

# SANCTIFICATION

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## FOREWORD

It is with gratitude to God that I am called upon to write a foreword to the eighth edition of the following pages. Eleven thousand, five hundred copies in the three English editions have been sold. Two editions in Japanese, one in French and one in Chinese have helped to spread the tidings of a Full Salvation in other lands.

Letters from not a few in different parts of the world have heartened me by the testimonies they have brought.

I send forth yet another edition in English with the prayer that God will still further use it to His Glory, and help many more of God's children to find the Lord Jesus as a PERFECT Saviour, able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

A. PAGET WILKES.

Wimbledon, November, 1931.

## FOREWORD TO THIRTEENTH EDITION

This little book has for a long time been regarded as a classic on this vital subject.

Comprehensive in its teaching, clear, concise and packed with supporting scriptures, this thirteenth edition is sent forth with prayer that very many more will be helped into the blessing of which it speaks. October, 1963

*Holiness by faith in Jesus,  
Not by effort of thine own,  
Sin's dominion crushed and broken  
By the power of grace alone.  
God's own holiness within thee,  
His own beauty on thy brow,  
This shall be thy pilgrim brightness,  
This thy blessed portion now.*

## 1. SANCTIFICATION: ITS NECESSITY

We are going to consider together that great word found in the New Testament, SANCTIFICATION or Holiness. The Authorized Version translates the original freely by either of these two words.

We shall first consider its *necessity*, then its *nature*, then its *way*, and lastly *the time* of its realization.

There are two great words in the New Testament relative to the state and position of the believer—Justification and Sanctification. Speaking roughly we may say that Justification means "being *counted* righteous," and Sanctification means "*made* righteous." When a man is born again, God both counts him righteous, forgiving all the past—and makes him righteous giving him a new nature. Hence Paul, when writing to the Christians of his day, though many of them were carnal, calls them saints, or sanctified ones. Sanctification, however, may be divided into two parts—"regeneration," or sanctification begun, and "entire sanctification" which is the work completed, and which is the subject we are considering. In this connection it is interesting to note that John Wesley entitles his great classic on the subject "Entire Sanctification."

Some may inquire, "Why talk so much about this second work of grace in the heart? Why teach sanctification?" (and for convenience sake let me say, I shall speak of "entire sanctification" merely as sanctification, to distinguish it from regeneration)—why, says the enquirer, emphasize it so much, why not speak more about the Person and Presence of the Lord Jesus Himself? Well, we shall see the reason as we go on. I do, however, hope that all of us believe that a second work of grace in the heart is necessary. It is blessed to get out of Egypt, but I consider it even more blessed to get into the land of Canaan. I suppose that all Christian workers have found it much easier to lead people out of Egypt, than to get them into the land of Promise: it was also so in the days of Moses. Only Caleb and Joshua—two out of that great host—ever reached the land: it was left to the second generation to inherit it. Oh! How hard it is to get all the Egypt, the murmuring, and unbelief out of the hearts of God's children, and lead them into the country that flows with the milk and honey of His Word.

Let me repeat it, therefore, it is most necessary to preach the blessing before we talk about the Blessor. "But it is not the blessing we want," says

someone, “it is the Blessor.” No! that is not true; we need both, we need the blessing and the Blessor. Will you turn with me to Revelations 3:14. There the Lord, diagnosing the state of the Laodicean church, and calling them “Wretched, miserable, poor and blind and naked,” finally adds that most blessed promise, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me.” But I want you to notice that those two do not come together: in between the description of the lukewarm Christian and the wonderful promise of an indwelling Christ, we have these words, “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see.” Here is the blessing; it is not till we have received this, that He adds, “Behold I ... will come in” even the Blessed Lord Jesus Himself! I am going to speak, therefore, on the sevenfold necessity of being sanctified wholly.

The first we will consider is:

## 1. Vision of Christ

*“Follow after peace with all men and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord.”* (Hebrews 12:14, R.V.)

Here then is the first reason for this great work to be done in our hearts. The necessity of having a second work of grace taking away the depravity of our nature, is that without this deliverance we “cannot see the Lord.” “Blessed are the pure in heart,” said Christ, “for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8.) This may refer possibly in its primary meaning to His coming again, in order that we may be counted worthy to escape the things which are coming to pass on the earth, and to stand before the Son of Man, but it also applies to us here and now. The desire of every true Christian is to see the Lord Jesus: we long for Him to be made manifest to our souls. That, moreover, was His last great promise, that if we keep His two commandments, “believing” and “loving” (see 1 John 3:23, 24) He would manifest Himself to us. Why is it that He is not real to us? Is it because we fail in “believing” and “loving”? But why do we thus fail? Surely it is because of the unbelief, the carnal mind, that depravity of heart which weakens and hinders and destroys our faith and love! When that is removed, He says we shall see Him *because we are then enabled to believe and love with all of our hearts*. Yes! We shall see Him fully in His Word; we shall see Him in nature; see Him in His people; see Him in the sacraments and see Him in His Providences. Do we now? When the heart is pure it shall be so—we shall see the Lord. Hallelujah!

Have you ever studied in the Word of God the subject of seeing the Lord Jesus? The *wise men* when they saw the little Babe of Bethlehem knew it was the Lord! It led them to worship, adoration, and sacrificial giving.

The *Shepherds*, too, that came and saw the Babe, They knew Him. Their vision led to praise and thanksgiving and testimony.

The day that *Simeon* came into the Temple, no doubt there were numbers of other babies in their mothers’ arms. Mary was just an ordinary peasant woman: you and I would doubtless have passed her by, but Simeon didn’t: he saw the Lord and knew Him to be the Saviour of the World. “Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,” he cries, “for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” Yes, it made him both praise God, and pray for a blessing on Joseph and Mary.

Later on *Anna* came in: she, too, saw the young child and she, too, knew it was the Christ; at once she begins to give thanks and spread it all abroad.

The *Samaritan woman* when she saw Him after she had received the cleansing water in her soul knew Him to be her Saviour. Her natural idea of a Messiah was of course that He would be a mighty king and national deliverer; but as soon as her heart was made pure she sees and believes that the lowly Carpenter (He that spoke unto her) was the One: yes! standing at her side, looking into her face, and bringing salvation to her soul. This beatific vision made her a missionary at once. Oh! that this may be ours also! So shall the interior eye of faith be opened and we shall go hence seeing the Lord—testifying to His grace, praising His name, telling

the good tidings abroad and made missionaries of the Cross indeed.

## 2. Oneness with Christ

*“Sanctify them through thy truth ... that they may be ONE.”* (John 17: 17-21)

Here is another of the deepest reasons for our being sanctified: that we may be one with Christ. In John 15 The Lord had said to His disciples, “Now ye are clean,” and then in the 17th Chapter goes on to pray, “Father, sanctify them.” The two words in the Greek are quite different from each other. For example in 2 Timothy 2:21, “If a man therefore *purge* himself from these, he shall be a vessel *sanctified*”; the first word is the same as in John 15, while the second is that used in John 17. Again in 2 Corinthians 7:1, “Let us *cleanse* ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting *holiness*” we find the same distinction. Yes, you *are* clean, if you are Christians at all: you are one with the Vine; and yet the Lord prays, “O Father, make them clean and make them one.” There is, therefore, a deeper purity and a closer union than most of us know anything about. In the epistle to the Romans we find the double union with Christ very clearly set forth. In the 6th chapter the apostle speaks of a union with Christ in death, burial and resurrection, but in the 7th he talks about a oneness with Christ in marriage, bringing forth fruit unto God. He goes on to explain that there cannot be a oneness with Christ and bringing forth fruit until the “old husband” is gone. What a picture of the carnal mind and the old man is the husband in Romans 7! There can be no divorce, no suppression, no putting him down in the cellar or up in the attic. He has to die. Without his decease there can be no re-marriage and no oneness with Christ Jesus—the heavenly Bridegroom. There is a striking parable of this in the Old Testament in the story of Abigail’s marriage with King David after the death of Nabal—“Fool” was his name and “Folly” his nature. When Abigail went home and told him how desperate their situation was, we read that his heart became like a stone within him, but it was the Lord who gave him his *coup de grâce*. So shall it be with us; if in faith we say the word, take sides with our heavenly Bridegroom and speak the word of condemnation to the Nabal within, the Lord Himself will do the rest.

What we are after, is not some wonderful blessing that is going to make us independent of the Lord Jesus, but a blessing that will make us one with Him—one in desire, one in will, one in motive, one in God’s desire for the salvation of a lost world, one with Christ. That is what we are seeking; if this is not so we shall get very little worth having. Religion does not consist only in ecstasies and emotions and talking in tongues; it also means that I am brought into a oneness with Christ over a lost world, and if I am brought into oneness with Christ it will make a tremendous difference in my life. I can look out on the world as Christ looks on it, and feel as He feels, love as He loves, and walk as He walked. You remember Paul prayed that he might know the fellowship of His sufferings: I do not think that this refers to the past sufferings of Christ; it certainly does not mean emotional sentiment about the suffering of Christ on the Cross; he is surely thinking of His present sufferings, His bitter disappointment and sorrow and suffering the Lord Jesus had over His people! And we may know something of that too in fellowship with Him: that is the suffering I desire to enter into. May the Lord so sanctify our hearts that we may all be one with Him—for union with Jesus demands the cleansing, sanctifying experience of which we are thinking.

## 3. Usefulness and Power

*“If a man purge himself ... he shall be a vessel ... sanctified and meet for the Master’s use.”* (2 Tim. 2:21.)

It is blessed to see the Lord, blessed to be one with Him, but there is a further reason that makes sanctification a necessity: it is declared to us in the above passage. What a marvellous verse that is! Those of us who know the awful weakness, the failures, and the miserable slipshod makeup that some of us have, can never cease to marvel that God can not only make us a vessel unto honour, or that He can sanctify us, but that He can make us fit for His using and ready for every good work. Here is the reason why we lack power and are so unusable in God’s service: we are not yet clean within: and the Lord knows that if He

began to use us we would get puffed up with pride. As Brengle says, "Don't pray, Lord use me, but, Lord, make me usable." God is using men and women today to the utmost limit of their ability. He will look after the using, if we will only get detached from ourselves, so that we can praise the Lord if someone else is used as much as ourselves. Oh! what liberty that is! Some of us know the bondage of jealousy and envy, that springs up in our hearts when we hear of some Christian worker being used more than we are, and some of us know the inward freedom, when we do not care who is used, if only the Lord Jesus is glorified. Oh! how we have longed for that inward purity, that absence of jealousy, pride, and every evil work! Until we are free we are not ready for His use. That is the reason why we need a clean heart. God can then take us up as He pleases: He can put us down as He pleases, for He knows that we shan't grumble or murmur, but will still praise Him because we are occupied and satisfied with the Lord Jesus Himself, rather than with our service for Him. Yes! God has got to do a deeper, more drastic and a more real work in our hearts than we dreamed of, when we were in the land of Egypt. All we thought of then was that we were in bondage. Thank God we are out of bondage! But when we get into the wilderness we begin to find out how much there is of Egypt still in us. We begin to find out from bitter experience how much there is of this corrupting evil thing: no! we don't want it to be there, but there it is all the same, creeping into all we do and say. It is like an unclean fountain, pouring out its evil thoughts all the time. How can the Lord Jesus take us and use us till He has made us "clean" and "free" and "whole"?

#### 4. **The Power to Love**

*"Seeing ye have PURIFIED your souls in obeying the truth ... see that ye LOVE one another with a PURE heart fervently." (1 Peter 1:22)*

*"The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart." (1 Tim. 1:5)*

"The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Romans 14:17) That is to say, it is not the meat and drink of the body, but it is the meat and drink of the soul. We may call righteousness, which is faith and love, the meat, while peace and joy are the drink of the soul. There are a lot of people who are spiritual drunkards: they want nothing but peace and joy, mere emotional experiences; but faith and love are not emotional, they are very practical. Love is not necessarily emotional at all: it is solid, real, and full of good works. The secret of the ability to love is a pure heart. Love to God and man, pure and unadulterated, cannot proceed out of a heart that is still defiled with bitterness and envy. Just as you cannot put the new wine of joy in old bottles, so you cannot put a patch of heavenly love on to an old garment. The garments of holiness, the raiment of love unpatched and unspotted have to be put on, that the shame of our nakedness do not appear. Oh that God may give us a yearning desire to have love out of a pure heart! "Yes!" you say, "We like the word 'love' but we don't like the words, 'a clean heart.'" Well, David did not object to them anyhow, did he? And I am willing to be in David's company and cry with him, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." (Psalm 51:10) Oh! do be careful about despising God's words, for Christ hath declared "Whosoever is ashamed of Me and of My words, of him will I be ashamed." "Love out of a pure heart!" Can anything be more beautiful? Let us seek in these days with all our mind and soul and strength! and God will purify and fill and cause us to overflow!

The Word of God presents us with still another reason why we should be entirely sanctified—

#### 5. **Preparedness for the Lord's Coming**

*"The God of Peace Himself sanctify you wholly . . . unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5:23)*

I wish you would take your Bible and look carefully into this matter.

Take such passages as 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13; 1 John 3:3; 2 Thessalonians. 1:10-12; Titus 2:13-14; and many more, if not all other passages relative to this theme; and you will find that holiness of heart and His appearing are never separated. Oh how ashamed we should be, if He came and found in our heart envy and pride, and malice, uncharitableness and unbelief, the fear of man and the shame of the Cross. I do not know how much you want left in your heart: I do not want any of it left. "Ah," you say, "We must have a little sin to keep us humble." Do you really believe that? Sin never makes us humble, for if it did, the devil ought to be the humblest creature on earth. No! No! Only the grace of God can make and keep men humble. This is a deeply solemn aspect of the matter—the white robes—the wedding garment—preparedness for the appearing—the fitness and not merely the right to enter the marriage supper of the Lamb—are surely the holiness of heart He has created for us—His purchased blessing. Without it, alas, we may be left outside to pass through the days of the "great tribulation" -those saved as by fire. Do not be content with the right to enter; we need the fitness. Imputed righteousness gives the former, but His imparted righteousness—Christ as our sanctification, appropriated and put on, can alone make us ready for His appearing; that when He does appear we may not be ashamed before Him.

#### 6. **Ability to Praise in Time of Reproach**

*"Wherefore Jesus also that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate: let us go forth therefore unto Him...bearing His reproach...by Him let us offer us the sacrifice of Praise." (Hebrews 13:12-15.)*

In passing I want you to notice particularly the words "sanctify with His own blood." There is a form of doctrine that is preached nowadays that makes sanctification the result of the Holy Spirit's indwelling. This, of course, is true, but not the whole truth. In Romans 5:9, we read that we are "justified by His blood," but here we learn that His blood sanctifies our hearts. The meaning is plain. Before the Holy Ghost can come and take full possession, there has to be cleansing of innate sinwardness from the heart through the efficacy of the blood of Jesus—the "body of sin" has to be destroyed by the Cross: the disease of the soul has to be healed by "His stripes." Here is a reason why so many people who come to meetings, and pray and consecrate themselves, asking to enter His Rest, yet as far as we can see never do enter: at best they are satisfied with mere notions: there is no reality. They fail to see that before this we need to be sanctified by His blood. "His blood doth make me holy," for in it is a sin-destroying power. I merely say this in passing.

The point of the passage before us is that without His sanctifying grace and power we cannot "go unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach." Here is a very real, result of sanctification, the ability to bear the reproach of Christ, and not be ashamed. May I ask you, when you are traveling in the train for example, are you ashamed of the Lord Jesus? How many Christians I find as I travel about are ashamed of Him. They have no power to confess Him or win others to Him. Some of us have suffered from that false shame, haven't we? There are men who naturally have a very strong character and yet when it comes to witnessing for Christ they are utterly weak. It takes more than mere natural strength to eradicate that fear of man and the shame of the Cross. Oh! isn't it amazing that we should ever be ashamed of Christ. What an awful day that would be, perhaps the most awful moment, when we look back on all these accepted customs of the world, and remember that we were ashamed of Him in its presence. Beloved, may we get it all out of us in these days. Do you believe it can be done? I know it can. Out of the most timid person God can take away all the fear and false shame, if they will only let Him sanctify them entirely by His blood: but you won't let Him do it unless you are convicted over it, unless you feel that your witness and worship and testimony have been miserable performances and cry out, "Oh that God would bring me into a place where I can help someone and be a blessing." You remember the little boy who was asked why the lions could not eat Daniel and he innocently replied, "Because he was three parts grit and all the rest solid backbone."

He sanctifies the people by His own blood in order that we might go

without the camp, bearing His reproach. The body of the sin offering was burned outside the camp. It was entirely consumed, after certain parts had been burned upon the altar. The fire speaks to us of the Holy Ghost and the word “body” reminds us of St. Paul’s striking words, “The body of sin,” “The body of death,” and “The body of the flesh” (R.V.) Why does the Apostle use these strange expressions? Surely that he may show us that he is talking about the sin as a totality, an entity (not mere guilt, habit, or action) to be destroyed and consumed. The blessed result will be that we shall have power to bear His reproach, and by Him offer the sacrifice of praise in the midst of persecution, criticism and shame. We can never get real praise and thanksgiving out of a heart that is not yet made clean and sanctified by His blood, at least in circumstances of suffering and reproach.

And now lastly. We close with another, and perhaps the most important result of a sanctified experience—

## 7. *The Power to Obey*

*“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience.”* (1 Peter 1:2)

It is not too much to say that the heart of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is to make us obedient; just as the essence of that sin which ruined the human race was disobedience. We are not only like lost sheep losing our way, ignorant of the way back, but we all have “gone our own way,” a very pleasant way, and a very respectable way maybe, but our own way that is far away from God nevertheless. The purpose of redemption is to bring us back to the place of perfect obedience. The Lord Jesus Himself came to show us its reasonableness, righteousness and blessedness -by His living a life of unswerving obedience to the will of God. Are we assured that such a life is impossible without first experiencing an entire sanctification of our nature—the cleansing out of every bit of rebellion, self-will and self-pleasing? God the Holy Ghost can bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. So, and only so, shall we gladly obey and follow in His steps. “Unto obedience.” We know perfectly well the value of these words: we ourselves do not want the smart kind of people as our servants: we want men and women whom we can trust. They may not be very brilliant, but if they are perfectly faithful and obedient we are satisfied. What a comfort it is to have men and women like that about us, and how disappointing it is to have the exact opposite! Is it otherwise with God? By no means He, too, does not want brilliant men and women so

## 2. SANCTIFICATION: ITS NATURE

WE are now going to consider together the nature of that great experience described in the word of God as Sanctification or the entering into a state of Holiness of heart. We may define it as righteousness *imparted* just as justification may be called righteousness *imputed*. “The Sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14, R.V.)

I do not propose speaking of the various theories as to how we enter into this gracious state—there are some six or seven—but they do not concern us here. Nor, moreover, do I intend to be abstruse or go into any psychological study of the question, but I think it may help us if we glance for a moment at the constituent elements of our nature. The activities, or faculties, of the human soul may be described as follows, Conscience, Will, Mind, Memory, Imagination, Affections and Desires—though of course it is obvious that in each one of these, mental activity is present. There can be no exercise of any of these faculties without the activity of the intellect, and yet for a practical purpose we can divide our nature in some such fashion.

We are all conscious of these faculties and their activity: and we are all equally conscious, if we will but reflect, that every one of them has been distorted, perverted, poisoned and rendered ineffective by the work of Satan, the arch-enemy of man. But the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, sanctify the soul and bring us back again to a perfect happy confidence in God. I think,

much as those who will be sanctified unto obedience. Oh! may He make us such. May He take all the disobedient spirit and self-pleasing out of our hearts at this time. Some of us know so well our own slipshod nature that we can cover up and conceal it very cleverly from our friends, but we still know and God still knows all about it. Thanks be to Him that He can alter it and sanctify us body, soul and spirit, so that we obey Him and be ready for Him to use us for His glory.

These then are some of the reasons why we need the great work of sanctification in our souls. Let us glance at them again as we close.

- (1) We need it that we may “see the Lord.” Until the heart is pure there can be no vision: sin and fear and unbelief blur and dim the sight of our soul. (Matthew 5:8; Hebrews 22:14)
- (2) We need it that we may be one with Christ not only in will, but in desire and affection, mind and motive, yes, in all the powers and affections of our soul. (the whole chapter of John 17)
- (3) We need it that we may be a vessel meet for His using—power and usefulness are dependent on the sanctification of our nature. (2 Timothy 2:22)
- (4) We need it that we may love. This cannot be until all evil has been cleansed from our heart: we cannot love till we are sanctified within: the pure essence of love can only be poured in and out of a clean vessel. (1 Peter 1:22)
- (5) We need it that we may be ready for Him at His appearing—that the shame of our nakedness may not appear, and that we may be confident before Him when He comes. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)
- (6) We need it that we may be enabled to bear His reproach without the camp and offer therein praise and thanksgiving—rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks. (Hebrews 13 12-15)
- (7) Finally we need it that we may be perfectly obedient to our Master. Until all self-will and self-pleasing be taken out of our heart we cannot follow in His steps. (1 Peter 1:2.)

May the Holy Ghost make these simple thoughts a blessing to our souls and stir up our hearts to seek and obtain all that is purchased and procured for us through the sacrifice of His dear Son. —Amen.

therefore, it may be helpful to consider what is done in the various faculties of our nature, taking them one by one—and finally investigate the cause and root of all the trouble. But above all I want you to be convinced that God desires to purify all these faculties and powers, so that everything within shall bless His Holy name, and there be nothing remaining, that cannot say Amen and Hallelujah to His gracious will. Do we believe this is possible? Or, is it too good to be true? Surely not with such a God as our God, and such a Saviour as the Lord Jesus Christ.

## 1. *The Conscience*

*“How much more shall the Blood of Christ ... purge your CONSCIENCE from dead works to serve the Living God.”* (Hebrews 9:14)

When as a sinner we seek and find the pardon of our sins, the clamor of our awakened conscience is for ever stilled—the blood of Jesus silences its fierce and implacable accusations—its sting is extracted: its voice silenced. But there is still a greater change. The Conscience is renewed. Some of the most unregenerate men and women have been the most conscientious; but when the grace of God reaches the heart, the conscience is both enlightened and renewed.

Our text, however, speaks of a yet deeper experience in the words, “purified from dead works” to wait on the Worker, even the living God; not merely freed from past sin and guilt, nor from mistaken and misguided zeal, but from doing things in our own strength, and urged to wait on the One who works for us. The conscience is cleansed and purified; and it is the blood of Jesus that does the work. The allusion in our text is to the sprinkling of water containing the ashes of the red heifer, upon the priests, who had been engaged in burying the bodies of the dead, slain by the plague, instead of waiting in prayer and praise and worship in the Holy Place; so shall it be with our conscience when we obtain the blessed cleansing of the blood of Jesus in all its supernatural fullness. We shall wait on God who waits to do His work in us.

## 2. The Will

“I am crucified with Christ.” (Gal. 2:20)

The will is the fortress of the soul. We may call it the ego, the very self of man. Till this is captured—till this is surrendered—there is nothing. When we are born again of His Spirit, it is then that through God’s free grace the will is transformed—the ego is crucified with Christ—the self-will, the rebellion and disobedience are removed. There is, in other words, a real surrender to the claims of God. In a way that, I suppose, we shall never understand since this is accomplished through the sacrifice of Calvary. “I am crucified with Christ,” says the Apostle. Through His death and sufferings is dealt the deathblow to my self-will and rebellion. Here is sanctification begun—a glorious beginning when the fortress falls. This is, I know, worked in us by the Holy Ghost, but it is only possible because He who knew no sin was made sin for us.

And yet though the dark fortress may have fallen, Sanctification is certainly not complete. Many suppose that the surrender of the will is all. Alas! We soon discover our mistake. When the devil did his work he made a thorough job of it. Every part of our nature was twisted, perverted, poisoned and animated by his serpent virus. But praise be to God, He can effect a perfect cure and thoroughly undo all that the devil has wrought within.

Strictly speaking, our conscience and will are two great spheres of our nature in which God’s *regenerating* grace operates. Our conscience is “purified” (Hebrews 9:14.), and “our will” is “crucified” (Galatians 2:20). But complete sanctification covers a yet wider and deeper ground than these.

## 5. The Desires

“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” (Gal. 5:24)

I have spoken of ground deeper than the conscience and the will—I refer, of course, to the *desires* of the heart. In the Hebrew and Greek originals of the scripture, there are some sixteen words used to express the noun, and about twenty-six the verb “desire.” Sanctification reaches these deep places of the soul. Most of us are all too conscious of the truth of Wesley’s line—“My will seems fixed, yet wide my passions rove”—conscious that lower and deeper down than our wills there are hankering desires so strong that they would bring again into captivity the will that has been set free. Let us look well to our hearts. What are our real desires? “Desire nothing but God,” said John Wesley. Do we? Are there no unspoken desires for worldly things, ease, comfort and pleasure? As the Lord draws nigh to ask, “What shall we do for thee?”—we say, “Lord, give us the fullness of Thy Rest,” but do we find in our hearts desires for other things far stronger than those we pray for with our lips? “Set your hope (or desire) perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ,” said the apostle Peter. (1 Peter 1:13, R.V.) Are our desires fixed thus? The Word of God speaks a good deal of this permanent fixing. Here it tells of our desires being fixed. The Psalmist cries, “My heart (i.e. my affection) is fixed.” The prophet Isaiah talks of our *mind* or imagination being stayed or fixed on God. And yet before this fixing and establishing of our desires wholly God-ward can be accomplished, the Holy Spirit uses a stronger word—“Crucifixion.” “They that are Christ’s have crucified ...

the desires.”

Here is the nature of true sanctification. There has to be a cleansing of dross from the desires of our soul.

Our conscience can be cleansed from dead works. (Hebrews 9:14)

Our will can be crucified with Christ. (Galatians 2:20)

Our worldly and carnal desires too can be nailed to the Cross. (Gal. 5:24)

## 4. The Affections

“The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart ... to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul.” (Deuteronomy 30:6)

There is one command—the greatest—in the Word more beautiful than all the others. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and soul and strength.” There is a promise, too, more comforting and precious—the one I have quoted. “The Lord thy God will *CIRCUMCISE* thine heart to love ...” Why is that command so beautiful? It is not—thou shalt serve worship or obey in the first place, but thou “shalt love.” We can’t conceive of anyone giving such a command unless He first loved the one to whom He gave it to. No man asks for the love of a woman unless he first loves her. So too, is it with God. He could not bid us love Him with all our heart, if He had not first loved us.

Why is consecration and devotion to God so difficult with some of us? Surely it is because we are not in love with Him. Let us imagine the case of a young man who has to go to his place of work some ten or twelve miles distance every evening. He has to go in all sorts of weather, wet or fine, hot or cold—storm or sunshine—oh! how he grumbles and murmurs as he has to toil along in a blizzard or gale of wind! Let him however fall in love—the woman he loves residing at the end of his journey. How easy is his road! How delightful is his daily travel that brings him to the one he loves. There is no complaining now: hardship is now no hardship at all.

So it will be when our heart is circumcised to love the Lord with all our strength. I ask you to notice the word circumcised. St. Paul in applying it to our sanctification (Colossians 2:11) uses another word (*ἀπεκδοσις*) never found anywhere outside the New Testament, a very strong word—a “putting away from and out of” us the whole “body of the flesh”—the *whole* body as opposed to the *part* taken away in physical circumcision. Yes, it is a blessed taking away from and out of us of all that deflects our love and mars our whole-hearted devotion to the Lord, we love and gladly would follow.

## 5. The Imagination

“Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” (Genesis 6:5)

The subject of the imagination in the scriptures is very wide and deeply interesting. The prophet Jeremiah speaks much of “walking after the imagination of our hearts,” and in every case he uses it in contrast to the “law,” the “voice,” and the “word” of God. The imagination is followed and trusted and obeyed rather than God’s word, etc. There are three distinct words in the Old Testament all translated “Imagination.” The first means “Formation,” the second “Device,” and the third means “*Stubbornness*.” It is the last that Jeremiah uniformly employs.

We may say that imagination, the faculty that is always forming and giving shape to things that do not exist, is the stronghold of unbelief. We imagine that God is hard and austere; that His way is difficult; His will unbearable: we imagine trouble that never comes, difficulties that never appear: this is all the work of unbelief; unbelief says “it can’t be done”: “too good to be true”; unbelief whispers that sin is too strong, the giants are too great, the circumstances are too difficult, the price is too costly; unbelief paints upon the imagination fearful specters of failure and disappointment and all sorts of trouble.

Oh! that diseased imagination, permeated and saturated with the poison of unbelief! Can it be healed and made pure? Can it be filled with praising,

believing, loving, rejoicing thoughts of God? Hear what the Psalmist said as he saw the people lovingly giving of their all to God—"O Lord God ... keep this for ever in the IMAGINATION of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and *prepare* their heart unto thee." (1 Chronicles 29:18) Yes, the heart will never be established or fixed till the imagination is cleansed and that, too, stayed upon God, as the prophet Isaiah declares, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind (*imagination* in the original) is stayed upon thee."

Oh! beware of "forming" a God of your own—one made after your own likeness, the outcome of your diseased imagination, saturated as it is with the poison of unbelief. Yes, God can sanctify even our imaginations and cast out all unbelief, so that we shall walk not according to the imagination of our own evil hearts but according to His "law," His "voice," and His "word." Amen! Yes!! Amen!

## 6. The Mind

"Renewed in the spirit of your mind." (Ephesians 4:23)

In speaking of the mind I shall only refer to it in the sense of the thoughts of the heart. Some people seem to think that God cannot deal with our thoughts, and yet "as a man thinketh in his heart so is he." "Sow a thought, you reap an act: sow an act and you reap a habit: sow a habit, you reap a character: sow a character and you reap a destiny." Truly the thinkings of our heart are the most important of all.

I am well aware that desire, imagination, and will are all elemental in the construction of our thoughts, but for the sake of plain people, I think we may consider the "cleansing of the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit" as a separate theme.

There are "thoughts of evil" passing casually through our minds: they come in a moment and are gone as quickly—leaving no stain, no sense of guilt, no sting or aftermath of pain. Of these I am not speaking. But there are also "evil thoughts," arising from the heart that mar and scar: blister and burn; that whirl us along in captivity and hold us there. These are they which fix and make our character.

Is there no balm in Gilead for these wounds? Is there no remedy? No deliverance? No inward cleansing of the source, from whence they spring? Must censorious, bitter, complaining thoughts, not to mention others more polluted, always arise? Verily nay—the blood of Jesus Christ does avail not only to pardon but cleanse and remove the evil—making us pure at the source and fountainhead of our being, or as the Scripture declares, "renewed in the *spirit* of our mind"; surely this touches the cause and source of all the trouble, not the mind, but its innermost spirit. ... He can "bring into captivity every *thought* to the obedience of Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:5)

## 7. The Memory

"I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance." (2 Peter 3:1)

Perhaps there is no part of our nature that reveals the evil effects of the fall of man more than our diseased memory. Why is it that we find it so easy to remember the evil and forget the good? For this there must be some reason.

God's complaint through the prophet Jeremiah was ever, "They have forgotten Me days without number." Moses in his closing address to the Israelites repeated again and again, "Remember, remember," and "Lest thou forget; lest thou forget," was his constant warning. Remember the bondservice in Egypt (Deuteronomy 24:22) Remember the sin in the wilderness (9:7). Remember the judgment on Pharaoh (7:18). Remember that God is the giver (8:18). Remember the day of Exodus (16:3). Remember God's judgment of Miriam (24:9). Remember the hindering Amalek (25:17). Remember the Sabbath (5:15). St. Peter repeated it also more than once; that he wrote to put them in remembrance, though they knew it already and were established in the truth. Oh! how treacherous and fickle and foolish is the memory even of the saint.

There are only three things that can change and heal and keep it fresh. (1) The Word of God. "These things have I told you that ... ye may remember" (John 16:4); (2) The Spirit. "The Holy Ghost ... shall ... bring all things to your remembrance" (John 14:26); (3) The blood of Jesus. "This do in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19). How can we remember unless we read and meditate on His word? How can we remember unless His blessed Spirit be the "Divine Remembrancer"?

Come thou everlasting Spirit,  
Bring to every thankful mind,  
All the Saviour's dying merit,  
All His suffering for mankind.  
Come thou Witness of His dying,  
Come Remembrancer divine,  
Let us feel Thy power applying  
Christ to every soul and mine.

How shall He keep us in remembrance unless the blood has first been applied to cleanse and heal? The water of the Word, the Spirit and the Blood, these three bear witness and keep the memory pure and fresh and true.

Such, dear friends, is the sevenfold work of sanctification. Our *Conscience* purified from dead works and renewed. Our *Will* transfigured; "I" crucified with Christ. Our *affections* circumcised, our *desires* nailed to the Cross, our *Mind* renewed in its spirit; our *imagination* stayed or fixed on God and our *memory* healed.

And now, before we close, I want to look a little deeper to find out the cause of all the trouble. Whence comes the perversion, distortion, defilement and disease of these faculties of the soul?

The story of the fall directs our minds to Satan, the great archenemy of man. Here is the primary cause—but is there no secondary one with which we can deal? There is. As we read our Bible daily we cannot have failed to notice something which appears everywhere in its pages again and again—as the reason of our disasters. That something has many names, or designations. Here are some of them—though there are many more—"The old man" (Romans 6:6). "The old leaven" (1 Corinthians 5:8). "The carnal mind" (Romans 8:7). "Indwelling sin" (Romans 8:20). "The evil heart of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:12). "The body of sin" (Romans 6:6). Had I time I could take each one of these and show you that these designations so carefully chosen of the Holy Ghost, give us different aspects of our evil nature, inherited from our first parents. The cause, however, is but one—depravity of nature (innate sinwardness), imparted by Satan to the human race. Here I have only time to speak of three:

1. THE CARNAL MIND. The special mark of this designation is idolatry, or perhaps we may say—hostility and enmity towards God—that aspect of depravity that says "No" to God's command, something within us that says "I won't obey" when He orders. As Christians, of course, we would never utter the words with our lips; but often in our hearts these sentiments are there. Yes, I will go nine-tenths of the way, but here on one point I will not obey God. Alas! we have all felt its power, this rebellious spirit—this carnal mind which is God's enemy. Thank God He can deal with His own enemies. He has "gifts for the rebellious also"; He can take away even this spirit of idolatry, for such it is. It is not our business to destroy this tenacious foe—we have but to acknowledge and humbly confess the awful fact of its presence before Him; and He will cast it out.

NOTE. —It is important to observe that it is "the MIND of the Flesh" and not "the FLESH" itself. The flesh *in itself* is not sinful; we are not told to cleanse ourselves from the flesh itself but from "all filthiness of the flesh." It is "the *mind* of the flesh" that is "enmity against God." Thayer, the great lexicographer, describes it this way: "The flesh in its ethical sense denotes mere human nature, the earthly nature of man apart from divine influence." Now our "human nature"—"our reason and all other faculties included"—is God-made and God-given, and cannot, therefore, in itself be sinful. The flesh seems to include our natural appetites, our heredity, our temperament and is affected by our environment and upbringing. Thus St. Paul says in Philemon 3:3-6, "I also might have confidence in the flesh.

Circumcised the eighth day ... of the stock of Israel ... of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews," etc., etc., etc. Now none of these things was sinful; they were merely part of the natural man and his upbringing, and yet St. Paul designates them as "the flesh." They may become the avenues of temptation, but are only sinful when they are poisoned and dominated by indwelling sin.

2. **THE SIN THAT DWELLETH IN ME.** The special mark of this designation is impotence. "the evil which I would not, that I do." (Romans 7:19) Here it is not "I won't" but "I can't." I can't keep sweet; I can't control my temper, my passions, my disordered desires—I can't love and suffer and obey. I can't forgive. I can't face this humiliating situation. I can't cast out this critical censorious spirit, or stop the murmuring, complaining thoughts of my heart. I have tried a thousand times but *can't*. Yes, the sin that dwelleth within, this natural depravity is the paralysing thing that makes us cry every time "the evil that I would not, that I do, and the good I would, that I do not."

3. **THE EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF.** But there is something far worse than "I can't" or the "I won't." Its reigning power can be defined "I don't believe it can be any different." Here is the root of the whole trouble as I have already pointed out. All other sin can be detected by a thorough introspection; but until the Holy Ghost reveals it to us, we can never feel unbelief to be sin—"the sin of the world"—the one most awful and damning sin.

It causes terrible pain; to have no confidence in husband or wife or parent is the most cruel thing on earth.

It ties the hands of those who want to help us. If we don't believe that our would-be benefactor has true, disinterested motives, he may try to help us as much as he will, but he can't—not he won't, but he can't. We won't let him.

Let us apply all this to our relationship with God. Can we not begin to see that worse than any evil under the sun is an "evil heart of unbelief" towards a God of love—I want you, however, to notice that this unbelief is not necessarily in our wills (if we are true Christians); it lies lower than the sphere of the will. It is the poison that spoils our whole nature, our mind, memory and imagination and can only be dislodged and cleansed by the mighty power of God.

Here, then, is the cause of all the disorder and distortion in our God-given faculties—this trinity of evil—disobedience, impotence and unbelief—three names or designations of that inward bias implanted by the devil—that carnal and depraved nature inherited from our first parents.

Can God's sanctifying grace radically deal with so grave a problem and so

### 3. SANCTIFICATION: ITS WAY

*"And the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5:23.)*

WE will now consider together the way that God takes to purify the heart. We have covered the necessity and the nature of this great experience. May His Spirit direct our hearts into another of its blessed secrets.

I remember hearing our brother, Mr. George Grubb, once say that God answers man's query of "how" with a gift. And so most assuredly He does. "How can a man be born again?" said Nicodemus. "How can you get living water seeing the well is deep?" "How can we eat Thy flesh and drink Thy blood?" "How wilt Thou manifest Thyself to us and not unto the world?" "How are the dead raised up?" To each and all of these enquiries the Lord replies—It is the gift of God. "He so loved that He gave." "I will give you Living Water." "I will give my flesh and blood for the life of the world." "I will give you another comforter." "Thou fool, God giveth it a body."

And so it is with the experience that we are considering. It is a gift; and a gift is a gift. Oh, let us get hold of this blessed fact. Repentance, faith and consecration are all man's part; but sanctification is a gift—something that

mighty a force? Can He make us "free" and "clean" and "whole"? Can He sanctify every part of our nature? In reply to this question may I turn you to that wonderful Old Testament story as told us in 1 Kings 20.

It is hardly necessary to point out that King Benhadad mentioned there was a hereditary foe of God's people—surely a striking type of our inherited evil—a veritable Barabbas, merciless and unrelenting, demanding and seizing all in his power, as the opening verses of that chapter describe. You can no more satisfy or appease the carnal mind than quench Vesuvius.

You will notice as you read the story, the conflict and the victories, two of them: but God's intention was "more than victory." He has made us "more than conquerors" through Christ. After his second defeat, Benhadad escaped and fled to Aphek, where, we read in the marginal versions, he "hid himself in a chamber within a chamber." What a picture of the elusive power of indwelling sin! Feeling a little secure he comes forth to plead for his life. Oh! how humble *and* consecrated he appears! "All the cities I took," says he, "shall be given back to you; and you can even make streets in my capital, Damascus." Yes, the old man can be both "humble" and "consecrated," if only his life is spared. We know the rest of the story. Ahab spares him—makes a covenant with him, and sends him home. He does not, however, hesitate to murder one of his loyal subjects, Naboth, as is told in the next chapter, though sparing his deadliest foe. In the following chapter we read of Benhadad once more in the saddle and at war, giving instructions to his guards "to fight with none except the king of Israel"—the very man who had spared his life! That is true of the carnal mind every time. It can never change its enmity. It is no more to be altered or changed than Benhadad. Later on we read of Elisha healing the Syrian commander of leprosy; and sending home clothed, and fed, the army which came to take him prisoner; but Benhadad still remained the same old, ungrateful, unrelenting enemy to God and His people. So it is with the carnal mind. Oh! in what solemn fashion does the Spirit of God give us warning. A prophet of the Lord—goes to the king covered with his own blood—for no mere word of warning, however solemn, would suffice; but his wounds shall speak, his blood and suffering shall bring conviction. "The man appointed of God to utter destruction," says the prophet, "has escaped. Therefore thy life shall go for his life." And so, indeed, it came to pass. Shall we not see in this type the Christ of Calvary?

God has appointed to utter destruction "the man of sin" within our hearts. Shall fear or unbelief spare him? Nay, let us cry with one accord, "Crucify him!" "Crucify him!" "Away with him!" Let none of Ahab's spirit lurk within our breasts. Only believe: let us consent to the curse and we shall see Jesus lifted up as the serpent and made a curse for us. Then let us bow in faith and worship, praising Him till we find in blessed experience that all the evil is cast out; our hearts purified, and that everything within does bless His Holy Name. Amen.

God does in and for us. Every time He says it—"God giveth." May He pour some of this blessed balm into some tired, defeated hearts.

How, then, are we made pure within? How can the imagination, the mind, the memory, the desires, affections, conscience and will, be made perfectly whole, so that "all that is within shall bless His Holy Name"? This is what we are to consider.

#### 1. **God Himself does it by Love**

*"The God of Peace Himself sanctify you wholly." ... "Faithful is He that calleth." (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, R.V.)*

This is our first declaration. It is God that does the work. The God of peace: not, be it incidentally noted, the God of power or love, but of rest. The God who giveth rest, Himself sanctifies us. It is nothing that we do or struggle into. It is not a mental position which we adopt and then hold on to: it is a real thing, a practical emancipation from inward evil which God gives to the soul.

Will you notice with me the three words in verse 24? "Faithful."—"Calleth."—"Do." God's *faithfulness*, God's *love* and

God's *power* are all taxed to the utmost in accomplishing this great work. Here for the moment I want to emphasize the second of these words, "Calleth," the indication of His love. "God commandeth men everywhere to repent," but here He *calleth*. When John Wesley was asked when one should preach the *doctrine* of entire sanctification, he replied, "Scarce at all to those who are not pressing forward: To those who are, always by way of promise; always drawing, rather than driving."

Yes, He calls us, woos us, allures us, invites us to enter the land of rest from innate sin. I am always suspicious of the modern method of trying to work people up to a state of consecration. The Lord Jesus in dealing with men and women always approached them in such a way, that of their own accord they confessed their sin and need. His treatment of the woman of Samaria is a beautiful instance of this gracious method. He gave her an opportunity to run away from Him. It was so, too, as He dealt with the woman taken in adultery. (John 8) How easy it would have been for her to slink away when all eyes were directed to the runaway Pharisees, but faith in His tenderness and grace held her fast, till His pardoning, sanctifying grace had done its work.

He draws you now. He calls you, poor, defeated, discouraged soul. He tells you that it is He Himself who does the work, the very God of Peace Himself.

One of the most wonderful themes in the Word of God is His message through the prophet Jeremiah. Turn, will you, to the opening chapter of that prophecy. Is it conceivable, he says, that a man who has put away his wife for unfaithfulness and sin, will ever take her back again? Why, the very land would be polluted (3:1). But yet He cries, "I will receive you if only you will return. Only acknowledge your iniquity." That is the sole condition. His plaint was, "They have forgotten Me days without number." The reason why we can't get deliverance and victory is that we will not return with all our hearts, *just as we are*—sin and all—to Him. Like the prodigal of old, with our rags upon us He bids us come, and then He himself will sanctify us wholly. This is the first secret of inheriting the blessing. How hard it is to believe this wonderful thing! So poisoned have been our hearts that we find it almost impossible to believe that God blesses so.

May all the poison of distrust, suspicion and unbelief be extracted from us, and heavenly, holy faith infused within our wounded, weakened souls.

## 2. *By Chastening*

*"He (chastened us) for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness."* (Hebrews 12:10)

In this twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews we get another secret. If you will read it carefully you will notice the word "endurance" translated in verse 1 as "patience," but in verses 2, 3 and 7 as "endurance."

The Lord Jesus, we are told, endured two things there, the Cross, and the contradiction of sinners. The writer uses this as a warning and a model for us. His argument is this. If Christ, the Sinless One, could endure the gainsaying and rebuke of sinners, how much more should we, the sinful, endure patiently the chastening and rebuke of a loving Heavenly Father.

There can be no sanctifying grace without this. Are we prepared for His convicting, chastening word? Can we take rebuke and reproof through His people—other Christians—without getting offended?

Without conviction for holiness we can get nowhere. Not only is it necessary for our own holiness, but it is a priceless asset in our service. Unless we ourselves have been convicted of sin we can never produce conviction in others. We may preach like angels, but it will only be "tinkling cymbals" and "sounding brass." God must chasten us if we would be partakers of His holiness. The word here is *ἀγίασις*; that in verse 14 is *ἀγίασιμος*. The former speaks of a state, the latter of a process bringing us into that state. (How extraordinarily exact is the Word of God. I cannot imagine how a deep student of scripture can be other than a believer in verbal inspiration. The very words—nouns and verbs and

adjectives—are all used with such precision and exactitude of meaning.) When the Spirit of truth first visits our hearts he reproves and rebukes and makes us miserable. No one ever got miserable over his sins apart from the Holy Ghost. Praise God for all the misery and conviction! Remember it is His chastening hand, for there can be no living faith apart from conviction. It can only operate in one broken up and convicted by the Holy Ghost. Has He been putting the plow through your fallow ground, breaking up the hardness and self-righteousness in your heart? Have you had a vision of your Lovelessness and joylessness? Is the chastening hand of the loving God who has called you. Don't be afraid of it. Don't run away from it. Welcome it; bow down before His presence. He wants you to be a partaker of His holiness. Remember Jesus Christ enduring the rebuke and gainsaying of sinners. He invites you, draws you, allures you, and in tenderness chastens you, that you may be "sanctified in truth."

You will never get the blessing by understanding the doctrine, or by study and by knowing all about its philosophy. You can't get in "head first." Bow, O bow before His chastening, convicting hand. So shall you enter in. Hallelujah!

## 3. *By the Promises*

*"Having, therefore, these promises let us cleanse ourselves from ALL filthiness ... perfecting holiness in the fear of God."* (2 Cor. 7:1)

*"(That by His) exceeding great and precious promises ye might be partakers of the Divine nature."* (2 Peter 1:4)

The Divine nature—what is it? "God is a Spirit." "God is light." "God is love." "God is a consuming fire." That is the fourfold definition of God's nature, as given us in the New Testament. "*God is a Spirit*," His nature is spiritual; when we partake of it, we, too, shall become spiritual; understanding spiritual, eternal and heavenly things. It will take the carnality out of us. "*God is light*," that is to say bringing sweet and clear assurance to our souls. It will take the darkness out of us. "*God is love*," we shall be partakers of this also. It will take the malice from us. "*God is a consuming fire*," it will destroy all the dross of selfishness and innate sinwardness.

And all this is for us through the promises. These are what convey to us the blessing. I have never heard of any soul entering the blessed state of sanctification other than through the promises of God. We need to get alone, and read and re-read, affirm and re-affirm, plead and plead again, the great and precious promises before the Lord.

"Last night," wrote a young man to William Carvosso, "as I was pleading the promises of God for Entire Sanctification, I suddenly found faith spring up in my heart and I was enabled to believe the work was done."

This is the only way to wrest the devil's weapons from him. The written word alone avails. The Lord Jesus in the Wilderness used it thus. The words He quoted from the Book of Deuteronomy were all selected from the story of His people in the Wilderness. He Himself in the desert puts Himself back with His people in that same position, and meets the enemy with words of victory where they had met defeat. Study the context of the words He quoted and compare them with the Temptation of the Lord Jesus, if you wish to get out of the wilderness into the promised land of Canaan rest. God sanctifies through His promises. Through them He draws, encourages, and sets His seal. God lovingly calls, He lovingly chastens and convicts, and now He lovingly offers to us His exceeding great and precious promises. To the call and to the conviction He adds the encouragement of a *promised* blessing. Lay hold, lay hold with all your might, that the thing is promised.

## 4. *By the Blood of Jesus*

*"Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own Blood ..."* (Hebrews 13:12)

We now come to the heart of the whole matter—the meritorious cause of the great transaction. In Romans 5:9, we read that we are "justified by His Blood"; but here we are told of deeper things—"Sanctified by Blood." So many miss the blessing because they never see the Cross of Christ as the

means of their sanctification. That He died for their sins they know well enough, But that He died “to put away sin” is hidden from their eyes. They have seen Him as the Lamb of God who died in their stead on behalf of their transgressions, but they have never beheld Him lifted up as the Serpent—made a curse on their behalf—to take away their innate sinwardness and cleanse all the old serpent virus from their nature.

St. Paul speaks of the Cross; St. John tells of the blood; St. Peter seeks to show us the stripes and sufferings of the Saviour—to make us “free” and “clean” and “whole.” The mystery we may never understand, but faith believes and appropriates all that His death has secured for our sanctification.

“Never have I felt my need of the blood of Jesus,” said that great man John Smith, of the early Methodists, “more than I do to-day, and *never have I made such use of it.*”

What are we really making of it at this very hour? Ten years ago, perhaps, we were saved through its merits, but today at this moment, what is it to us in its practical working? In St. John 6 we read of four blessings secured for those that eat His flesh and drink His blood. (1) The gift of eternal life. Here is feeding on Him as the Passover Lamb. (2) An indwelling Christ. Here is a partaking of His sacrifice as the Peace Offering. (3) The power to serve. Here is feeding upon the Sin Offering on others’ behalf. (4) A future and everlasting salvation—eating of Christ as the Trespass Offering. Oh! let us learn this lesson well. We can never enter to abide with Him except on one ground, the sacrifice of the Slain Lamb. No tears or prayers, no repentance or vows of consecration, no works of obedience will ever avail to ensure our abiding. We can only be made able to enter to abide in response to faith in the Blood of Jesus.

We are sanctified and made clean by *His* blood, not by our tears. We are crucified with Him through *His* cross, and not by our own sufferings and mortification. Our poor diseased nature is made whole by *His* stripes, not by any efforts or vows of consecration of our own.

Let us look again upon His Cross—where He, the spotless One, was “made sin.” If all the imaginations of all men were rolled into one, could they ever fathom the mystery or understand what it meant for the spotless Son of God, who had never experienced a sinful thought, an angry temper, a jealous feeling, a lustful desire—who no more knew from experience what sinfulness was, than you or I know what the angelic state may be; could they ever imagine, I say, what it meant for Him to have the unfathomable ocean of the world’s sin, polluted with all the unthinkable, unprintable filthiness of hell, surge over His spotless soul? No, we cannot understand: but we can believe that He is able to sanctify us with His blood. When this lays hold of us and we do believe and venture on the atoning, sanctifying blood of Christ, what confidence is ours! Faith rests no more upon feeling, no more upon reasoning, no more upon mere truths, or even the promises of God alone; it finds a rock beneath its feet, the great historic fact of His sacrificial atoning death—and can cry—

The Cleansing Stream I see, I see,  
I plunge, and oh, it cleanseth me.  
Oh, praise the Lord, it cleanseth me,  
It cleanseth me, yes, cleanseth me.

When you know and feel that you are made holy by His blood there will be an end of pride.

The theory that the Holy Spirit enters our hearts and keeps us from yielding to sin is wholly inadequate. Before this takes place there has to be a definite, instantaneous and radical adjustment of our soul; a purifying of the secret springs of our being from that tendency of evil inherited from Adam. Then can He keep us from falling moment by moment and from yielding to the temptations of the tempter: though, thank God, they are from without instead of within. This sin-destroying, sanctifying experience is effected by His death—the blood-shedding of the Son of God upon the Cross, and apprehended by the living faith of a humbled soul, and its blessed effects maintained moment by moment as we walk lowly in the light.

## 5. *By the Spirit*

“*Through sanctification of the Spirit.*” (1 Peter 1:2)

All that we have said is true. God the Father, by His calling, chastening, promising love does the work. The Lord Jesus, by His death and blood-shedding procured, provided and forever secured the “gift divine”; and yet, without the agency of the Holy Ghost—may we say it in all reverence—all this would have been in vain.

“It is expedient,” said the Saviour, “that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.” (John 16:7)

Blessed, indeed, for us that it should be so; if the Saviour had remained on earth, how few of us would have seen Him; every train and ship and caravan would have been crowded with pilgrims the world over to see Jesus. How few, comparatively, of the poor would ever have got a glimpse of His face. But the Comforter has come that all may see the Lord. It is He that takes the things of Christ and shows them to us.

Do you say you cannot understand, you cannot grasp the meaning? How can the blood of Jesus, shed two millenniums ago, cleanse my heart? How can my selfish nature be crucified with a Christ nailed to the Cross so long since? How can my diseased memory, mind and will be made whole by the lacerated body of the Christ of Calvary? To your “how,” dear soul, the Lord replies, “I will send the Comforter and He shall teach you all these things.” It is He who applies the blood. Listen to these exquisite lines of Charles Wesley, written many years ago:—

Come thou everlasting Spirit,  
Bring to every thankful mind  
All the Saviour’s dying merit,  
All His sufferings for mankind.  
True recorder of His passion,  
Now the living faith impart,  
Now reveal His great salvation  
Unto every faithful heart.  
Come thou witness of His dying,  
Come Remembrancer divine,  
Let us feel Thy power applying  
Christ to every soul and mine.

What exquisite designation of His office. “True Recorder of His Passion,” “Witness of His dying,” “Remembrancer Divine.”

Yes, we are all dependent on Him. What need there is to wait upon Him—alone in our rooms! Beware of the greatest of all dangers, seeking to enter through the operation of our own understandings or the struggles of our own wills—or by both; some try one way, some the other and some both. They are all equally futile. Only the Holy Ghost can show us the way and only the Holy Spirit can bring us in. If the Lord Jesus had to offer Himself through the eternal Spirit, how much more are we dependent upon His constraining, compelling, enlightening, enabling power. As we wait then upon God pleading the promises, knowing our own impotence, idolatry and infidelity, let us remember He is there to help us believe, and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

## 6. *By the Word*

“*As soon as He had SPOKEN, immediately the leprosy departed from him.*” (Mark 1:42)

“*Now ye are clean through the WORD which I have spoken.*” (John 15:3)

Our meditation is drawing to a close—but there is one very important consideration in the subject before us.

We have seen that God gives us and uses His promises to work the sanctification of our hearts. We can only really believe God, the finished work of Christ and the operating presence of the Holy Spirit through the written word. That is always the intermediary blessing. By hiding a definite promise of God in our hearts, appropriating it, using it against the attacks of the devil, and *through it* believing God, by this means and this

alone are we able to reach our desired end, the complete sanctification of our soul. And yet, after we have done this, stepped out on the promise, burned our bridges behind us, God has still a further work to do through His word.

By it He seals His own work. The Scriptures provide us with repeated instances of His working thus.

Take the cleansing of Isaiah the prophet. There we see that after the live coal had touched his lips and he had felt the burning cleansing flame, the seraphim spake again, “Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.” (Isaiah 6:7) In the story of the afflicted woman described in Mark 5 we read that “she *felt* in her body that she was healed of that plague.” The Lord stayed her steps, and lest in the coming days by trusting to mere experience she should cast away her confidence He give her a word of sealing to her soul. “Thy faith,” He says, “hath made thee whole,” not thy prayer, decision, consecration, earnestness or zeal, but by simply believing thou art restored. Oh! how she must have hid that word in her heart! Just one other example—the story from which I have selected my text—told us in Mark 1:40-41.

The poor leper had sought the Lord in despair and yet in faith “self-desperate,” he had believed. The Saviour was moved with compassion, stretched forth His hand and touched him. Neither the touch nor the compassion effected the cure—but as soon as He had *spoken* the work was done.

Believe His promise just as you are! You need no special one for yourself. They are all “Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus.” Come boldly; wait humbly; believe simply; take freely: but when you have and are resting in the faithfulness of Him who has called, chastened, promised and led you by

## 4. SANCTIFICATION: ITS TIME

“To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” (Hebrews 3:7-8)

WE come to the last and perhaps the most important of our studies. We have seen the *necessity*, the *nature* and the *way* of God’s sanctifying grace, and we seek to know *when* it can be ours. “Wilt thou be made clean? When shall it be?” When can we enter the land of rest from innate sinwardness (depravity), and abide in Him?

To this question there is but one answer—NOW. For whether we enter it next week, next month, or next year, by the time we get there it will be NOW. Then why not today, at this hour?

We make this reply simply because the sole condition on our part that cannot be left incomplete is Faith. If then it is by faith, and not by consecration and faith, much less by consecration alone, it must be *now*.

In this connection, I want to quote from John Wesley, that great servant of God, and also from John Fletcher, the vicar of Madeley, whom John Wesley believed to be the saintliest man since the days of the Apostle John.

“Look for it,” said Mr. Wesley, “every day, every hour, every moment; why not this hour, this moment? Certainly you may look for it now, if you believe it is by faith; and by this token you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or works. If by works you want something to be done first, before you will believe; you think I must obey first, or do thus and thus: then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith, you will accept it as you are, if as you are, accept it now. Accept it by faith, accept as you are, accept it now.”

The words of John Fletcher of Madeley are even more emphatic.

“Fight the good fight of faith, break through all temptations, dejections, wandering worldly thoughts, all unprofitable companions and the backwardness of an unbelieving heart, and a carnal mind. Struggle till you touch Jesus and feel healing, comforting virtue proceeding from Him, and when you know clearly the way to Him, repeat the touch until you find He lives in you by the powerful operation of His Holy Spirit. You must also remember that it is your privilege to go to Him by such a faith now and

the Holy Ghost to the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, then wait still upon Him in quietness and expectancy *until* He seals what He has done with a word from His lips. And then wait, believing that He *has* done it.

Just five little sentences that have been made a blessing to many, and may help you also—

What I give God takes.  
What He takes He cleanses.  
What He cleanses He fills.  
What He fills He seals.  
What He seals He uses.

May your faith—not your understanding—lead you up these easy steps; slowly, surely may you go. Test each one as you take it. They will bear all your weight; lean hard; walk firmly; say “Excelsior” (superlative Saviour) as you rise; keep praising! Only believe! So shall the work be done.

The God of peace Himself, He calls you to-day, He gives you promises to-day, His loving hand has been chastening you, giving you a bad time to-day; well look up and thank Him. When you do, you will find the sun coming out, and with the tears and the sunshine you will get the rainbow.

The way God blesses you is in just the simple steps I have tried to indicate. May every one of us enter into the land of promise, the land that flows with milk and honey, the land that is the gift of God, the land of plenty, and a land that you enter into without effort of your own; it is all yours, that wonderful land of rest in Christ Jesus.

every succeeding moment, and that you are to bring nothing to Him but a tired, distracted, tossed, hardened heart, just as you have now.”

“Here lies the grand mistake of many miserable but precious souls; they are afraid to believe lest it should be presumption, because they have not yet comfort, peace, joy, love, etc., not considering that this is to expect the fruit before the tree is planted. Beware, then, of expecting any grace previous to believing.”

When, however, we say that faith is the sole condition for receiving this glorious experience, we need to add that we do not mean by faith, a cheap and easy beliefism.

Faith is a mighty living force worked in us by the Holy Spirit, whereby we are enabled to lay hold upon Christ as our sanctification and full redemption.

It will help us, therefore, in this, our closing Bible reading, to see the conditions under which a living, effective faith can operate, the groundwork of our believing unto a full salvation.

### 1. Earnest Desire

“Blessed are they that HUNGER AND THIRST after righteousness.” (Matthew 5:6)

“What things soever ye DESIRE when ye pray believe that ye receive.” (Mark 6:24)

Surely I am not mistaken if I say that in hearts of many a great desire has been awakened for an uttermost and complete salvation. We have been getting a vision of fullness of life and liberty and joy in Christ, that has caused us to seek with all our hearts. The Lord Jesus, in speaking of the gift of the Holy Spirit in Luke 11:13, precedes that promise with a parable of a little hungry boy—not asking for aeroplanes or bicycles or cricket bats—but for bread and butter—the very necessities of life. Our children coming home late for dinner, very hungry and tired, don’t fold their arms and say, “If it is your will, mother, to give us our dinner we should like to have it, but if not, then it’s all right.” No, oh dear no! They ask and make a noise till they get it. Are we like that spiritually? Are we hungry and

thirsty? Is our soul fainting within us for a life of love and joy and peace and power? Do we ask and seek and desire and long for a full and joyous exuberant salvation in Christ—free from a censorious, critical, hard and unforgiving spirit; delivered from discontent and a murmuring, complaining disposition—freedom from *all* sinwardness and not merely our uncomfortable and unpleasant iniquities—from all self-pleasing and waywardness of soul? Then faith can begin to operate here and now if such is our deep desire.

## 2. Conviction

*“Present your bodies ... which is your reasonable service...”* (Romans 12:1-2)

Here, I believe, is the second condition of an effective faith—recognition of the reasonableness of God’s claims. I am not speaking here of consecration itself, but of a recognition of its reasonableness. Do we believe that what God asks of us—a whole-hearted devotion to Himself, a true and loyal love to Him—is right, reasonable, and the best thing for us? To do His will is the safest, sweetest and surest thing on earth. Have you ever noticed those wonderful words of the Lord Jesus, “Whosoever shall do the will of My Father, the same is My brother and sister and mother”? What! the mother of the Son of God? Well, He has said it! We should never have dared to utter such things; but they came from His lips. I leave these wonderful utterances for your own further meditation. I have not time to follow them out. He that does God’s will, the same is Christ’s brother. She that lives in the perfect will of our Father in heaven is the very mother or sister of the Saviour of the world. So to do the will of God must indeed be good and perfect and well-pleasing.

Let this be our objective. Don’t, however, get confused over it. Consecration of all that He shows us is different than consecration of our all (that only God can judge) to God -which is *not* one of the conditions for entering His Rest. If it were it would be by “works”; for consecration is another name for “good works.” Consecration is rather the result of the blessing, than a cause or condition of receiving it. Because we are not capable to yield all in happy, loving obedience to our Father in heaven, we need the blessing. It is the entire sanctification of the heart that makes it possible for us to render a perfect consecration of all our being’s ransomed powers to the Lord. So, we merely consecrate the absolute all within our grasp, and leave any unknown omissions to Him. (Romans 12 Comes after chapters 6-8) But we must have this as an objective. We must see that if the blessing we get, does not lead to this, we have started to follow imagination rather than Him.

God must convict us of the sin and unreasonableness of living for ourselves in any part of our life.

Hunger and thirst—the deep desires of the soul—are followed or accompanied by a painful conviction that there is much within us, that secretly holds back and does not bless His Holy Name and give a joyous “Yes” to all His reasonable demands for a wholly consecrated life. Let us look the matter in the face, and shut our ears to all the whisperings of unbelief, and dare to believe in the reasonableness of God’s holy claims.

## 3. Enlightenment

*“Send out Thy light and Thy truth; let them lead me...”* (Psalm 43:3)

I am perfectly well aware that self-desperate souls do sometimes enter into the most blessed experience of God’s grace without much definite enlightenment of their spiritual understanding. God is so gracious to our poor, ignorant and stupid minds.

And yet it makes the way much easier, if we are enlightened. Faith can operate with greater certainty. So many earnest ones are floundering about because they are not only ignorant of the devil’s devices, and the way of their own deceived heart and nature, but also of God’s way of deliverance.

There are souls in different stages of development, needing different presentations of truth, but I have a peculiar sympathy with those earnest and wholly consecrated souls, who though devoted to God, are yet experiencing constant defeat and discouragement in their hearts and lives.

It is to them I wish to speak at this point. Everywhere I go I meet with such.

I believe a little enlightenment will greatly forward the effective operation of faith.

Conversion and the new birth deal largely with the conscience and the will of the unregenerate. The “ego” or “I” is crucified with Christ—the will is changed and made one with His.

Sanctification on the other hand, deals, with that which is “no I, but sin that dwelleth in me”—the poison still lurking in our desires, affections, memory, mind and imagination, frequently bringing our regenerate and transfigured will again into bondage. “Not I, but sin,” no more I, than the watch I carry so close to my body, is part of that body; no more I, than the bacilli in the poor leper’s blood is part of him. No, just as they were an abnormal intrusion into his system—so it is with “the sin that dwelleth within.” The “I won’t,” the “I can’t,” the “I don’t believe,” that awful trinity of evil are like leprous bacilli, poisoning our whole nature. If I am a truly surrendered soul and a real follower of Christ, the trouble is not in my will. Hence consecration and decisions of my will to correct and purify are of no avail. We need a power from without—something outside ourselves. That power is Jesus’ blood; and faith, and faith alone, is the faculty that can apprehend, appropriate and apply it to our struggling, defeated souls.

Ah yes, if the trouble is in ourselves how can we be free? But thank God His word reveals to us that it is not I, but something detached from myself, that has fastened itself upon me. It was grafted in with hands other than mine. The devil put it there; and the Son of God came down “to destroy the works of the devil.” Oh! let us cease from all struggling and attempting by our will power. Let us only believe that the blood of Jesus Christ does cleanse us from all sin, if only we will walk in the light, humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God.

Does someone object and say if it is “not I” where does the responsibility come in? God does not hold us responsible for having our innate sinwardness; we did not choose it to be there: but He does hold us responsible for retaining it, when He has provided a perfect way for its death and burial. Only pride and sloth and unbelief hinder that death sentence being carried out. May God make us in earnest to seek and believe for a perfect deliverance; for this, and this only, “is the condemnation (viz) that we *believe* not....”

## 4. Repentance

*“Bring forth fruits meet for repentance.”* (Matt. 3:8)

I am equally well aware that what I have been saying is to *some*, almost unintelligible. The truth is hidden from their eyes. Before God can deal with the evil within, or they by faith claim and trust Him for the purifying operation of the blood of Jesus, there has to be a practical repentance. There is, in short, real trouble in an unsundered will. God cannot deal with the inward evil till we have dealt with the outward in true repentance.

It may seem hardly necessary to dwell upon this aspect of things, and yet I am persuaded that not a few who are seeking an inward cleansing and an entry into Rest, are unable to exercise the faith that receives, because of unrepented sin. Yes, a plain simple practical repentance is what God requires. That letter has to be written: that cheque despatched: the one who has wronged you, forgiven—the hidden sin confessed to the party concerned. This is how the Spirit is convicting and directing some. You, maybe, are trying to understand the theory of sanctification and the doctrine of the higher life. The Lord just now wants you to attend to the practical things of the lower one. You will never get enlightened about innate sinwardness and its destruction through the Cross of Christ until *by His grace* you have obeyed His voice. I say *by His grace* because if you will only seek Him, He has gifts for the rebellious also. He will give you grace and power to repent and be reconciled to your brother, if only you will seek His face.

But after we have obeyed, let us be aware lest we think we have got the blessing of which we speak. There is always a sense of rest following

repentance and obedience; but it is a great danger to suppose that this is all. Nay! Rather let us go on to perfection which the God of all grace has promised to work in us, after that we have suffered a little while from the testing and trial of our faith.

As I look back on my own life, how vividly do those times of repentance stand out in my mind. I would not be writing this, if God had not gifts for the rebellious also, and given me grace to straighten out and make amends for evil done in my life.

## 5. Humility

*“Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God....”* (1 Peter 5:6)

If I had to state in the simplest form the conditions for receiving heart cleansing from the hand of the risen exalted Christ I should say (1) humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God and (2) only believe—humility and faith.

This, I know, contradicts a good deal of modern teaching which makes consecration or surrender the main element in securing the promised gift.

God’s wonderful promises were not given to earnest, devoted and consecrated souls, but to poor, miserable backsliders. “If you knew the gift of God,” said the Lord Jesus to the Samaritan woman, but certainly not, “if you knew how wicked you are, or what a hell is awaiting you, or how mighty a thing sin is”—no, nor “if you had consecrated yourself to me, I would have given the gift.” No! no such thing. He never said to the poor leper seeking cleansing, “if you give yourself to me, body and soul and spirit, I will cleanse you of your leprosy.”

He never said to his timid, frightened disciples behind closed doors after His resurrection, “if you will make a full and complete surrender I will give you the Holy Ghost.” No! indeed—for it is all of grace—all a free gift—all of Him. The consecration follows out of a grateful heart for what He has done and given.

As I have moved about the country I have met many, very many, who have long been struggling to inherit the blessing through absolute surrender and whole-hearted consecration. In utter despair and weariness of spirit they have come to me confessing that they were nothing bettered but were rather growing worse. What a joy it has been to proclaim the way of faith and show them that, instead of consecration, the Lord is asking of them a humble, lowly confession of sin, and bidding them tell Him of the “I won’t,” the “I can’t,” and the “I don’t believe,” that they find in their heart; how often I have seen it, when with tears and lowliness of spirit they have gone down to the bottom and brought to Christ—none of their goodness or earnest desire—but only the sin, the fear, the unbelief, the unwillingness, rebellion and every evil thing within, confessed it all to Him, and then triumphantly, stood upon the promise, that if they HAVE done their part, He HAS done His; how often, I say, have I seen fullness of assurance and joy well up in the soul and overflow in sweetness and light to all around!

But yet in other cases I have noticed that it has been far harder to come thus to the Lord in humble and broken confession than in consecration. They love to give and offer and present their all to God; but alas! the proud, unbroken spirit will never let them seek for the blessing as a poor leper, a blind beggar—or a helpless paralytic; and so they have gone empty away.

Yes! the “repentance of believers” as John Wesley called it long ago, is a *sine qua non* for the effective operation of a living faith. (for a season before I entered into His Rest, I specialized in radical (loud or tearful) abject repentance. I had been fully consecrated as far as I knew for some time. -Earnest Seeker)

Let no inability to surrender all, let no failure to consecrate, ever keep you from Christ. Come as you are, tell Him all about it, the idolatry, the impotence and the unbelief, and then “only believe.” So shall this triple stronghold of the Jebusite, the JEBUS which Just Exactly Beats Us Saints, be utterly captured and destroyed by Him whose name is called JESUS—the One—the only One—who Just Exactly Saves Us Sinners, yes, and

sanctifies as well.

I have a number of letters in my hand received from saints who have thus entered into rest. I will read only one:—

“I am so happy I hardly know how to thank you. For a week after I asked, I went on believing God had cleansed my heart, though I did not feel any different, but on Monday when I was on my way home I suddenly knew I was cleansed and I began running along the road and singing aloud, and I have been singing ever since. It is so wonderful I cannot praise God enough, yet so simple that I wonder I have never asked Him to do it before. I am amazed at the difference it makes to me. Two things have happened to me in the last two days, which a little time ago would have made me angry; now I don’t want to be angry, I don’t even have to fight the angry feelings; and the worldliness has gone too, there is a dance going on in the room below me, and two weeks ago my feet would have been itching to dance (though I never did); now instead of envying the people, I begin to feel sorry for them.

“But, best of all, is the wonderful joy and peace within. I am sure the Lord is with me as if I felt my hand in His. These last days have been heaven on earth to me; I can never praise Him enough. I feel like the old man who was so amazed at the love of Jesus in dying for him that he said, ‘When I get to heaven I will never let Him hear the end of it.’

“It is wonderful to find the Bible a new book and prayer a great delight (it never was before), and to be able to tell people of all the wonderful things God has done for me!”—not only that the Lord Jesus is wonderful, but the wonderful things He has done; there is salvation as well as a Saviour; and, listen to this sentence—“as be alternately shouting and singing praises, or silent with amazement at the greatness of His love and the fullness of His salvation.”

I would rather get letters like that than cheques for £100!

## 6. Faith

*“Purifying their hearts by faith.”* (Acts 15:9)

*“That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”* (Gal. 3:14)

When shall we be made clean? When will it be? As soon as with deep desire, convicted of our need, and impotence, enlightened as to the cause and seat of the evil, truly repentant, and with genuine abasement, we can “only believe”—there and then the blessing is ours.

The Lord Jesus never said “only believe” to a Pharisee in his self-righteousness and formalism, never to a Sadducee in his rationalism and so-called wisdom. He said it, and says it still, to the needy, penitent seeker at His feet.

“When I stand in unbelief,” said Fletcher of Madeley, “I am like a drop of muddy water dried up in the sun of temptation, but when I *do* believe and close in with Christ I am like that same drop of water on the boundless ocean of Light, Life, Liberty, Power and Love.”

Yes, you say—I know whom to believe, but what and how is my difficulty.

Well, first the “how” of faith. We believe God through His promise and His word; don’t let us try any other way! Rest in the written word. Take hold of some definite explicit statement of the Lord; they abound throughout the precious volume—“Thus saith the Lord.” The Lord hath spoken; don’t grieve the Spirit by putting the statement down to Paul or Peter or John. The apostles were not the authors of these exceeding great and precious promises. They are the very words of God Himself. That is how to believe HIM.

But you ask, on what exactly is my faith to rest in the matter of so great an experience as this?

The hand of faith must have some explicit thing to grasp and lay hold upon. Yes, thank God, it must, and has—The BLOOD of the LAMB—The CROSS of CALVARY—The WOUNDS and STRIPES of JESUS.

“They made their robes white in the Blood of the Lamb.” Then why not

you? The “old man was crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed.” Then why not yours? “Healed by His stripes.” Then what hinders you?

The blood of Jesus is the price paid for the gift of a purified heart. That price He paid is ample, yea, more than enough. Then why not in faith bring it with all boldness and claim the purchase of His blood? No more tears, no consecrations, no vows, no fastings, or earnest endeavour, no struggles or good intentions will bring the Comforter to your soul. He responds to one thing, and one thing only—a bold, unswerving, unflinching faith in the sacrifice of Calvary. Dare to believe that all you have already confessed so passionately *is* nailed to the Cross; or, if you prefer it, that the Blood *does* just now *make* your heart clean; or, if the Spirit has led you thus, that at this very moment the efficacy of His stripes and open wounds *does* make you “sound” as well as “safe.” And like the woman of old, you, too, shall be made perfectly healed from the plague of your heart.

Faith must rest somewhere. When the assaults of the devil and the storms of unbelief sweep over your soul, there is but one foundation that will stand the strain. Faith even in God’s truth, mere generalities about His love and promise will avail us not; seeking to believe in His abiding presence, because we are consecrated or engaged in earnest endeavour; mere feelings or philosophising; none of these things will enable us to withstand the onslaughts of the devil.

I am crucified with Christ, therefore I abide in Him: my union with Him rests upon His death. He has cleansed me by His blood, therefore I abide within Him. Here is faith’s solid mighty resting place.

Will you not look up in the face of God and say, “here I am Lord, I have confessed all my impotence, my idolatry, my infidelity to Thee, I have told Thee I cannot follow Thee; I see all sorts of difficulties cropping up, I see scorn and criticism awaiting me; I am so utterly impotent: I cannot do anything and confess it all to Thee, but Thou has promised to give a pure heart to those that ask, to rebels also, if only they hunger and thirst after Thee. Lord, my only plea is the blood of Jesus.” He may keep you waiting a little time, but He will come, He has never yet denied the humble soul, never. If He has not come to you yet, there is only one of two reasons—

**Amen and Amen.**

**May His Great Grace now wholly accept your needy heart into His...**

either you have not humbled yourself under the mighty hand of God, or you are not believing.

## **7. The Trial of Faith**

“*The trying of your faith worketh patience...*” (James 1:3)

We cannot repeat it too often—the blessing of which we are speaking is by faith and faith alone—that all the glory may be God’s.

And yet before closing I want to speak of one thing more—the testing of faith. May I ask you when you get alone to read over very carefully 1 Peter 5:6-11: “Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God.”

“Casting all your anxiety upon Him.”

“The devil ... whom resist stedfast in the faith.”

These are three simple conditions on our part and then we read, “The God of all grace, AFTER THAT YE HAVE SUFFERED A LITTLE WHILE make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”

Take note of the words printed in capitals. If the little seed freshly sown could speak, it would say beneath the cold dark clods of earth, “Suffering a little while.” It is not otherwise with the seed of faith. (Luke 17:5.) When you have definitely trusted and seem in utter darkness, say “A little while” and “He shall come”—begin to praise by faith; stop praying, for there comes a time when prayer is positive sin, because it is nothing more than the expression of unbelief. Praise then should and must take its place. Praise to God and testimony to men, of what you *believe* that God *has* done in your soul. When the testing of your faith has done its work, the Holy Ghost will make real all that you have trusted Him for.

The Lord says to us once more, “Only believe.” If you will obey Him and do what He bids, you soon will say to all around, “Faith triumphant, faith triumphant, knowing not defeat or fear”—and in your own soul you will know that the very God of Peace Himself does sanctify you wholly and preserve you blameless, spirit, soul and body unto the coming of the Lord Jesus, and you will praise Him throughout eternity that He who has called you, has been faithful and *has* done it for you—even for you.