christ has taught us to pray for entire, in the sense of perpetual, sanctification. "Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven." He designed that we should expect this prayer to be answered or that we should mock him by asking what we do not believe is agreeable to his will and that too which we know could not consistently be granted and that we are to repeat this insult to God as often as we pray. The petition for forgiveness of our trespasses, it is plain, must apply to past sins and not to sins we are committing at the time we make the prayer, for it would be absurd and abominable to pray for the forgiveness of a sin which we are then in the act of committing. This prayer cannot properly be made in respect to any sin of which we have not repented, for it would be highly abominable in the sight of God to pray for the forgiveness of a sin of which we did not repent.

If there be any hour or day in which a man has committed no actual sin, he could not consistently make this prayer in reference to that hour or that day. But at the very time it would be highly proper for him to make this prayer in relation to all his past sins, and that too although he may have repented of and confessed them and prayed for their forgiveness a thousand times before. This does not imply a doubt whether God has forgiven the sins of which we have repented, but it is only a renewal of our grief and humiliation for our sins and a fresh acknowledgment of and casting ourselves upon his mercy. God may forgive when we repent, before we ask him, and while we abhor ourselves so much as to have no heart to ask for forgiveness. But his having forgiven us does not render the petition improper.

And although his sins may be forgiven, he ought still to confess them, to repent of them, both in this world and in the world to come. And it is perfectly suitable so long as he lives in the world to say the least to continue to repent and repeat the request for forgiveness. For myself, I am unable to see why this passage should be made a stumbling block; for if it be improper to pray for the forgiveness of sins of which we have repented, then it is improper to pray for forgiveness at all. And if this prayer cannot be used with propriety in reference to past sins of which we have already repented, it cannot properly be used at all except upon the absurd supposition that we are to pray for the forgiveness of sins which we are now committing and of which we have not repented. And if it be improper to use this form of prayer in reference to all past sins of which we have repented, it is just as improper to use it in reference to sins committed today or yesterday of which we have repented.

Another objection is founded on James 3:1-2: My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man and able also to bridle the whole body."

Upon this passage I remark: The term rendered masters here may be rendered teachers, critics, or censors and be understood either in a good or bad sense. The apostle exhorts the brethren not to be many masters because if they are so, they will incur the great condemnation; "for," says he, "in many things we offend all." The fact that we all offend is here urged as a reason why we should not be many masters, which shows that the term masters is here used in a bad sense. "Be not many masters," for if we are masters "we shall receive the greater condemnation" because we are all great offenders. Now I understand this to be the simple meaning of this passage; do not many (or any) of you become censors or critics and set yourselves up to judge and condemn others. For inasmuch as you have all sinned yourselves and we are all great offenders, we shall receive the greater condemnation if we set ourselves up as censors. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

It does not appear to me that the apostle designs to affirm anything at all of the present character of himself or of those to whom he wrote, nor to have had the remotest allusion to the doctrine of entire sanctification, but simply to affirm a well-established truth in its application to a particular sin: that if they became censors and injuriously condemned others, inasmuch as they had all committed many sins, they should receive the greater condemnation.

That the apostle did not design to deny the doctrine of Christian perfection or entire sanctification as maintained in these lectures seems evident from the fact that he immediately subjoins, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man and able also to bridle the whole body." Another objection is founded in 1 John 1:8: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

Upon this I remark: Those who make this passage an objection to the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life assume that the apostle is here speaking of sanctification instead of justification; whereas an honest examination of the passage, if I mistake not, will render it evident that the apostle makes no allusion here to sanctification but is speaking solely of justification. A little attention to the connection in which this verse stands will, I think, render this evident. But before I proceed to state what I understand to be the meaning of this passage, let us consider it in the connection in which it stands, in the sense in which they understand it who quote it for the purpose of opposing the sentiment advocated in these lectures. They understand the apostle as affirming, that, if we say we are in a state of entire sanctification and do not sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Now if this were the apostle's meaning, he involves himself in this connection in two flat contradictions.

This verse is immediately preceded by the assertion that the "blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Now it would be very remarkable if immediately after this assertion the apostle should mean to say that it does not cleanse us from all sin and if we say it does, we deceive ourselves, for he had just asserted that the blood of Jesus Christ does cleanse us from all sin. If this were his meaning, it involves him in as palpable a contradiction as could be expressed.

This view of the subject then represents the apostle in the conclusion of the seventh verse as saying the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin and in the eighth verse as saying that if we suppose ourselves to be cleansed from all sin, we deceive ourselves, thus flatly contradicting what he had just said. And in the ninth verse he goes on to say that "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," that is, the

blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin; but if we say it does, we deceive ourselves. "But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Now all unrighteousness is sin. If we are cleansed from all unrighteousness, we are cleansed from sin. And now suppose a man should confess his sin and God should in faithfulness and justice forgive his sin and cleanse him from all unrighteousness and then he should confess and profess that God had done this; are we to understand that the apostle would then affirm that he deceives himself in supposing that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin? But as I have already said, I do not understand the apostle as affirming anything in respect to the present moral character of anyone but as speaking of the doctrine of justification.

This then appears to me to be the meaning of the whole passage. If we say that we are not sinners, that is, have no sin to need the blood of Christ, that we have never sinned and consequently need no Savior, we deceive ourselves. For we have sinned and nothing but the blood of Christ cleanseth from sin or procures our pardon and justification. And now, if we will not deny but confess that we have sinned, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "But if we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and his word is not in us."

These are the principal passages that occur to my mind and those I believe upon which the principal stress has been laid by the opposers of this doctrine. And as I do not wish to protract the discussion, I shall omit the examination of other passages.

There are many objections to the doctrine of entire sanctification besides those derived from the passages of Scripture which I have considered. Some of these objections are doubtless honestly felt and deserve to be considered. I will therefore proceed to notice such of them as now occur to my mind.

It is objected that the doctrine of entire and permanent sanctification in this life tends to the errors of modern perfectionism. This objection has been urged by some good men and I doubt not, honestly urged. But still I cannot believe that they have duly considered the matter. It seems to me that one fact will set aside this objection. It is well known that the Wesleyan Methodists have, as a denomination, from the earliest period of their history maintained this doctrine in all its length and breadth. Now if such is the tendency of the doctrine, it is passing strange that this tendency has never developed itself in that denomination. So far as I can learn the Methodists have been in a great measure, if not entirely, exempt from the errors held by modern perfectionists. Perfectionists, as a body, and I believe with very few exceptions, have arisen out of those denominations that deny the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life.

Now the reason of this is obvious to my mind. When professors of religion who have been all their life subject to bondage begin to inquire earnestly for deliverance from their sins, they have found neither sympathy nor instruction in regard to the prospect of getting rid of them in this life. Then they have gone to the Bible and there found in almost every part of it Christ represented as a Savior from their sins. But when they proclaim this truth, they are at once treated as heretics and fanatics by their brethren until being overcome of evil, they fall into censoriousness; and finding the church so decidedly and utterly wrong in her opposition to this one great important truth, they lose confidence in their ministers and the church, and being influenced by a wrong spirit, Satan takes the advantage of them and drives them to the extreme of error and delusion. This I believe to be the true history of many of the most pious members of the Calvinistic churches. On the contrary, the Methodists are very much secured against these errors. They are taught that Jesus Christ is a Savior from all sin in this world. And when they inquire for deliverance, they are pointed to Jesus Christ as a present and all-sufficient Redeemer. Finding sympathy and instruction on this great and agonizing point, their confidence in their ministers and their brethren remains and they walk quietly with them.

It seems to me impossible that the tendency of this doctrine should be to the peculiar errors of the modern perfectionists and yet not an instance occur among all the Methodist ministers or the thousands of their members for one hundred years.

And here let me say it is my full conviction that there are but two ways in which ministers of the present day can prevent members of their churches from becoming perfectionists. One is to suffer them to live so far from God that they will not inquire after holiness of heart and the other is most fully to inculcate the glorious doctrine of entire consecration, and that it is the high privilege as well as the duty of Christians to live in a state of entire consecration to God. I have many additional things to say upon the tendency of this doctrine but at present this must suffice.

By some it is said to be identical with perfectionism and attempts are made to show in what particulars antinomian perfectionism and our views are the same.

On this I remark: It seems to have been a favorite policy of certain controversial writers for a long time, instead of meeting a proposition in the open field of fair and Christian argument, to give it a bad name and attempt to put it down, not by force of argument, but by showing that it is identical with or sustains a new relation to Pelagianism, Antinomianism, Calvinism, or some other *ism*, against which certain classes of minds are deeply prejudiced. In the recent controversy between what are called old and new school divines, who has not witnessed with pain the frequent attempts that have been made to put down the new school divinity, as it is called, by calling it Pelagianism and quoting certain passages from Pelagius and other writers to show the identity of sentiment that exists between them.

This is a very unsatisfactory method of attacking or defending any doctrine. There are no doubt many points of agreement between Pelagius and all truly orthodox divines and so there are many points of disagreement between them. There are also many points of agreement between modern perfectionists and all evangelical Christians and so there are many points of disagreement between them and the Christian church in general. That there are some points of agreement between their views and my own is no doubt true. And that we totally disagree in regard to those points that constitute their great peculiarities is, if I understand them, also true. But did I really agree in all points with Augustine or Edwards or Pelagius or the modern perfectionists, neither the good nor the ill name of any of these would prove my sentiments to be either right or wrong. It would remain, after all, to show that those with whom I agreed were either right or wrong in order on the one hand, to establish that for which I contend or on the other, to overthrow that which I

maintain. It is often more convenient to give a doctrine or an argument a bad name than it is soberly and satisfactorily to reply to it. It is not a little curious that we should be charged with holding the same sentiments with the perfectionists, while yet they seem to be more violently opposed to our views since they have come to understand them than almost any other persons whatever. I have been informed by one of their leaders that he regards me as one of the master-builders of Babylon.

With respect to the modern perfectionists, those who have been acquainted with their writings know that some of them have gone much farther from the truth than others. Some of their leading men who commenced with them and adopted their name stopped far short of adopting some of their most abominable errors, still maintaining the authority and perpetual obligation of the moral law, and thus have been saved from going into many of the most objectionable and destructive notions of the sect. There are many more points of agreement between that class of perfectionists and the orthodox church than between the church and any other class of them. And there are still a number of important points of difference as everyone knows who is possessed of correct information upon this subject.

I abhor the practice of denouncing whole classes of men for the errors of some of that name. I am well aware that there are many of those who are termed perfectionists who as truly abhor the extremes of error into which many of that name have fallen as perhaps do any persons living.

Another objection is that persons could not live in this world if they were entirely sanctified. Strange! Does holiness injure a man? Does perfect conformity to all the laws of life and health, both physical and moral, render it impossible for a man to live? If a man break off from rebellion against God, will it kill him? Does there appear to have been anything in Christ's holiness inconsistent with life and health? The fact is that this objection is founded in a gross mistake in regard to what constitutes entire sanctification. It is supposed by those who hold this objection that this state implies a continual and most intense degree of excitement and many things which are not at all implied in it. I have thought that it is rather a glorified than a sanctified state that most men have before their minds whenever they consider this subject. When Christ was upon earth, he was in a sanctified but not in a glorified state. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master." Now what is there in the moral character of Jesus Christ as represented in this history that may not and ought not to be fully copied into the life of every Christian? I speak not of his knowledge but of his spirit and temper. Ponder well every circumstance of his life that has come down to us and say, beloved what is there in it that may not, by the grace of God, be copied into your own? And think you that a full imitation of him in all that relates to his moral character would render it impossible for you to live in the world?

Another objection is that the doctrine tends to spiritual pride. And is it true, indeed, that to become perfectly humble tends to pride? But entire humility is implied in entire sanctification. Is it true that you must remain in sin and of course cherish pride in order to avoid pride? Is your humility more safe in your own hands and are you more secure against spiritual pride in refusing to receive Christ as your helper than you would be in at once embracing him as a full Savior?

I have seen several remarks in the papers of late and have heard several suggestions from various quarters which have but increased the fear which I have for some time entertained that multitudes of Christians, and indeed many ministers, have radically defective views of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. To the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life as believed and taught by some of us, it has been frequently of late objected that prayers offered in accordance with this belief and by a sanctified soul would savor strongly of spiritual pride and self-righteousness. I have seen this objection stated in its full force of late in a religious periodical in the form of a supposed prayer of a sanctified soul, the object of which was manifestly to expose the shocking absurdity, self-righteousness, and spiritual pride of a prayer or rather thanksgiving made in accordance with a belief that one is entirely sanctified. Now, I must confess that prayer, together with objections and remarks which suggest the same idea, have created in my mind no small degree of alarm. I fear much that many of our divines, in contending for the doctrines of grace, have entirely lost sight of the meaning of the language they use and have in reality but very little practical understanding of what is intended by salvation by grace in opposition to salvation by works. If this is not the case I know not how to account for their feeling and for their stating such an objection as this to the doctrine of entire sanctification.

Now if I understand the doctrine of salvation by grace, both sanctification and justification are wrought by the grace of God and not by any works or merits of our own irrespective of the grace of Christ through faith. If this is the real doctrine of the Bible, what earthly objection can there be to our confessing, professing, and thanking God for our sanctification any more than for our justification? It is true, indeed, that in our justification our own agency is not concerned while in our sanctification it is. Yet I understand the doctrine of the Bible to be that both are brought about by grace through faith and that we should no sooner be sanctified without the grace of Christ than we should be justified without it. Now, who pretends to deny this? And yet if it is true, of what weight is that class of objections to which I have alluded? These objections manifestly turn upon the idea, no doubt latent and deep seated in the mind, that the real holiness of Christians in whatever degree it exists is in some way to be ascribed to some goodness originating in themselves and not in the grace of Christ. But do let me ask how it is possible that men who entertain really and practically right views upon this subject can by any possibility feel, as if it must be proof conclusive of self-righteousness and Pharisaism, to profess and thank God for sanctification? Is it not understood on all hands that sanctification is by grace and that the gospel has made abundant provision for the sanctification of all men? This certainly is admitted by those who have stated this objection. Now if this is so, which is the most honorable to God, to confess and complain that our sins triumph and gain dominion over us or to be able truly and honestly to thank him for having given us the victory over our sins? God has said, "Sin shall not have dominion over you for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

Now, in view of this and multitudes of kindred promises, suppose we come to God and say: "O Lord, thou hast made these great and precious promises, but as a matter of fact, they do not accord with our own experience. For sin

does continually have dominion over us. Thy grace is not sufficient for us. We are continually overcome by temptation, notwithstanding thy promise that in every temptation thou wilt make a way for us to escape. Thou hast said the truth shall make us free, but we are not free. We are still the slaves of our appetites and lusts.”

Now which, I inquire, is the most honorable to God, to go on with a string of confessions and self-accusations that are in flat contradiction to the promises of God and almost, to say the least, a burlesque upon the grace of the gospel or to be able through grace to confess that we have found it true in our own experience that his grace is sufficient for us, that as our day is so our strength is, and that sin does not have dominion over us because we are not under the law but under grace?

To this I know it will be answered that in this confessing of our sins we do not impeach the grace or faithfulness of God, inasmuch as all these promises are conditioned upon faith and consequently that the reason of our remaining in sin is to be ascribed to our unbelief and is therefore no disparagement to the grace of Christ. But I beg that it may be duly considered that faith itself is of the operation of God—is itself produced by grace, and therefore the fact of our being obliged to confess our unbelief is a dishonor to the grace of Christ. Is it honorable or dishonorable to God that we should be able to confess that even our unbelief is overcome and that we are able to testify from our own experience that the grace of the gospel is sufficient for our present salvation and sanctification? There is no doubt a vast amount of self-righteousness in the church, which, while it talks of grace, really means nothing by it. For a man to go any farther than to hope that he is converted seems to many minds to savor of self-righteousness. Now why is this, unless they themselves entertain self-righteous notions in regard to conversion? Many persons would feel shocked to hear a man in prayer unqualifiedly thank God that he had been converted and justified. And they might just as well feel shocked at this and upon precisely the same principle as to feel shocked if he should unqualifiedly thank God that he had been sanctified by his grace.

But again, I say that the very fact that a man feels shocked to hear a converted or a sanctified soul unqualifiedly thank God for the grace received shows that down deep in his heart lies concealed a self-righteous view of the way of salvation and that in his mind all holiness in Christians is a ground of boasting, and that if persons have become truly and fully sanctified, they really have a ground of boasting before God. I know not how else to account for this wonderful prejudice. For my own part, I do not conceive it to be the least evidence of self-righteousness when I hear a man sincerely and heartily thank God for converting and justifying him by his grace. Nor should I feel either shocked, horrified, or disgusted to hear a man thank God that he had sanctified him wholly by his grace. If in either or both cases I had the corroborative evidence of an apparently holy life, I should bless God, take courage, and feel like calling on all around to glorify God for such an instance of his glorious and excellent grace.

The feeling seems to be very general that such a prayer or thanksgiving is similar in fact and in the principle upon which it rests with that of the Pharisee noticed by our Savior. But what reason is there for this assumption? We are expressly informed that that was the prayer of a Pharisee. But the Pharisees were self-righteous and expressly and openly rejected the grace of Christ. The Pharisee then boasted of his own righteousness, originated in and consummated by his own goodness and not in the grace of Christ. Hence he did not thank God that the grace of Christ had made him unlike other men. Now, this prayer was designed to teach us the abominable folly of any man's putting in a claim to righteousness and true holiness, irrespective of the grace of God by Jesus Christ. But certainly this is an infinitely different thing from the thanksgiving of a soul who fully recognizes the grace of Christ and attributes his sanctification entirely to that grace. And I cannot see how a man who has entirely divested himself of Pharisaical notions in respect to the doctrine of sanctification can suppose these two prayers to be analogous in their principle and spirit.

Again it is objected that many who have embraced this doctrine really are spiritually proud.

To this I answer: So have many who believed the doctrine of regeneration been deceived and amazingly puffed up with the idea that they have been regenerated when they have not been. But is this a good reason for abandoning the doctrine of regeneration or any reason why the doctrine should not be preached? Let me inquire whether a simple declaration of what God has done for their souls has not been assumed as of itself sufficient evidence of spiritual pride on the part of those who embrace this doctrine while there was in reality no spiritual pride at all? It seems next to impossible, with the present views of the church, that an individual should really attain this state and profess to live without known sin in a manner so humble as not, of course, to be suspected of enormous spiritual pride. This consideration has been a snare to some who have hesitated and even neglected to declare what God had done for their souls lest they should be accused of spiritual pride. And this has been a serious injury to their piety.

But again it is objected that this doctrine tends to censoriousness. To this I reply: It is not denied that some who have professed to believe this doctrine have become censorious. But this no more condemns this doctrine than it condemns that of regeneration. And that it tends to censoriousness might just as well be urged against every acknowledged doctrine of the Bible as against this doctrine.

Let any Christian do his whole duty to the church and the world in their present state; let him speak to them and of them as they really are, and he would of course incur the charge of censoriousness. It is therefore the most unreasonable thing in the world to suppose that the church in its present state would not accuse any perfect Christian of censoriousness. Entire sanctification implies the doing of all our duty. But to do all our duty we must rebuke sin in high places and in low places. Can this be done with all needed severity without in many cases giving offense and incurring the charge of censoriousness? No, it is impossible; and to maintain the contrary would be to impeach the wisdom and holiness of Jesus Christ himself.

It is objected that the believers in this doctrine lower the standard of holiness to a level with their own experience. To this I reply that it has been common to set up a false standard and to overlook the true spirit and meaning of the law and to represent it as requiring something else than what it does require, but this notion is not confined to those who believe in this doctrine. The moral law requires one and the same thing of all moral agents, namely that they shall be

universally and disinterestedly benevolent; in other words, that they shall love the Lord their God with all their heart and their neighbor as themselves. This is all that it does require of any. Whoever has understood the law as requiring less or more than this has misunderstood it. Love is the fulfilling of the law. But I must refer the reader to what I have said upon this subject when treating of moral government.

The law, as we have seen on a former occasion, levels its claims to us as we are and a just exposition of it, as I have already said, must take into consideration all the present circumstances of our being. This is indispensable to a right apprehension of what constitutes entire sanctification. There may be, as facts show, danger of misapprehension in regard to the true spirit and meaning of the law in the sense that by theorizing and adopting a false philosophy, one may lose sight of the deepest affirmations of his reason in regard to the true spirit and meaning of the law; and I would humbly inquire whether the error has not been in giving such an interpretation of the law as naturally to beget the idea so prevalent that if a man should become holy, he could not live in this world? In a letter lately received from a beloved and useful and venerated minister of the gospel, while the writer expressed the greatest attachment to the doctrine of entire consecration to God and said that he preached the same doctrine which we hold to his people every Sabbath but by another name, still he added that it was revolting to his feelings to hear any mere man set up the claim of obedience to the law of God. Now let me inquire why should this be revolting to the feelings of piety? Must it not be because the law of God is supposed to require something of human beings in our state which it does not and cannot require? Why should such a claim be thought extravagant unless the claims of the living God be thought extravagant? If the law of God really requires no more of men than what is reasonable and possible, why should it be revolting to any mind to hear an individual profess to have attained to entire obedience? I know that the brother to whom I allude would be almost the last man deliberately and knowingly to give any strained interpretation to the law of God, and yet I cannot but feel that much of the difficulty that good men have upon this subject has arisen out of a comparison of the lives of saints with a standard entirely above that which the law of God does or can demand of persons in all respects in our circumstances, or, indeed, of any moral agent whatever.

Another objection is that as a matter of fact the grace of God is not sufficient to secure the entire sanctification of saints in this life. It is maintained that the question of the attainability of entire sanctification in this life resolves itself after all into the question whether Christians are sanctified in this life. The objectors say that nothing is sufficient grace that does not, as a matter of fact, secure the faith and obedience and perfection of the saints; and therefore, that the provisions of the gospel are to be measured by the results and that the experience of the church decides both the meaning of the promises and the extent of the provisions of grace.

Now to this I answer: If this objection be good for anything in regard to entire sanctification, it is equally true in regard to the spiritual state of every person in the world. If the fact that men are not perfect proves that no provision is made for their perfection, their being no better than they are proves that there is no provision for their being any better than they are or that they might not have aimed at being any better with any rational hope of success. But who except a fatalist will admit any such conclusion as this? And yet I do not see but this conclusion is inevitable from such premises. As well might an impenitent sinner urge that the grace of the gospel is not, as a matter of fact, sufficient for him because it does not convert him; as well might he resolve everything into the sovereignty of God and say, the sovereignty of God must convert me or I shall not be converted, and since I am not converted, it is because the grace of God has not proved itself sufficient to convert me. But who will excuse the sinner and admit his plea that the grace and provisions of the gospel are not sufficient for him?

Let ministers urge upon both saints and sinners the claims of God. Let them insist that sinners may and can and ought immediately to become Christians and that Christians can and may and ought to live wholly to God. Let them urge Christians to live without sin and hold out the same urgency of command and the same encouragement that the new school holds out to sinners, and we shall soon find that Christians are entering into the liberty of perfect love, as sinners have found pardon and acceptance. Let ministers hold forth the same gospel to all and insist that the grace of the gospel is as sufficient to save from all sin as from a part of it, and we shall soon see whether the difficulty has not been that the gospel has been hid and denied until the churches have been kept weak through unbelief. The church has been taught not to expect the fulfillment of the promises to them, that it is dangerous error to expect the fulfillment to them, for example, of the promise in 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24: “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. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it.” When God says he will sanctify us wholly and preserve us blameless unto the coming of the Lord, masters in Israel tell us that to expect this is dangerous error.

Another objection to this doctrine is that it is contrary to the views of some of the greatest and best men in the church, that such men as Augustine, Calvin, Doddridge, [and] Edwards were of a different opinion.

To this I answer: Suppose they were; we are to call no man father in such a sense as to yield up to him the determination of our views of Christian doctrine. This objection comes with a very ill grace from those who wholly reject the opinions of these divines on some of the most important points of Christian doctrine. Those men all held the doctrine of physical moral depravity which was manifestly the ground of their rejecting the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life. Maintaining, as they seem to have done, that the constitutional susceptibilities of body and mind were sinfully depraved, consistency of course led them to reject the idea that persons could be entirely sanctified while in the body. Now, I would ask what consistency is there in quoting them as rejecting the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life while the reason of this rejection in their minds was founded in the doctrine of physical moral depravity which notion is entirely denied by those who quote their authority?

But again, it is objected that if we should attain this state of continual consecration or sanctification, we could not know it until the day of judgment and that to maintain its attainability is vain, inasmuch as no one can know whether he has attained it or not.

To this I reply: A man's consciousness is the highest and best evidence of the present state of his own mind. I understand consciousness to be the mind's recognition of its own existence and exercises and that it is the highest possible evidence to our own minds of what passes within us. Consciousness can of course testify only to our present sanctification; but with the law of God before us as our standard, the testimony of consciousness in regard to whether the mind is conformed to that standard or not is the highest evidence which the mind can have of a present state of conformity to that rule.

It is a testimony which we cannot doubt anymore than we can doubt our existence. How do we know that we exist? I answer, by our consciousness. How do I know that I breathe or love or hate or sit or stand or lie down or rise up, that I am joyful or sorrowful? In short, that I exercise any emotion or volition or affection of mind? How do I know that I sin or repent or believe? I answer, by my own consciousness. No testimony can be "so direct and convincing as this."

Now, in order to know that my repentance is genuine, I must know what genuine repentance is. So if I would know whether my love to God and man or obedience to the law is genuine, I must have clearly before my mind the real spirit and meaning and bearing of the law of God. Having the rule before my mind, my own consciousness affords "the most direct and convincing evidence possible" whether my present state of mind is conformed to the rule. The Spirit of God is never employed in testifying to what my consciousness teaches but in setting in a strong light before my mind the rule to which I am to conform my life. It is his province to make me understand, to induce me to love and obey the truth; and it is the province of consciousness to testify to my own mind whether I do or do not obey the truth when I apprehend it. When God so presents the truth as to give the mind assurance that it understands his mind and will upon any subject, the mind's consciousness of its own state in view of that truth is "the highest and most direct possible" evidence of whether it obeys or disobeys.

If a man cannot be conscious of the character of his own supreme or ultimate choice in which choice his moral character consists, how can he know when and of what he is to repent? If he has committed sin of which he is not conscious, how is he to repent of it? And if he has a holiness of which he is not conscious, how could he feel that he has peace with God?

But it is said that a man may violate the law not knowing it and consequently have no consciousness that he sinned but that afterward, a knowledge of the law may convict him of sin. To this I reply that if there was absolutely no knowledge that the thing in question was wrong, the doing of that thing was not sin, inasmuch as some degree of knowledge of what is right or wrong is indispensable to the moral character of any act. In such a case, there may be a sinful ignorance which may involve all the guilt of those actions that were done in consequence of it, but that blameworthiness lies in that state of heart that has induced this and not at all in the violation of the rule of which the mind was at the time entirely ignorant.

The Bible everywhere assumes that we are able to know and unqualifiedly requires us to know what the moral state of our mind is. It commands us to examine ourselves, to know and to prove our own selves. Now, how can this be done but by bringing our hearts into the light of the law of God and then taking the testimony of our own consciousness whether we are or are not in a state of conformity to the law? But if we are not to receive the testimony of our own consciousness in regard to our present sanctification, are we to receive it in respect to our repentance or any other exercise of our mind whatever? The fact is that we may deceive ourselves by neglecting to compare ourselves with the right standard. But when our views of the standard are right and our consciousness bears witness of a felt, decided, unequivocal state of mind, we cannot be deceived any more than we can be deceived in regard to our own existence.

But it is said our consciousness does not teach us what the power and capacities of our minds are and that, therefore, if consciousness could teach us in respect to the kind of our exercises, it cannot teach us in regard to their degree, whether they are equal to the present capacity of our mind. To this I reply:

Consciousness does as unequivocally testify whether we do or do not love God with all our heart as it does whether we love him at all. How does a man know that he lifts as much as he can or runs or walks as fast as he is able? I answer, by his own consciousness. How does he know that he repents or loves with all his heart? I answer, by his own consciousness. This is the only possible way in which he can know it.

The objection implies that God has put within our reach no possible means of knowing whether we obey him or not. The Bible does not directly reveal the fact to any man whether he obeys God or not. It reveals his duty but does not reveal the fact whether he obeys. It refers for this testimony to his own consciousness. The Spirit of God sets our duty before us but does not directly reveal to us whether we do it or not for this would imply that every man is under constant inspiration.

But it is said the Bible directs our attention to the fact, whether we outwardly obey or disobey as evidence whether we are in a right state of mind or not. But I would inquire, How do we know whether we obey or disobey? How do we know anything of our conduct but by our consciousness? Our conduct as observed by others is to them evidence of the state of our hearts. But, I repeat it, our consciousness of obedience to God is to us the highest and indeed the only evidence of our true character.

If a man's own consciousness is not to be a witness either for or against him, other testimony can never satisfy him of the propriety of God's dealing with him in the final judgment. There are cases of common occurrence where the witnesses testify to the guilt or innocence of a man contrary to the testimony of his own consciousness. In all such cases, from the very laws of his being he rejects all other testimony; and let me add that he would reject the testimony of God, and from the very laws of his being must reject it, if it contradicted his own consciousness. When God convicts a man of sin, it is not by contradicting his consciousness but by placing the consciousness which he had at the time in the clear strong light of his memory, causing him to discover clearly and to remember distinctly what light he had, what thoughts, what convictions, what intention or design, in other words, what consciousness he had at the time. And this, let me add, is the way and the only way in which the Spirit of God can convict a man of sin, thus bringing him to condemn himself.

Now, suppose that God should bear testimony against a man that at such a time he did such a thing, that such and such were all the circumstances of the case; and suppose that at the same time the individual's consciousness unequivocally contradicts him. The testimony of God in this case could not satisfy the man's mind nor lead him into a state of self-condemnation. The only possible way in which this state of mind could be induced would be to annihilate his opposing consciousness and to convict him simply upon the testimony of God.

Men may overlook what consciousness is. They may mistake the rule of duty, they may confound consciousness with a mere negative state of mind or that in which a man is not conscious of a state of opposition to the truth. Yet it must forever remain true that to our own minds, "consciousness must be the highest possible evidence" of what passes within us. And if a man does not by his own consciousness know whether he does the best that he can under the circumstances—whether he has a single eye to the glory of God—and whether he is in a state of entire consecration to God—he cannot know it in any way whatever. And no testimony whatever, either of God or man, could, according to the laws of his being, satisfy him either as to conviction of guilt on the one hand or self-approbation on the other.

Let me ask how those who make this objection know that they are not in a sanctified state? Has God revealed it to them? Has he revealed it in the Bible? Does the Bible say to A. B. by name, You are not in a sanctified state? Or does it lay down a rule in the light of which his own consciousness bears this testimony against him? Has God revealed directly by his Spirit that he is not in a sanctified state, or does he hold the rule of duty strongly before the mind and thus awaken the testimony of consciousness that he is not in this state? Now just in the same way consciousness testifies of those that are sanctified that they are in this state. Neither the Bible nor the Spirit of God makes any new or particular revelation to them by name. But the Spirit of God bears witness to their spirits by setting the rule in a strong light before them. He induces that state of mind which conscience pronounces to be conformity to the rule. This is as far as possible from setting aside the judgment of God in the case, for conscience, under these circumstances, is the testimony of God and the way in which he convinces of sin on the one hand and of entire consecration on the other; and the decision of conscience is given to us in consciousness.

By some it is still objected that consciousness alone is not evidence even to ourselves of our being or not being in a state of entire sanctification; that the judgment of the mind is also employed in deciding the true intent and meaning of the law and is therefore as absolutely a witness in the case as consciousness is. "Consciousness," it is said, "gives us the exercise of our own mind and the judgment decides whether these exercises are in accordance with the law of God." So then it is the judgment rather than the consciousness that decides whether we are or are not in a state of entire sanctification; and therefore, in our judgment of the law we happen to be mistaken, than which nothing is more common in such case we are utterly deceived if we think ourselves in a state of entire sanctification.

To this I answer: It is, indeed, our judgment that decides upon the intent and meaning of the law. We may be mistaken in regard to its true application in certain cases as it respects outward conduct, but let it be remembered that neither sin nor holiness is to be found in the outward act. They both belong only to the ultimate intention. No man, as was formerly shown, can mistake his real duty. Everyone knows and cannot but know that disinterested benevolence is his duty. This is and nothing else is his duty. This he can know and about this he need not be mistaken. And sure it is that if man can be certain of anything, he can be certain in respect to the end of which he lives or in respect to his supreme, ultimate intention.

I deny that it is the judgment which is to us the witness in respect to the state of our own minds. There are several powers of the mind called into exercise in deciding upon the meaning of and in obeying the law of God, but it is consciousness alone that gives us these exercises. Nothing but consciousness can possibly give us any exercise of our own minds; that is, we have no knowledge of any exercise but by our own consciousness. Suppose then the judgment is exercised, the will is exercised, and all the involuntary powers are exercised. These exercises are revealed to us only and simply by consciousness, so that it remains an invariable truth that consciousness is to us the only possible witness of what our exercises are and consequently of the state of our own minds. When therefore I say that by consciousness a man may know whether he is in a state of sanctification, I mean that consciousness is the real and only evidence that we can have of being in this state.

This objection is based upon a misapprehension of that which constitutes entire or continued sanctification. It consists, as has been shown, in abiding consecration to God and not as the objection assumes, in involuntary affections and feelings. When it is considered that entire sanctification consists in an abiding good will to God and to being in general, in living to one end, what real impossibility can there be in knowing whether we are supremely devoted to this end or supremely devoted to our own interest?

Again, it is objected that if this state were attained in this life, it would be the end of our probation. To this I reply that probation since the fall of Adam or those points on which we are in a state of probation or trial are (1) whether we will repent and believe the gospel and (2) whether we will persevere in holiness to the end of life.

Some suppose that the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints sets aside the idea of being at all in a state of probation after conversion. They reason thus: If it is certain that the saints will persevere, then their probation is ended because the question is already settled not only that they are converted, but that they will persevere to the end; and the contingency in regard to the event is indispensable to the idea of probation. To this I reply that a thing may be contingent with man that is not at all so with God. With God there is not and never was any contingency in the sense of uncertainty with regard to the final destiny of any being. But with men almost all things are contingent. God knows with absolute certainty whether a man will be converted and whether he will persevere. A man may know that he is converted and may believe that by the grace of God he shall persevere. He may have an assurance of this in proportion to the strength of his faith. But the knowledge of this fact is not at all inconsistent with his idea of his continuance in a state of trial till the day of his death, inasmuch as his perseverance depends upon the exercise of his own voluntary agency and also because his perseverance is the condition of his final salvation.

In the same way some say that if we have attained a state of entire or permanent sanctification, we can no longer be in a state of probation. I answer that perseverance in this depends upon the promises and grace of God just as the final perseverance of the saints does. In neither case can we have any other assurance of our perseverance than that of faith in the promise and grace of God, nor any other knowledge that we shall continue in this state than that which arises out of a belief in the testimony of God that he will preserve us blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. If this be inconsistent with our probation, I see not why the doctrine of the saint's perseverance is not equally inconsistent with it. If any one is disposed to maintain that for us to have any judgment or belief grounded on the promises of God in regard to our final perseverance is inconsistent with a state of probation, all I can say is that his views of probation are very different from my own and so far as I understand from those of the church of God.

Again, there is a very high and important sense in which every moral being will remain on probation to all eternity. While under the moral government of God, obedience must forever remain a condition of the favor of God. And continued obedience will forever depend on the faithfulness and grace of God; and the only confidence we can ever have, either in heaven or on earth, that we shall continue to obey must be founded upon the faithfulness and truth of God.

Again, if it were true that entering upon a state of permanent sanctification in this life were in some sense an end of our probation, that would be no objection to the doctrine for there is a sense in which probation often ends long before the termination of this life. Where, for example, for any cause God has left sinners to fill up the measure of their iniquity, withdrawing forever his Holy Spirit from them and sealing them over to eternal death; this in a very important sense is the end of their probation, and they are as sure of hell as if they were already there. So on the other hand when a person has received after believing the sealing of the Spirit unto the day of redemption as an earnest of his inheritance, he may regard and is bound to regard this as a solemn pledge on the part of God of his final perseverance and salvation and as no longer leaving the final question of his destiny in doubt.

Now it should be remembered that in both these cases the result depends upon the exercise of the agency of the creature. In the case of the sinner given up of God, it is certain that he will not repent, though his impenitence is voluntary and by no means a thing naturally necessary. So, on the other hand, the perseverance of the saints is certain, though not necessary. If in either case there should be a radical change of character, the result would differ accordingly.

Again, while it is admitted by some that entire sanctification in this life is attainable, yet it is denied that there is any certainty that it will be attained by anyone before death; for it is said that as all the promises of entire sanctification are conditioned upon faith, they therefore secure the entire sanctification of no one.

To this I reply that all the promises of salvation in the Bible are conditioned upon faith and repentance; and therefore it does not follow on this principle that any person ever will be saved. What does all this arguing prove? The fact is that while the promises of both salvation and sanctification are conditioned upon faith, yet the promises that God will convert and sanctify the elect, spirit, soul and body, and preserve and save them must be fulfilled and will be fulfilled by free grace drawing and securing the concurrence of free will. With respect to the salvation of sinners, it is promised that Christ shall have a seed to serve him, and the Bible abounds with promises to Christ that secure the salvation of great multitudes of sinners. So the promises that the church as a body at some period of her earthly history shall be entirely sanctified are as it regards the church unconditional in the sense that they will assuredly be accomplished. But, as I have already shown, as it respects individuals the fulfillment of these promises must depend upon the exercise of faith. Both in respect to the salvation of sinners and the sanctification of Christians, God is abundantly pledged to bring about the salvation of the one and the sanctification of the other to the extent of his promise to Christ.

It is also objected that the sanctification of the saints depends upon the sovereignty of God. To this I reply that both the sanctification of the saints and the conversion of sinners is in some sense dependent upon the sovereign grace of God. But who except an antinomian would for this reason hesitate to urge it upon sinners to repent immediately and believe the gospel? Would anyone think of objecting to the doctrine or the fact of repentance, that repentance and the conversion of sinners were dependent upon the sovereignty of God? And yet if the sovereignty of God can be justly urged as a bar to the doctrine of entire sanctification, it may, for aught I see, with equal propriety be urged as a bar to the doctrine and fact of repentance. We have no controversy with anyone upon the subject of entire sanctification who will as fully and as firmly hold out the duty and the possibility and the practical attainability of entire sanctification as of repentance and salvation. Let them both be put where the Bible puts them, upon the same ground so far as the duty and the practicability of both are concerned. Suppose anyone should assert that it were irrational and dangerous for sinners to hope or expect to be converted and sanctified and saved because all this depends upon the sovereignty of God and they do not know what God will do. Who would say this? But why not as well say it as make the objection to sanctification which we are now considering?

Love is the fundamental expression of Christians and is essential to biblical Christianity. God himself is love. All his moral attributes are merely attributes of love. This means that benevolence wills the best possible end for its object(s). Love is also a trait that all men are capable of expressing. Such demonstrations of love are evident every day and reflect the basic need of all men to love and be loved. Love can be expressed toward others and God.