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Holiness Writers

**THE BEAUTY OF
HOLINESS**

By

George Whitefield Ridout, D.D.

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

By

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of

"Amazing Grace"

"The Cross and Flag"

"Seven Deadly Fallacies"

"Revival Blessings"

"Seven Wonders of Prayer"

"Marvelous Men and Women of God"

etc., etc.

"Holiness is power. It utilizes ability, fertilizes the soul and energizes the whole man. Holiness is God's power with man and man's power with God. — Cecil —

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THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

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THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

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CHAPTER 1

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

"The beauties of the earth and sky may change, the highest, sweetest forms of beauty in the human face divine, may turn to the dust and ashes of the sepulcher; but Holiness abides forever. No fires can burn it, no floods can overwhelm it, no age bring wrinkles on its brow or carve deep lines into its face." — Rev. L. R. Dunn —

It has been well said of Holiness that it resembles the light of the sun at noonday with its brightness, beauty, illumination and warmth; and the air redolent of sweets, and flowers. Holiness should bring sunshine, not gloom; happiness, not heaviness; gladness, not depression.

The Beauty of Holiness adorns the soul with certain qualities which bring praise and glory to the God of all grace (Ephesians 1:6). A certain writer asks what is sanctified grace, and the answer is: It is that grace by which the soul comes into possession of faith like Abraham, patience like Job, hope like Moses, perseverance like Noah, meekness like David, temperance like Daniel, prayerfulness like Elijah, unworldliness like James, holiness like Peter, love like John, guilelessness like Nathanael, devotion to God and to Jesus like Paul. It is that grace which will let you sing in trial like Paul and Silas, help you to pray out of prison like Peter, keep you in the hottest fire of affliction like the three Hebrew children. Sanctification is supernatural grace because it takes supernatural power to arrest, to control, to destroy. Sanctification is an habitual grace. Holiness becomes a habit on earth; here the saints do on earth as they do in Heaven.

Holiness imparts sovereign and moral beauty to the soul so that according to Thomas Aquinas, that which is in God substantially by His essence is accidentally in the soul by divine participation. It is such beauty God Himself is captivated with it. "Thou art all beautiful; there is no spot in thee." It reflects the beauty of the face of God. Oh, the face of God! Did you ever see a soul lit up by divine glory? That is but the reflection of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Holiness is a participation of the divine nature, a seed of divinity. "His seed remaineth in him." It partakes of the divine nature in the sense the iron partakes of the fire; the rough, rude iron put into the fire becomes radiant, brilliant and the fire may say to it: "I have imparted that to thee." So God may say to the soul, "impart to thee the glow and beauty and heat of my nature" — the soul is bathed in God.

Sanctifying grace assures eternal salvation, conditioned of course upon its continuance in the soul by a living faith and obedience. Possessed with this no soul can be lost.

Holiness is susceptible of constant increase, and like other riches can be added onto. This is increased by divine bestowments, also by fuller acquirements by exercise and practice. Sanctifying grace gives cause for God's complacency with His saints. God delights in His saints and takes

pleasure in them. Sanctifying grace is that by which the soul enjoys God, abounds in His love and becomes more and more like Him — like Him in love, in humility, in sinlessness, in purity, in holiness — "We shall be like Him."

In setting forth the beauty of holiness we shall draw a figure from the realms of physics: here we are told that all the primary colors in nature coalesce to make pure white. It takes the red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet to make a pure white; so the various attributes of holiness join together — coalesce — to produce the pure white light of the beauty of holiness. Holding to the figure seven in the above, we shall endeavor to set forth seven of the essential elements of holiness.

1. The Beauty of Holiness is the Beauty of Purity.
2. The Beauty of Holiness is the Beauty of Unity.
3. The Beauty of Holiness is the Beauty of Humility.
4. The Beauty of Holiness is the Beauty of Christlikeness.
5. The Beauty of Holiness is the Beauty of Consecration.
6. The Beauty of Holiness is the Beauty of Love.
7. The Beauty of Holiness is the Beauty of Perfection.

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CHAPTER 2

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS IS THE BEAUTY OF PURITY

As pure Light is composed of seven colors, so the holiness of the perfect Christian character is composed of a number of distinct and beautiful virtues and purity is not the least among them. "Blessed are the pure in heart."

"I wait till he shall touch me clean,
Shall life and power impart,
Give me the faith that casts out sin
And purifies the heart."

The purification of the soul from sin's defilement is a distinct and definite act of God's grace wrought for the believer. Peter, in Acts 15:9, describing the outflowing of the Spirit in the house of Cornelius, said, "And God which knoweth the hearts bare them witness giving them the Holy Ghost even as he did unto us and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."

The mystic writers on the deeper life in God trace the stages whereby the chosen soul is gradually invaded and absorbed by God thus: First, the long climb of purgation when the first renunciation is effected; secondly, the hilltop of supernatural illumination; thirdly, the vale of purging drought when all spiritual life seems withdrawn, and the world loses all of its attachments and all spell of its allurements is broken and no taste for worldly things remain.

Pureness of soul is solely a matter of God's grace through the precious blood. The question arises, how pure may we become? How clean of sin? To what depths of the soul can purification through the blood go?

Perhaps we cannot do better than present a concrete case of heart purity from the Reflections of Albin Peyron, of France, in which he tells of his complete deliverance from indwelling sin which took place quite sometime after his notable conversion; his testimony is as follows:

"I can fix precisely the day when kneeling beside a Salvationist who for years had traveled the way of holiness, I had the distinct impression that the Lord had taken from my soul the roots of sin, that He had purified me from all my stains, all my idolatries. I besought Him for this blessing of entire deliverance as I prayed long for the grace of forgiveness. The sister who knelt beside me interrupted with: 'Bless the Lord, because He has granted your prayer.' But ought I not to wait until I realize it before thanking Him for it?"

"No," came the answer, "believe that He has given it. This mercy is obtained by faith."

"Well, then," I cried, "bless thee, my Saviour, because thou hast taken sin out of my heart and hast now given me a new heart and a pure heart."

"And he did it. He freed me from evil. He made me literally free. That was nine years ago and I can say here to the glory of God that the sin which He took out of my heart has never returned. I do not mean to say that since that time I have never been tempted; on the contrary, I have been the mark of the adversary and attacked far more than before, and at times these attacks have been terrible. But if Satan has come — and he has — he has had nothing in me. The Saviour has removed that inner correspondence with him which formerly existed, that traitor hidden within who opened the gate to the enemy. Satan still prowls around. I must watch. But thanks to God, he prowls around and not within. Jesus guards the gates."

It will be noticed in Paul's writings that he uses some special phrases in setting forth the state of soul purity. He uses negatives namely, "without offence," Acts 24:16; "Without rebuke," Phil. 2:15; "Without blame," Eph. 1:4; "Free from sin," Rom. 6:22.

Let it be remembered sin is cleansed, not outgrown. The remains of depravity must be removed from the soul by faith in the atonement and not supplanted by a new nature. In fact, the weeds will choke the growth of the wheat. The remains of the carnal mind will hinder the development of the spiritual nature. The energies which should be spent in working for Christ are used in watching, and chaining, and keeping the old self subdued and in prison, when he ought to be slain and buried, and then these guards could do active duty for God and humanity. The soul is exhausted in this dreadful struggle with self. The inner poverty and emptiness have no overflowing streams for the thirsty souls of others. Self-environed and self-absorbed, they do not move as a living force, an inspiration and courage to their fellowmen. They need the cleansing of the blood of Christ, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost which always follows, and then they will grow. "Having the hindrances removed, and the vital force of the spiritual organism increased by this Holy Ghost power, they will grow naturally and symmetrically from within and not from accretion without. A few Greek soldiers, concealed within the prodigious horse, which the Greeks made and which the Trojans captured as a prize and took within the city's gates, opened the gates of Troy to the Greek army, and Troy fell. Traitors within the heart are more to be feared than the foes without."

Martin Luther has said:

"The Holiness of common Christianity is this: that the Holy Spirit gives the people faith in Christ and sanctifies them thereby; that is, makes a new heart, soul, body, work, and being and writes the law of God, not on tables of stone, but in fleshly hearts. He sanctifies them, not only by the forgiveness of sin, but also by the laying aside, expelling and destroying of sin."

HOW TO ATTAIN CHRISTIAN PURITY

"An error has gained considerable prevalence, and has wrought not a little evil, in relation to this very subject — the faith which brings the sanctifying grace."

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

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

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CHAPTER 3

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS IS THE BEAUTY OF DIVINE UNION

In Divine Union the soul is brought into a sweet and mysterious nearness and union with God. It would hardly be too much to say that the soul has, in some important sense, changed its locality. It has not only withdrawn its affections from the world, which separated it for so long a time from its Creator, but mounting upward, it experiences a mystical reunion, a most holy and delightful mingling with the infinitude and blessedness of the divine nature. Not an extinction of our personality, for that would be a view false and pernicious; but a union, although the similitude gives but an imperfect idea of the reality, like that of the planets to the sun, which revolve in its attraction; and are not only bound to it by a strong and indissoluble tie, but are ever clothed in its light. The soul may be said, in the experience of this interior life, to live in God as well as with him. God is its center and its home; not only its sustaining power, but its encircling radiance. — Saint.

"Among the ideas relating to the Beautiful," says one, "are order, proportion, harmony (or unity), grace, perfection."

Union with God or Divine Union is one of the richest and deepest experiences of the soul.

Madame Guyon indicates the steps by which Divine Union is acquired thus:

First Degree — Conversion.

Second Degree — Effectual Touch of the Will.

Third Degree — Passivity or Interior Sacrifice.

Fourth Degree — Naked Faith.

Fifth Degree — Mystical Death.

Sixth Degree — Union with God.

When a soul has happily attained Divine Union by the perseverance of love, it is lost in God, and never leaves him. It ceases, says Augustine, to possess itself, in order to possess God alone; it cleaves to Him, is swallowed up and absolved in Him, as its center and in its repose. The Holy fire of Divine Love melts and dissolves it that it may flow into the heart of God. Of this it takes possession, there it fixes itself and abides as in its own dominion and never leaves it. There it is inflamed with divine fire; there it enjoys infinite delights and is at length formed into that which it loves."

Among the saints of the ages perhaps, no one had a greater joy in God and in Divine Union than St. Bernard, of Clairvaux.

Reading recently the life of St. Bernard (by Storrs) we were profoundly impressed with the saintliness of this man of the Eleventh Century. He enjoyed a rich, spiritual illumination. His soul at times seems to have been lifted up on "heavenly pinions and made to partake in a degree of the inheritance of angelic purity." Bernard enjoyed the sense of the Divine to such an extent that it was to him as "animating breaths coming from the gates of pearl, bringing exaltation and secret illumination and immediate and perfect insight into all Divine things which he expected to reach."

Bernard, in one of his sermons, specifies in a mystical way three Divine touches of the soul: The first, at the feet of God where the soul embraces His mercy and truth. The second, at the hands of God when it turns with its might to His service in good works or gratefully receives from Him the gift of virtues. The third, from His mouth when, with celestial desire, the soul aspires to the hidden joys of the most intimate communion with the Divine mind.

The soul thus touched abstracts itself from all human things and divinely assisted, arises to direct contemplation of God.

Bernard's thought of a holy life is further expressed thus: "Even as the atmosphere when flooded by the light of the sun is transfigured with such clearness of light that it does not so much seem to us illuminated as to have itself become elemental light; so is it needful that in the holy, every human affection should, in some ineffable way, clear itself from itself and become inwardly transformed into the will of God.

Gregory the Great has touched upon a similar experience when he said: "A mind occupied with external desires will not glow with the fire of Divine Love; and no words will avail to inspire hearts to celestial desires which proceed from a cold heart. Nothing which does not burn itself can kindle flame in anything else."

Such nearness to God makes the soul burn with holy love such as Bonaventura had when it was said of him: "His cheeks are furrowed with the courses made by frequent tears springing from his burning love of the wounds of his Saviour."

Spurgeon, the great London Gospel preacher, once said, "There is an upper realm of rapture, of communion, and conscious union with Christ, which is far from being the common dwellingplace of believers. All believers see Christ, but all believers do not put their fingers into the prints of the nails, nor thrust their hand into His side. We have not all the high privilege of John to lean upon Jesus' bosom, nor of Paul, to be caught up into the third heaven. In the ark of salvation we find a lower, second, and third story; all are in the ark, but all are not in the same story. Most Christians, as to the river of experience, are only up to the ankles; some others have waded till the stream is up to their knees; a few find it breast high, and but a few — O how few ! — find it a river to swim in."

Charles Wesley expresses the longing of the believer for those higher and deeper things in the lines,

Thine, wholly thine, we pant to be;
Our sacrifice receive:
Made, and preserved, and saved by Thee,
To Thee ourselves we give.

Heavenward our every wish aspires,
For all thy mercy's store;
The sole return thy love requires,
Is that we ask for more.

For more we ask; we open then
Our hearts to embrace thy will;
Turn, and revive us, Lord, again;
With all thy fullness fill.

Come, Holy Ghost, the Saviour's love
Shed in our hearts abroad;
So shall we ever live, and move,
And be, with Christ in God.

The soul that has found the blessedness of divine union has come to a cessation of its own works. (Heb. 4:10). A great transformation has taken place. Rest has taken the place of struggle; peace the place of turmoil, and the place of assurance and quietness has been reached. (Isaiah 32:17, 18).

T. C, Upham well describes it in the following words:

"The soul that reposes itself always in God, has an inward sense of His love, of His lovingkindness and tender mercy, such as the heart wandering from God has no conception of. The sweet rest, the blissful repose of such a soul, cannot be expressed; it rests on the bosom of infinite, unchangeable love. Though removed from the object of its love in a natural sense, yet the eye sees, the ear hears. It sees the infinite mind, and reads the thoughts of love, numerous as the sands upon the seashore, recorded here. It feels the union with the Eternal, the Holy, the Blessed One.

SACRED MEDITATIONS

Away back in the centuries lived a saintly man — Jan Van Rnysbroeck — He devoted the latter years of his life to the deeper things of God. He gave this testimony:

"The soul that has stood in the presence of Christ experiences a great sweetness, which deepening, passes into that holy joy that is the yielding of the soul to the divine love. If every earthly pleasure were melted into a single experience and bestowed upon one man, it would be as nothing when measured by the joy of which I write; for here it is God who passes into the depths of us in all His

purity, and the soul is not only filled but overflowing. This experience is that light that makes manifest to the soul the terrible desolation of such as live divorced from love; it melts the man utterly; he is no longer master of his joy."

In "Revelations of Divine Love," by Juliana of Norwich, the writer says:

"God is nearer to us than our own soul. He is the ground, He is the substance, He is the teaching, He is the teacher, He is the end and the meed for which every soul travaileth. Till I am one with Him, I may never have full rest nor bliss.

"The goodness of God is the highest prayer, and it cometh down to the lowest part of our need. It quickeneth our soul and bringeth it on life, and maketh it for to waxen in grace and virtue. It is nearest in nature; and readiest in grace; for it is the same grace that the soul seeketh, and ever shall seek till we know verily that He hath us all in Himself enclosed."

DIVINE UNION AND SPIRITUAL TORRENTS

No one set forth more beautifully the virtues of the holy life than Madame Guyon, of France. She lived and died within the pale of the Catholic Church which persecuted her for her holiness and imprisoned her for her profession of grace. She wrote various books on Divine Union, etc., and one of her most extraordinary books was called "Spiritual Torrents." The thesis of her book may be briefly set forth as follows: "There are three classes of souls that may be compared to rivers flowing toward God as their ocean."

1. Some moving toward Him sluggishly and feebly.
2. Some proceeding decidedly and rapidly.
3. Some advancing with headlong impetuosity.

SOULS OF THE FIRST CLASS

"These advance slowly and feebly. They deal with the outward life, and are very dependent on outside sources of help. They are like pumps that give water only when worked. They are only able for service in conjunction with others. They have great desire to be always doing. At one time they do wonders, at another they only creep. They are easily discouraged, and are often scrupulous and fettered by their own 'ways.' They are full of plans how to seek God and to continue in His Presence, but all this by their own efforts, aided by grace.

SOULS OF THE SECOND CLASS

"These are like large rivers which move with decision and rapidity, yet they are dull and sluggish compared with the impetuous torrent described later on. Souls of the second class are drawn out of the first (the feeble rivers), gradually or suddenly, by God taking hold of them.

"These souls are so full of light and ardent love that they excite the admiration of others, for God seems to give them gifts upon gifts, graces, light, visions, revelations, ecstasies. Temptations are repelled with vigor; trials are borne with strength. Their hearts are enlarged, and they gladly make great sacrifices for God and souls.

SOULS OF THE THIRD CLASS

"These are like torrents which have their source in God, and enjoy not a moment's rest until they are lost in Him. Nothing stays their progress, and they run with a rapidity which strikes fear into the boldest. They are drawn from among the feeble ones (the first class), or from the souls in the 'way of light' when any of these have courage to part with their rich experiences and to press on to know God.

"God commences His work in a soul by causing it to feel the estrangement from Himself. It is given a true grief for its sins and sees a rest in God afar off, the sight of which redoubles its restlessness, and increases the desire to reach it.

"It seeks at first in outside means what it will never find except within. The wound is in the heart. Unsatisfied, these souls become more eager, and struggle with all in themselves that hinders, but the fight only increases their sense of helplessness

"In the mercy of God, help is sent them, and they are instructed to seek within what they have looked for without; at last they find they have the treasure within them that they sought afar off. (Gal. 1:15, 16).

"It is now nothing but ardor and love; all earthly pleasures are not comparable to one moment of the joy it tastes. Its prayer is uninterrupted, becoming so ardent that it cannot contain it. Its senses (i.e., feelings or sensibilities) are so much centered, and its recollection in God so strong, that it would fain be in perpetual solitude with its Well-Beloved; for it is not sufficiently established to be undisturbed by ordinary conversations, so it is disposed to shun them.

"The Well-Beloved is so manifestly in possession that He rapidly reproves for an idle look or hasty word, and it changes more in one day than in years before. It seems as if sentinels were placed over all the senses, and as if it were no longer held to earth, so much does it feel detached therefrom.

"The soul is so full of what it 'feels,' that it would fain impart it to the whole world. Its words are all fire and flames, and it is fertile in beautiful thoughts; full of deep lively feelings; all reasonings are swallowed up in ardent love, and one word from God awakens afresh the love that burns it."

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CHAPTER 4

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS IS THE BEAUTY OF HUMILITY

"Where there is holiness there is Humility. It is a Christian grace hard to define, but which implies at least a quiet and subdued, a meek and forbearing spirit. Whatever may be our supposed gifts and graces, whatever may be internal pleasures and raptures, they are far from furnishing evidence of completeness of Christian character without humility. It is this grace which perhaps more than any other imparts a beauty and attractiveness to the religious life; and which, while it is blessed with the favor and approbation of God, has the additional efficacy of disarming, in a considerable degree even the animosity of unholy men. It has the appearance of a contradiction in terms but is nevertheless true, that he who walks in humility walks in power.'

"Be clothed with Humility," say the Scriptures (2 Peter 5:5).

In order to obtain anything of God's grace the soul must be broken and brought to a state of deep humility. Human nature is proud, self-willed, arrogant. We must bow down in the depths of humility in order to obtain God's grace in justification, and in order to obtain the deeper, more blessed, more precious grace of sanctification a further humbling must take place and there must be the dying out of the self-life — pride, self-sufficiency and self-importance.

Humility is a grace. It cannot be self-induced. God's grace alone can produce it.

God's humbling grace works a work in the human soul that is transforming and sanctifying. One has expressed it thus:

The proudest heart that ever beat
Hath been subdued in me;
The wildest will that ever rose
To scorn thy cause and aid thy foes
Is quelled, my God, by Thee.

The saint that wears heaven's brightest crown
In lowliest adoration bends;
The weight of glory bows him down,
The most when most his soul ascends;
Nearest the throne itself must be
The footstool of Humility.

Humility is one of the laws of soul growth. (Matt. 18:4). "Whosoever therefore, shall humble himself (as this little child) shall be greatest in the Kingdom of heaven."

Humility is the way to success. (2 Chron. 12:1?). "And when he humbled himself . . . things went well."

The way of Humility is the way of salvation and soul recovery.

When John Wesley was seeking converting grace he consulted very freely Peter Bohler the Moravian preacher. After one of those conversations Bohler said of Wesley: "He wept bitterly while I was talking upon the subject, and afterwards asked me to pray for him. I can freely affirm that he is a poor brokenhearted sinner hungering after a better righteousness than that which he has hitherto, even the righteousness of Christ."

The way of Humility is the way of soul restoration.

David the backslider in Psalm 51, cries out with a broken spirit and a contrite heart: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation."

Peter in his humiliation, after denying the Lord, "wept bitterly" and evidently wept his way back to Jesus as the next time we met him the Lord holds that wonderful dialogue with him: "Simon Peter, lovest thou me more than these? . . . Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" . . . To all of which Peter replied, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee . . . Lord thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

Jesus saith unto him: "Feed my sheep."

Humility is God's method of growth in grace. Humility is opposed to ostentation, to self-seeking, to self-aggrandizement, and self-advertisement. As one grows Christlike this selfhood fades and dies. Christ was constantly teaching humility to his disciples by precept and example. He Himself was a perfect example of humility. "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away." (Acts 8:33). He refused to advertise Himself. (John 7:3-6). He hid Himself from the crowd when His successes and victories would force them to make Him king. He had the lowly mind. "I am meek and lowly." (Matt. 11:29).

Humility of soul means the dying out of the ego — the personal pronoun I.

Mark Guy Pearse in his "Thoughts on Perfection," says:

"But this agonized effort to make ourselves perfect is not always a failure. Sometimes it actually succeeds — then indeed only most completely to fail. Taking hold of the rebel self, another part of the same self saith, 'Now I am going to make thee perfect.' And self chips and hammers at self to bring it into shape, and hacks and hews at self until it fits into the ideal mold. And then it is polished with much sulfuric acid and sandpaper and a host of processes are gone through — with what result? This — That at last there is turned out the most unhappy thing that it has ever been our misfortune to meet — from five to six feet of polished L A great mass of self-consciousness. How could it be otherwise? All the thoughts, all the desires, all the aims of life have been set upon self. And now this same perfected 'I' becomes the standard by which everything is measured and to which everybody

must conform, or there is no hope for them in this world or any other. This, as we have seen is Pharisaism."

"Verily, if that be all, let us rather die in despair. If Holiness, or Perfection, or the Higher Life — Call it what you will — is a something that is to set me up on a pedestal, and exalt me in wretched consciousness of my superiority to other people, let us pray God to bury us underneath the pedestal. There will be more hope for us, and we shall be a good deal nearer to the kingdom of heaven. If that is perfection, the best prayer we can make is to be saved from it forever and ever. Thank God that is not His way of holiness."

The Way of Humility is the way into the deeper things of God. The saintly Alfred Cookman tells the following experiences:

"Some years since, at the Penn's Grove Camp Meeting, after the Holy Ghost had been given as a sanctifier, I found myself drawn out for more of God. I could scarcely define my feelings, but there was a going out after God. When surrounded one day with a few Christians, struggling up to enjoy God as never before, this suggestion came: 'You have been trying to get up; are you willing to sink down?' 'Yes,' I answered, 'any way; if I may find Him thus, let me sink in the depths.' Then I began to feel that I was going down, and with this there came a realization of love, as I had never known before, and it filled my body, soul and my entire being. O how I loved His children and His word. I asked, 'What does this mean?' 'God is love.' This was the consciousness of love that filled my whole spirit."

Some years ago a few ladies met together in Dublin to read and study the Scriptures. One observed in reading Mal. 3:3, that there is something remarkable about the expression, "Shall sit as a refiner," etc. One of the ladies promised to call on a silversmith, and report what might be said on the subject. She went accordingly, and, without telling the object of her errand, begged to know the process of refining silver, which he fully described. "But, sir," said she, "do you sit while the work of refining is going on?" "Oh, yes, madam!" he replied, "I must sit with my eye steadily fixed on the surface; for, if the time necessary for refining be exceeded in the slightest degree, the silver is sure to be injured." At once she saw the beauty, and the comfort too, of the passage, "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." As the lady was leaving the shop, the silversmith called her back, and said he had still further to mention, that he only knew when the process of purifying was complete, by seeing his own image reflected on the silver.

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George Whitefield Ridout. D.D.

CHAPTER 5

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS IS THE BEAUTY OF CHRISTLIKENESS

Christ with me, Christ before me,

Christ behind me. Christ within me,

Christ beneath me, Christ above me,

Christ on my right, Christ on my left,

Christ in the fort, Christ in the chariot seat.

Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me.

Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me,

Christ in every eye that sees me,

Christ in every ear that hears me.

— Ancient Prayer —

Much of the Christianity of our day is disappointing because it seems to fall short of real Christlikeness. People naturally expect that we who profess Christ should become like Christ. Paul in Phil. 2:5, says: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." In other words, be Christlike. Christlikeness cannot be attained by the mere effort of morality or moral culture.

The Christlike life can only be achieved by holy men and women. There must be the inward work, first of the Spirit of the Lord in the heart; there must be the inward cleansing of the blood; there must be the stamping of the Divine image upon the heart purified by sanctifying grace. Wesley sings:

"Rest for my soul I long to find;
Saviour of all, if mine thou art,
Give me thy meek and lowly mind,
And stamp thine image on my heart."

To be Christlike means a holy combination of the qualities of Righteousness and Compassion and Love. When the Spirit descended on Jesus it was in the form of a dove.

The dove hath neither claw nor sting,
Nor weapon for the fight,
She owes her safety to her wings,
Her victory to flight.

Christlikeness in the believer makes him suffer long for righteousness' sake.

When on a certain occasion Archbishop Fenelon, that holy man of France, after having experienced much trouble and persecution from his opposers, was advised by some one to take greater precautions against the artifices and evil designs of men, he made answer in the true spirit of a Christian, "*moriamur in simplicitate nostra*," 'let us die in our simplicity.' He that is wholly in Christ, has a oneness and purity of purpose, altogether inconsistent with those tricks and subterfuges, which are so common among men. He walks in the broad day. He goes forth in the light of conscious honesty. He is willing that men and angels should read the very bottom of his heart. He has but one rule. His language is, in the ordinary affairs of life as well as in the duties of religion, 'My Father, what wilt thou have me to do?' — this is Christian simplicity; and happy, thrice happy is he who possesses it."

Christlikeness will produce in us a sweet reasonableness and correct those tendencies toward self-will and arbitrariness so common to human nature. It will arrest leanings toward fanaticism. It will make us teachable, docile and considerate for others and their opinions. Dr. Steele, writing of the fanatic which is the creature of loveless light, says:

"He abjures and pours contempt upon that scintillation of the eternal Logos — Human reason. This lighted torch, placed in man's hand for his guidance in certain matters, he extinguishes in order ostensibly to exalt the candle of the Lord, the Holy Ghost, but really to lift up the lamp of his own flickering fancy. He who spurns the spirit will be left to darkness outside the narrow sphere of reason; and he who scorns reason will be left to follow the hallucinations of his heated imagination, instead of the dictates of his common sense. The fanatic degrades the word of God by claiming for himself an inspiration equal to its theopneustic utterances. The fanatic imagines he has a manifestation of God so immediate that he no longer needs the ordained means of grace. He is characterized by acts professedly prompted by the Spirit, but which are contrary to both reason and the Word of God."

Likeness to Jesus produces his patience and his attitude of soul when suffering and trials come. Madame Guyon has well said:

"Holy souls are without impatience, but not without trouble; are above murmuring, but not above affliction. The souls of those who are thus wholly in Christ may be regarded in two points of view, or, rather, in two parts, namely, the natural appetite, propensities and affections, on the one hand, which may be called the inferior part; and the judgment, the moral sense and the will, on the other, which may be described as the superior part. As things are in the present life, those who are wholly

devoted to God may suffer in the inferior part, and may be at rest in the superior. Their wills may be in harmony with the Divine will, they may be approved in their judgment and conscience, and at the same time may suffer greatly in their physical relations and in their natural sensibilities. In this manner, Christ upon the cross, while His will remained firm in its union with the will of His heavenly Father, suffered much through His physical system; He felt the painful longing of thirst, the presence of the thorns and the agony of the spear. He was deeply afflicted also for the friends He left behind Him, and for a dying world. But in His inner and higher nature, where He felt Himself sustained by the secret voice uttered in His sanctified conscience and in His unchangeable faith, He was peaceful and happy."

One who had entered into spiritual rest and was experiencing a great passion for being like Christ thus describes some soul sensations passed through:

"It is by looking to Jesus," or "looking at Jesus, that we are changed into his image." It struck my mind with peculiar force, and produced such a thrill of holy joy as I cannot describe. I was then looking at Jesus. He seemed standing before me, arrayed in glory and beauty that surpassed all I had ever before conceived of, and looking upon me with a look of tender regard, benignant love and divine complacence, seemed to claim me for His own. My soul was so captivated with the charms of the adorable Redeemer, that when my leader spoke of being changed into his image, I felt such a transport of bliss, as nearly overpowered me. Oh! thought I, to be assimilated to His glorious likeness — to be a partaker of His nature — to be "one with Him!" What ineffable felicity — what overwhelming glory — what amazing exaltation! for an abject worm of earth, to be changed into the image of Jesus! And this is my privilege! I, who am "less than the least of all saints." I, who am the most unworthy of so distinguished a favor, thus honored, thus blessed of God! Heretofore my heart has borne but the mere outlines of that glorious image; but now, I am to receive the full impress! Yes, now, while I am looking at Jesus! now, He is molding me and fashioning me after His own lovely likeness! My soul is in His hands, passive as clay in the hands of the potter. Jesus is making me all glorious within! I shall be like Him! I have fixed my eyes upon Him, never more to remove them thence, and it is by looking at Him that I am to be conformed to His likeness! O! such a fullness of love and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. I seemed, indeed, "filled unutterably full of glory and of God." As I came home, Jesus seemed walking with me, and communing with my heart by the way. When I retired to my chamber, His presence accompanied me, and His glory appeared to fill the room! For several hours, I could not sleep. My heart was in such raptures of joy, that I could not become sufficiently composed to sleep. At length exhausted nature sank into repose; but still my mind was occupied with the same glorious object. Often I would awake in ecstasies, exclaiming "Jesus! O, thou art my Saviour — my Redeemer from all sin — my happiness — my heaven!" I have since, enjoyed the same delightful consciousness of His presence, who is the life of all my joys, and am still enabled to keep my eyes unwaveringly fixed upon Him. I see clearly that this is the way, and the only way to abide in His love, and to have the continued victory over the world, the flesh, and Satan, to keep looking at Jesus.

A certain seeker said, "While entreating God for a clean heart my mind was led to contemplate 'the image of Christ' as the single object of desire. To be Christlike, to possess 'all the mind that was in' the blessed Saviour; and this became the burden of my earnest prayer."

And the thought occurred to him. why not take that image, and take it now? He said:

"Give Him your sin and take His purity. Give Him your shame and take His honor. Give Him your helplessness and take His strength. Give Him your misery and take His bliss. Give Him your death and take His life everlasting. Nothing remains but that you take His in exchange. Make haste! Now, just now, He freely offers you all, and urges all upon your instant acceptance." He adds: "Suddenly I felt as though a hand omnipotent, not of wrath but of love, were laid upon my brow. That hand, as it pressed upon me, moved downward. It wrought within and without, and wherever it moved it seemed to leave the glorious impress of the Saviour's image. For a few minutes the depth of God's love swallowed me up; all its billows rolled over me."

Cecil has said, "The union of saints results from union with Christ, as the lodestone not only attracts the particles of iron to itself by the magnetic virtue, but by this virtue it unites them to one another." This attachment to Christ furnishes the soul a great incentive to be true and steadfast in all circumstances. The Christian devoted to Christ can sing:

"Though I am now on hostile ground,
Christ for me! Christ for me!
And sin beset me all around,
Christ for me! Christ for me!

Let earth her fiercest battles wage,
And foes against my soul engage,
Strong in His strength I scorn their rage,
Christ for me! Christ for me!

"And when my life draws to its close,
Christ for me! Christ for me!
Safe in His arms I shall repose,
Christ for me! Christ for me!

When sharpest pains my frame pervade,
And all the powers of nature fade,
Still will I sing through death's cold shade,
Christ for me! Christ for me!"

CONSECRATION

"The body with all its members; the mind with all its faculties; the soul with all its affections, tastes and appetites; the substance with all its gains and uses, including business pursuits and social relations, recreations, education, thought and reading, embracing all our advantages natural and acquired; indeed, our whole life, together with our death, grave and memory, must be given to Christ and placed under contribution for His glory.

"Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die we are the Lord's.

"Living, dying, suffering, rejoicing, resting, toiling, we are the Lord's, entirely His for time and eternity."

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

By

George Whitefield Ridout. D.D.

CHAPTER 6

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS IS THE BEAUTY OF CONSECRATION

Consecration does not mean the giving up of our sins or vices or depraved appetites, or forbidden indulgences; these things we renounce, cut out, abjure. It is that state in which all our ransomed powers are devoted, dedicated, consecrated to God. The language of consecration is thus put by a certain writer:

"I am willing —
To receive what Thou givest;
To lack what Thou withholdest;
To relinquish what Thou takest;
To suffer what Thou inflictest;
To be what Thou requirest;
To do what Thou commandest."

CONSECRATION

Romans 12

The Language of Consecration — "I beseech you."

The Subjects of Consecration — "Brethren"

The Motive of Consecration — "Mercies of God"

The Area of Consecration — "Your bodies"

The Quality of Consecration — "Living sacrifice"

The Sanity of Consecration — "Reasonable service"

The Object of Consecration — "May Prove what is that good,
and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

One of the best hymns of Consecration is that hymn of Miss Frances Ridley Havergal:

"Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee:
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise."

This hymn takes in the consecration of time, hands, feet, property, intellect, voice — all.

This hymn suggests the extent of consecration or in other words the manifestation of real consecration in personal and practical life through all the ramifications thereof.

I. The Consecration of Life. "Take my life and let it be."

Real Consecration shows itself in the life, and it should be the burning ambition of every believer to live the consecrated life. Those saints who have impressed their time and age have borne in their daily constant living the marks of dedication to God. Every consecrated soul may say with Paul, Gal. 6:18: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

II. The Consecration of Time. "Take my moments and my days."

We should give our time to God. When this is consecrated to God there will always be time to put into the Lord's service. Many people say: "I have no time to pray, no time to read the Bible, no time to attend church, or go to prayer meeting," but in real consecration this does not happen as the genuinely consecrated soul always has time for God and His services.

III. The Consecration of the hands. "Take my hands."

This means that when the hands are consecrated to God they will be kept clean and kept out of all unholy business. Consecrated hands mean that the pen will not write that which God cannot bless, will not play that which grieves the Spirit in recreation, will not touch anything that is impure, unclean and that is not of good report.

IV. The Consecration of the feet. "Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee."

Consecrated feet will not take us where God will not bless us. We will keep off the Devil's territory. Consecrated feet will walk in the way of God's commandments and will not walk in paths of questionable resort. Consecrated feet will not take us to the theaters, the movies, the dance and other worldly and perilous places. Many young people will save themselves great trouble if they recollect that consecration applies to the feet and many Christian people will strengthen their testimony and increase their influence for God by remembering that the consecration of the feet means keeping out of and away from all those paths and by-paths which lead not to the King's highway of holiness.

V. The Consecration of Property and Money. "Take my silver and my gold."

Where real consecration exists there will be money for God and His cause because the law of the tenth will be observed and perhaps more. Our silver and gold laid upon the altar of God will mean abundance of money for the Lord's work at home and abroad.

Consecration applies to the pocketbook and the income. We recognize that we are only stewards or trustees of the money and property that come in our hands — god has a claim on it and we recognize it when He draws upon us.

VI. The Consecration of the Intellect. "Take my intellect and use."

This means all our intellectual powers placed upon the altar so that our thinking and reading and study and theology and philosophy will all be along lines well pleasing to the Lord. Paul, Luther, Wesley placed their intellects upon the altar of consecration, hence they became mighty leaders of God's people. Where there is consecrated intellect there will be no skepticism, no modernism, no higher criticism. Today our Protestantism is menaced by an intellectuality that is not consecrated, hence we are flooded with unbelief. A consecrated believer with intellect laid upon God's altar never wanders into the by-paths of speculative philosophy; he believes his Bible, he believes in the things divinely revealed, he enjoys the "inner light" which comes from the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Consecration of the thinking and reasoning powers will produce wisdom in the life and character. Alfred Cookman says:

"How can it be otherwise? If the third Person in the Trinity comes to abide in our heart, fulfilling His own promise in teaching us all things, revealing Christ in our consciousness as our Wisdom (and to me that means more than the Church now conceives), we shall make wonderful progress in wisdom. Not that a holy person will not blunder; but God will help you to perceive His truth. His character, modeled after the Divine pattern, will be impelled by the Divine impulse. When Jesus sent out His ambassadors, He said, "Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." That, I think, means the blending of purity and prudence. The Holy Ghost does not come to teach any new doctrine, or to testify of Himself, but of Christ. The very best minds are likely to be tempted in this direction for the sake of holiness.

VII. Consecration of the Voice. "Take my voice and let me sing."

The consecrated voice will mean singing for Jesus and the refusal to use the God-given powers of the voice for the world and the amusement only of the people. This applied to singers will mean songs sung to God's glory; to preachers the use of the voice to publish salvation; and to God's people the use of the voice in prayer, in testimony, in consecration for God's glory. Sankey dedicated his voice to sing salvation and it was heard on two continents. Bliss' consecrated voice was blessed to multitudes. Sweeney and a great host of holy singers dedicated their voices to sing Redemption's story and countless thousands were won for God. Some years ago a noted opera singer was converted in a holiness tent meeting. She at once left the stage, consecrated her powers of voice to God's glory and gave herself to God's work thrilling thousands with her message of free and full salvation through sacred song.

VIII. The Consecration of the Lips. "Take my lips and let them be."

Consecrated lips will be lips of truth, integrity and love. They will not be lying lips, nor tale-bearing or false witnessing lips. They will not be backbiting lips. They will refrain from uttering those things which bring debate and strife and contention.

Consecrated lips will be loving lips and kind, bitter things they will not utter, the unclean they will not speak, truth and righteousness and things pure and holy will be the theme of conversation. They will be praying lips ever burning with holy desire, expressing itself in intercession and prayer for every soul need and the deeper things of the Spirit.

IX. The Consecration of the Will. "Take my will."

The consecration of the will means the will power dedicated to God, hence the will brought into unison with God. "Thy will be done" becomes the language of the soul. A consecrated will will not bend to every pressure brought upon it but is fixed in God. Well has Dr. Upham said:

"A fixed, inflexible will is a great assistance in a holy life. Satan will suggest a thousand reasons, why we should yield a little to the temptations by which we are surrounded; but let us ever stand fast in our purpose. A good degree of decision and tenacity of purpose is of great importance in the ordinary affairs of life. How much more so in the things of religion? He, who is easily shaken, will find the way of holiness difficult — perhaps impracticable. A double-minded man, he who has no fixedness of purpose, no energy or will, is 'unstable in all his ways.' Ye, who walk in the narrow way, let your resolution be unalterable. Think of the blessed Saviour. 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' Though he was momentarily forsaken, at least so far as to be left to anguish inconceivable, and unutterable, his heart nevertheless was fixed, and he could still say, 'My God, my God.'"

X. The Consecration of the Heart. "Take my heart."

The heart consecrated to God means the inward shrine of the life dedicated to God with all its powers and issues. This consecration enables the believer to love the Lord God with a wholehearted devotion in which the affections are not divided. Real consecration protects us from a divided heart.

Gregory the Great said, "A mind occupied with external desires will not glow with the fire of Divine love; and no words will avail to inspire hearts to celestial desires which proceed from a cold heart. Nothing which does not burn itself can kindle flame in anything else."

XI. The Consecration of our Love. "Take my love, my Lord, I pour at thy feet its treasure store."

This means our affectional nature so consecrated to God that we love God and the things of God supremely.

Love is the master passion of the soul and when regulated by consecrated grace the love powers will not be spent on secondary or trivial matters. Love of Jesus will absorb the soul so that love of self, of the world, of fashion, dress, money, property will be held in check. Many Christians lose their rich experience when they take off the altar their love powers. Young people often break with their consecration by forming affiliations with those who do not love God, business men often lose their blessing by falling to keep on the altar their love for things — money, property, etc. Many Christians take their love power off the altar and go after worldly adornment, worldly amusements, etc.

"Thee will I love, my joy, my crown;
Thee will I love, my Lord, my God;
Thee will I love, beneath thy frown
Or smile, thy scepter or thy rod.
What though my flesh and heart decay?
Thee shall I love in endless day!"

XII. The Consecration of the Personality. "Take myself and I will be ever only all for Thee."

All our powers are dedicated to God and the life bearing the marks of this complete consecration to God. In this connection we think of Paul when he said: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." The seal of God is on the wholly consecrated. The life manifests it, the deportment shows it. With this wholehearted dedication to God there will be a transformation and there will be a constant renunciation and repudiation of worldly standards, fashions and laws. The wholly consecrated person is truly a nonconformist. There is a refusal to conform to this world. A full and complete consecration results eventually in the soul's sanctification and improvement. Let it be remembered that consecration is objective — "That ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:2). "This is the will of God even your sanctification."

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CHAPTER 7

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS IS THE BEAUTY OF LOVE

"Love is the one kind of holiness existing in different degrees in various believers," said an old writer. Holiness has been described as Perfect Love — "The loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, this implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul and that all the thoughts, words and actions are governed by pure love."

Love is the master passion of the soul, hence Jesus placed all service and all obedience and all fidelity to him on Love. He said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy strength."

Dr. Daniel Steele in describing his entrance into the experience of Perfect Love said: "This has been accompanied with such a feeling of inward cleanness, that I doubt not that the Purifier has taken up His abode in the temple of my heart. But the direct testimony of the heavenly Guest is Love, Love, all consuming Love, flaming in the heart of Jesus — Woe to me, I feel that sin cannot abide in the flames of this furnace kindled to such an intensity about me."

One of the most illuminating interpretations of love as set forth in Thirteenth of First Corinthians has been by Professor Drummond in "The Greatest Thing in the World." He sets forth Love Contrasted, Love Analyzed, Love Defended. In his analysis of Love he says:

"The spectrum of love has nine ingredients.

"Patience — Love suffereth long.

"Kindness — And is kind.

"Generosity — Love envieth not.

"Humility — Love vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up.

"Courtesy — Doth not behave itself unseemly.

"Unselfishness — Seeketh not her own.

"Good Temper — Is not easily provoked.

"Guilelessness — Thinketh no evil.

"Sincerity — Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."

In that wonderful little book of the ages, "The Imitation of Christ," Thomas a'Kempis speaking of the "Wonderful Effect of Divine Love," says:

"Love is circumspect, humble, and upright; not yielding to softness, levity, or vanity; love is sober, steady, chaste, quiet, and keeps a guard over all the senses.

"Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing broader, nothing more pleasant, nothing better, either in heaven or earth, because love is born of God; and, rising above all created things, can find its rest in Him alone.

"Love watches, and, slumbering, does not sleep; if weary, it wearies not; if restrained, it is not straitened; if fearful, it is not dismayed; but as a living flame and flowing torch it bursts upward, and safely keeps its onward course.

"If any man loves, he will know what is the utterance of love."

Doddridge was touching this realm of Divine Love when he sang:

"Do not I love thee, O my Lord,
Then let me nothing love;
Dead be my heart to every joy
Where Jesus cannot move.

"Thou knowest I love thee, dearest Lord
But O, I long to soar
Far from the sphere of mortal joys,
And learn to love thee more."

The consecration of our Love powers hold all things in proper proportion.

Thou art the sea of Love,
Where all my pleasures roll,
The circle where my passions move
And center of my soul.

My passions hold a pleasing reign
When Love inspires the breast,
Love the divinest of the train,
The Sovereign of the rest.

PERFECTION

Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, who was given to the wild beasts at Rome when one hundred and seven years of age, said: "I thank thee, O Lord, that Thou vouchsafed to honor me with a perfect love towards Thee."

Irenaeus taught that those were perfect "who present soul, body, and spirit faultless to the Lord. Therefore, those are perfect who have the spirit and perseverance of God, and have preserved their souls and bodies without fault."

Marcarius taught the doctrine more clearly than any of the Fathers. Of our duties and privilege, he says: "It is perfect purity from sin, freedom from all the shameful lusts and passions, and the assumption of perfect virtue; that is, the purification of the heart by the plenary and experimental communion of the perfect and divine Spirit."

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

By

George Whitefield Ridout. D.D.

CHAPTER 8

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS IS THE BEAUTY OF PERFECTION

"The unceasing and steady aim of every Christian should be perfection — perfection in all things 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 and who does not make it his daily and constant aim to be perfect, may settle it down as demonstrably certain that he has no true religion." — Barnes.

"Out of Zion the Perfection of Beauty God hath shined." Psalm 50:2.

"The church is not a dark lantern, but a candlestick God shines not only in Zion, but out of her. She is made perfect in beauty by his indwelling and that beauty is seen by all observers when the Lord shines forth from her." Spurgeon,

The perfection which Holiness relates itself to is not that of absolute perfection which appertains only to God.

Many erroneous ideas of Perfection prevail on the subject of holiness. Let it be again repeated that on this question we are not predicating angelic perfection, nor Adamic perfection, or absolute perfection, but we are dealing entirely with the subject of Christian Perfection, such as the Bible speaks of in such passages as, Genesis 17:1; Matthew 5:48; Hebrews 6:1; Genesis 6:9; Job 1:8; Psalms 37:37; 1 John 4:17; 2 Cor. 13:9-11; Heb. 13:20, 21; 1 Peter 5:10; Col. 1:28; Eph. 4:11-13.

"Religion places the human soul in the presence of its highest ideal of perfection which, for the time being, it can reach or grasp. It lifts it above the level of ordinary goodness and produces at least a yearning after a higher and a better life — a life in the light of God."

Christian Perfection as John Fletcher interprets it is this:

"By Christian Perfection we mean nothing but the cluster and maturity of the graces which compose the Christian character in the church militant. In other words, Christian Perfection is a spiritual constellation made up of those gracious stars: Perfect Repentance, Perfect Faith, Perfect Humility, Perfect Meekness, Perfect Self-Denial, Perfect Resignation, Perfect Hope, Perfect Charity and above all Perfect Love."

"It is Perfection," said Limborch, "in being correspondent to the provisions and terms of the divine covenant. It is not sinless or an absolutely perfect obedience, but such as consists in a sincere love of piety, absolutely excluding every habit of sin."

Dr. Adam Clarke discussing Christian Perfection says: "That observation of a learned civilian is at once both correct and illustrative; namely, 'We count those things perfect which want nothing requisite for the end whereto they were instituted.' Accordingly a man may be said to be perfect who answers the end for which God made him; and as God requires every man to love Him with all his heart, soul, mind and strength and his neighbor as himself, then he is a perfect man that does so — he answers the end for which God made him. And this is more evident from the nature of that love which fills his heart; for as love is the principle of obedience, so he that loves his God with all his powers will obey Him; and he who loves his neighbor as himself will not only do no injury to him, but on the contrary, labor to promote his best interests. Why the doctrine which enjoins such a state of perfection as this should be dreaded, ridiculed or despised is a strange thing."

Let it be understood that this Perfection is the perfection of the Heart. It is that of which Wesley sings.

"A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of Love divine,
Perfect and right and pure and good
A copy, Lord of thine.

"Give me a new, a perfect heart,
From doubt and fear and sorrow free,
The mind which was in Christ impart,
And let my spirit cleave to thee."

THE PERFECT CHRISTIAN

But to answer the question directly. What is it to be a perfect Christian? Two things are necessary, viz., a clean heart, and a heart filled with love to God and man. This we have already briefly noticed. But is it possible for the heart to be made clean, or to be freed from all sin? We answer affirmatively. That the soul may be saved from the least and last remains of moral pollution and defilement, we have not a shadow of a doubt. Indeed no truth is more clearly revealed in the Bible. Who can read the Bible, anxiously desiring to know the truth, and not acknowledge it?

The idea of perfection should always carry with the idea of wholeness and health. Let us ring it out to a needy church that Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith can save to the uttermost and give us a completed and finished case of redemption.

Furthermore let us always bear in mind that Christian Perfection such as the saints of the Lord may attain unto is Practical. Francis DeSales, in his "Introduction to a Devout Life," says:

"It is an error, a heresy, to suppose that devotion cannot be cherished in the camps of soldiers, the shops of tradesmen, the courts of princes, or the households of married persons. It is true, that neither purely contemplative nor monastic, nor religious devotion, would be suitable in such places; but, besides these three kinds of devotion, there are many others which may be exercised so as to attain perfection in all lawful secular callings. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, David, Job, Sarah, Rebecca, prove the truth of this in the Old Testament. In the New, Cornelius, Sebastian, Maurice, were

perfectly devout in the army; Joseph, Lydia, Crispin, in their shops; Constantine, Helen, Lewis, Blessed Amedoeus and St. Edward, on their thrones; Monica, Aquila, and Priscilla, in their households. It has even happened that many have relinquished perfection in solitude, which seems so favorable to it, who cherished it in the world, which appears so much opposed to it.

One has said: "Now devotion is that true spiritual sugar which sweetens the bitterness of mortifications, and corrects the unwholesomeness of worldly consolations; it sweetens the discontent of the poor, and corrects the avidity of the rich — soothes the desolation of the afflicted, and represses the arrogance of the prosperous — cheers the sadness of those who live in solitude, and checks the dissipation of those who frequent society. It serves as fire in winter, and as dew in summer. It knows how to enjoy abundance and how to suffer want; and how to render both honor and contempt equally advantageous. It enables us to receive pleasure or pain with almost the same evenness of soul, and replenishes us with extraordinary sweetness.

"True devotion never injures, but perfects, whatever it influences; when it is made a hindrance to the pursuit of some lawful calling, it becomes false devotion. The bee, says Aristotle, extracts honey from flowers without doing them the least harm, leaving them as fresh and perfect as it found them; but true devotion does still more, for it not only does no injury to any lawful vocation or employment, but adds to them grace and beauty."

In Holiness there can be no selfishness.

In Holiness there can be no murmurings.

In Holiness there can be no covetousness.

In Holiness there can be no self-will.

In Holiness there can be no seeking for the highest places.

In Holiness there can be no envy.

In Holiness there can be no resentment.

In Holiness there can be no religious pride.

— Ackerman. —