



“You will know them by their fruits.” Mt. 7:16

OBJECTIONS TO ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

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FOREWORD

Although the following pages are for the most part argumentative, yet the writing has not been done with a view to contention. If no unholy man can see God in peace, the sooner unbelievers are convinced of the error of their unbelief the better it will be for them. We have written to convince. Those who will hew out their own broken cisterns and attempt to fill them with waters suitable to their own carnal likings will still find abundance of room for contention after they have read every argument that follows. This evil cannot be remedied.

But on the contrary some honest souls will be convinced. They are like the merchantman seeking

goodly pearls, they will give all they have for the one pearl of great price. Honest heart, do you long for a rest as yet unattained? Do you thirst for a drink from some cooling spring? Then Jesus says:-- "Come unto me and drink," and, "I will give you rest." A Sabbath of rest from the sin of your soul, a blessed Sabbath that never will end. "Draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith."

I have quoted freely from widely different sources always giving due credit in the proper place.

With a prayer that God may bless our humble effort to the good of all who read, this little book is sent on its mission. It does not profess to be beyond criticism, it makes no pretensions to literary merit, but the author sincerely desires that before it is lost altogether in the mighty sea of greater things that is flooding the literary world someone may be blest and led to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

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OBJECTIONS TO ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

DEFINITION

Much of the opposition to the doctrine of entire sanctification would be removed if the opposers would get a right understanding of the intelligent claims of its adherents. Quite often the strongest opposition comes from those who have obtained their ideas from the strong and unwise statements of those who profess to have attained the experience or from others who for one reason or another are prejudiced against it.

When the early Methodists were undergoing severe criticism and persecution for their views an incident occurred which Mr. Wesley describes as follows:

"I think it was in the latter end of the year 1740, that I had a conversation with Dr. Gibson, then bishop of London, at Whitehall. He asked me what I meant by perfection. I told him without any disguise or reserve. When I ceased speaking, he said, Mr. Wesley, if this be all you mean, publish it to all the world. If anyone then can confute what you say, he may have free leave. I answered, 'My lord, I will;' and accordingly wrote and published the sermon on Christian perfection.

Negatively, holiness or entire sanctification (in the sense in which we shall use the terms) is the absence of all sin, both in fact and in principle; positively, it is the presence of all the graces of the Spirit, 'love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, (Gal. 5:22-23) unmixed with any carnal or contrary affection. The holy soul is free from all sin (Rom. 6:22) and "filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph. 3:19).

I will now proceed to give from widely different sources definitions of holiness or entire sanctification, let the reader note the perfect harmony that exists.

Wesley defines the experience thus: "What is Christian perfection? 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."

John Fletcher says: "It is the pure love of God and man shed abroad in a faithful believer's heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him, to cleanse him, and to keep him clean, from all the filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to enable him to 'fulfill the law of Christ,' according to the talents he is intrusted with, and the circumstances in which he is placed in this world."

Adam Clarke says: “What, then, is this complete sanctification? It is the cleansing of the blood, that has not been cleansed; it is washing the soul of a true believer from the remains of sin.”

From Watson’s Theological Institutes: “By which can only be meant our complete deliverance from all spiritual pollution, all inward depravation of the heart, as well as that which, expressing itself outwardly by the indulgence of the senses, is called ‘filthiness of the flesh.’ “

Bishop Foster says of the person entirely sanctified, that he is in “a state in which he will be entirely free from sin, properly so called, both inward and outward. The process of this work is in this order: beginning with pardon by which one aspect of sin, that is actual guilt, is wholly removed, and proceeding in regeneration, by which another kind of sin, that is depravity, is in part removed, terminating with entire sanctification, *by which the remainder of the second kind, or depravity, is entirely removed.*”

Jesse T. Peck in Central Idea: “In the merely justified state we are not entirely pure ... But in the work of entire sanctification, these impurities are all washed away, so that we are wholly saved from sin, from its inward pollution.”

Bishop Simpson says: “Christian Perfection is a term used by Methodists to denote a state of grace implying purity of heart, or a heart cleansed from all sin ... Sanctification is that act of the Holy Ghost whereby the justified man is made holy.”

Rev. Wm. McDonald says: “It is the removal from our moral natures, through faith in Christ. All sinful desires and tempers, all pride, anger, envy, unbelief, and love of the world; and the possession in these purified natures of the unmixed graces of faith, humility, resignation (longsuffering), patience, meekness, self-denial, and love.”

Watson’s Biblical and Theological Dictionary: “Sanctification, that work of God’s grace by which we are renewed after the image of God, set apart for his service, and enabled to die unto sin and live unto righteousness. Sanctification is either of nature, whereby we are renewed after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:19) or of practice, whereby we die unto sin, have its power destroyed in us, cease from the love and practice of it, hate it as abominable, and live unto righteousness, loving and studying good works.”

Geo. Peck in Christian Perfection: “Then sanctification, in its earliest stages, implies the subjugation of the body of sin; and complete sanctification implies its entire destruction.”

Definitions agreeing with these might be multiplied indefinitely, but since they would be only a repetition of the substance of the foregoing we will give no more but proceed to search for other reasons why people so strenuously oppose the doctrine.

WHY PEOPLE OPPOSE THE DOCTRINE

Among the various reasons that might be given for the opposition to the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification we will cite just a few as samples of the many, or as general reasons under which particular reasons might be assembled.

1. There is a class of persons who entertain false ideas of the standard of holiness and because of these false ideas are led to oppose. This may occur either when they place the standard too high or too low. Those who place the standard too high are apt to cry “impossible;” while those who place it too low cannot see any good that will come from its possession.
2. Another class of opposers are those who fail to comprehend. The subject may be presented with much patience and care and made never so clear, but when all is done they still fail to comprehend. “They are

like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely." -- Ps. 58:4-5. Concerning this class of persons the Lord said to Isaiah: "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed."

3. Another fruitful source of opposition is faulty theology. Error is often at the foundation of a theological tenet and the person who accepts the dogma must force everything to bend to fit this ideal. Certain theological writers have made the statement, and backed it with plenty of misapplied scripture, that it is impossible to be made holy in this life. Those who accept this view of things must either ignore or explain away the plainest declarations of scripture, and the testimonies of those who have been made holy; they must even quiet the convictions and desires sent by the Holy Ghost in their more honest moments and in place of them accept the things that their better judgment tells them are wrong.
4. Another class of persons is misled by skeptical teachers. They know nothing of theology and very little of the Bible, They will not trouble themselves to learn, but blindly follow their leaders. Their guides say the road they are traveling ends in heaven, and these persons, although they have the guide book, the Bible, will not trouble themselves to find out the truth. The guide declares that the Bible says, "There is none perfect, no not one," and the blind follower immediately repeats the news and excuses his shortcomings on the ground of a passage of scripture that does not exist. Surely "if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." -- Matt. 15:14. "Woe unto you, ye blind guides, for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." -- Matt. 23:16, 15.
5. Another reason why some oppose entire sanctification lies in the fact that they are prone to consider men instead of the word of God. It is not an exaggeration to say that where one man reads God's word nine men read the lives of professed Christians, and especially is it true that they read the ones who profess holiness. If they would read them in the light of the word of God this would be all right, but instead they are apt to measure them according to their own self-conceived ideas.
6. Still others fail to catch the breadth and import of the work of redemption and hence fall to opposing holiness as an extreme and erroneous ideal. To many persons redemption is nothing more than deliverance from hell and the gift of a home in heaven. They fail to catch the meaning of the angel's message to Joseph, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." -- Matt. 1:21. Such persons do not understand what Jesus meant when he prayed, "Sanctify them (not only His disciples, but all which should believe on Jesus through their words) through thy truth: thy word is truth." -- Jno. 17:17. See also Eph. 5:25-27.
7. Some persons consider their own hearts and their utter helplessness in the cruel hands of sin, and failing to comprehend the fact that God will help, declare confidently that no man can be holy in this life! This is as absurd an argument as to reason that because a lizard is unable to fly nothing can. The happy birds would prove the fallacy of such a conclusion. When God changes our vile nature and "all things become new," new possibilities are given and impossibilities are changed to the possible. When sin is gone and righteousness reigns the happy saint can "do all things through Christ who strengtheneth him."
8. Another fruitful reason for opposition arises from the fact that men are loathe to give up sin, and sin in the heart hates the holiness of God. Men still "love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd (margin, discovered)." -- Jno. 3:19, 20.

OBJECTION 1 KESWICKISM

One of the most dangerous enemies of the experience of holiness which has re-arisen in the last few years clothed in modern apparel is what is commonly called "suppression." Its advocates teach that the heart of man is such an unfathomable depth that while one may honestly think that he is delivered, yet hidden below the line of consciousness depravity always lurks and will spring up when provocation comes. The housekeeper must not think that she can clean her house, that would be presumption and self-righteousness, she can only keep the dirt hidden or suppress it. This is the Keswick doctrine and is championed by some of the world's most noted preachers.

The danger is all the greater since the poison is concealed by tempting sweets. The advocates of this theory are often very pious and are quite successful in their line of work. They talk sweetly of God, grace and holiness, but they must be allowed to put their own interpretation on the word holiness, for they give us to understand that such a thing as the entire eradication of the carnal nature from the soul is an impossibility in this world. Some of us prefer to believe the teachings of the Bible which says, "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it (the church) that he might sanctify and cleanse it (the church) with the washing of water by the word and present it (the church) to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; ut that it (the church) should be holy and without blemish" -- Eph. 25-27.

The time and fact of this sanctifying operation was confirmed by the oath of God, and whoever denies its possibility in this world makes God a perjurer. "The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life. " -- Luke 1:73-75.

Rev. R. A. Torrey says: "The baptism of the Holy Spirit has no direct reference to cleansing from sin. This is an important point to bear in mind for many reasons. There is a line of teaching on this subject that leads men to expect that, if they receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the old carnal nature will be eradicated. There is not a line of Scripture to support this position." (of course, in modern parlance, this is correct. Being filled with the Spirit has to do with speaking in tongues rather than purity of heart. Before Asuza Street, "the baptism" referred to the sanctification crisis in which a pure heart is obtained.)

Rev. F. B. Meyer says: "On this platform (Keswick) we never say self is dead; were we to do so, self would be laughing at us around the corner."

Rev. H. W. Webb-Peploe says: "It is ever taught at Keswick, as in every part of God's Word (in what parts of God's Word? It is easy to make statements. -H. A. B.), that there are, to the very last hour of our life upon earth, powers of corruption within every man which defile his very best deeds, and give even to his holiest efforts the nature of sin."

The writer has no desire to enter into a discussion of the original text as such a course would be of no value to the popular reader and would prove practically nothing but what is proven in our English Version. But we will give one quotation from Daniel Steele which is to the point. "It is a remarkable fact that while the Greek language richly abounds in words signifying repression, a half-score of which occur in the New Testament, and are translated to bind, bruise, cast down, conquer, bring into bondage, let, repress, hold fast, hinder, restrain, subdue, put down, and take by the throat, yet not one of these is used of inbred sin (the carnal mind) but such words as signify to cleanse, to purify, to mortify, to kill, to crucify, and to destroy."

The word of God abounds with exhortations, entreaties and commands to get rid of the old man, not suppress him, but cast him out, not hide him behind the door like a dirty housekeeper does the filth, but let the Spirit of God kill him and rid the house of his presence. To copy these passages would take more

space than the limits of this little work would allow. We will cite a few and the reader can look them up for himself. Gal. 4:22-30; Col. 3:8-10; Eph. 4:22-24; Co. 2:11; Heb. 12:1; 1 Peter 2:1; 1 Thes. 5:23-24; Thes. 3:10; Eph. 4:11-14; 2 Cor. 7:1; etc.

As to whether sin remains so deeply hidden that no person can ever know he is delivered is mainly a question of individual experience and of how much dependence one can put in the operations and testimonies of the Holy Ghost. True, man's heart is a depth unfathomable to himself, but on the authority of God's Word (Luke 2:35) and of the testimony of many unimpeachable witnesses we can unhesitatingly say that God reveals this depth, and many persons declare that they were shocked when the Holy Spirit began to turn over the sod. Note this fact: As to whether any person ever saw all the depths of his soul is not material since we do not depend on sight for evidence, but the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit; our sight might fail and deceive us, but the Holy Spirit -never. When the Spirit takes us down through the depths of our soul and says, "Thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in thee," or "Thou art holy and without blame before me in love," who am I that I can call him a liar? He knows all things and "his testimony is true." Let all men stand back when God speaks; he says, "What God has cleansed call not thou common or unclean," and if they do they are fighting against God and will receive their reward.

OBJECTION 2 FAILURE TO OBTAIN THE EXPERIENCE

Another objection which is sometimes urged, may be stated thus, "I sought the experience of holiness carefully and honestly and did not obtain it, hence there is no such a thing." This reminds one of the man who went out and knelt under a certain tree and prayed, "Oh, God, if there is such a religion as the Methodists profess, give it to me." It did not come immediately, so he went and spread the news abroad declaring it could not be obtained and was all a fraud.

This objection only proves one thing, and it does prove that conclusively, that is, the objector did not get sanctified. If there is not one sanctified person in the world yet the facts remain the same, God still declares, "I am he that sanctifieth thee," In matters of experience negative testimony is no testimony. Twenty men declare they did not see John Jones shoot James Small and that they do not believe he did the deed, but two men did see the shooting, the result is John Jones is convicted of murder, One hundred professed Christians do not profess holiness and do not believe in its attainment, but two do profess it and bear the fruits. This proves the contention that God still sanctifies.

The failure to obtain the experience may result from different reasons, and the failure does not negate the possibility.

1. The seeker may not be earnest enough. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force." Matt. 11:12.
2. The seeker may not be in a proper condition to receive it. A clear, victorious experience of pardoning and keeping grace precedes the possibility of entire sanctification.
3. The seeker may not have proper motives in seeking. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." -- Jas. 4:3.
4. The seeker may not have proper faith, or he may allow doubts as to the possibility of cleansing, "for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." -- Heb. 11:6.
5. The seeker may not comprehend the conditions upon which cleansing is given. God is not dealing with horses that need a bit in their mouths to guide them because of their lack of intelligence, but he is dealing with human beings and demands all there is of them even

their intellect. Not that they could know everything, but they must know the “sore of their souls” and apply for the only remedy. “Study to show thyself approved unto God.” -- II Tim. 2:15.

OBJECTION 3 INCONSISTENCIES

Some base their objections to holiness on the inconsistencies they see in the lives of those who claim to be sanctified.

This method of argument is as reasonable as to take the stand that there is no genuine money because there is a counterfeit. The fact is there can be no counterfeit without a genuine, and, since there is a mock holiness there must be a true holiness. It is natural that the more counterfeit money we discover the more likely we are to distrust all money, but our distrust does not change the character of the real neither does the counterfeit take from the actual value of the genuine, if it makes any difference at all it increases our appreciation if not the value of the genuine. Thus with holiness, if the fact of the existence of counterfeit makes any difference at all it should increase our appreciation of the genuine. And since holiness is a voluntary condition, if this condition remains steadfast and keeps the soul amid shams and frauds the realization of its actual value will increase as the days go by, and in proportion to the oppositions which it endures and amid which it conquers. Again, the fact that holiness is counterfeited does not change the character of real holiness and the more spurious professions there are the more does the beauty and grace of real holiness shine forth, and the more is its actual character revealed.

Then the objector asks to be shown a genuine case of entire sanctification. When Wesley was asked to cite some examples of sanctified persons he answered that if he knew any he would not point them out to the quibbler for no matter how holy they might be the objector would only tear them to pieces. “Cast not your pearls before swine lest they trample them under feet, and turn again and rend you.”

While these inconsistencies may be formidable in the mind of the objector and while they may constitute an objection which he thinks cannot be answered yet the whole matter fades into nothingness from any angle it is viewed.

1. The bad life of no single man or body of men is an objection to a good doctrine which they may hold. While the false doctrines of an heretic are the cause of his evil doings (for men are prone to do evil if they can find an excuse for so doing), yet on the other hand the good doctrines of a man who believes in holiness are not the cause of his evil deeds but are the restraint that keeps him from greater evils. If he does wrong he will immediately tell you it was a transgression of his doctrine.

This statement is not negated even though the bad men that hold the good doctrine may profess to be governing their lives by their doctrine; instead of proving that the doctrine has a pernicious effect it only proves that the professors are either ignorant or hypocritical.

The fact that bad men make a profession of holiness does not prove that the doctrine of holiness is pernicious; holiness cannot be pernicious for its very nature is opposed to evil, these men may profess holiness for policy or to bring reproach on the cause.

2. Inconsistencies in one or many men’s lives do not prove that inconsistencies exist in every man’s life. Because one man gets angry when he whips his child he naturally thinks every man does the same, but this is not necessarily the case.

3. Because many men fail in their efforts to be holy, and because you never met any one who according to your opinion was holy, does not prove that all men fail and that there are no holy men. Darius Green’s flying machine would not fly, but men are flying now every day whether you ever saw

them or not, and whether you believe it or not.

4. What right has an unsanctified man and especially one who is prejudiced against the experience of holiness to set up a standard and then because no person he knows comes up to his ideas brand all holiness professors as hypocrites and self-righteous? Surely such a man falls into his own pit and his feet are taken in his own snares. He is the self-righteous man.

5. Who is the judge of a sanctified man, the quibbler or God?

OBJECTION 4 DO NOT BEAR PROPER FRUITS

It is objected that many or all of the professors of holiness do not bear the fruits of holiness. This objection is much like the preceding one.

As to whether all holiness professors fail to bring forth proper fruit, no matter how competent the judge may be to pass on any individual case that may come under his observation, it stands to reason, that, because those he has met are a failure, he cannot legitimately conclude that all he has not met are failures. Because all the people I ever met spoke either English or German it does not follow that all people in the world speak English or German. Those who indulge in such arguments are sophists. They draw conclusions with no proper ground upon which to base them.

The fact that many of the persons who profess holiness really do not or do not seem to bear proper fruits can be readily accounted for without in the least disturbing the fact that some actually have the experience.

1. Those who profess to have obtained the experience and do not bear proper fruits may be mistaken in their evidence. This, it must be confessed, is too often the case. But let it be said that a misunderstanding of evidence is no proof of the impossibility of evidence. God's witness is true and when it is actually received it settles the question. This misunderstanding of evidence may arise from a lack of knowledge, a lack of thoroughness or a lack of spiritual insight; these shortcomings may have their foundation in a failure to comprehend the word of God or to know what holiness is and what evidence is to be expected. Again this misunderstanding of evidence may arise from a lack of conscientiousness, or strange as it may seem, over-conscientiousness. The former is seen in those who are over-anxious to profess the experience either to be rid of the trouble of further seeking, to be able to testify to the same thing that they hear others professing or for numerous other reasons; the latter is seen in those who, generally because of faulty teaching, are fearful of grieving the Spirit by failing to "take him at his word" and profess the experience. These persons, notwithstanding all their conscientiousness, not having received the proper grace, lack the fullness of the fruits.
2. Some may be cleansed and at the same time be mistaken in some things that are or are not required of them. God nowhere promises to make his children perfect in knowledge in this world. The Seat of actual evil is in the motive. If God has purified the motive (and who is competent to judge that he has not?) then the heart is clean, and if the heart is clean sooner or later all wrong things will be discovered and rectified. This very point leaves room for walking in the light (new light) and for growth in grace.
3. The person who views the one professing holiness may be mistaken and be expecting more than God does. We would not kill all the robins because their notes are not as sweet as the canary's. We would not drown the faithful watch dog because he cannot pull a plow. Neither would we cut down the crab apple tree because it does not bear harvest sweets. Man, who

art thou that thou shouldst assume authority to dictate the work another man's servant shall do, or how he shall do it? "To his own master he standeth or falleth." -- Rom. 14:4.

4. To the shame of the person who dares to do so it must be said that there are some who profess holiness and are hypocritical in so doing. There are at least two reasons for hypocrisy: (a), The hypocrite hopes to gain some temporal advantage by his hypocrisy, or, (b), He hopes to bring disrepute on the cause he is hypocritically advocating. Which ever of these may be true in any particular case nothing is actually proven against the clean doctrine and profession of holiness; the only point that is made is that the devil and wicked men still exist.

OBJECTION 5 AS GOOD AS GOD

It is objected that those who profess holiness claim to be as good as God.

This statement is as false as it could possibly be. Professors of holiness never make such a claim; on the contrary they constantly assert that they are not and never will be divine nor as good as divinity. This is proven from the following considerations

I. The nature of God himself.

1. God is goodness. He has in himself independent of any other being the fountain of never failing goodness. No man ever makes such a claim for himself, but all holiness people constantly declare that any goodness in them is given by God.
2. God is love. This is his nature and ever will be. He is the very personification of love. Every professor of holiness declares "I love because he first loved me."
3. God is perfect. That is, in him every moral attribute is so complete that there is no possibility of adding any perfection to his character either in kind or degree. Holiness people continually bewail their littleness and are always seeking greater attainments.
4. God is perfect in knowledge, wisdom, power and glory. Nothing ever will add to him or detract from him; we can never teach him or hide anything from him. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through all the earth beholding the evil and the good. Professors of holiness are like other men, they lack knowledge, are liable to be unwise, are weak and are even called the filth of the world.

II. Holiness people not only do not claim to be as good as God but they assert that there are other beings that excel them in holiness and that there are laws that they cannot fulfill.

1. They do not claim to keep the angelic law of perfect obedience the Adamic or Mosaic laws of perfect innocence.

"The prejudices of our opponents are increased by their confusing Adamic and Christian perfection; two perfections these, which are as distinct as the garden of Eden and the Christian church. Adamic perfection came from God our Creator in paradise, before any trial of Adam's faithful obedience: and Christian perfection comes from God our Redeemer and Sanctifier in the Christian church, after a severe trial of the obedience of faith. Adamic perfection might be lost by doing despite to the preserving love of God our Creator; and Christian perfection may be lost by doing despite to the redeeming love of God our Saviour. Adamic perfection extended to the whole man; his body was perfectly sound in all its parts, and his soul in all its powers, but Christian perfection extends chiefly to the will, which is the capital moral power of the soul; leaving the understanding ignorant of ten thousand things, and the body "dead because of sin." *[1]

2. They do not claim what some call sinless perfection unless the word “sinless” is properly defined.

“We believe that although adult, established believers, or perfect Christians, may admit of many involuntary mistakes, errors, and faults; and of many involuntary improprieties of speech and behavior; yet, so long as their will be bent upon doing God’s will; so long as they ‘fulfil the law of liberty’ by pure love, they do not sin according to the gospel; because, evangelically speaking, ‘sin is the transgression,’ and ‘love is the fulfilling,’ of ‘that law.’ Far, then, from thinking that there is the least absurdity in saying daily, ‘Vouchsafe (give) to keep us this day without sin,’ we doubt not but in the believers who ‘walk in the light as Christ is in the light,’ that deep petition is answered, the righteousness of the law which they are under is fulfilled; and, of consequence, an evangelically sinless perfection is daily experienced. I say, evangelically sinless,’ because, without the word ‘evangelically,’ the phrase ‘sinless perfection’ gives an occasion of caviling to those who seek it; as Mr. Wesley intimates in the following quotation, which is taken from his Plain Account of Christian Perfection:-- “To explain myself a little farther on this heading: 1. Not only ‘sin,’ properly so called, that is, a voluntary transgression of a known law, but ‘sin,’ improperly so called, that is, an involuntary transgression of a divine law, known or unknown, needs the atoning blood. 2. I believe there is no such perfection in this life as excludes these involuntary transgressions, which I apprehend to be naturally consequent on the ignorance and mistakes inseparable from mortality. 3. Therefore, ‘sinless perfection’ is a phrase I never use, lest I should seem to contradict myself. 4. I believe a person filled with the love of God is still liable to these involuntary transgressions – such transgressions you may call ‘sins,’ if you please; I do not, for the reasons above-mentioned.” *[2]

3. Persons who profess holiness do not claim to have attained such a measure of grace and of the fullness of the Spirit that they cannot grow in grace.

“Another capital mistake lies at the root of the opposition which our Calvinist brethren make against Christian perfection. They imagine that, upon our principles, the grace of an adult Christian is like the body of an adult man, which can grow no more. But this consequence flows from their fancy, and not from our doctrine. We exhort the strongest believers to ‘grow up into Christ in all things;’ asserting that there is no holiness, and no happiness in heaven, much less upon earth, which do not admit of a growth, except the holiness and the happiness of God himself; because, in the very nature of things, a being absolutely perfect, and in every sense infinite, can never have anything added to him. But infinite additions can be made to beings every way finite, such as glorified saints and holy angels are,” *[3]

III. Holiness people do not lay claim to absolute perfection, for the following reasons:--

1. They are compassed about with infirmities, Their physical bodies are weak. Sickness, old age, and disease prey upon them. Because of their weakness they are often unable to do the things they desire.

2. Their fleshly natures possess appetites and desires which must be held in check, mortified or denied or they will become too strong, or take too prominent a place in the life and eventually overthrow spirituality. Paul says: “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” And again, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

3. Their minds are weak. Holiness does not teach a man the measurements of the heavens, the natures and virtues of plants, the laws of physics nor the intricacies of mathematical calculations. Holiness does not even insure that its possessor will be able to pass judgment as to what consequence

will follow any given antecedent without error. That is, they are not infallible in judgment and do not claim to be.

4. Their spirits are infirm. An infirmity is defined as an involuntary lack of power. All are free to admit that they would be glad to be able to sense God's will and requirements more readily than they do. Their spiritual eyes are open but they do not always see all things clearly. Although growth in grace assures clearer vision yet perfect vision will never be given till they enter heaven.

IV. In what particular then do they claim to be perfect?

1. They do claim that their hearts are cleansed from sinfulness.

2. They do claim that their motives are pure. When they know the will of God they desire to do it.

3. They claim to be made perfect in love. This is a Bible term and is the name of a Christian experience. Perfect love means love with no admixture of any contrary affection. If there is any admixture the love is not perfect.

4. They do claim to be perfect according to the law of liberty by which they shall be judged, "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." -- James 2:12. This law admits that human infirmities may exist even after the heart is cleansed from sin.

In view of all these acknowledgments of weakness and infirmity no one can truthfully accuse another of claiming divine prerogatives simply because he professes entire sanctification.

OBJECTION 6 MISINTERPRETED SCRIPTURES

There is a method of opposing the doctrine of holiness by quoting a few lonely passages of scripture that seem to warrant the assertion that no man can live without sin.

With scarcely an exception the force of the interpretation depends upon the isolation of the text – upon the fact that it is wrested more or less from the context and given some other meaning from that which it would naturally assume if it were allowed to stand with its inspired surroundings. In other cases passages that students of the word admit are obscure are brought into requisition to prove so vital a point as the necessary indwelling of sin. Still others are driven to such extremes to prove their pet doctrine of necessary sinfulness that they drag up passages from the Old Testament that are as far from proving the point as the east is from the west. Let us notice a few of these passages. Classifying them according to the interpretation generally given them by holiness opposers.

I. Passages taken from their context,

1. "Not as though I had already attained either were already perfect." -- Phil. 3:12.

This it is asserted, is a plain statement of the apostle that he himself was not perfect. But to what perfection does he refer? Turn to your Bible and read the preceding verse and you will see that the apostle means the perfection of resurrected saints, for he says, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained either were already perfect: but I follow after, etc." It is clear that he does not mean Christian perfection for in the next breath he professes to have attained that grace. Let us therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded." -- Phil. 3:15.

2. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." -- I Jno. 1:8. That this does not mean that it is necessary to commit sin is seen in the fact that both in the seventh and eighth verses the apostle asserts all that the holiness people claim. In the seventh verse he says "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin," and in the ninth God is "faithful and just ... to cleanse us from all sin." The apostle never intended that such an unwholesome doctrine as the necessity

of sinning should be read into his words for in the third verse after the one the objectors love so well (the Bible was not divided into chapters when it was written) he declares, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." -- Ch. 2:1.

For the common reader this would be sufficient but for fear some person may still be in doubt we will give the meaning of the passage. In John's day a class of men called Gnostics were making their appearance in the church and teaching that they were elected and had no sin and never did have any, for God did not impute sin to them. To rebuke them John says, "If you say you have no sin, you deceive yourselves. You are in error and never have been saved from sin; if you say that you have not sinned, you make God a liar." He uses the first person, plural number (see I Jno. 1:8-10) for the same reason that any preacher or public speaker uses it.

3. "There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that doeth good, no, not one." -- Rom. 3:10-12. Read the following description of the characteristics of these persons, and if any one who calls himself a Christian wants to be classed with such characters he may do so, but some of us prefer better company. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes." -- Romans 3:10-18.

4. There is perhaps no other passage in the Bible that is more abused than the seventh chapter of Romans. As some one has said compromisers "come from the north, from the south. From the east and from the west, and find in this chapter a common solace." To give it a complete survey would be too much for our present design, we will simply suggest a few thoughts that may be helpful to a proper understanding of the most difficult portions.

(a) Paul professed deliverance from what he calls the flesh, not only for himself but for others both before and after the part of the chapter that is used to uphold sin. In the former part of the chapter he says, "For when we were in the flesh. The motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Immediately following the seventh chapter he says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are of Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." What could be more plain than this?

(b) Some of his statements are contrary to the possibility of saving grace.

"I am carnal, sold under sin." So was king Ahab; was he a Christian? -- I Kings 21:20-25.

"What I hate, that I do." Christians are constantly represented as persons who do right.

"It is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me." Christians are delivered from the old man that did dwell within. -- Rom. 6:6, 7, 11.

"Oh, wretched man that I am," etc. Christians rejoice evermore. I Thes. 5:16.

"For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." This is a heathen experience. Seneca, a Roman philosopher and writer, and a contemporary of the apostles, born 3 B. C., says, "What is it that draws us in one direction while striving to go in another, and impels us toward

that which we wish to avoid?" Arian, a Stoic philosopher of Nicomedia, born about 100 A. D., "For truly, he who sins does not will sin, but wishes to walk uprightly; yet it is manifest that what he wills he doth not; and what he wills not he doth." Compare this with Rom. 7:18-19.

(c) But this was not Paul's present experience as he manifestly states elsewhere. We will show this by quoting what he says in Romans seven and over against this set his statements of experience as recorded in other places.

"I am carnal, sold under sin." "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Rom. 8:2. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." -- Gal. 2:20.

"What I hate, that I do." "Ye are witnesses, and God also. How holily, justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe." I Thes. 2:10. Read also Acts 20:18-35.

"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. -- II Cor. 6:10. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." Rom. 6:6-7.

(d) Such an interpretation is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture. It declares, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine (bad doctrine if it parallels heathenism), for reproof (had thing for reproof if it upholds sin), for instruction in righteousness (but they make it instruct us in the necessity of sin): that the man of God may be perfect (in what? The common interpretation of Romans seven makes him perfect in sinning), thoroughly furnished (margin, perfected) unto all good works." -- II Tim. 3:16-17. Thus we see that the design of the Scripture is to perfect us in righteousness and good works, and any doctrine which tends to the opposite is heterodox.

OBJECTION 6 (Continued) MISINTERPRETED SCRIPTURES

II. We come now to consider some Old Testament passages which are perverted in such a manner as to prove that no man can be delivered from sin.

1. "If they sin against thee (for there is no man that sinneth not)." I Kings 8:46; II Chron. 6:36. "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." Ecc. 7:20.

Bible students tell us that in the original these passages read, "That may not sin," thus simply showing the possibility of falling. But suppose we should grant that Solomon meant, as our version reads, that there was no man that was free from sinning, what does this prove? Suppose there were none free from sin in his day, does that prove that all who commit sin today when we are living under the full blaze of gospel light? Surely not. As well might we accept the following passage from Solomon to be true today when everyone knows that in religious matters wise women far outnumber wise men. In seeking wise people he says, "One man among a thousand have I found (and may be that was himself); but a woman among all those have I not found (perhaps his thousand wives and concubines)" -- Ecc. 7:28.

2. "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me if I say, I am perfect, it shall also, prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul; I would despise my life." -- Job 9:20-21

What does it all prove although Job should declare he was not perfect, one that knew more than he about his heart said that he was "a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil." -- Job 1:1, 8 and 2:3.

3. "Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly." -- Job 4:17-18.

No man ever claims to be more just or pure than God. Angels fell into sin and were full of folly.

"How then can man be justified with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold, even to the moon, and it shineth not, yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, that is a worm, and the son of man, which is a worm?" -- Job 25:4-6.

No man in himself is clean in God's sight, all his purity is given him of God, and without God's ever-abiding presence we will inevitably lapse into sin.

5. "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sins?" -- Prov 20:9.

No man can cleanse his own heart, but Jesus came to this world, lived and died to cleanse his people from the power and inbeing of sin and sinfulness, and his life is a success.

6. "A just man falleth seven times (not seven times a day as some quote), and riseth up again." Prov. 24:16.

There is more than one way of falling; James mentions one. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." Jas. 1:2. Temptation is not sin.

III. Passages wrested from their obvious meaning.

1. "And behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." -- Matt. 19:16-17.

Jesus did not mean to state that he himself was not good, but just the opposite. The young man had come for advice and in his anxiety had ascribed to Jesus one of the attributes of divinity. Jesus took occasion to apply the truth that if he (Jesus) was good (and he did not deny the fact) then it must follow that he was God, and hence the conclusion must inevitably be drawn that when he should speak it would be with authority. He then proceeded to show his divine insight and authority by uncovering the young man's sins and demanding reformation.

No man in himself is good, but the Bible mentions several persons that were good because God made them good.

2. "And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." -- Luke 11:4.

There are two definitions of sin in vogue among professors of religion. One makes all mistakes and involuntary transgressions of the law whether caused by ignorance, weakness or otherwise, sin. In this sense of the word all men must pray for the forgiveness of sins. The other definition allows of these shortcomings and does not call them sin.

No holiness professor ever claims infallibility; he always admits that he has constant need of the blood, not only to keep him but to cleanse him from his errors, known and unknown.

IV. *Obscure passages that are made to uphold sin.*

1. "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me and he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." -- II Cor. 12:7-9.

This thorn in the flesh has been variously interpreted by the best scholars to mean sore eyes, a false apostle; his infirmities, severe headaches, etc. But when holiness fighters want an excuse for the necessary indwelling of the thorn, sin, they know sin is exactly what Paul's thorn means. From all such knowing people may we be delivered!

2. "I die daily." 1 Cor. 15:31.

When people desire to fight holiness they can think of no possible meaning for this expression but dying to sin. The apostle mentions a number of things in his experience as death which have no connection with dying to sin.

(a) He died daily by bearing constantly the criticisms of the world: "For I think God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." 1 Cor. 4:9. Read also verses 8-13.

(b) He died daily by bearing the reproach of Christ. "For thy sakes we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Rom. 8:36. "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp (where he died) bearing his reproach." Heb. 13:13.

(c) He died daily by fellowshipping the sufferings of Christ: "That I might know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." -- Phil. 3:10.

(d) He died daily by bearing burdens for the lost and for the church: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (The reason for the death is given thus.) So then death worketh in us, but life in you." II Cor. 4:10-12.

OBJECTION 7 NOT A SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE

It is objected by some that entire sanctification as a possible experience is not taught in the Bible.

In reply to this objection allow us to present the following from Bishop Foster's book, "Christian Purity, or the Heritage of Faith."

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

comfort.” -- Foster's “Christian Purity”, Chapter V.

It would be almost superfluous to enter into any extended argument to prove that the word of God teaches holiness. We will quote a few passages among scores just as clear and give references for finding others, and leave the execution with the sword of the Spirit.

1. Holiness is taught in commands.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.” Luke 10:27. “Be ye holy; for I am holy.” -- I Pet. 1:16. “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” -- Heb. 12:14. “Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” -- Matt. 5:48 See also I Tim. 1:5; II Cor. 13:11.

2. Holiness is taught in exhortations.

“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.” -- II Cor. 7:1. “Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ. Let us go on to perfection.” Heb. 6:1.

3. Holiness is taught in promises.

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” -- Matt. 5:6. “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” I Jno. 1:7. “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.” -- I Jno. 4:18. “Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” -- Col. 1:28. “But whoso keepeth his word in him verily is the love of God perfected.” I Jno. 2:5. “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” -- Eph. 4:24. “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.” -- Heb. 13:12. “And this also we wish, even your perfection.” II Cor. 13:9. “To the end that he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God.” I Thess. 3:13. “For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.” I Thess. 4:7. “This is the will of God, even your sanctification. -- I Thess. 4:3. “God hath chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.” -- II Thess. 2:13. “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.” -- Eph. 4:11-16. See also Matt. 5:6; Isa. 1:18; I Jno. 3:3; I Jno. 2:1; I Jno. 3:8.

4. Holiness is taught in prayers.

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory

in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” -- Eph. 3:14-21. “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.” I Thess. 5:23. See also Heb. 13:20-21; Jno. 17:21-23.

5. Holiness is taught as an actual experience.

“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” Rom. 6:22. “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.” I Jno. 4:17. “Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” Rom. 6:6. See also Rom. 8:1-4; Gal. 2:20

In view of all these passages and of hundreds more we are forced to the conclusion that holiness, or entire sanctification, or perfect love, or Christian perfection, by whatever name it may be called, is attainable because: (a) God commands us to attain it, and he never commands impossibilities; (b) God exhorts us to seek and obtain it, and God never wastes words exhorting us to seek impossibilities; (c) God promises to give the experience to those who diligently seek it, and any person who says God will not do it makes him a liar; (d) Both Jesus and the apostles prayed that the church might be sanctified, and God inspired their prayers and will answer them; (e) and last, because the Bible gives examples of some who reached the goal and were made holy.

OBJECTION 8 NEW DOCTRINE

An objection is urged that holiness as a possible attainment and as a second work of grace is of modern origin and can scarcely be found before Wesley.

To establish the fact of the antiquity of the doctrine of holiness even as a second work of grace, the writer has at hand abundance of testimony, but for the sake of brevity only a few from widely different ages will be quoted.

The first is from Clement of Rome, the man mentioned in Phil. 4:3. “Let us pray, therefore, and implore of his mercy, that we may live blameless in love, free from all human partialities for one against another. All the generations from Adam even unto this day have passed away; but those who, through the grace of God have been made perfect in love, now possess a place among the godly, and shall be manifest at the revelation of the kingdom of God.”

Justin Martyr, a philosopher, converted to Christianity after vainly searching the philosophies of the ancients, and who finally sealed his testimony with his blood, wrote as follows: “For our own Ruler, the divine Word, who even now constantly aids us, does not desire strength of body and beauty of feature, nor yet the high spirit of earth’s nobility, but a pure soul, fortified by holiness, and the watchwords of our King, holy actions, for through the Word power passes into the soul. O trumpet of peace to the soul that is at war! O weapon that putteth to flight terrible passions! These instructions that quench the innate fires of the soul! These have conquered me – the divinity of the instruction, and the power of the Word: for as a skilled serpent charmer lures the terrible reptile from his den and causes it to flee, so the Word drives the fearful passions of our sensual nature from the very recesses of the soul; first driving forth lust, through which every ill is begotten – hatreds, strife, envy, emulations, anger, and such like. Lust being once banished, the soul becomes calm and serene. And being set free from the ills in which it was sunk up to the neck, it returns to him which made it.”

The works of Clement of Alexandria abound in calls to holiness, in instructions to seekers after purity, exhortations to holiness, on holiness as a second work of grace, cleansing from inherent sin, holiness as an actual experience, communion with God, mystic union with God, pure living, perfect love, mystic

contemplation, etc.

We will venture just one short quotation: “And the man who turns from among the Gentiles will ask for faith while he that ascends to knowledge will ask for the perfection of love. And the Gnostic (meaning the man who has gained knowledge of God) who has reached the summit, will pray that contemplation may grow and abide, as the common man will for continual good health.”

The next is taken from a book called *Christian Perfection*, written by Macarius the Egyptian or Macarius the Elder or Macarius the Great as he is variously called. Mosheim the Ecclesiastical Historian, who is always ready to accuse everything spiritual, is forced to admit that Macarius deserves first rank among the practical writers of his time, and, that his writings contain the “brightest and most lovely portraiture of sanctity and virtue.” Macarius was born in the year 300 A. D. and died in 391 A. D. He was 24 years old at the time of the council of Nice, of which council he was a member. He says: “Only let every one take especial care that when he has been “born again of the Spirit,” he thoroughly wash out the inward sin. For that new birth of the Spirit, bears indeed a certain image of perfection in form and parts, though not in power, intelligence, and vigor. But he who has attained to perfect manhood, and the full measure of growth, renounces the things of childhood. And this is what the Apostle has signified: ‘Whether there be tongues or prophecies they shall cease.’ As, therefore, he who is become a man no longer received either the food or the discourse which is suited to a child, but rejects them with disdain as having passed on to another stage of life; so likewise he who has attained to the full measure of evangelical perfection, and who has advanced his spiritual infancy to the perfection of its growth.” “There are some, who abstain from all overt sins, as fornication, theft, avarice, and all similar corruptions, and who therefore class themselves with the holy; and yet are they far from being such in truth, For, evil is not yet wholly expelled from them; but it still lives, and lurks, and creeps within, their minds. But the holy, is he who is perfectly cleansed in the inward man.” “For, abstinence from overt sins is not perfection but purification of the mind within is alone perfection. And the end of every Scripture, both Old and New, is purity; and everyone, whether Jew or Greek, is desirous of purity, though he is unable to attain it. But this I affirm, that purity of heart cannot otherwise be effected than through Jesus.” His opinion of the experience received by the disciples at Pentecost is seen from the following quotation: “Wherefore, when the Comforter came at the feast of Pentecost, according to the promise, and when the power of the Good Spirit had rested upon the souls of the Apostles, the veil of sin was at once taken off from their hearts, their evil passions were extinguished, and the eyes of their hearts were opened; and being thence forward replenished with wisdom, and established perfect by the Spirit, which governed and directed their souls, they were taught to fulfil the will of God and were led into the knowledge of all truth, when, therefore, we feel ourselves effected to tears on hearing the word of God, let us still with a firm faith beseech Christ to come to us; in full confidence that the Spirit will truly come, and will both hear and pray in us, according to His will.”

Hugo of St. Victor, who lived in the 12th century, speaks of the purification of the soul in the following manner: “Fire is applied to green wood, it kindles with difficulty; clouds of smoke arise; a flame is seen at intervals, flashing out here and there; as the fire gains strength, it pierces the fuel; presently it leaps and roars in triumph – the nature of the wood is being transformed into the nature of fire. Then, the struggle over, the crackling ceases, the smoke is gone, there is left a tranquil, friendly brightness, for the master-element has subdued all into itself. So, do sin and grace contend; and the smoke of trouble and anguish hang over the strife. But when grace grows stronger, and the soul’s eye clearer, and truth pervades and swallows up the kindling aspiring nature, then comes the holy calm, and love is all in all. Save God in the heart, nothing of self is left.”

The following is from *Theologia Germania*, the book that Luther prized next to the Bible and Augustine: “Now be assured that no one can be enlightened unless he be first cleansed or purified and

stripped. So also, no one can be united with God unless be be first enlightened. Thus there are three stages: The purification concerneth those who are beginning or repenting, and is brought to pass in a three-fold wise; by contrition and sorrow for sin, by full confession, by hearty amendment. The enlightening belongeth to such as are growing and also taketh place in three ways: to wit, by the eschewel of sin, by the practice of virtue and good works, and by the willing endurance of all manner of temptation and trials. The union belongeth to such as are perfect, and also is brought to pass in three ways: to wit, by pureness and singleness of heart, by love, and by the contemplation of God, the Creator of all things.”

Peter Poiret, an early Protestant writer, in his *Divine Economy*, says: “But when he thinks himself far advanced, and his activity at an end, and as it were quite wearied and spent in this holy employment, which is a true worship of God; then does God strike him with a light so penetrating and so lively, and with motions so internal and powerful, that all the corruption of the inward recesses of his soul, is stirred up from the very bottom. And this discovers to him on one hand so great and so perfect a purity in God, that all his past good works and righteousness seem to him but little in comparison of it; and on the other hand, the corruption that is at the bottom of his heart which he discerned not before, appears to him so heinous that not daring to do anything more, nor to use any activity so corrupt as he is, despairing of whatever may come from him, he casts himself as dead into God’s hands.

“From the time of this perfect resignation, God becomes all in man: he works in him as he pleases and without opposition; and there grace is absolute mistress. ‘Tis God that then disposes of the liberty and faculties of man, of his desires, his understandings, and of everything: he moves and penetrates all by the motions of his love and of his divine light; but in such a manner as is at first very dreadful and mortifying to sense; because God’s motions investing the inmost recesses of the soul are expelling thence their most central and rooted corruption, which is not alone without great agonies which are extremely acute and desolating to a soul that is by nature of the greatest and tenderest perception imaginable.

“But this perfect operation of purifying grace being finished, the soul comes pure out of this furnace, and lives thence forward in the bright element of reigning grace. She is then a new creature, and her divine faculties, now that they are repaired in their utmost recesses are governed and acted by the Holy Ghost, who uses them as he sees convenient for God’s glory and the benefit of other souls.”

To these quotations many others could be added until the fact is established that no doctrine is more clearly set forth nor more perseveringly upheld by the spiritual church of all ages than is holiness of heart which delivers from all depravity. Of course, we will admit that since the fourth century hundreds of people have opposed the doctrine, but that proves no more against it than does the opposition of thousands today.

OBJECTION 9 ONLY A METHODIST DOCTRINE

Again it is stated that entire sanctification is a Methodist doctrine and that it is not held by other churches.

We will first give a few quotations from church creeds. Such statements from creeds and admitted authorities could be multiplied indefinitely.

The Westminster Confession of Faith, 1647. Chapter 13. Article on Sanctification. “I. They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ’s death and resurrection, by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified and they more and more quickened and strengthened, in all

saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

“II. This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.

“III. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

The New Hampshire Baptist confession, 1883. “Of Sanctification. We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means especially the word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.

Confession of the Free Will Baptists, 1834-1868. “Sanctification is a work of God’s grace, by which the soul is cleansed from all sin, and wholly consecrated to Christ; it commences at regeneration, and the Christian can and should abide in this state to the end of life, constantly growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Confession of the Society of Friends, 1675. Eighth Proposition. “Concerning Perfection. In whom this holy and pure birth is fully brought forth the body of death and sin comes to be sanctified and removed, and their hearts united and subjected into the truth, so as not to obey any suggestion or temptation of the evil one, but to be free from actual sinning and transgressing of the law of God, and in that respect perfect.”

The German United Brethren Church says: “By perfect holiness we understand the separation and the purification from all inhering sin, after regeneration, by the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the filling of the heart with the love of God by the Holy Ghost.”

I think all will agree in the following particulars: (1) God is holy. (2). Angels are holy. (3). Heaven is a holy place. (4). Whatever pleases God in heaven pleases him on earth. (5). When God made man he made him according to his ideal, -- holy. (6). Nothing pleases God as much as holiness. (7). Whatever is pleasing to God is good for us. (8). Holiness is pleasing to God, therefore its attainment would do us good. (9). Since holiness is for our good if we can be made holy in this life that fact would not only please God but would be a benefit to us. (10). Every church that calls itself Christian in one form or another accepts the doctrine of holiness.

But some claim that holiness can be attained in this life while others place its attainment at or beyond the article of death. This is where the disagreement enters and this is the vital point.

The Westminster Confession teaches: (1). Regeneration. (2). The indwelling of the Spirit. (3). The destruction of the dominion of sin. (4). The lusts of sin more and more weakened. (5). Saving graces more and more strengthened. (6). Growth in grace. (7). Perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

This all sounds good but the words that immediately follow are as disappointing and unseemly as snow in summer or rain in harvest. Prov. 26:1. Here is a man who is regenerated, has the Spirit dwelling within, the dominion of sin is destroyed, his lusts are more and more weakened, the graces more and more strengthened and he is perfecting holiness in the fear of God, yet no matter how fast he grows he is always imperfect in this life, there are always remains of corruption in every part. Not much encouragement here! If he grows fifty long years, and grows never so fast, there are still “remains of corruption in every part,” which nothing but the Calvinistic death purgatory can wash away! But, look,

if he grows six months and no matter how slow he grows the same purgatory washes him clean and fits him for heaven! Not much encouragement here for the fifty year old saint! Nothing can make you clean but death purgatory! No matter how much you grow in grace, or how much sin is conquered and weakened or how much the blood of Christ is applied man must still groan in carnal bondage till his worst enemy, death, comes to deliver him! This same line of argument will apply to all imperfectionists.

But they may say, "It is not death that sanctifies but the blood of Christ." This concession yields the whole contention. If it is the blood of Christ that cleanses, then it can cleanse just as well before as at or after death. And if it can cleanse one minute before death it can cleanse one year or fifty years before. (There is not a scrap of scripture to prove that the soul is not cleansed until the body dies).

Again if men concede (and they do) that God can make a person holy at the time they are pleased to specify, then they must concede that he can make them holy when he pleases. Now look at the articles cited above to which all honest Christians agree and the following conclusions are inevitable. If it pleases God to have holy people in heaven it would please him to have them on earth. If I find what in me pleases God the most and give him an opportunity (and one which is consistent with the dignity of his divine government) to work that thing in me, he would be against himself if he did not do it.

Freedom from sin, which is holiness, all branches of the church will admit is the character in man that best pleases God; consequently, if he works in us that which is well pleasing in his sight he will make us holy. No matter whether or not any certain preacher or church teaches holiness as possible, they do not deserve even the name Christian if they do not admit it to be desirable. And if it is desirable, and I attain to it, they should not reject me, but rejoice that I have reached the goal.

If the less sin I commit the more pleasing I am to God it follows inevitably that if I can live without sin I will please him most. Will he not help me to do the thing that is pleasing to him and cease doing the things that are displeasing? Man's help is vain, but help has been laid on one that is mighty

OBJECTION 10 ZINZENDORFISM

We now came to consider the Zinzendorf doctrine (from the saintly Count Von Zinzendorf in the 1700's) which, with various modifications, still exists. Zinzendorf's error did not consist in denying the possibility of heart purity, for he accepted that, but in magnifying the article of regeneration, and in teaching that no man can be a child of God while sin remains in his heart.

The persons who hold this doctrine make the mistake of supposing that partial sanctification is complete sanctification or that a person cannot be sanctified partially and not be sanctified wholly. There is no doubt that every Christian is sanctified and sanctification means to cleanse or make holy. But that he is not cleansed completely is proven both by experience and by the Bible.

From the standpoint of experience, Wesley perfectly refutes this error in his sermon, "Sin in Believers." A few of his arguments we subjoin.

"Is there then sin in him that is in Christ? Does sin remain in one that believes in him? Is there any sin in them that are born of God, or are they wholly delivered from it? Let no one imagine this to be a question of mere curiosity: or, that it is of little importance whether it be determined one way or the other. Rather it is a point of the utmost moment to every serious Christian: the resolving of which very nearly concerns both his present and eternal happiness. Yet I do not know that ever it was controverted in the primitive church. Indeed there was no room for disputing concerning it, as all Christians were agreed. And so far as I have ever observed, the whole body of ancient Christians who have left us anything in writing, declare with one voice, that even believers in Christ, till they are 'strong in the Lord and in the power of his might,' have need to 'wrestle with flesh and blood,' with an evil nature, as

well as 'with principalities and powers.'

"However, let us give a fair hearing to the chief arguments of those who endeavor to support it. And it is, first, from Scripture they attempt to prove, that there is no sin in a believer. They argue thus: 'The Scripture says, Every believer is born of God, is clean, is holy, is sanctified, is pure in heart, has a new heart, is a temple of the Holy Ghost. Now, as that which is born of the flesh is flesh, is altogether evil, so that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, is altogether good. Again: a man cannot be clean, sanctified, holy, and at the same time unclean, unsanctified, unholy. He cannot be pure and impure, or have a new and an old heart together. Neither can his soul be unholy, while it is a temple of the Holy Ghost.'

"I have put this objection as strong as possible, that its full weight may appear. Let us now examine it part by part. And, (1). 'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit, is altogether good.' I allow the text, but not the comment. For the text affirms this, and no more, That every man who is born of the Spirit, is a spiritual man; else they had been no Christians at all; and yet they were not altogether spiritual, they were still, in part, carnal. 'But they were fallen from grace.' St Paul says, no. They were even babes in Christ. (2). 'But a man cannot be clean, sanctified, holy, and at the same time unclean, unsanctified, unholy.' Indeed he may. So the Corinthians were. 'Ye are washed,' says the apostle, 'ye are sanctified;' namely cleansed from 'fornication, idolatry, drunkenness,' and all other outward sins, I Cor. 6:9-10-11; and yet, at the same time, in another sense of the word, they were unsanctified; they were not washed, not inwardly cleansed from envy, evil surmising, partiality. 'But sure they had not a new heart and old heart together.' It is most sure they had; for at that very time, their hearts were truly yet not entirely renewed. Their carnal mind was nailed to the cross; yet it was not wholly destroyed. 'But could they be unholy, while they were 'temples of the Holy Ghost?' Yes; that they were temples of the Holy Ghost is certain, I Cor. 6:19; and it is equally certain they were, in some degree, carnal, that is, unholy.

"However, there is one scripture more which puts the matter out of question: 'If any man be (a believer) in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new' -- II Cor. 5:17. Now, certainly, a man cannot be a new creature and an old creature at once. Yes, he may: he may be partly renewed, which was the very case with those at Corinth. They were doubtless 'renewed in the spirit of their mind,' or they could not have been so much as babes in Christ; yet they had not the whole mind which was in Christ, for they envied one another. 'But it is said expressly, Old things are passed away; all things are become new.' But we must not so interpret the apostles' words, as to make him contradict himself. And if we will make him consistent with himself, the plain meaning of the words is this: His old judgment concerning justification, holiness, happiness, indeed concerning the things of God in general, is now passed away: so are his old desires, designs, affections, tempers, and conversation. All these are undeniably become new, greatly changed from what they were. And yet, though they are new, they are not wholly new. Still he feels, to his sorrow and shame, remains of the old man, too manifest taints of his former tempers and affections, though they cannot gain any advantage over him, as long as he watches unto prayer.

"The whole argument, 'if he is clean, he is clean;' 'if he is holy he is holy;' (and twenty more expressions of the same kind may easily be heaped together;) is really no better than playing upon words: it is the fallacy of arguing from a particular to a general; of inferring a general conclusion from particular premises. Propose the sentence entire, and it runs thus: 'If he is holy at all he is holy altogether.' That does not follow: every babe in Christ is holy, and yet not altogether so. He is saved from sin; yet not entirely: it remains though it does not reign. If you think it does not remain, (in babes at least, whatever be the case with young men, or fathers,) you certainly have not considered the height and depth, and length, and breadth of the law of God; (even the law of love, laid down by St. Paul in the thirteenth of Corinthians;) and that every disconformity to, or deviation from this law, is sin. Now is there no disconformity to this in the heart or life of a believer? What may be in an adult Christian, is another question; but what a stranger must he be to human nature, who can possibly imagine that this is

the case with every babe in Christ!”

OBJECTION 10 (Continued) ZINZENDORFISM

But the doctrines of Zinzendorf will not stand the test of Scripture. For proof that carnality remains in the justified soul in the dispensation under which we now live we must turn to the New Testament. In the very beginning we find an interesting inquiry and one which has caused a great amount of unnecessary trouble. It is asked, “Were the disciples justified before the day of Pentecost?” The indefiniteness and indecision in our answer would be done away if we would but remember the dispensation in which the disciples lived before the day of Pentecost. They were not post-Pentecostal Christians, when men passed from death unto life as we see them doing today, a transition which we as genuine Christians would quite easily understand, but they were living under the Mosaic dispensation and were justified by meeting the requirements of their age.

Jesus declared that the disciples had both faith and love, saying, “For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.” -- Jno. 16:27.

In his upper room prayer, he said, “For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.” Farther on he continued the same thought, saying, “O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.” (Jno. 17:8, 25) That they were justified is made clear by comparing the three passages above with the following statement of Jesus, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” Jno. 17:3. In the following passage Jesus states that they were saved, and prays for their sanctification, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (This is initial salvation). Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” (This is holiness.) Jno. 17:16-17.

In addition to all this, when the disciples returned from their missionary tour and jubilantly reported their successes, Jesus told them not to rejoice because devils were subject to them, but rather to rejoice because their names were written in heaven. None but saved people have their names recorded there.

That the carnal nature still remained in their hearts is seen from the following facts.

1. They desired preferment. They wanted to be great in the kingdom which they supposed Christ was about to establish. They even went so far as to strive among themselves as to who should be the greatest.
2. They manifested a spirit of retaliation. They wanted to call down fire on the Samaritans, and when the rabble took Jesus, Peter drew his sword and cut off the servant’s ear.
3. They were unbelieving. This is seen in the case of Thomas who would not believe unless he could see and handle Jesus. Jesus upbraided all of his disciples because of their unbelief and hardness of heart.

All of these are carnal traits and are inconsistent with purity of heart.

That their hearts were still unclean is further seen in the fact that Jesus prayed for their sanctification, and also the fact that their hearts were cleansed on the day of Pentecost. In reporting the remarkable descent of the Spirit on the house of Cornelius, Peter said, “And God which knoweth the hearts, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us (at Pentecost); and put no difference between us and them, purifying their (and our) hearts by faith.” -- Acts 15:8-9.

The fact that carnality remains in the hearts of those who are saved, is learned, not only from the

experiences of the disciples, but also from Bible doctrine elsewhere recorded.

Although the Corinthian Christians had trouble with some refractory people, yet the majority were far from being backslidden, for Paul wrote them thus, “Unto the church of Gad which is in Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus (sanctification begins at conversion), called to be saints ... God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” -- I Cor. 1:2-9. Immediately after these words of praise he lays bare the manifestations of carnality among them, saying, “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions (margin, schisms,) among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.” -- I Cor. 1:10-12. Farther on he adds, “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men (according to men, margin)? For while one saith, I am of Paul: and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?” I Cor. 3:1-4.

These passages show that a person can be in Christ and yet not be cleansed from the principle, that, if allowed to have its way, will cause envy and strife. The envy and strife of the above passages must not be so interpreted as to refer to that wicked manifestation of these evils which is commonly allowed and excused in the lives of modern professors; but they do refer to those outcroppings of an evil heart which so often, even today, injure the cause of God; when men prefer certain ministers because of some qualities, which may be either good or bad, and, in spirit, “sit down” on every other man who does not run in the same groove. These feelings are not allowed to such an extent as to cause open war, or all grace would be forfeited, but they are seen in that secret, almost unconscious, harboring of preferences which is a grief to the Spirit, and, if allowed, become a snare to the soul.

Paul exhorts these same Corinthians who were already initially “sanctified in Christ Jesus” to seek entire sanctification or heart purity, using the following words, “Having therefore these promises (Read chapter 6), dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” -- II Cor. 7:1.

To the Galatians Paul says, “This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” Gal. 5:16-17. For proof that this passage refers to the condition of a regenerated heart read the following from Wesley’s sermon “Sin in Believers.” “Nothing can be more express. The apostle here directly affirms that the flesh, evil nature, opposes the Spirit, even in believers; that even in the regenerate, there are two principles, ‘contrary the one to the other.’ “

Christ gave himself for the church, that he might “sanctify and cleanse it.” Eph. 5:25-27. Notice that it is “the church” that is to be sanctified and cleansed.

To the Thessalonians, whose “work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” he “remembered without ceasing.” and to whom he declared, “Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God,” -- I Thess. 1:3-4; to these people, he said, “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” -- I Thess. 4:3, and again, “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.” -- I Thess. 5:23-24. The apostle does not say that their entire sanctification had already been accomplished, but that the Lord “would do it” either now or at such a time as they should meet the proper conditions.

John says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another (this is justification), and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." -- I Jno. 1:7. The "cleansing from all sin" is subsequent to "walking in the light;" this is conclusive proof that sin remains from which the simply justified soul must be cleansed. Again John says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." -- I Jno. 1:9. This again is cleansing subsequent to forgiveness, and establishes all the teachers of the second work of grace claim.

These passages, with others that might be adduced, show that there remains in the heart of the merely justified Christian a sinful principle, which is called "unrighteousness," "the flesh," and "filthiness;" from which he must be cleansed, and from which he will be cleansed if he walks in the light.

OBJECTION 11 EMPOWERING

There are persons who realize that their Zinzendorffian ideas are not satisfactory and to supply the deficiency they must add some further experience. *They claim that the soul is wholly cleansed when it is justified and that after this there is no further cleansing but an infilling or empowering.*

I submit for your consideration that the cleaning and the empowering are one and identical in time and that when we separate the two in time we bring in confusion. Again I submit that the cleansing as well as the empowering are accomplished by the one operation commonly called the baptism with the Holy Ghost.

(The old-fashioned view of the Baptism was evidenced not only by tongues and power, but also obtaining the grace of heart-purity -all on the same day in the Upper Room. Modern Pentecostals remove the heart-purity component since they have a Baptist in doctrinal foundation. See -on the Charismata" page -"The Achilles Heel of Pentecost")

The first time there is any trace of the actual reception of this baptism is on the day of Pentecost when the one hundred and twenty disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost. -- Acts 2. That this filling is simultaneous with cleansing is proven by Peter who in reporting the experience of the Gentiles of Cornelius' house said, "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us (at Pentecost); and put no difference between us and them purifying their hearts by faith." Acts 15:8-9.

Further that the cleansing, the empowering and the baptizing with the Holy Ghost are simultaneous transactions is proven by reference to the first of Acts where the writer quotes the promise thus, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence ... But you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. This last statement is rendered in the margin, "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you." This baptism with the Holy Ghost; power from on high, or power of the Holy Ghost is interpreted by Peter as simultaneous with the act of cleansing.

Again I submit that there is no scripture that can unqualifiedly be made to draw a time distinction between cleansing and empowering. The empowering agent is the one who cleanses and where the cleansing is operative the cleansing agent must first be present. Not that God empowers in the Pentecostal sense an unclean vessel, but when the Holy Ghost cleanses a soul he does not depart to come some other day with an empowering for service, but while there he abides.

This whole contention might be summed up as follows: The baptism with the Holy Ghost effects two things one negative and the other positive; the negative is cleansing and the positive filling, empowering, unctionizing. If we separate the two transactions in respect to time we make room for all sorts of errors, and experiences innumerable will be piled up.

Now in the light of these facts and the Scriptures which have been quoted for any person to say that their hearts were entirely cleansed at the time they were justified and that after some months or years they were empowered for service is an error.

Greater measures of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart will no doubt produce greater effects, but this is only a sign of growth in grace and not of the reception of a new element called empowering or any other name. It is a fuller development of the power if we may so call it which is already in the life.

OBJECTION 12 SIN IN THE FLESH

Sin is in the flesh and as long as we are in the flesh we cannot please God. This is a re-statement in modern form of the old Manichaeism, which flourished in the second half of the Third century. The morality of Manichaeism, according to Dr. Schaff, was “based on the fundamental error of the intrinsic evil of matter and the body ... Their great moral aim was to become unworldly in the Buddhistic sense; to renounce and destroy corporeity; to set the good soul free from the fetters of matter.”

The meaning of the word flesh in the Bible gradually shades off from a physical through an ethical to a metaphysical sense. The idea of essential sin as lying in the physical body cannot be found in the Word of God. The corporeal flesh is not sinful. It is simply a material organism composed of various chemical elements, which elements can all, without exception, be found elsewhere in nature, but to this corporeal substance is added, in the living man, the interior and exterior organisms of the senses; by the union of the flesh with the spirit it becomes possible to conceive ideas, sensations, desires, and this union contains the faculties of the soul with their divers functions. Without the additions of the spirit, the flesh is a dead substance, incapable of any activity whatever. (See Eccl. 9:10). According to the Scriptures sin is in the heart (See Jer. 17:9; Matt. 15:19; Jas. 3:14), the center of our personality, in which all the influences, good and bad, meet, and the choice is made between them. (See Dan. 1:8; Eph. 6:6). The heart is the seat of spiritual affections and here resides the powers of discrimination and choice. (See Prov. 4:23; 23:7; Eccl. 8:5). Hence, heart sin is a perversion of the affections (Col. 3:2), and actual sin is a misdirecting of the will toward that which is denied or which is contrary to obedience.

In the human body in common with the beast are appetites, desires and aversions. The proper gratification of any one of these does not constitute sin. But sin enters when the soul which should be master is brought under and made the follower of fleshly desires. This is part of the bondage mentioned in the seventh chapter of Romans.

Then the corporeal flesh is not sin, neither are fleshly desires sin, but the choice of the lowest or animal man is sin and makes one worldly, sensual, devilish.

The flesh spoken of in the passage so often quoted, “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Rom. 8:8) is not the corporeal body, else Enoch would have been as desperately situated as we, but the Bible says that “before his translation (even while he was here in the flesh) he had this testimony that he pleased God.” -- Heb. 11:5.

As to whether it is possible for us while in this life to please God, the Bible makes clear when it says that without faith it is not possible to please God (Heb. 11:6), leaving the inevitable inference that he that has faith does please God. This is the ground of Enoch’s success and also of ours.

But people who quote this passage about the flesh almost invariably fail to see the very next sentence, which reads, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” Even the Westminster Confession declares that regenerated persons have the Spirit in their hearts; and a

better authority than that declares, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." -- Rom. 8:9.

Minding the flesh is choosing the lowest that is in man, excluding the spiritual for the sake of the earthly, either the vicious or the so-called lesser sins.

OBJECTION 13 PROFESSION OF HOLINESS TENDS TO PRIDE

Some object that the profession of holiness makes its professor proud and self-righteous. How strange! To be free from sin and to profess to be free causing the most heinous sins of all, pride and self-righteousness! Some say we must sin to keep humble. If a little sin will make us humble great sins should make us very humble.

"Sin never humbled any soul. Who has more sin than Satan? And who is prouder? Did sin make our first parents humble? If it did not, why do our brethren suppose that its nature is altered for the better? Who was humbler than Christ? But was he indebted to sin for his humility? Do we not see daily that the more sinful men are, the prouder they are also? Did Mr. Hill never observe, that the holier a believer is, the humbler he shows himself? And what is holiness but the reverse of sin? If sin is necessary to make us humble, and to keep us near Christ, does it not follow, that glorified saints, whom all acknowledge to be sinless, are all proud despisers of Christ? If humility is obedience, and if sin is disobedience, is it not as absurd to say, that sin will make us humble, -- that is, obedient -- as it is to affirm, that rebellion will make us loyal, and adultery chaste? See we not sin enough, when we look ten or twenty years back, to humble us to the dust forever, if sin can do it? Need we plead for any more of it in our hearts or lives? If the sins of our youth do not humble us, are the sins of our old age likely to do it? If we contend for the life of the man of sin, that he may subdue our pride, do we not take a large stride after those who say, 'Let us sin, that grace may abound; let us continue full of indwelling sin, that humility may increase?' What is, after all, the evangelical method of getting humility? Is it not to look at Christ in the manger, in Gethsemane, or on the cross? To consider Him when He washes His disciples' feet? And obediently to listen to Him when He says, 'Learn of me to be meek and lowly in heart?' Where does the gospel plead the cause of the Barabbas and the thieves within? Where does it say, that they may indeed be nailed to the cross, and have their legs broken, but that their life must be left whole within them, lest we should be proud of their death? Lastly: what is indwelling sin but indwelling pride? At least, is not inbred pride one of the chief ingredients of indwelling sin? And how can pride be productive of humility? Can a serpent beget a dove? And will not men gather grapes from thorns, sooner than humility of heart from haughtiness of spirit?" *[4]

But there is one point that needs careful consideration and guarding: there are some who profess holiness in a boastful way that gives the lie to their testimony and causes the onlooker to suspicion the presence of a Pharisee. Such persons are fond of saying, "I am sanctified no matter what you think about it;" "I know my heart is clean and you can think as you please." These persons are very conscious of their own worth and can feel power in nearly anything they themselves say or do. They are liable to be a contentious folk. They will stir up trouble on any circuit and are always meddling with other people's affairs. Steer clear of such persons, they are Pharisees in a sanctified man's clothes.

OBJECTION 14 SMALL RESULTS

Some object that such small results attend the efforts of those who profess holiness that there must be a mistake in their profession.

Some will not hear the truth. Jesus was not uniformly successful in every place.

These are days when the two damning sins of the world, covetousness and pleasure, have conspired to

take things and even the church is crippled by them. Look into the history of every fallen nation and you will find that these two forms of sin were the lever that accomplished their downfall, and with various modifications they have overthrown the spirituality of every worldly church. Our country today is reeking with these two vile diseases. Commercial greed, political thievery and ecclesiastical pomp and emulation are centralizing power and wealth in great men and concerns, while the common herd dances to the music of their multiplying pleasures, and, to gratify their insatiate desire for fun and enjoyment, throw all they have in goods, power, or reason lavishly and carelessly into the maw of the great moloch who is hourly tightening his grip on them.

But what has this to do with the question in hand? Much every way. Men will not listen. While one seeks gain another seeks pleasure; while one is miserly another is spendthrift; while one seeks enjoyment another is inventing means of enjoyment to keep pleasure-seekers on the run and lest they tire of old things. The nominal church is caught in this flood tide of sin; now the prophecy of the apostle is fulfilled and men are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. The Athenians spent their time in seeing and hearing new things and even Paul could not reach them.

Again the one thousand and one imitation religions which are being palmed off as ways to heaven are hindrances. Men used to believe in the Saviour Jesus; now they believe in the man Jesus: once they thought they must be holy in heart; now they must follow Jesus; once they feared an eternal hell; now they fear nothing. The whole tendency of religions matters is toward the outside. Religion is not of the heart any more but of the life.

One great reason for the lack of success among holiness professors is found in the fact that so much is palmed off as holiness which is false. People take up with the shallow holiness and will not accept that which is thorough.

After all, outward success not a criterion of experience. That man is successful who conquers his own spirit whether he takes a city or not. A man may take a city and be a failure in God's sight. All who are entirely sanctified have conquered their own spirits, and God says, "Well done."

OBJECTION 15 TOO HIGH A STANDARD

Some object that entire sanctification is too high a standard to be reached.

Has God said so? On the contrary has he not commanded us to be holy? Has he not warned us of the danger of unholiness? Has He not given us examples of holy men?

God does not command impossibilities unless he gives strength to accomplish impossibilities. Man unaided can never reach this standard, but God has promised to guide us, to lead us, to help us, to carry us, and to supply all our needs according to His riches in glory. He is able, He is willing, He does as He promises. Man's extremity is God's opportunity.

"But after all, you object the thing is impossible; that in this world a man cannot live without sin. Has God said so? If man were left to himself it might be admitted; but cannot God empower him to be free from sin? Reflect: Cannot you, by the grace of God, live one minute without sin? If a minute, can you not an hour? If an hour, a day? If a day, a year? You overlook the power of the grace of God. We are weak, and cannot too much distrust ourselves; but 'through Christ strengthening' us, we are 'able to do all things.' Shall we limit the 'Holy One of Israel?' Shall we plead in extenuation of our sins, our weaknesses, our inability, when Christ stands ready, waiting to enter the list for us? O, but you say, My difficulty is not to live without sin, so much as it is to be without sin. If I could but be once set on my feet I might go, but I cannot get on my feet. 'O, wretched man that I am!' Have you ever heard of one whose name is Jesus? You may not be able to raise yourself, but have you tried Him? Cannot He save? His name is Jesus, Saviour. Surely He has power, power now, power to save even you and me, and

every man that will come unto Him, power 'to save unto the uttermost.' Dare you disbelieve it, you who have felt its power? You whom He saved once from a darkness so great, from a pit so deep? Dare you doubt? Much more, dare you tell Him you doubt?

“As the man of Pethor said of God’s ancient people, ‘There is no enchantment against Jacob; neither is there any divination against Israel;’ so may we say of this doctrine, there is no enchantment against it. Why are objections sought against it? Is it not a beautiful and glorious truth? Why do we contend against it? Behold its array of proof! See how God has ‘planted a hedge about it,’ and ‘fenced it in on every side!’ Behold how feeble its gainsayers; how powerless its reprovers! And in passing from the chapter, let the reader consider well the reasons of his opposition. Why do you oppose it? Are you sure it is because you are convinced it is an error? Or have you not a less pardonable reason? May you not, at least, be only apologizing for your sins – pleading for concealed garments, or hidden wedges of gold? Is it not out of too great kindness for the inhabitants of the land, whom you are not willing to put to the sword? O that you may be led to right conclusions, and know and enjoy all that is your privilege to realize of grace here, and finally come to the enjoyment of eternal glory hereafter! Amen.” *[5]

OBJECTION 16 LEADS TO FANATICISM

It is objected by some that the profession of entire sanctification leads to fanaticism and makes its professors impracticable. They assert that holiness people are filled with wild and uncanny notions, that they are ignorant, superstitious and hopelessly unreliable.

No matter how learned or wise a person may have been considered before, as soon as he makes a profession of holiness people wag their heads, tap their foreheads, and shout fool, fanatic, wildfire, holy-roller, self-righteous, and a thousand other epithets of reproach. No matter how innocent, guileless and saintly the professors may be they are with very few exceptions accused of the vilest of sins and improprieties.

The Lord foresaw this condition of affairs and prepared His people for it by saying, “Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets.” -- Luke 6:26. “The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world.”

Jno. 17:14. “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” -- Matt. 5:11-12. “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” -- 2 Tim. 3:12.

This method of false accusation has always been one of the devil’s big sticks in his war against holiness and in fact against Christianity itself. Tertullian, after going to great lengths in naming and refuting the charges brought against the Christians of his day, sums the whole thing up by stating that the only crime laid to their charge was their name. In his *Ad Nationes*, Book I, Chapter III, he says, “Since therefore, you who are in other cases most scrupulous and persevering in investigating charges of far less serious import, relinquish your care in cases like ours, which are so horrible, and of such surpassing sin that impiety is too mild a word for them, by declining to hear confession, which should always be an important process for those who conduct judicial proceedings; and failing to make a full inquiry, which should be gone into by such as sue for a condemnation, it becomes evident that the crime laid to our charge consists not of any sinful conduct, but lies wholly in our name.”

In reply to the charge that the profession of holiness leads to fanaticism and wild notions, let us quote the following from Wesley the acknowledged leader, in modern times, of the holiness movement. A people that will keep to such a line as this, and sanctified people do, are neither fanatical nor visionary.

“Beware of that daughter of pride, enthusiasm. O, keep at the utmost distance from it! Give no place to

a heated imagination, Do not hastily ascribe things to God. Do not easily suppose dreams, voices, impressions, visions, or revelations, to be from God. They may be from Him. They may be from nature. They may be from the devil. Therefore, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God. Try all things by the written word, and let all bow down before it, You are in danger of enthusiasm every hour, if you depart ever so little from Scripture; yea, or from the plain, literal meaning of any text, taken in connection with the context. And so you are, if you despise or lightly esteem reason, knowledge, or human learning; every one of which is an excellent gift of God, and may serve the noblest purposes.

“I advise you never to use the words wisdom, reason, or knowledge, by way of reproach, On the contrary, pray that you yourself may abound in them more and more. If you mean worldly wisdom, useless knowledge, false reasoning, say so; and throw away the chaff, but not the wheat.

“One general inlet to enthusiasm is, expecting the end without the means; the expecting knowledge, for instance, without searching the Scriptures and consulting the children of God; the expecting spiritual strength without constant prayer and steady watchfulness; the expecting any blessing without hearing the word of God at every opportunity.

“Some have been ignorant of this device of Satan. They have left off searching the Scriptures. They said, ‘God writes all the Scriptures on my heart. Therefore I have no need to read it.’ Others thought they had not so much need of hearing, and so grew slack in attending the morning preaching. O, take warning, you who are concerned herein! You have listened to the voice of a stranger. Fly back to Christ, and keep in the good old way, which was once delivered to the saints; the way that even a heathen bore testimony of: ‘That the Christians rose early every day to sing hymns to Christ as God.’

“The very desire of ‘growing in grace’ may sometimes be an inlet of enthusiasm, As it continually heads us to seek new grace, it may lead us unawares to seek something else new, besides new degrees of love to God and man. So it has led some to seek and fancy they had received gifts of a new kind, after a new heart, as (1) The loving God with all our mind; (2) With all our soul: (3) With all our strength: (4) Oneness with God: (5) Oneness with Christ: (6) Having our life hid with Christ in God: (7) Being dead with Christ: (8) Rising with Him: (9) The sitting with Him in heavenly places: (10) The being taken up into His throne: (11) The being in the New Jerusalem: (12) The seeing the tabernacle of God come down among men: (13) The being dead to all works: (14) The not being liable to death, pain, or grief, or temptation.

“One ground of many of these mistakes is the taking every fresh, strong application of any of these Scriptures to the heart, to be a gift of a new kind; not knowing that several of these Scriptures are not fulfilled yet; that most of the others are fulfilled when we are justified; the rest the moment we are sanctified. It remains only to experience them in higher degrees. This is all we have to expect.

“Another ground of these and a thousand mistakes, is, the not considering deeply that love is the highest gift of God; humble, gentle, patient love; that all visions, revelations, manifestations whatever, are little things compared to love; and that all the gifts above mentioned are either the same with, or infinitely inferior to it.

“It were well you should be thoroughly sensible of this the heaven of heavens is love. There is nothing higher in religion; there is, in effect, nothing else; if you look for anything but more love, you are looking wide of the mark, you are getting out of the royal way. And when you are asking others, ‘Have you received this or that blessing?’ If you mean anything but more love, you mean wrong; you are heading them out of the way, and putting them upon a false scent. Settle it then in your heart, that from the moment God has saved from all sin, you are to aim at nothing more, but more of that love described in the thirteenth of the Corinthians. You can go no higher than this, till you are carried into Abraham’s bosom.

“I say yet again, beware of enthusiasm. Such is, the imagining you have the gift of prophesying, or of discerning of spirits, which I do not believe one of you has; no, nor ever had yet. Beware of judging people to be either right or wrong by your own feelings. This no scriptural way of judging. O keep close to ‘the law and to the testimony!’ “

(Note: And yet “enthusiasm” seems to be the mark of much of today's church -together with eventual spiritual failure in those who are proclaimed to be especially gifted. They may be, but lacking purity of heart, they also lack the full armor of God, and so are still vulnerable.

It is a serious mistake to ascribe rare gifts to large groups. Rare gifts are rare. Counterfeited ones are not, and come bundled with eventual failure.

Purity of heart is of greater honor before God -and of greater service to men -since it serves as a shining example to others. Salvation and healing are essential, but so is purity.) Earnest Seeker)

ENDNOTES

- 1 Fletcher’s Christian Perfection, Section II.
- 2 Fletcher’s Christian Perfection, Section I.
- 3 Fletcher’s Christian Perfection, Section II.
- 4 Fletcher’s Christian Perfection.
- 5 Foster’s Christian Purity, Chapter VI.

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