



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

ASBURY LOWREY

(Methodist)

The accompanying precious testimony, given by Dr. Lowrey, in letter to our beloved friend Mrs. Bishop Hamline, has, with the consent of the writer, been kindly sent to us for publication. -- Eds.

You will be chiefly interested, I am quite certain, to hear how I stand related to the all-comprising subject of personal holiness. It is now just thirty years since the Holy Ghost first revealed himself to my consciousness as a sanctifier. It was in the town of Piqua, my first station. Before that, I understood and accepted the doctrine as a theory and scriptural article of faith. Accordingly I preached holiness as present possibility and obligation. Indeed it became to me, from the beginning of my ministry, the richest vein of truth and the sweetest note in the song of redemption.

From my stand-point all the rays of the heavenly light were seen to focus in the heart, for the production of crystalline purity. My happiest hours were spent in the exposition and enforcement of this privilege and duty. Nay, more, I often felt the most hallowing inspirations, and confessed that during such moments and days I was not conscious of anything in my heart contrary to love. My success too was encouraging; souls were converted, and a few sanctified under my ministry, whether attributable to it as an agency or not.

To seek and profess holiness was no doubt felt to be by my congregations in perfect consonance with my preceptive inculcations (precepts taught), and, I trust, not regarded as incongruous to my life and spirit. And yet, when I looked into my aggregate experiences, I realized a painful consciousness that there was something in my nature unhealed of sin. There were, at least occasionally, some tastes and tendencies, some dispositions, tempers, and volitions which I had to pronounce incompatible with perfect holiness. These affections and force within, though subdued and restrained, would sometimes develop into a corresponding practice, which could not be reconciled with entire salvation, because it was evidently the product of an evil germ (seed) yet left in my moral being, and not the work of eternal adverse influences.

BLESSING RECEIVED

This state of things continued during nine years of my religious life, and five years of my ministry. *But in 1812, I felt that I was fully saved, and made complete in Christ. I can point to the street, the house, the room, and the spot in the room, where the conviction was lodged (I cannot tell how), in my consciousness that Jesus had made me whole. This experience was very precious. I felt no more excitation than before, perhaps not so much; but my emotions were more subtle, profound, and hallowed. It was a trustful satisfaction, that partook of the nature of life, and rest, and security in God. It was a sweet fellowship with Jesus, and an exalted communion of the Holy Ghost.*

HOW LOST

I did not retain this condition of mind many weeks. It seemed to drop suddenly from the grasp of my soul, by the simple loss of assurance – the loss of power to claim the precious largess any longer as mine, at least not in so great fulness, I thought I could trace the relinquishment of my hold to an inadvertent and trifling evasion. But this I have been led to abandon, because if the act of evasion had been imputed as sin, it must have brought condemnation, and that would have vitiated (killed) my justification as well. Of this I had no conviction, but retained a lively sensibility of acceptance and peace. I think now my confidence was relaxed by a negative sin – the sin of robbing Jesus of His meet (portion) of glory – His due of public praise. I made no verbal acknowledgment of the chief saving efficacy which He had applied to my heart.

Having buried my talent, the Lord took it from me. Holiness is glad tidings secretly revealed to the soul. How can such revelations glorify Christ, if they are suppressed? I made a selfish appropriation and concealment of that grace which is especially appointed to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Having been unfaithful to the trust committed to me, it was withdrawn, or transferred (as the one talent was) to other hearts, where it might find more consecrated lips to give it utterance, and diffusive practical power. At least, whatever be the correct theory, I mourn to say it was gone; and what is worse, it was not regained during most of the best years of my manhood and ministry.

A GREAT MISTAKE

I write this sad confession with a heart rent with unavailing regret, and eyes blind with repentant tears. I grieve now and shall never cease to grieve. I will tell my grief to Jesus in heaven, if it be possible that I faltered when this holy challenge was addressed to my soul: “What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God.” “As God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them.” “Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.”

In the presence of such conspicuous separation – such an absolute renunciation – such an awful and holy abjuration (judgment, denial), I hesitated. I saw it would cut off every cord of compromise with the world, and disallow the slightest touch and taint of sin. To take on a sanctity so sublime and Christlike, I was not prepared. I was willing and anxious to have it wrought in me; but to be the recognized exponent of it, with all the possibilities of failure incident to a life of probation (life on earth), was quite another thing. I knew that the avowal of such unmixed purity would provoke criticism, perhaps repugnance, which might lead to aspersion and odium (criticism and vile reputation). I knew it would draw attention and fling around me an air of singularity and sacredness, which would be set down by the world as monastic fanatical isolation, and by many in the church as sanctimonious assumption.

In such a presence I sealed my lips, and, as I now see was inevitable, I dropped back into the preceding and ordinary groove of religious life. For it must not be understood that it was a relapse into a sinful career or general delinquency, though it involved the greatest mistake of my life, and exposed my spiritual and heavenly interests to the most serious perils. How shall we escape if we neglect only in part so great a salvation?

In this incomplete abnormal state, however, personal holiness continued to be, in my estimation, the superlative blessing. It presented itself to me, not only as privilege, but as an imperative and universal obligation. Accordingly it formed the staple of my preaching – the objective point of my inculcations (teaching)– the reigning idea of my religious conversations, and the burden of my prayer. By a sort of spiritual spontaneity I fell into sympathy with all who professed this attainment, or even breathed holy aspirations.

Purity was congenial, therefore I coalesced with it and promoted its objects. On this

account I believe I was generally understood to be an advocate of holiness and did contribute in some degree to its advancement. While I have much to regret I have this satisfaction, that I never breathed the mildew of doubt, prejudice, or suspicion upon the plant of holiness, either as a doctrine or an experience. Yet I was in an anomalous condition, because I carried the conviction that I was not fully saved.

LOST TREASURE REGAINED

In 1864 in the midst of trials of which perhaps my imperfect consecration was in part the cause, I began pensively, like the woman in the Gospel, to sweep my house in search of my lost piece of silver. I lifted imploring hands, and eyes, and heart to heaven, and said,

*“I thirst, thou wounded Lamb of God,
To wash me in Thy cleansing blood.”*

I soon realized (so willing is Jesus to save) that I had recovered my lost treasure. I was greatly comforted, enriched, and built up with my new acquisition. I acknowledged the wonderful saving power of Jesus in the class-room, and in our next Conference love-feast. I was understood to exalt my Saviour by witnessing substantially that His blood, could, and did in my case, cleanse from all sin. But such was my timidity and self-distrust, that it seemed almost impossible to subdue the habit of approaching the subject, as a matter of personal experience, but by indirection. I could not resist the impression that my testimony was equivocal, ambiguous, and bungling. This, it occurred to me, must destroy much of its availability as a means for good to others or a tribute of honor to my Redeemer. I determined to be more explicit.

WHAT THE RESULT

About eighteen months ago I executed the purpose, in the town of Urbana, both in the love-feast and in the sermon that followed. The Lord put His seal most gloriously upon the avowal. That day will be an epoch in the life of my soul. It has also materially modified my general ministrations. Now I make prayer, singing, preaching, love -feasts, and the administration of the sacrament tributary to this grand and all-compassing subject.

I do not segregate holiness from any other truth of the Bible, nor eclipse or under-rate any antecedent (prior) stage of experience, but present it as crowning and perfective. At all my Quarterly Meetings I give the subject special prominence. What is the result? The element of power on these occasions is the element of holiness. It dominates thought and perceptibly modifies and spiritualized the speaking.

Thank the Lord, the leaven is sensibly present (detected by the senses), and diffusing in every charge. In two charges, the numbers who had professed to have received entire sanctification were formally reported by the pastors, in their written quarterly reports – eight on one circuit and thirteen on another.

A word touching my own state. If I am not wholly the Lord's, I am deluded. If there is a member of my body, or a faculty of my mind, or an affection of my soul, or a member of my family, or a dollar of my property, or other appurtenance not consecrated, I am not aware of it. If my will, ambitions, and covetings are not submitted to the will of God with a desire that they should be operated in accord with His plans and purposes, I am deceived.

If any sinful habit reigns over me, or a vile passion, taste, or feeling lives within me, I am not conscious of it. If I do not abjure, hate, and loathe all that I understand would be repugnant to my Saviour, and if I do not love, and enjoy every form, feature, and shade of moral excellence, and if every song, service, and means of purity is not a festivity to my soul, then I do not know what manner of spirit I am of.

If I do not desire and invite the divine scrutiny (under the infinite provisions and mercy of

Jesus), to dissect, analyze, and shred my being, and then to cleanse and keep each fibre clean and immaculate, I have misunderstood my purposes and prayers.

DIVINE ASSURANCES

As to my realizations. Most of the time I have a sensible assurance – an emotional consciousness that I am thoroughly saved – that my life is hid with Christ in God – that the blood cleanseth. When the emotional evidence abates, I find myself enshrined in Jesus by a stable trust. The Comforter abides. So also do the sanctities of the soul. Immaculate qualities and powers seem to be gifted with the power of self-assertion.

Feelings fluctuate, but an uncontaminated state reports itself as abiding. In this way our own spirit witnesses responsively with the Holy Ghost to our salvation. Also I find my mind, by a process of introspection and analysis, sits in judgment upon itself and pronounces concerning my spiritual state.

When physical causes dull the sensibilities, or collateral subjects absorb attention, or circumstances disturb and agitate the mind, yet my soul, with a fixed and steady gaze on the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, retains a substratum of serene and holy quiet. It is the tranquillity of the Comforter--too deep, settled, and intangible, to be disturbed by any adverse agency, unless the soul goes out of its home in Jesus.

“I am by the grace of God what I am!” “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Source: “Guide to Holiness, June, 1872”



HOLINESS IN ITS RELATION TO (Asbury Lowrey)

It was my good fortune to hear much about experimental religion, including holiness, from my childhood; not so much as a doctrine as an experience. I was cradled in the atmosphere of spiritual Christianity. Holiness, sanctification, perfect love, and kindred words were among the first articulations to which I listened from the lips of my parents.

As might be expected, I early received a bias toward this type of religion, and as my opinions ripened I more and more imbibed and assimilated the thought. Consequently I discover it has tinged all my religious productions, whether from the pulpit or pen.

I do not wish to convey the idea, by referring to these propitious beginnings, that my life has been preeminently good and satisfactory. Far from it. Through too many years of my life I was obliged to say in regard to full redemption: “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.” * And sometimes in my discouragements and conscious imperfection, as a Christian, I have felt like saying, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.” Through all my religious career my only hope has been that I am personally interested in Christ and He in me, who speaketh “in righteousness, mighty to save.”

But I do wish to record the testimony that whatever of goodness I may possess, or whatever good results I may have achieved, all is traceable in the last analysis to this peculiar grace.

It is probable that the remote cause of my early bent toward holiness was a painful providence which drove my parents to seek relief and rest in the deepest consolations of

religion.

When three children gladdened the home of my parents, and they were full of worldly hope, the great sorrow of their life came upon them. During a brief absence of both from home, the house took fire and burned to the ground, consuming the three children in the flames. This awful event broke my mother's health and spirit. Not long after that event she went into a decline, and for seven years was the prey of consumption. From the time of this mysterious visitation her chastened spirit seemed to say, in the language of Hezekiah, "What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul." * But happy for her and her children, and especially for me, she learned the lesson and tested the truth, that while "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." She learned from that hour that God had chastened her for her profit, that she "might be partaker of his holiness."

MOTHER'S DEATH AND MY COVENANT

The day before my mother died I was sitting in the room alone with her. She fondly cast her eye upon me and tenderly said: "Asbury, my son, in a few days you will have no mother, but follow me to heaven." I was silent and sorrowful, and she too feeble and choked with emotion to utter another word. It was our last interview, for the next day the Lord took her. But her last words, though never responded to by me, were graven on my young and susceptible heart; and they have ever since kept her life and memory vivid and sacred in my remembrance. But the hallowed turn which her last expostulation gave to my thoughts and purposes is the priceless benefit which I derived. While yet my mother lay lifeless and cold in our home I went out to a fence, in front of the house, and there mournfully stood alone and said to the Lord, "If you will spare my life till I am sixteen years old I will seek religion." I was so serious in making this vow, and so anxious to commit myself to it, and to convince the Lord that I meant it, that I took my knife from my pocket and cut a notch in a rail as a seal of my covenant.

In proposing this delay my thought was to gain a better time; being under the impression that I was then too young to seek, obtain, or live religion. Children had not then been organized into Sabbath-schools, as at present, and but little confidence was expressed in the conversion of children. I am satisfied now that I ought to have sought my soul's salvation at once. But being ignorant of the power of grace, and yet sincere, the Lord accommodated his mercy to my mistake, and evidently accepted my pledge, as the sequel will show. I have no recollection of any serious conviction from that time till I reached the age of sixteen. A chasm divided the dates.

When the period arrived to redeem the pledge I found myself in a strange neighborhood, with none of the means of grace accessible to which I had been accustomed in my childhood. My pledge came vividly to mind. I felt bound by a promise, as binding as an oath, to seek religion. Accordingly I went into a grove two days in succession with but little feeling, except the conviction that I must seek my soul's salvation according to promise. At the close of the second day of prayer, penitence, and thought, my feelings and fear of failure so increased that I went to a neighbor's house to ask counsel. But the neighbor, being ill, had retired, and I had not the courage to make known my sorrowful errand to his wife.

The next day I returned to the grove desperately in earnest. I prostrated myself upon the ground, in self-renouncing helplessness. I threw myself upon the mercy of God for every thing, light, repentance, conversion, and the witness of conversion. About ten o'clock in the morning of the third day my resurrection came. Conscious salvation streamed into my

soul. I was blessed with peace, joy, a tender, loving sense of the presence and favor and love of God to me. It was a jubilee. But my strongest emotion was that of devotion. I loved to pray. Accordingly on my way out of the wood I passed through a ravine, and quite spontaneously I knelt down and lifted my grateful soul to God in prayer. And such a sluice of glory as then came into me I never knew before; such communion with God and blessing from him.

I could not doubt my conversion. Another corroborative evidence I received in reading a chapter in the Gospel as I retired at night. The whole chapter seemed so sweet that I wondered I had not happened to notice it previously. I suppose I had often read the precious truth, but the secret was that, until then, I had no corresponding relish for it. The sweetness was not just then put into the Gospel, but into my heart. I then proved, for the first time, that the word of the Lord is “sweeter . . . than honey and the honeycomb,” and that man does “not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

NEGLECTED DUTY

I made a serious mistake at this point. I did not identify myself immediately with the Church, nor make confession of my conversion, except to one person, for more than a year. As a result I lost much and fell into great doubt. Infidel books being put into my hands, I was plagued with skeptical thoughts. The reasonings of Universalists also cooled the ardor of my devotion. I left myself out in the wilderness, and, therefore, was naturally the prey of wild beasts. And it was not until I united with the Church of my fathers, under Rev. Wilbur Hoag, of the East Genesee Conference, and commenced a witnessing and active Christian life, that I regained my enjoyments. And here I must record most gratefully my indebtedness to Cyrus Sawyer, afterward Rev. Cyrus Sawyer, and pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Delaware, O., where he lived a holy life and died a glorious death in 1848. He was my chum at the Penn Yan (N. Y.) Academy. A more devout and pure young man I never knew. O how he did walk and talk with God! What divine communion by day, and ecstatic visions by night, did he enjoy! His conversation was literally in heaven. Through him I was induced to pray vocally and to begin speaking in public.

About this time I commenced teaching, a profession which I supposed I might follow through life. But, as Providence evidently willed, a strange gentleman, of intelligence and piety, Robert Henry, of Hector, N. Y., became interested in me, and one day kindly presented me a pamphlet and offered to give me the benefit of his scholarship in the Genesee Wesleyan Seminary. The pamphlet proved to be Wesley’s “Plain Account of Christian Perfection.” Shall I say I read it? I did more; I devoured it, and it saturated me, and then set me on fire, and has proved, in my convictions, at least, an unquenchable fire. As a doctrine, if not fully as an experience, the subject burnt itself into me. Whatever may have been my own lack or shortcomings, one thing is certain, it became the formative principle of my character and life, the nucleus of my studies, and the reigning idea of my public ministrations, and I have not been able to accept any other type of religion, as measuring up to the Gospel standard. Nothing short of salvation from all sin in this life has appeared to me from that hour to be consistent with the purpose and power of God in undertaking the recovery of a lost world; and nothing less has seemed to reflect due credit upon Christ as a Saviour, or to account adequately for the cost of redemption, and the elaborate preparation for its accomplishment. Since that day no aspect of religion has appeared so beautiful, and no theme so sweet, and no experience so entirely satisfactory.

CALL TO PREACH

The Church recognized my call to preach before I did myself. For some time my

conviction of duty and sense of incapacity were about equally balanced. When it was proposed, I positively declined to be licensed to exhort. Knowing this, the late Rev. John W. Nevin, of the East Genesee Conference, brought up my case in my absence, and without my knowledge, and then enclosed a license to me in a private letter. From that time I shaped my course toward the ministry. Before I went to the Genesee Wesleyan Seminary I had taken a limited course in two academic institutions of high order for those times, both under Presbyterian control. From this last school, in Lima, N. Y., I was induced to enter the itinerancy. Not being fully convinced that I was Divinely called to preach, I resolved to take nothing but the actual conversions of souls through my own instrumentality as a satisfactory proof. Accordingly I commenced a protracted meeting in an obscure neighborhood on my first Sunday on the circuit. I held two such meetings in succession, during which seventy-five souls were converted. This I took as an evidence that I had not made a mistake in supposing I was called to be a minister. Several clear witnesses to entire sanctification came to that meeting from other localities, one an exceedingly intelligent and gifted lady. From this source I received much light and inspiration, and my interest in the subject was augmented. The utter subduation of sinful anger was stated to be the Christian's privilege and duty. This teaching became profoundly interesting to me because of an incident which occurred about that time, revealing angry tempers as unsubdued in me, and capable of being excited by slight provocation. I was riding a skittish horse from one appointment to another on the Sabbath day. Having but few sermons and insufficient preparation to preach, I was developing my text by the way. The horse, however, broke the continuity of my thought by darting from one side of the road to the other. I found myself exasperated at the animal. At once my conscience rebuked me, and I said, "Is this consistent? Is this all that grace can do for a man?"

Other sinful affections I soon discovered in my heart. I was not backslidden, nor was I without the conscious blessing of God, and much happiness and good fruit. The service of God was a luxury. I had a perfect passion for saving souls, and yet I found these latent propensities within me. The power of sin was broken, but not destroyed. I was justified by faith, and had "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," * but "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" had not yet "made me free from the law of sin and death. I was, in my own eyes, a contradiction. I was saved, and yet unsaved; holy, and yet unholy; happy, and yet unhappy. I was successful as a revivalist, and yet unable to lead the young convert and Church up to a higher plane, where they would be established blameless in holiness. The (ultima thule) of religion in my immature condition was the rapture of pardoned sin. If I could keep believers up to the point of testifying that they had been converted and still enjoyed religion, I had reached my goal, and was quite satisfied. Indeed, I seemed to have expended all my resources when I compassed that end. As might have been expected, from the deep impression I received in reading Wesley's Plain Account and other kindred works, I began early to preach on the topic of holiness, though I did not, and could not, confess its attainment. It was, however, even then a sweet theme, and presented itself to me as the marrow of the Gospel and the quintessence of religion. I had the experience of Jonathan Edwards, who testified: "Holiness then appeared to me to be of a sweet, serene, charming nature, which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peace, fullness, and ravishment to the soul." In the fall of 1842, nine years after my conversion, and after having traveled eighteen months under presiding elders and three years on probation, the first year in connection with the East Genesee Conference, the other two on trial in the Ohio Conference, I was ordained and received into full connection with the latter Conference, and appointed to Piqua, my first single station. I had lived a devout and holy life during all these preparatory years, and especially so during the year preceding my ordination, and yet I had not obtained the evidence of entire

sanctification. Indeed, I was painfully conscious of remaining sin, and strove against it all the year by fasting and prayer. Still I went to Conference, and finally stood before the altar of ordination somewhat unhealed of sin. But notwithstanding all my defects, I am persuaded a more sincere and conscientious soul never stood before such an altar. As every candidate is required to do, I answered all the disciplinary test questions in the affirmative: "Have you faith in God? Are you going on to perfection? Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life? Are you groaning after it?" When this last question was put and answered, I remember to have felt some misgiving respecting my positive response.

The question raised in my conscience was, whether I so intensely desire this knowledge as to justify the strong phrase, "groaning after it." The language of my soul immediately was, "If I do not, I will until that great grace is obtained. I will pursue it with travailing pangs. I will never relax my efforts, nor ungrasp my hold." The words best suited to my case, and often sung, were these:

"But who, I ask Thee, who art Thou?
Tell me Thy name, and tell me now.
"In vain Thou strugglest to get free,
I never will unloose my hold:
Art Thou the Man that died for me?
The secret of Thy love unfold:
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go,
Till I Thy ""me, Thy nature know."

About three months after this date God, in His love, gave me the evidence of full salvation. Observe, I did not approach it gradually by any sensible increase of joy or power. My soul did not flower up into it by successive blessings. I was being blessed, sometimes more and sometimes less, as I had been for years, but remained as far from the actual grasp of the great salvation, an hour before it came, as I had been for nine years. And I suppose it would have continued so, but for one mighty resolve, and that was to bring on a crisis. I found I must fix a time, and limit my faith to it. My course had been like that of a man traveling on and on to reach a beautiful horizon. It was always lovely, always in sight, but always receding. *Therefore, under the conviction that it must be now or never, I dismissed every other subject, suspended every pursuit, and retired into a room, bowed all alone before God, and pleaded for immediate redemption, immediate deliverance, immediate cleansing from all sin, the fullness of the Spirit, and perfection in love. I soon realized the unfailing truth of these words: "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." Somehow I was moved and inspired to trust: first, that it would be done; second, that it was being done; and, third, that it was done. Not that my faith was actually divided into three stages. Not that I stopped in mental action at either of these three points; but these three elements seemed to conspire and come together in my belief. It was all very summary and unmethodical. In conjunction with this process of trusting and praying, a joyous impression, evidently a divine conviction amounting to an evidence, came upon my mind to the effect that God had graciously granted my request. -- that I was healed of all sin; that I had entered into rest from sin; that its corroding had ceased.*

I was happy, but not ecstatic. The prevailing feeling seemed to be that of rest, satisfaction, great peace, and a consciousness of cleansing and sanctity. My joy was more solemn and sacred than ever before. My soul seemed hushed into silence before the Lord on account of his nearness and realized indwelling, and the overshadowing presence of the Holy Spirit.

My experience was not only that of victory over sin, but absolute deliverance from it. Its indwelling had ceased. The love of sin and the tendency to it were gone. I had been saved

from the guilt and reigning power of sin before, but now I felt that the lurking, hostile, and warring inbeing of sin had been taken away. The usurper had been dethroned and cast out, and perfect love had been enthroned in his stead. The prayer was answered,

“The seed of sin’s disease
Spirit of health remove.”

I did not feel that I could not sin, but that I would not, on the principle, that I would not put my hand in the fire, or besmear myself with filth, though so unnatural a thing were possible. It was a deliverance from the internal existence of sin, though not from the capability of sinning. The inherent quality of sin and bias to it were gone, but the will-power to originate it again, and the susceptibility to its re-entrance remained. My whole being became averse to sin, so that I could not enter upon its commission *without doing violence to my renewed nature. Principles of fixed purity and abhorrence of sin would have to be broken down, before the habit or being of sin could re-assert itself, or receive the slightest indulgence, if by any temptation, infirmity, or surprise, I might be betrayed into it.*

The difference between my regenerate and sanctified state seemed to be this: 1. In regeneration my soul was alienated from sin; in sanctification it became hostile to it, and was set against it. 2. In regeneration my hopes were a mixture of assurance and fear; in sanctification my soul rested in unmixed quietness and assurance forever. Perfect love did actually cast out all fear that had torment. The physical suffering in death or other afflictions might be dreaded, but no fearful forebodings found place in the soul. 3. In regeneration the enjoyments of religion were temporary, fitful, and evanescent; in sanctification they became uniform, abiding, deep, rich, and supremely controlling. 4. In regeneration there was a constant intrusion of worldly, ecclesiastical, or spiritual ambitions, personal to self; they preyed upon the soul and ate out the vitals of its spirituality and power; in sanctification these unholy ambitions became dead and unattractive as a faded autumn leaf. Prominence, official position, and preferment, coming as a spontaneity from esteemed brethren, still seemed desirable, but only so far as they were an expression of confidence, a tribute of respect, or a means of usefulness.

PUBLIC EFFECT

As a result of this experience one of the best revivals that ever occurred under my ministry immediately followed, which, in my view, ever after stamped holiness as a revival power. I have to this day continued to inculcate holiness as the central truth of Christianity, the marrow of experience, and the great need of the ministry and Church, in order to the real and speedy conversion of the world; but for many years I did not mix my sermons with my experience nor testify explicitly to its reception. This, I think, was a mistake, and it had two bad effects:

First. It limited my usefulness in spreading the experience. Instances of entire sanctification did occur under my ministrations, but they were not numerous, until I began to press the matter upon the people as a present need and an experience of which I had personal knowledge. As I was then presiding elder, my definiteness and hortatory expositions had the effect to convert the love-feasts and communion services into occasions for the promotion of holiness. This prepared the way for the first and second great National Camp-meetings, at Urbana, Ohio, within my district, and held there pursuant to my invitation. From them and subsequent meetings influences radiated through Ohio and to the ends of the earth. Revivals were frequent, and a good spiritual state was maintained previously, but the cloud of witnesses which has been raised up in recent years under more explicit testimony did not appear.

Second. My own evidence became often eclipsed, and my experience at times was much

like a succession of cloudy and clear days. This continued until I committed myself more fully before my Conference and the Church as an exponent of the doctrine. From that time I preached doctrine experimentally and told my experience doctrinally. The new method, I am persuaded, is the correct one, as it has been blessed to many souls. What the Church needs, in regard to every great Gospel truth, is doctrine supported by experience, and experience undergirded by doctrine. The root of experience is doctrine, and the end of all doctrine is experience.

Source: "Possibilities of Grace" By Asbury Lowrey



[The Enter His Rest website](#)