

THE BETTER WAY

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

It affords the writer great pleasure to be able to issue this volume by Dr. Carradine. I have read his other books with delight and profit; but believe that, fruitful for good as they have proved, this one, as he has been heard to predict, "will be more convincing and effective in leading people into the blessing of sanctification" than any other book he has written. It is surely a Bible gallery of beautiful pictures of "The Better Way." Will the reader not unite with us in praying that by its perusal many may be blest and God glorified?

CINCINNATI, O.

Rev. M. W. KNAPP

CHAPTER 1. OPENING WORDS

In seeking a location for a house, a man properly desires the best location. In like manner we prefer the purest air rather than a malarial atmosphere. We want the best water, food that is not adulterated, and clothing that is not shoddy goods. In all this, one need not be selfish; for there is abundance of pure air and water and everything else for us all. It would be a matter of astonishment to all if a man, having a choice between good and better, should prefer that which is inferior. The astonishment would arise from several reasons--one cause being found in the reversal of the universal practice of the race.

Now, it is certainly surprising that, while men practice the rule of securing the best in the physical realm, they should act in a contrary manner in spiritual things, and be satisfied with a lesser grace and blessing when something far superior is theirs for the asking and seeking.

When a young man once said to me, "I want all that God has for me," he might have added, "and the best that God has for me," and still spoken the truth and that which would have been pleasing to God.

That a child of God should hear of this superior grace, and live on contentedly without it, is a matter of amazement to the writer. The very rumor of such a grace should agitate the heart, inflame the soul with longings, and set one to traveling in that direction.

If the rumor of gold in California created a perfect exodus toward the West, if a star led the wise men from vast distances to seek the Savior, how is it that we, as God's children, can remain where we are in the spiritual life, when the word today is flying from lip to lip, that there is a deeper peace and joy than is realized in regeneration; that a sun has arisen instead of a star; that a pearl of great price instead of a box of treasure is to be possessed? In a word, that a "Better Way" is open for the believer to enter upon and walk Zionward with joy upon the head, and sorrow and sighing fled away from the heart.

If there is such a better way, the Bible will have much to say about it. And this is just what we have discovered. Both the Old and New Testaments also abound in allusions and direct teachings in regard to the grace. The Gospel prepares the soul for it, and closes with the exhortation to the disciples to "tarry" for it. The Book of Acts is a record of how Jews, Samaritans, Romans, and Greeks entered upon this better way. The epistles evidently regard regeneration as an initial and transitional grace; that we are not to abide there, but sweep on to something higher and holier and better.

With this thought in the mind, we ran our eyes through the Scriptures for expressions and statements which would confirm the fact.

We think we found enough to arouse any thinking mind, that is not steeped in prejudice and set in a predetermined opposition not to be convicted or convinced.

This little volume, carefully avoiding the crossing of the two other books we have written, will present the blessed truth of entire sanctification from repeated Bible statements to God's people, that there is a "Better Way." The word "better" is the key-note and idea of the book.

2. THE BETTER REDEMPTION

The Savior speaks of one redemption in John iii 16: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Paul speaks of another, deeper and profounder, in Ephesians 5:25-27: "Christ also love. The Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Here is evidently something distinct from the first, and unquestionably profounder and more radical in its nature. In the one, sinners are saved from perishing; in the other, the Church is sanctified and made without blemish.

The objection is made that the quotation from Ephesians reads, "That He might sanctify and cleanse it [the Church] with the washing of water by the word," and that the washing of the word stands for regeneration and so knocks down our argument for another and deeper work of grace received after pardon.

To this we reply by referring the reader to the Revised Version, where the corrected translation reads: "That He might sanctify, having cleansed it with the washing of the water of the word." It was after a number of years of study of the Word of God before the author saw this inner and deeper redemption. He had seen facts in the spiritual life that had vaguely suggested the thought; but it was only one day in putting the two passages of Scripture together that are quoted above, that he suddenly recognized the startling difference, and the two distinct works they plainly teach.

The writer has seen a Christmas present given to one in the shape of a box. To all appearance the handsome box itself was the gift; but on touching a spring the lid flew open, and lo! Inside was another box, and in the second was the real present.

So we read that Christ died to save sinners; God gave Him to the world that men might not perish.

Through His blood we may approach God and obtain pardon. For years we thought this was all of Christ's redemption, when a spring was touched, the lid of truth flew open, and we saw that He also died to make His people holy; that while God gave His Son to the world that sinners might not perish, yet He, the Son, at the same time gave Himself to the Church that he might sanctify it.

The world is one thing, the Church is another. While the world obtains one benefit, the Church also receives another of deeper character. While the shedding of Christ's blood saves the sinner, that same blood applied sanctifies the Christian.

It seems that when He came on earth to do His Father's will, He also brought in His hand a love-gift for His Church.

The angel recognizes this fact in His words to the Virgin: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

The same thought appears in the passage: "Who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe."

We know the explanation given of this verse by commentators. We know also that it can not be twisted into teaching Universalism; that "all men" means here just what is meant in other places where the expression is used. Take, for instance, two quotations: "Then Herod ... sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem." Again: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

We know that all the children in Bethlehem were not destroyed, from the statement of history; and we know from life that all men are not drawn to Christ. This figure is an Oriental one, and one, for that matter, used today, and means simply a vast number. "Behold, all men have gone after Him." So it looked, but not all did. It is not intended nor received as a violation of truth.

Here, then, is the word, "He is the Savior of all men;" that is, vast numbers. Revelation says they can not be counted, that they constitute an "innumerable multitude." But upon the top of this is the other striking expression, "Specially of those that believe." There are some men to whom Christ has never been and never will be a Savior. There is a certain number to whom He will only be a Judge.

But to a great multitude He is a Savior, and, farther still, a special Savior to them that believe. The sanctified understand this special salvation.

Going back now to the two passages in question, we see two things that must affect the thoughtful. The first contrast is "God gave His Son," over against the other statement, "Christ gave Himself." The second contrast is seen in that the Father's gift was to the "world," but Christ's was to the "Church." The third contrast is that this world "might not perish," over against the profounder spiritual thought that the Church might be "sanctified."

In a word, there is an inner redemption. There is, in the great plan of salvation, pardon and purity provided for the human race. The first is offered to the sinner; and if he accepts and becomes the child of God, then the second becomes at once his privilege and also his duty to possess.

Well do we sing of our Savior--
"Be of sin the double cure:
Save from wrath, and make me pure."

3. THE BETTER PRAYER

The first prayer we call attention to is in Luke 23:34 "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This is the Savior's prayer for His murderers. There is not a word about sanctification in it. The supplication is for pardon, and pardon alone. We bless God for such a prayer; that it ever ascended in behalf of sinners, and is still ascending. But there is a better prayer, and it is to be found in John 17:17 where our Lord is praying to the Father for His disciples, and says, "Sanctify them." This prayer is the contrast of the other. The first was for His murderers; this is for His friends and disciples. The first was for pardon; this is for sanctification. Just as there was not a word about sanctification in the prayer for those that were crucifying Him, so there is not a word about pardon in the prayer for His disciples

It was a prayer for a distinct grace and blessing. The Bible always keeps them apart, and common sense ought to keep them separate.

Some endeavor to evade the force of Christ's prayer for His disciples by saying that the prayer was for their being "set apart" to preach the gospel. But St. Mark tells us that this had been done three years before. In the third chapter and fourteenth verse we have His inspired statement: "And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him and that He might send them forth to preach." Others affirm that this prayer for the disciples' sanctification was that they might be empowered to heal and to cast out devils. But here we are met again by Mark's statement in the fifteenth verse of the same chapter, where we see that three years before the time of His prayer He had imparted to them "power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils."

A third objection has been made that this prayer was only for the disciples for a special time and occasion, and is not to be appropriated by us.

To this Christ Himself replies in John 17:20: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word." In these words He states that His prayer to "sanctify" is not alone for His disciples, but for others that were to come into the light through their word.

Observe, also, that it was for those which shall "believe on Me."

So the fact stands out that what He prayed for the "twelve" is for the great multitude of believers who have Sprung up everywhere over the world and in all ages, under their words, preached or written.

Yes, it is a better prayer. It is better to be holy than simply pardoned; and while we must have the first, let us not stop there, but sweep on at once from forgiveness, which is good, to sanctification, which is manifestly better for the soul.

4. THE BETTER HOPE

In Hebrews 7:19, the apostle says that the law made nothing perfect, but “the bringing in of a better hope did.” This better hope, he tells us, has been brought us in the person and achievement of Christ. It certainly stands to reason that if a “better hope” has been ushered in, then there must have been once a good hope. The very expression “better” declares something to have existed before, good in its line, but not equal to what is now mentioned. All this is true to facts. The world lived under a good hope for four thousand years. Men by faith in the Christ to come were justified, served God, and went home to glory. The patriarchs and prophets lived, labored, and died sustained by this good hope. They were told, and then told others, that something better was to come with the appearance of the Messiah; but died without the sight of the world’s Redeemer, and without the enjoyment of the peculiar blessing He had or His people.

For years of his early life the writer supposed there was no pardon of sin until the Savior came.

What He did with the patriarchs, prophets, and other good people, he does not remember. According to his idea, there was no pardon or salvation until Jesus appeared. The thought that men were saved by a prospective faith in Christ, as they now are by a retrospective faith, did not occur to him.

Observing that the Bible taught something very wonderful and gracious was to be enjoyed in the last days, that a better hope was to be ushered in, he, in ignorance of the profounder work of grace, Stumbled on in the dark.

The very expression “better hope” should have aroused thought; but it did not at the time.

That, then, is this “better hope?” What does it do? He apostle answers in the nineteenth verse just quoted.

It brings in perfection; not pardon, but perfection. Pardon, according to the writings of David, the prophets, and John the Baptist, had been known before. But a blessing called “perfection,” a completing, perfecting work of grace in the soul, is brought to the Church by the Savior. What this perfection is we will speak of again in the next chapter; will simply add here that the Methodist Church has much to say about it, calling it by the various terms of “perfection,” “perfect love,” “made perfect,” etc.

These terms are not synonyms of pardon, but represent something to be possessed and enjoyed after justification. His fact is sounded forth in the words of the pastor of every Methodist Church with all new accessions to the membership, in the exhortation in the Ritual: “Brethren, do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love;” while in the Conference the bishop asks every preacher who seeks admission into the traveling connection, and into the local ranks as an ordained minister, the questions: “Are you going on to perfection?” “Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?” “Are you groaning after it?”

A second result of the better hope, we are told in the nineteenth verse, is, that **“we draw nigh unto God.”**

There is such a thing as serving God at a distance; as feeling Him near one day, and afar another.

But the blessing that the Savior brings to us in the better hope is that we draw nigh to God. What is more, we feel nigh, and stay nigh all the time. Christ is no longer a visitor, but comes in as an indweller. Abiding thus in the heart always, the sweet, delightful experience is that we are nigh to God.

5. THE MORE EXCELLENT SACRIFICE

St. Paul, in Hebrews 11:4, tells us that “Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.”

If there is any dependence to be placed in grammar and the laws of language, there must be a good sacrifice, if there be such a thing as a more excellent one.

Most of us have passed a hasty judgment upon Cain; and because we find him the first murderer, we conclude there was never any good in him. A little charity and sober reflection would greatly help the inquirer after truth.

Let it be first remembered that both Cain and Abel appear as worshipers of God. Both bring an offering. Cain came with the fruits of the ground--something that was allowed in the Levitical worship ages afterward; but Abel, with a profounder view of the atonement comes with the lamb and with blood!

Now let the reader mark that while God said that sin lay at the door of a man whose gift was not accepted, and whose worship was not received, He did not say that the offering of Cain was a sinful one.

There was sin at the door of Cain; it may have been in his not apprehending and emphasizing the blood as he should, and as Abel did. Anyhow, God, in view of what redemption was, and how it was to come, was compelled to pay peculiar respect to Abel’s offering.

In His own Word He says it was a “more excellent sacrifice,” Just as Paul, after describing a certain kind of spiritual life, tells us there is a more excellent way.

The thought is wonderfully impressive, that there is a more excellent way of approaching God, and a better sacrifice.

Cain is a type of a large body of worshipers of God today, who come with the fruits of Christian living. Busy lives, religious activities, great performances in and for the Church, seen at times so stressed that the “blood” is almost, if not altogether, lost sight of. A preacher making his report on the floor of a Church assembly, and telling of the many conversions he had witnessed, was brought up sharply with the words: “How much money did you collect?”

Cain is still at the altar. The fruits are still brought up in abundance. We do not condemn it; we simply affirm there is a better sacrifice.

There are Abels in the Church who have gone to the heart of the atonement and seen its glory.

They exalt the blood every time, and at all times; the blood at the beginning and at the ending; the blood now, always, and forever; the blood for justification, and the blood for sanctification.

No wonder God accepts them, and peculiarly blesses them. Cain, who still lives, notices these things. He sees a more excellent sacrifice has been offered, gets irritated and angry over the shining face and glowing experience of the Abels of today, and again raises his hand and strikes at, or strikes down in some way, the more spiritual worshiper, the man who has been more blessed than himself.

If, as a worshiper today, one is disturbed and angered over the deeper experience of another, that very irritation declares the existence of something that ought not to be, and that God wishes and is willing to remove.

“Sin lieth [or croucheth] at the door,” was the word of God to Cain. Something, indeed, of a dark nature is crouching in the heart of a follower of God who would strike or in any way hurt a man whose main fault is, that he is in the enjoyment of a profounder knowledge of God, has a more intimate union with Christ, and has a secret that all have not, who name the name of the Lord.

6. THE BETTER COVENANT

In Hebrews, chapter 8, verse 6, we have the statement that Christ is “the mediator of a better covenant.” In the seventh verse mention is made of a first covenant that in time is made to give way to a second, which in the sixth verse is called “a better covenant.”

The world lived under the first covenant for four thousand years. Under it men and women served God, and went to heaven. Under it flourished the patriarchs and prophets. Such men as Samuel and David, and such women as Deborah and Anna, glorified God, and left the world better for their being in it, through the grace that came in this dispensation.

John the Baptist lived under the first covenant, preaching and warning, and so preparing the way of the Lord by “giving knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins.”

The Savior Himself lived and died under the first covenant, but prepared His followers for the “better covenant,” which was set up on the morning of Pentecost, and in descending flames of fire established in the hearts of the praying, waiting, expectant Christian Church.

Christ brought to “His people” the “better covenant,” about which Paul enlarges in the eighth chapter of Hebrews.

Against the first covenant several objections are filed by the apostle. He does not say that it could not save. On the contrary, the Bible teaches that it did. Elijah was translated under it, and Elisha worked wonders and went to glory through its power. But listen to the objections.

One was that it could not make “the comer [worshiper] perfect.” Second, the “old sin” was not “purged away.” Third, there was a “constant remembrance of sins.” All of which is well understood by the regenerated man, who feels that, child of God as he is, yet regeneration is not the blessing of Christian perfection; that the “old man” is not yet purged or burned out with the baptism of fire; and that he has, day after day and night after night, a constant remembrance of having done wrong, so that the bedside at night is a kind of altar at which he, a penitent, lingers, until he receives pardon and peace.

The second covenant which was brought by Christ, and is called by Paul the “better covenant,” has the following features, according to the eighth chapter of Hebrews. It is seen to be better, because--

It brings purity instead of pardon. Let it be understood that, for Christ’s sake, pardon was given under the first covenant and continued in the second. He was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Men were saved by a prospective faith in Him in the old dispensation, as they now are saved by a retrospective faith. But when He came he brought a new covenant, the excellence of which is seen in the additional blessing of purity. The “old Sin, called variously the “old man,” “carnal mind,” “the sin that dwelleth in me,” etc., is removed by sanctifying fire and grace.

The worshiper is made perfect. Not the perfection of Christ, or of angels; but God perfects His work in the heart by the removal of inbred sin. With the conscious grace wrought in his heart, the man feels that he loves God with a perfect heart.

There is no remembrance of sins every year, or week, or day, or moment. But the “old sin” being purged away which occasioned the witting or unwitting slips and falls, behold, the worshiper now goes on a joyful way, and, kept cleansed moment by moment, ends the day, as he began it, with joy, and transforms his bedside from a mourner’s bench of sighs, tears, confessions, and lamentations, into an altar of glad thanksgivings and praises to God for His constant delivering, cleansing, and keeping power of the day.

The law of God is written in heart and mind. (Verse 10.) It would be hard to describe this to one not having the second covenant experience. The Bible becomes a new book, an illustrated one at that, and seems to be imbedded in the mind. There seems to be a Bible within. The preached or read Word of God finds a sweet echo within. There is delightful agreement with the soul of such a man and all that is written in the printed Word of God. Truly, the Word is now hidden in his heart, and he finds it sweeter than the honey or the honeycomb.

All in this experience know God from the least to the greatest. (Verse 2.) The writer has been often struck with the ignorance of God’s truth, and dealings, among those who live under the first covenant. Such a veil seems to be in the Bible, and such hardness and cruelty is attributed to the providence of God. On the other hand, when believers come into the better covenant they at once seem to know God. They so thoroughly know Him that they believe in Him when they can not understand His dealings, nor decipher the whole sentence of His providential writing.

“From the least to the greatest” this knowledge of the Lord is recognized. It is truly wonderful how the very young will come into a spiritual wisdom and knowledge beyond their years when they receive this blessed experience. It is the peculiarity and glory of the better covenant; all, from the least to the greatest know God.

It does not decay nor wax old. The other did. And all that live today in the first covenant experience, find a decaying experience, and their spiritual life getting old and feeble. Many are the journeys made to camp-meetings, many the ministerial prescriptions taken, in order to rally the energies and restore the health and protract the life.

In the better covenant of sanctification, the principle of decay is taken out; the balm of Gilead is placed in the soul; there is a constant, conscious stream of life, strength, and health in the spirit; a welling-up joy in the heart; freshness in the experience; hallelujahs in the soul and on the lip; and Christ and heaven everywhere.

7. THE BETTER EXPERIENCE

A good experience is taught in Rom. 5:1: “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

A better experience is spoken of in Philippians 4:7, where the apostle says: “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.”

The contrasted experiences are “peace with God,” and “the peace of God.” The prepositions are different; their meaning is not the same; and the latter expression is so much profounder than the other.

Peace with God is the result of a changed relation. Being justified or pardoned through faith, we are turned from enemies into the friends of God, and have peace with Him. It is a very blessed change, and the peace is very sweet. But we do not possess it long before we discover how easily it is affected by circumstance--by change of weather, departure of health, and loss of friends and property.

Sometimes without any explainable cause, it is gone, and the heart is left restless and the soul burdened. In vain we seek the reason; clouds are round about the throne, and darkness is in us. Truly there should be a sweeter, steadier, and more abiding experience than this; and, thank God, there is such a grace and blessing.

The peace of God is not the result of a changed relation, but is a bestowment. It is God’s own peace given to us. Let the reader think a moment of this peace of God! Let him brood a moment on the calm that dwells in the Divine breast. Nothing can disturb it. It is there in spite of all that is thought, said, and done against Him. In spite of wrath of enemy and betrayal of friend, the holy calm, which is the peace of God, abides.

This peace God is willing to bestow upon believers who will comply with certain conditions. The instant that it is received by the regenerated soul the man stands amazed at its blessedness.

Paul gives three features of this better experience:

It “**passeth all understanding.**” No brain can compass it, no intellect understand it, no tongue explain it. It is there, a heavenly gift or deposit in the soul--a profound mystery, but also a profounder reality, filling one with wonder, love, and praise. How often the writer has heard people in the enjoyment of this higher grace say, “I can not understand it!” The constant sweetness, freshness, and restfulness it brings to the soul causes the possessor to be filled with gratitude and adoring wonder.

It abides in and through all conditions. Friends leave, love grows cold, losses befall; but the peace of God which passeth all understanding, still remains.

It “keeps the heart.” The heart is the seat of the desires and affections. A perfect world of sensibility and sensitiveness is the heart. The regenerated man finds great difficulty in restraining and controlling it.

Many tears have been shed over these failures, and many sighs heard at the recognition of its perverse inclinations and manifold wanderings.

But there is a blessing that keeps the heart. The peace of God can and does do so. As Christians receive this grace they are made to marvel at the trust, the quiet, the self-control, and self-containedness within. We are in the same world, with its allurements, bewilderments, and sapping influence and power; but something has been given to the soul that keeps it unmoved and sweetly triumphant through all.

It “keeps the mind.” Here is seen the antidote for the fret and worry of life. The disappointments of business life, the annoyances of home life, and all the manifold and nameless trials that are found as we progress through the world, are delightfully met and overcome through this blessing. Many Christians go down under this wear and tear. The face becomes wrinkled, the eyes have a tired look, the voice gets a fretted, worried tone, and premature age sets in. But this sweet peace of God smoothes out the wrinkles, takes out the fret, gives a soothed feeling to the breast, and makes the voice itself a tranquilizing power in this poor, tired, heart-broken world.

It keeps the mind!

Here, also, is seen the deliverance from error, wrong doctrine, erroneous teaching, that Satan loves to sow in Christian people and in Churches.

Until this steadying blessing is received, it is wonderful how easily the child of God can be indoctrinated with false teaching. His very tenderness of heart, hunger for truth, and willingness to be taught, increases his danger. So numbers become a prey to the teachers of various “isms” and the spreaders of foxfire and wildfire.

The peace of God delivers us here. It is the grace that grounds and settles, so that we are no more “tossed about with every wind of doctrine.”

It keeps! This is the glad and blessed experience of the sanctified man. He awakens with the smile of God upon him; all through the day is realized the undergirding. He notices with a delighted wonder that cares, assaults, trying conditions, fall away before him, as the waves split and fall to the right and left, under the irresistible prow of the rushing steamer. The afternoon is in no whit behind the morning, but works the same calm, undisturbed state. The night, with its return home--no matter what that home may be--finds the soul still kept, with a sense of freshness, sweetness, and stillness that is even more amazing to the possessor than to the beholder.

The writer enjoyed “peace with God” for fourteen years. He has had the “peace of God” six years.

The latter is greater than the former. As it passeth all understanding, of course it passeth all power to describe. He can only look up to heaven with a great thankfulness of spirit, and say, “It keeps.” This may not mean much to the world; but it means everything to the one who pens these lines.

8 THE BETTER SUPPING

It is wonderful how the twofold work of grace appears in the Scripture to the anointed eye.

Passages that once bore one meaning are made, under the Spirit, to have another and deeper teaching; and verses that seemed to have in them a repetition of the same truth, are seen, under closer study, to be statements of the Double Cure of Salvation.

In Bible study one day, we suddenly saw the dual blessing in Rev. 3:20: “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.”

Let the reader put the two following expressions together, and see if he does not observe a decided difference: “I will sup with him,” “And he with Me.”

For a long time we thought the verse referred to one occurrence or experience of grace; but one day, while reading, two distinct spiritual acts and states suddenly appeared, as under the telescope sometimes one star becomes two.

“I will Sup with him.” This is what happened when we were regenerated. Christ came into our poor hearts, and sat down at the table we spread for Him.

The reader certainly knows what it is to have some one sup with him. This means that the reader spreads the board, goes to expense, does the entertaining, and is the minister and servant, so to speak, of the guest. Such is the regenerated life. Christ comes in, and we commence the life of service and entertaining. How we spread the table with our poor works and imperfect performances! What a time we have to make a fair appearance that will recommend us to the favor of the Divine Guest, who sits at the table of the heart watching what we are doing for Him! Dish after dish of some new work or duty is laid before Him, with the hope that He will smile upon and approve. What a hurry and flurry it brings into many lives! It is no small thing to entertain any one, even of our own kind. Few can do it without worry and considerable strain. What, then, shall be expected when the Lord is at the board? And as we ask the question, we see the answer in many an anxious and exhausted-looking Christian face. We have known persons who have had to go to bed, or take a trip of a few days, after having entertained friends for a few days or weeks. And in the spiritual life, we see preachers taking Monday for recuperation, and Christian workers going to the mountains for a vacation to recover from the fatigue of the service or entertainment of the Lord.

Is there any thing better than this? One will ask. The reply is in the last sentence of the verse: “And he will sup with Me.”

The slightest glance ought to reveal the difference, and show the great truth hidden in the six words above.

It is one thing to entertain a friend; it is decidedly another thing to have this friend entertain you.

And what if the friend is very rich? Suppose the reader has a wealthy friend. In your love for him, nothing will do but that he must dine or sup with you. Your house, however, is humble, your purse dim, and your bill of fare quite meager; but it is the best you can do, and you desire to manifest your affection in the line of entertainment. The rich friend who accepts your invitation is very gracious; he comes, and as he eats, praises all that is set before him. He does not let a sign escape to show that he is accustomed to anything better. You have misgivings that what you are doing for him is poor in character; but you so love the person, and you so want him at your board, that you persist in having him again and again as your guest in spite of nervousness and forebodings.

But one day this rich friend asked you to dine or sup with him! That meant that he paid the bills, rendered all the service, and did the entertaining. That meant you leaned back in your chair and enjoyed the luxury of being waited on and entertained. You were now supping with him. What a supper! What dishes! What food! What service! It was not a poor man providing for a rich friend, but a rich man entertaining a poor man.

Something of the spiritual rest, abundance, and satisfaction that is in the verse begins now to appear. Sanctification now rolls into sight.

Christ is the rich friend whom we entertained for years. The wonder is how He endured the poor entertainment! At the best it was poor. But He smiled upon and approved all we did for Him, and, as He sat at the board, praised the poor dishes and awkward service, His smile lighted up the narrow little room, and we were happy.

But one day he said: "Let Me entertain you-- suppose you come and sup with Me." We did so; and lo! What a change, what a difference, and what an improvement! He loads the table with a variety and fullness of spiritual provisions and fruits that amazes and delights. There is no lack of any good thing at any time. There are constant surprises given the soul, with new and bountiful supplies of grace. The heart is fed, satisfied, and filled to overflowing. The bread is fresh, the honey drips, and the wine of a holy joy sparkles. Above all, Christ does the entertaining. He not only supplies the food, but waits upon the soul; and He not only ministers to the spirit, but grants us a heavenly speech, a holy communing with Himself, that fairly ravishes and absorbs the soul. Talk about people crowned with flowers at a banqueting board, with strains of music floating about them from unseen players; and how the whole thing becomes as nothing compared to the state of the soul treated to the good, music, speech, and presence of heaven! There are aches in the heart of the earthly banqueter; but where can be the pain to him who is lulled, rested, and smiled upon in the embrace of the Savior?

For fourteen years the writer tried to entertain the Savior, and what a stretch and strain there was, and what exhaustions and failures were realized! For six years the Savior has entertained the writer.

He now sups with the Lord! This is far better. His peace now flows like a river, his soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and his rest is unfathomable. May the reader never rest until he knows for himself the bliss and blessedness of the second supping!

9. THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY

If there is a more excellent way, then there must of course be a good way. This good way is seen in I Corinthians, chapter 12. Let the reader run his eye down the verses, and in the expressions that abound in the chapter the good way is revealed.

We call attention to them: "Diversities of gifts," "differences of administrations," "diversities of operations," "the word of wisdom," "word of knowledge," "faith," "gifts of healing," "working of miracles," "prophecy," and "discerning of spirits."

All these terms will be recognized by the reader as describing a life that is well known in the Church today. Here are gifts, offices, administrations that are felt worthy of striving for, and one is most fortunate to possess.

In the 28th verse mention is made of apostles, prophets, teachers, governments, etc. These ranks, with their succession of today, are greatly sought after and prized. He that desireth them "desireth a good thing."

In the beginning of the 13th chapter the apostle continues to allude to the good way, in the expressions, "Speaking with the tongues of men and angels," "gift of prophecy," "understand all mysteries," "bestow all my goods to feed the poor," and "give my body to be burned." Here is a wonderful collection of desirable and beautiful things--eloquence, knowledge, benevolence, and the actual wearing out of the body in good works.

Who is not struck with such a life? What praise and commendation such a character has ever, and will continue to awaken! When we speak of the higher experiences of the Christian life, we are promptly pointed to this character in the "good way." This is good enough for me, many will say.

Doubtless such a life and character was thrown up to Paul. Anyhow, after reviewing the good way, he writes: "Yet show I unto you a more excellent way."

If any one asks what and where is this better way, the answer is, Read the 13th chapter of First Corinthians. Paul calls it "charity," but the truer translation is "love," and one has but to read the chapter to see that it is not simply love, but "perfect love."

In describing grace as an experience, the apostle says: "It suffers long and is kind." We know that in the regenerated life we suffer, but it is not "long." Here is where we failed. A certain amount of endurance may be allowed, but after that comes the explosion. We seem to be constructed after a short pattern. People must not provoke us long, sinners must not be stubborn long, or we can not hold out. We suffer, but we say there is a limit when patience ceases to be a virtue. This is the way we talk and act. The other thing that troubles the converted soul is the "kind" feature connected with the peculiar long-suffering of the more excellent way. The regenerated man suffers; but it is not a long suffering, and it is not a kind suffering. The sense of irritation, or, worse still, the explosion, sooner or later takes place.

In the more excellent way of perfect love, Paul says we suffer long, and, wonderful to say, after suffering long, we are kind! Will any one affirm that this is not an excellent way?

"It envies not." This blessing enables one to see a fellow-being rise, prosper, succeed, and flourish in every respect without repining.

"It vaunteth not itself." The ego is retired. The "I did this," and "I did that," is changed to "I am blessed," "Christ sanctifies and satisfies me," "Praise God for an indwelling Christ!"

"Is not puffed up." The puff is easily discerned in one's manner. The assumed dignified appearance, the swelling air, the uplifted self-conscious head, the lordly gait, the studied attitude in pulpit or on platform, are well known. But they all disappear in the better way. Even the beaver hat has often been laid aside, because it seems to have the "puffed-up" look; for it certainly is not solid, but only a hollow space, and, in some cases, wonderfully suggestive of other hollow spheres that may be in the immediate vicinity.

"Doth not behave itself unseemly." We have all noticed a conduct in Christians, so light and frivolous that one could not but grieve over it. The power to "keep the heart" seemed not to be possessed, and the very lightness of heart produced by a sense of acceptance of God, was sufficient to betray them into a gayety that became finally hysterical, and left the soul with an empty heart and condemned feeling. In the more excellent way, the heart, from a constant consciousness of the presence of Christ, is strangely and sweetly delivered from the unseemly in conduct and conversation, and while always cheerful, yet is easily self-contained, and ever keeps in touching and speaking distance with the Lord. That full presence of Christ in the soul and in the life causes one to "walk softly," while at the same time freely and joyously, through the world.

"Seeketh not her own." Some men seek what belongs to others. For a man to seek his own is thought to be commendable according to the ethics of this world. It is even felt to be right in the Christian world, and the preacher dreams of high-steeple churches, connectional positions, and the bishopric. But here is one who seeks not his own. He demands not what is his right, and refuses to enter into sharp disputes about the fulfillment of certain things that had been promised him.

The writer once read of a little motherless gill who would be given things by other children, and then have them snatched away. She had lived thus for several years, and had learned to lay a very light and loose hold on everything. Her hands would hold articles and playthings, that had been given her, as if she expected them to be taken away the next moment.

In like manner the soul in the "better way" holds to things of earth. It feels motherless and unloved here. It expects to have all these things snatched away, and is ready to give them up at any moment, and stands with a far-away look in the eyes, indifferent about the possession of pleasures, treasures, promotions, dignities, and all such things about which so many thousands are struggling, clutching, pressing, living, and dying.

The man, could by a certain course, become this or that, or obtain yonder or another thing. But he has come to see there is a certain hollowness in “eloquence,” “governments,” “administrations,” etc., etc., and having found the very juice marrow, and substance of the Christian life is not in position or authority, but in the more excellent way of perfect love, he is satisfied to live with his hands stripped of earthly rewards and honors, while his soul is filled with glory and heaven all the while.

“**Thinketh no evil.**” That is, suspecteth no evil. Is not quick to judge. Is slow to attribute wrong motives to people. Is slow in its simplicity and childlikeness to take offense. Is actually slighted and cut, and probably struck at, but feels no resentment, or evil in the heart that the Lord has made like His own.

Let the reader study at his own leisure the remaining features of the more excellent way. What a wealth of grace we see hidden under such expressions as “rejoiceth not in iniquity,” “rejoiceth in the truth,” “beareth all things,” “believeth all things,” “hopeth all things,” “endureth all things!”

Does not the slightest examination show that here are graces, and here is a life that regenerated people do not live save in a spasmodic way, while the concluding statements about this experience is that it “never faileth?”

“**Never faileth!**” This is the crowning beauty of sanctification as an experience. It bubbles up in the heart as we awake in the morning; runs steadily through the morning hours; does not dry up at noon, but sings and murmurs and splashes on its musical way through the afternoon; has the same volume of power and gladness at the evening tide; and when we awake in the night, it is found to be still an artesian well of gladness and salvation in the soul.

The writer recently heard a gentleman say that he enjoyed this blessing in its richness in the days of wealth; that he lost all his money, and had to saw wood in a small Illinois town for a living; that as he packed the wood up the steps of law-offices downtown, the blessing never failed him all that time; that since then God had blessed him with abundant means again, and the same old blessing, with its same sweet old song of gladness, was abiding still in his soul.

It never faileth! Hallelujah! That is what we love about it. It stands by us through thick and thin.

When friends are many, or when they be few; when health is our portion, or when a sick-bed is our lot; when men speak kindly to us and about us, and soon after unkindly,--hallelujah! No matter who changes or fails, the blessing and joy of an indwelling Christ never fails! This is the beauty, sweetness, preciousness, and glory of the experience, and this is the reason that Paul called it “the more excellent way.” May every child of God find it, and walk in it!

10. THE BETTER LIFE

Martha and Mary were sisters. About their religious lives there can be no doubt. Their home open to Christ, their hospitality, their message to Him in time of trouble, their spiritual conversation with Jesus at the grave of their brother, and the statement of Christ Himself that He loved them, show what the two sisters were.

But while this is granted, immediately on closer examination we see a great difference. The road forks. The likeness changes suddenly into two dissimilar religious lives.

Martha illustrates one life. We notice with pleasure that her house is open for the Lord, and that she is busy for Him. But the Scripture brings out curious facts that will find a strange response and recognition by regenerated people.

“She was cumbered with much serving.”

O that much serving, and that heavy feeling that arises often as a consequence, in the Christian life! The wrinkles and careworn expression on many Christian faces spell the sentence “cumbered with much serving.”

Then her eye was on her sister. One of the hardest things in the world for a regenerated person to do is to keep his eyes on his brother. “What shall this man do? What is this man doing compared to myself?”

Then her grief was in “serving alone.” This is a great trial to the soul that has not passed into the experience and life of the sanctified. Regenerated people like to work in a crowd. It is hard to stand and serve alone. Indeed, none will do it willingly, much less successfully. There is a grace that qualifies one to serve God in utter loneliness and at the same time be happy. Martha did not possess it; neither do a good many of God’s children.

Again, she was careful and troubled about many things. Does the reader know such Christian people: full of anxiety about different things, troubled about the past, the present, and the future?

You see the apprehension in the uneasy glance, and hear it in the querulous and fretting tone.

Troubled about many things.

Mary illustrates the sanctified life. The things said about her bring out the holy experience in a vivid and most agreeable way.

“**She heard His word.**” Not all do that. There are some words that Christ has uttered that regenerated people will not listen to or receive. The emphasis should be thrown on the word “His”-- “His word.” Christ had peculiar words. His word was to declare His own special work. What was His work? Malachi said, to “purify the sons of Levi;” John the Baptist said, to “baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire;” the angel said to “save His people from their sins;” and Paul said to “sanctify the Church.” All agreed that He had a peculiar work, and that work to be the holiness of His people.

So He spoke of that work very naturally and freely. It was this He was speaking of to the woman at the well in Samaria, as we will show in another chapter. This work constantly appeared in His words.

Most men are listening today to Moses’ word, and to John the Baptist’s word; but Mary, and others like her, are listening to “His word.”

She sat at His feet. What a picture of absorbed attention and deep satisfaction! This does not represent the ordinary Christian life; there are many who love Christ, but few sit at His feet. “Mary sat still in the house,” so another chapter says, when she was placed in trying circumstances. It is another picture of spiritual quietness and restfulness. There is a beautiful grace that enables the possessor to sit still. It is not related to indolence, and is nothing in the world like it. It is the marvelous calm and repose of a holy heart.

Besides this, **she could withstand misjudgment and abuse.** “Lord, dost thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?” The sharp, querulous tone of Martha penetrates her ear, but utterly fails to disturb the serenity of her spirit. Mary answers not a word. Here is the glory of holiness. It can be found fault with, sharply and unkindly accused, and yet keep undisturbed. This is the spirit of the Savior come in, and producing again what was once seen in Himself when, although oppressed, afflicted, and reviled, He opened not His mouth.

She gave her richest possessions to Christ. Here is the woman of the alabaster box and the costly ointment. Her eyes shine with love, her fingers gladly pour the costly spikenard upon the feet of her Lord, and with her hair she wipes them dry. Here is manifested the life of holiness. Many Christians keep back the costliest things; they withhold their reputation, their time, personal ease, and money; but the sanctified soul feels there is nothing too good for Christ. All things are dross compared to him. Gladly they suffer the loss of all things that they may win Him and enjoy His unclouded and blessed approval. There is no alabaster box of temporal or spiritual treasure, but they gladly break and empty at His feet. They now say to him what He once said to them: “All things are yours--whether life or death, or things present or things to come--all are yours.”

[“Mary hath chosen that good part.”](#) The single word “chosen” in the above quotation answers the objection made by some that the difference between the sisters was a purely natural one, a mere question of temperament. But how can this be, when Christ said Mary had “chosen” what she had.

No person can choose his temperament. Moreover, God never made a temperament that would militate against the possessor coming into the full enjoyment of religious privilege. This would make God unjust, and give an unanswerable argument to the sinner and the low-plane Christian at the last day. Not a few think their temperaments prevent them from shouting and rejoicing openly. The Savior in the last few years has taught many of us better. The temperament dodge is very popular.

It is as much sought after as fig-leaves were on a certain occasion in the garden of Eden, and as poorly hides spiritual nakedness. The difference between Mary and Martha now appears, and is shown in the word “chosen.” Mary hath chosen the good part or experience. Remember that persons can not choose their temperaments. Many people, with this world and God to choose between, take the Lord; and some, with two kinds of religious experience and life to select from, take the better of the two. Paul writes of the same thing when he says we may “covet earnestly” the one, and yet there is a “more excellent way.”

Thank God we can choose this higher, holier life, in which the soul sits always at the feet of the Savior! If we desire and prefer it above all things, it can and will be ours.

She had the independent blessing. There is such a grace, and when it is in the heart it is marvelous how little the mutations of time and the losses of earth affect us. Christ here described it in the words “one thing is needful.” If there be but one thing needful, then all other things and beings are not needful. They can come or go, can smile or frown, can be for us or against us, and all the time the soul, in the enjoyment of the perpetual love and presence of Christ, is amazingly lifted above the force and influence of them all. The noisy house has become still; the “trouble about many things” is gone, the cumbered feeling from much serving is a thing of the past. Let the earth be removed, and let the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. A great contentment, an indescribable satisfaction, reigns within in full view of the removing world, while the mountains thrown upon us by Satan and evil men are flung at once into a great sea of love and peace in our souls, which swallows them up, and melts them into nothing in its pure crystalline depths.

[She had the undeparting blessing.](#) Thank God there is such an experience, a grace that never leaves us! The Savior speaks of it here in these words: “Which shall not be taken away from her.”

Many of us have had sweet blessings that came like angels, and were as swiftly gone. A blessing of an hour or a day is a precious memory. A blessing that remained in the soul a week or month was regarded and spoken of in experience-meetings as a wonder. “Where were giants in those days!” Men lived to be nine hundred years old. You paid a visit to that land and staid a month. How you talk about it! Men forget that we are living in the latter days; in the dispensation of the Spirit; when a little one shall chase a thousand; when a child shall be an hundred years old; and when we shall be able to obtain a blessing that shall last, not only a month, but a year, ten years, a thousand years, ten thousand years, and, indeed, forever. Christ has a blessing for us that shall never be taken from us.

We die with it in the soul, enter heaven with it, and go through eternity with it. No one can take it away from us without our consent; neither the world nor a formal Church, nor time, old age, Satan, poverty, trouble, delirium, nor death. It abides in us evermore.

The writer has had it unbrokenly for six years: he has known of others who have enjoyed it steadily for ten, some for twenty, and one for fifty years. There are some in heaven who have had it thousands of years, and all of us who follow on will also, with them, enjoy it forever.

11. THE DEEPER SALVATION

There are saved people and saved people, and there is a great difference between them. Some people are saved in a manner, we say, and others are saved in a deep-down, through-and-through way.

A man would be blind not to see these two classes. Both believe in Christ, both can tell the time of their conversion, both feel they have a title to Heaven, and yet any one can see that the work of grace has gone much deeper in one class than the other.

The Bible speaks of the “strong” and the “weak,” both being the Lord’s. Christ tells of the seed that had not much depth of earth, and withered under the heat of persecution. He tells, again, of the branch that bore some fruit, and the one that bore much fruit. Out of the same vine came four different kinds of branches: One, bearing no fruit; another, some fruit; a third, more fruit; and a fourth, much fruit.

There is a profounder salvation seen in life, and as clearly taught in the Word of God. We call attention to expressions that can not but impress the thoughtful spiritual mind:

(1) [“He will save His people from their sins.”](#)

Here is a salvation from sin. Not from hell and from the consequences of sin, but from sin. The salvation that is popular with many is a salvation in sin; that we keep Christ, and yet go on sinning every day. The verse above tells of a better salvation.

(2) [“Crucified with Christ.”](#)

Here are death-pangs, and not birth-pains. Regeneration is a birth, and is, of course, attended with pangs, just as is seen in the physical life. But here the apostle is writing, not about the pain of a spiritual birth, but the suffering of a spiritual death. Crucified, not converted. Many know and have felt the one, but are strangers to the other. Crucified with Christ! How few can say this! Truly there is a deeper work of grace, an experience that is now awaiting many who know, love, and follow Christ.

(3) [“Few there be that find it.”](#)

Find what? Salvation? Hardly. If we say salvation, then do we make the Bible contradict itself; for the statement is clear and unmistakable about the vast number who shall be saved. Hear the word in Revelation, seventh chapter and ninth verse: “After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.”

Were these people saved? It is said in the next verse they were crying: “Salvation to our God, and to the Lamb.” Their very presence in Heaven shows their salvation, without the additional proof seen in robe, palm, and shout.

The word distinctly says the multitude was so great that no man could number it! Evidently, then, when Christ uttered the solemn words, “Few there be that find it,” He could not be speaking of salvation, but was talking of “a strait gate and a narrow way.” We firmly believe in the strait gate and in the narrow way--a way that is too narrow to admit a single sin, self-indulgence, softness, love of place, praise of men, and many other like things; and we as firmly believe, as the Savior said, that “few” are in it. Multitudes, who will be “saved as by fire,” will never walk in this way. Multitudes will never enter upon it until the dying hour. We can count people by myriads today, that we believe will be saved at last, whose temporizing, compromising, and man-fearing lives can not for a moment be reconciled with a life that has a strait gate before it and is all along a narrow way.

It is remarkable that when Christ said, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to death," He did not say that all in that way would be lost. "Many," He said, were in the broad way;" but He did not say that this overwhelming majority, as contrasted with the "few," would be lost. Many in the broad way will be plucked as brands from the burning; many will see their mistake, and forsake the road before they die; many who have been betrayed into the broad road for a while, will turn back, as did the prodigal, and come home.

We leave men to wrestle as they please with the difficulties of the thought; but here are two great revealed facts, one as true as the other; viz., that "few" are in the "narrow way," and yet a multitude, "that no man can number," will be saved.

We get from it the truth which we see corroborated in life. Some Christians are living very close to God; and some are so near the world that no one would think of putting a "strait gate" on their religious escutcheon, nor accuse them of walking in a narrow way that led to life eternal.

(4) "The abundant life."

Christ said: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Regeneration is life, and so converted people have life. It is a life of love and labor for God. No one ever possessed it without thankfulness to Heaven for the gift.

But the italicized word "and" is a copulative conjunction, and means something in addition. This additional blessing is abundant life. This is what occurred at Pentecost; and under the influence of the new grace the disciples were metamorphosed, and, being abundantly filled, fairly overflowed, to the benefit, blessing, and salvation of multitudes in the first century.

This blessing of abundant life is the privilege still of God's people. Peter said on that day to the multitude; "The promise is unto you and your children, and to them that are afar off." It is now offered in the nineteenth century, and, thank God, is being received. The man is certainly blind who has not seen the two religious characters--one with life; the other having it more abundantly. When questioned upon the subject, both say they were the gifts of God, and were received instantaneously; the abundant experience coming after regeneration, which is the first gift of God to the soul.

(5) The inward revelation.

Paul speaks of it in Galatians i. 16, where he says, it pleased God "to reveal His Son in me." The first revelation Paul had was on the road to Damascus; and when struck down upon the ground he had an exterior vision of Christ. It was not a view of Christ within, but Christ without.

Paul said, I saw Him in a glory that no man could approach unto. This was an outward revelation.

Afterwards came the inward revelation, when it pleased God, he said, to "reveal His Son in me."

This is what is promised to the believer in John xiv, 23, where the Savior says He will come in and take up His abode in our hearts. This is what Paul wrote about in Colossians 1:26-27: "The mystery hid for ages, but now made manifest to His saints, which is Christ in you." Again it appears in Galatians 4:19: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." Christ revealed to us as our Savior is one thing, and Christ revealed in us as the Indweller and Sanctifier is another. This is the mystery that is now being declared to the saints (God's people), that the Savior will, upon compliance with conditions, cease to make us visits, and will come in and take up His abode in us.

The reader will remember that, after the Temple was built and completed, the priests, Levites and all, withdrew, and then suddenly the glory of the Lord filled it, and the Shekinah after that was always present.

We are the temple of the Lord, and after being emptied, cleansed, swept, garnished, and after a solemn waiting before and on God, suddenly He will come into us as a glorious abiding presence.

A very superior Christian lady was seeking the blessing of sanctification at the altar in a California city during one of our meetings. She had been instructed what to do, and had obeyed. All was on the altar; she was believing that the altar sanctified the gift, and stood looking upward as if watching for the descent of the blessing. The writer felt moved to say to her: "My sister, look in your heart, and tell me what you see." She closed her eyes, introverted the gaze, and in the next instant opened them, with a flash of joy in her face, and a rapturous cry that we can never forget: "O, He has come! Christ is in there!" Then followed for nearly a half hour a torrent of spiritual eloquence from her lips as she "prophesied" before a spellbound audience.

Months afterward we met her in another city, when, with a look and smile of unutterable rest, she said: "He is still in there." Speaking of it afterwards, she said: "When you told me to look within, I did, and the instant I did so I saw the Savior, and O! He did so smile upon me; and now, whenever I look within, there He is still, and always with the same sweet smile." This woman was a regenerated woman at the time, and she obtained something she never had before. She, with Paul, could say: "It pleased God, who called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me." Thank God for the inward revelation! Not all have it. We can tell it by the faces of the people. Such a secret possessed by the soul could not but flash in the countenance, gleam in the eye, and ring in the voice.

(6) "Running for a prize."

Some people are evidently Christians to escape hell. They are running for eternal life. Salvation with them is getting to heaven at last.

There are others who, like Paul, are "pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The mark is holiness, the prize is that peculiar glory and exaltation that comes to those who crave perfect likeness to their Savior, and who count all things loss that they might win Christ.

It is quite a different thing, and will make a great difference both here and hereafter between the man who is trying simply to gain Heaven and the man who is trying to be heavenly before he reaches Heaven.

This last individual has a deeper salvation. All can see it. There is no economizing on the soul and God-ward side; he is investing heavily in prayer, gifts, substance, and labors for returns in eternity.

He is not shirking duty, nor the pain or shame that comes in the path of duty. The perfunctory spirit seems not to be in him at all. The breath of a three hours' prayer stains the wall, as was the case of John Fletcher. He feels the presence of God everywhere, and carries it everywhere. His religious life seems to be a holy joy and passion. Here is no idler nor mechanical performer of duty. But the spectacle to angels and men is that of a man pressing to a mark for a prize; one who is running, not from a wrath to come, but for a joy and crown and throne, and for the smile of God which awaits all such heavenly racers.

(7) "Election."

This word is one that has been misunderstood and abused, and harm has been made to come of it through meanings attributed that it did not really possess. There can be no election of salvation made irrespective of one's volition, faith, character, and obedience. Men are not elected unconditionally to Heaven, no matter what they do or do not do.

And yet, leaving this out, there is such a word, and it does mean something particularly sweet and blessed to the child of God.

The word means chosen. Applied to political life, we say that a man has been chosen Governor or President by the ballots of the people. In a word, he was elected.

It is one thing to be nominated, and it is a great thing. The man is by nomination running for the high office of Chief Magistrate of the Nation. It is, however, another thing altogether to be elected.

We judge that Mr. Cleveland slept delightfully well when all the votes were in and he heard that he was elected.

The inauguration still remained. That was yet to take place, but created no anxiety. He could afford to wait for that with great composure. It was a certain thing, and bound to be. Preparations were being made already in the Capital City for the reception of the elected nominee. What a time of pleasant anticipation on his part until the day arrived! And what a day it was when it finally came, with its bands of music fluttering banners, battalions of soldiers, and cheering and welcoming multitudes!

We have a feeling in regeneration, that while we have a title to Heaven, we are nominated for a throne and crown. The nominated feeling is one of considerable anxiety. The regenerated man knows well the nominated experience. A sense of uncertainty is often in him mingled with apprehension.

All the ballots are not yet in. The State of Inbred Sin throws in a heavy and dark vote against him.

He fears sometimes he will never be elected. The old Methodist hymn comes up:

“I wonder, Lord, if I’ll ever get to Heaven, to the New Jerusalem.”

But at last, through a perfect consecration and faith, he is elected. Something happens that makes him know it is so. It is not salvation that has come for the first time; nor is it the witness of the Spirit.

It is a work wrought in the soul, and testified to by the Divine Worker, that is different from pardon, and that fills the heart with a joy that is deeper, and transcends the other as the joy of the elected candidate rises above the gladness of the nominated man.

Then comes at once a settled peace, a quiet joy to the soul, that can never be understood by the regenerated man until he knows the distinct blessing of entire sanctification. He is elected. The votes of Inbred Sin have been cast out. He is elected. Every bell in his soul is ringing out the joyful tidings, and how he does now rest and eat and drink in the spiritual life!

One thing only now remains to take place, and that is the inauguration. The Capital City of the universe is already preparing for it. The mansions are being built, the crowns and throne are ready, the banners of salvation are waving, the palms have been prepared, the boulevards are open. The angelic host and inhabitants of the Golden City are anxiously awaiting the time when the march upward from the earth shall commence, and the blood-washed, Spirit-purified, white-robed throng shall enter the gates into the city, to sit down upon seats of eternal honor and glory. Christ shall lead them; the red and white banners of justification and holiness shall wave over them. They gave up all for Jesus. They lived and died for Him. They elected Him out of all beings as their chief joy and all in all, and He has now elected them, and this is the inauguration-day.

What a day it will be! What a time of praising, shouting, and rejoicing, like the sound of many waters and mighty thunders! What a waving of palms, what a welcoming on the part of Heaven, and what glory and reward at last to those who fought the good fight and kept the faith! May we all be there on that day!

12. A GREATER PRIVILEGE

The Savior speaks of the first in John 3:3: “Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God.”

The greater privilege is declared in Hebrews 12:14 “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” One is to see the kingdom; the other, to behold the King.

A difference is taught here, or we are compelled to say that language as a means of conveying truth can not be relied on; or, worse still, that the Spirit is to be convicted of falsity for inspiring speeches that have no meaning in them.

Let the reader bear in mind that the question of salvation is not touched on here, but some peculiar and superior privilege in the spiritual world.

It is one thing to see a kingdom; it is another thing altogether to see the king of that kingdom. The writer, several years ago, saw England; but he did not see the queen. If the first would be considered by some as a blessing, the latter would certainly be a second blessing, in the line of sight-seeing.

The Bible says that we must be born again to see the kingdom of God. The same Bible says that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. The Revised Version says: “The sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord.”

Evidently here is not the question of salvation sprung, but the fact of some peculiar and exalted privilege.

A point that we would make is, that we ought not to allow prejudice, preconceived notions, the inconsistencies--fancied or real, people claiming sanctification, to cheat us out of this heavenly grace and privilege. Our souls good here, and future exalted state, should cause us to quickly settle this question, and, in the face of all difficulties and every opposing influence, to seek to know the Lord in the profoundest way.

In the Beatitudes, the Lord says: “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” This verse, and the corresponding one in Hebrews, undoubtedly refer to the same thing. A vision of God is promised to the purified and sanctified.

Can any one believe that Christ would bless a class of people who do not exist? Then, if so, He would utter an absurdity in virtually saying: “Blessed are a class of people that never were and never can be.” Evidently there must be some who are pure in heart.

Now comes the question home to each converted man: “Did regeneration make you pure?” And, as a regenerated man, has he a pure heart now? The Bible says not? The Methodist standards say not, and the universal experience of the Christian world say not.

Then, according to this, there are found to be two classes of Christians in the world: those who feel their hearts are not pure; and those whom Christ calls blessed because they are pure.

The greater privilege promised the latter is, that they shall see God.

What is it to see God? There are several answers to this question.

First. Let us say, can a man be said to see a mountain when he only beholds a limb or shoulder, or even the half of it? So, as a justified man, and knowing the Lord only as a Pardoner and Regenerator, can he be said to have seen God? He has seen Him as the Pardoner and Savior from personal sins; but is that all the Lord can do? Has He not a profounder work, a still deeper grace, for us? Can He not sanctify?

Moses wanted to see “all of God’s goodness.” He had known a part before; but, unsatisfied and hungry, he waits on the Lord in the mount, and the Lord showed him His goodness.

The man with simply a justified experience, has not felt all that God has for him: has received only a part of the “double cure;”

To get a pure heart is to see, feel, and enjoy God as never before. It is now not a partial redemption, but a whole salvation, that fills him; not simply a Forgiver is Christ, but a Sanctifier as well. He sees the Lord.

Second. This seeing the Lord may refer to a vision of Himself in the heart. We shall never cease to bear in memory the glad cry of a woman who, upon receiving the blessing, was told to look in her heart, and immediately cried out with a voice that thrilled every hearer: “O, Christ is there!”

Third. Seeing God may refer to His image in the countenance of the purified. Nothing has more deeply impressed the writer than the peculiar look that comes into the faces of the sanctified immediately after the reception of the blessing. The wrinkled frown disappears; the sour anxious, care-worn expression vanishes; the lines of the countenance are softened; Brightness is brought out, a sweetness gathers about the mouth and settles in the eyes. The set smile born of a soul at rest, and a conscious indwelling Christ, makes a face not to be forgotten. The writer can tell the sanctified in an instant. Just a glance reveals Christ in their faces. Again the Lord is seen.

Fourth. Seeing God may refer to His recognition in the affairs of life. How hidden He is to some of His people! How hard to recognize Him in dark days and time of sorrow! But there is a clarified vision that comes from a pure heart, that sees the Lord at all times and everywhere. In the cloud, in the storm, or robed in a black manner, yet the pure heart recognizes Him instantly without a moment's hesitation.

Fifth. Seeing God may refer to his return on earth. Some close students of the Bible say there is a coming of Christ for His bride, that precedes by a thousand years His coming to judge the world.

That not all will see Him. Not all will go into the great supper with Him at that time. Some of the virgins that had oil and lamps will not see the Bridegroom at all. There is a day coming of Christ when every eye shall see Him; but there is a night coming that is going to astonish and amaze many in the Church. In the day coming, all will be taken, good and bad alike. In the other coming, the Bible says, "one shall be taken, and the other left." Two women will be grinding at the mill; two will be in a bed; one shall be taken, and the other left. Those that are ready to meet Christ will be caught up and away from the "tribulation" that is to reign on earth, and that precedes the final judgment. Let us live so as to see the Bridegroom when He comes!

Sixth. Seeing the Lord may refer to some peculiar and exalted privilege in Heaven. It may mean a nearness to the Throne, a knowledge of God, a vision of the King, that all may not have who are in Heaven. Let us run no risk in this matter. Salvation is one thing; privilege and honor is another.

Let us strive for purity that we may see and enjoy all of God that is possible for a finite being in this world and the world to come.

13. THE BETTER RESURRECTION

In Hebrews 11:35, we are told that certain persons endured certain things, that they might obtain a Better Resurrection.

If there is such a thing as degrees of comparison, and if there is to be any dependence placed upon the construction of language, then, according to this expression "better," there must be a good resurrection.

No one will admit for a moment that the resurrection of the wicked is a good one. On the contrary, we have the Word of God stating that it is one of "shame and everlasting contempt."

So here we have three types or grades of resurrection--bad, good, and better.

Should one, in a critical spirit, ask where is the best resurrection, and thus seek to cast ridicule upon the thought, we would calmly point to that of the Son of God. Here, as in all other things, He out-ranks and towers above us all.

We are told in the Word of God that the good and bad alike will be raised from their graves on the morning of the last day. At the voice of the Son of God they that sleep in the dust will come forth, some to eternal life and glory, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. This is what is called the General Resurrection.

Where will we find the Better Resurrection? Let the reader turn to Revelation 20:4-6, and see for himself: "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death has no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

The First Resurrection takes place a thousand years before the General Resurrection, and is seen at a glance to be the Better Resurrection.

This is the resurrection that St. Paul talks about in Philippians 3:11-12: "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect."

Many have quoted these words to prove that Paul never had the blessing of Christian perfection, when he is not speaking of that grace at all, but of the glory of a peculiar resurrection.

But, some one says, Why should we be straining after a resurrection, when we all shall be raised, no matter what we do?

In answer, let the reader notice that it is not the General Resurrection that Paul is speaking of and saying that he is laboring for, but a very remarkable resurrection! Not a resurrection in common with all the dead, but one from among or out from the dead. The Revised Version brings out the meaning in the translation of the over-looked or unemphasized *ex* in the Greek.

This, by the way, is the peculiar description of the resurrection of the Savior: Not raised with the dead, but from the dead!

There is a resurrection of a certain band of the Lord's followers that takes place a thousand years before the General Resurrection, and when they are raised they will be taken from the midst of vast multitudes who will slumber on until the last day. So the First Resurrection will be one "out from among the dead."

Well might Paul say he "pressed" forward for such a prize, and exhorted "that as many of us as be perfect be thus minded."

The writer does not know how the reader is "minded;" but he can speak or himself in great certainty that he does not want to lie in the ground any longer than is necessary; that he wants to come forth from the grave as soon as possible; and if there is any grace or blessing in the spiritual life that will bring about this earlier resurrection, he would have it at any cost and in the face of every opposition.

What a luxury it would be to get up a thousand years ahead of the general time, and stand on one's own grave, and shout victory in the face of the devil! What an experience to read the inscription on one's own tombstone, and walk among the graves of myriads who slumber on until the sound of the last trumpet! What a triumph over the adversary, who brought death into the world, to show him that the grave could not hold you; but that everlasting life had commenced in the very world which Satan had undulated with graves and whitened with bones and tombstones!

Now the question arises, Who are they who are thus honored?

In this matter we are not left to conjecture; but the Scripture states plainly: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."

The word holy is the same that in other places is translated "sanctify." The two as translated come from the same Greek word, so that the verse as truly reads: "Blessed and sanctified is he that hath part in the first resurrection." As the honest and wise child of God would read this, he would at once say, if I am not sanctified, then let me at once be. I must be holy, no matter what my be the cost.

The fact is, we can not afford to allow prejudice, man-fear, or anything else, keep us from a grace or blessing that is to usher us into the superior joys and glories of an early rising from among, the dead. O, how some of us long for the time when we shall stand upon our graves, and shout and rejoice in the face of the devil, who introduced death into the world, but who will then see the power of death overcome and destroyed in the mightier strength of the Son of God!

The holy shall rise a thousand years before the morning of the General Resurrection. Let all of us see to it that we obtain and retain holy hearts!

In the fifth verse we read that John saw “the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God,” having part in the first resurrection.

The question arises, Suppose that a man should have been burned alive for Christ, or torn to pieces by instruments of cruelty, would he sleep on while the one beheaded shall be raised? A moment’s thought will show us that the meaning desired to be conveyed is simply that the one who gives up life for Christ shall be thus honored.

In all ages men have had to suffer for the witness of Jesus and the Word of God. As the centuries roll on and Christian teaching becomes crystallized in public sentiment and law, our heads are protected from the decapitating ax, and our lives are safe, but the hatred to the “witnessing” and “testifying” does not change. The spirit of persecution is not gone, but simply controlled and held down by certain forces.

This hate is not allowed to cut off heads, put people on the rack or in prison, but it still waits to strike, and does strike whenever it is allowed. There is an ecclesiastical power that, when it comes down on an offender, sounds exactly like the executioner’s ax as it fell once upon the neck of a victim. The letter written, the public censure, the open threat, the removal and degradation from office or position in the Church, has a sound about it that is wonderfully like the sickening “thud” heard on the block in the Dark Ages.

A certain dignitary on the cars, in reply to the question of a lady as to where he was going, said, “To crush out the holiness movement in _____,” naming a large Western city.

A preacher who had been blessed with a marvelous revival, that had resulted in hundreds of conversions and accessions to the Church, whose preaching was a witnessing for Jesus and a declaring of the Word of God as to what Christ could do, was sent promptly from a prominent to a broken-down appointment.

A physician, writing to the author, said: “They [that is, preacher and stewards] are about to turn me out of the Church for saying that Christ has sanctified my soul. What shall I do?” Our reply was: “Do nothing; let them turn you out, and bear it patiently, trusting all to God.” They turned him out! Twenty members of a certain denomination (not Methodist) were expelled from their Church for no other reason except that they testified to the power of Christ to sanctify. As they filed out of the church where they had worshipped God so long, one of them, an elderly woman, stopped, and looking back at the Church court, said, as she solemnly pointed upward: “You can take our names from your books here, but you can not remove them from the Book of Life up yonder!”

All this sounds like an echo from Patmos, and like voices that come from “under the altar,” saying: “How long, O Lord, how long!”

Mark the similarity: “I, John, on the island that is called Patmos, for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

“And I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held.”

How strangely and strikingly the nineteenth and first centuries agree! It is impossible, today, to witness to all the work of Jesus as taught in the Word of God without suffering coming from it.

Reputation is struck at, social and Church position is affected, salary is changed, friends fall away, favor is withdrawn, while Patmos is seen in broken-down appointments, and punishment for getting “on the altar” is beheld in the being placed, like the martyrs. “under the altar.” Heads were chopped off in those days for the full testimony and witness, and heads are cut off socially and ecclesiastically today for the same offense.

The righteous God sees all these things. He beholds numbers today, as of yore, who are willing to suffer the loss of all things for His sake, and who do so.

His word to them is, I will repay you for it; I will raise you up a thousand years before the rest of the dead, and you shall reign with me on the earth a thousand years!

Other descriptions follow concerning this band, that we merely mention without enlarging upon.

“They worshipped not the beast.” The beast stands for worldliness, whether in or out of the Church. As a certain expositor says, the Church is first seen as a woman running from the beast into the wilderness. Happy the Church that will thus fly from worldliness! But afterward the beast reappears from the wilderness, and, wonder upon wonder! The woman who fled from before it is now seen sitting upon its back, clothed in scarlet! The scarlet dress declares the harlot. The flying woman has made peace with the beast, and is now a spiritual harlot! This has been the dreadful spectacle beheld by Heaven and earth, and a sight not confined to the Catholic Church, but is beheld in the Protestant as well. But in face of this encroaching spirit of worldliness that we have seen in pulpit, pew, choir, financial methods, and amusement features in the Church, there is a band of men and women who will not bow down to this beast or state of affairs. Such a stand brings upon them social and ecclesiastical ostracism and much reproach; but the Lord says He will reward them fully for all these sufferings, and they shall be raised in the first resurrection.

It is furthermore said of them that they are “priests of God and of Christ.”

The Levite existed in Old Testament times, and is still seen in the Christian life. He could not, and can not now, conduct religious service. Christ came to purify the “sons of Levi,” and, by his blood, transform them into priests. This is what is done in sanctification. The Levite becomes a priest, and the man now, whether at home or social circle, or at Church, can conduct religious worship. The writer recalls the case of a dying man, who wanted some one to pray for him. The clergyman went to his house rapidly to get his “Book of Prayer.” The man died before he got back with his little form of rituals; but, fortunately, there happened to be a “priest of God” in the house, in the form of a layman, who knelt down by his side, and prayed with and guided the man’s soul to the Savior.

“They shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

These people of the First Resurrection are going to have a blessed time. They will not only come forth from the grave, but shall sit upon thrones? And rule with Christ through the millennial glory of the world.

May we see to it that we obtain the sanctifying blood! It matters not if we are exiled to Patmos, or beheaded ecclesiastically, or cast out of the synagogue as altogether vile,—the compensation is overwhelming for all these sufferings. We will have been with the Lord in body, and assisted Him in the rapid conquest of the nations, and grown accustomed to crowns, thrones, and ruling, a thousand years before the trumpet of the archangel shall sound, and the innumerable millions of the human race awake forever from their long sleep in the dust.

14. THE ABUNDANT ENTRANCE INTO HEAVEN

Many people are so taken up with the thought of getting into Heaven that the fact of there being a different kind of entrance or admission never seems to occur to them.

A lady once told the writer that all she desired was to be able to get inside the gate. This speech, with an appearance of humility was really one of unbelief, and showed utter failure to comprehend the marvelous privileges secured to us by the death of Christ.

According to Scripture, there are two kinds of entrance into glory, and one is better than the other.

In I Peter 4:18, we have the following statement: "If the righteous scarcely be saved." The words which we italicize plainly teach an admission, not of the best, but one attended with doubt and difficulty.

Paul in I Cor. 3:15, speaking of a man's works being burned, ads: "He himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." The figure is certainly most striking. It is that of a man who is asleep while his house is on fire. He slumbers on, unconscious of his danger. Some one runs along the street crying, "Fire!" The bells are tolling the alarm. But he hears nothing, and sleeps on, with flames about, and above him. Finally, a passing friend remembers him, and, seeing the burning building and no sign of life stirring, breaks open the door with a single blow of his foot, seizes his sleeping friend by the arm, and bids him, with a loud cry, to run for his life! The man opens his eyes, see the fire everywhere, realizes his peril at a glance, does not stop to take hat, shoes, article of dress, watch, purse, or anything; but with one wild leap, clears the door just as the whole roof falls in with a terrible crash. He is saved as by fire.

So, says the Apostle Paul some people will behold every work burned up, but be saved themselves, yet as by fire.

Peter, however, was not talking about this class when he speaks of the righteous.

To know what he means, let every justified man, who has carried inbred sin in his heart for years, confess to the existence of grave fears in that time as to whether he would finally be saved. He that has been repeatedly betrayed into irritability, anger, pride, a disposition to settled dislikes, etc., has had enough to make him sing, with emphasis and meaning, the old hymn of the colored people: "I wonder, Lord, if I will ever get to Heaven!"

There are Christians today that do not feel easy about their final salvation. If dying suddenly today, and saved, they feel it would be of the "scarcely-saved" order.

Preachers, reading these words, will thoroughly understand what we mean. There has not been a pastor but has been troubled about the final salvation of some of his flock. One of these pastors--now a bishop--said, about a certain prominent member of his congregation, as he lamented the religious "ins and outs" of the brother, his wanderings and recoveries, that it looked like a pity God did not kill and take him to Heaven while he was in or crossing the road of righteousness. More light we see in this remark on I Peter 4:18: "If the righteous scarcely be saved."

We feel the truth in the passage still more deeply after a pastoral occurrence of the following character: News comes to the parsonage, one day, that Brother Blank, steward, trustee, and perhaps Sunday-school teacher, is very sick! And likely to die. The pastor promptly visits the dying-bed, and, to his surprise, obtains no satisfactory reply from the sinking man about his spiritual condition. He is strangely reticent. There is no light in his face, and no response during the closing prayer. To direct questions as to his spiritual state, there is a marked evasion in reply. Full of concern, the pastor sends the most spiritual of his members to sing and pray with the brother. On their return, they report that he did not join in song or prayer, and did not request them to return; but said, in answer to their offer to come again, "that if they decided to come, he would be pleased to see them"--a polite speech that was felt to have no religious ring in it. After a week's sickness, it was whispered one afternoon that Brother Blank, steward, trustee and Sunday-school teacher, was dead. To the anxious query, "How he died?" it was told that, about two hours before he passed away, he said he was reconciled to go.

More light, verily, On I Peter 4:18! Another righteous man scarcely saved!

A preacher once told the writer of the death of a very prominent preacher in our Church. The "prominent preacher" was very prominent. Many praised him. His hands were full of business for the Church. When he came to die, a minister sitting by his bedside asked him about his spiritual state, and was surprised to receive an evasive reply. He put the question in a plainer manner, and was this time alarmed at the answers given. He communicated his uneasiness to another preacher in the same town and together they visited, talked, and prayed with this man who had been betrayed into going deeper into Church-work than in the grace of God. Finally, Church-work and ecclesiastical affairs that should be and can be a blessing, yet can become a snare and even ruin to the soul. The Jewish Church was very busy, but very dead, when Christ came and looked upon it. He said it was as beautiful as a polished sepulcher, but covered corruption and dead men's bones.

After a few days or a week the "prominent" brother expressed his willingness to die. Decidedly a negative expression of that full salvation and joyous faith and confidence taught in the Bible. Think of a man becoming, after days of prayer, resigned to go to Heaven! Paul longed to go.

How the light falls on I Peter 4:18!

So much for this bare entrance into glory.

There is a better one, which Peter calls the "abundant entrance."

In his second epistle, Peter writes that there are "exceeding great and precious promises," and through them "we become partakers of the Divine nature," having already "escaped the corruption of the world through lust." Here are the two works of grace. The man, "having escaped the corruption of the world," is confronted by promises of a still higher nature, and through them becomes a "partaker of the divine nature."

To this state of grace the man adds virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, and every other excellent grace and virtue.

If he fails to do this, he will soon suffer loss, and by and by "forget that he was purged [not forgiven] from his old sins."

But if he goes on abounding in the good way, Peter says he will "neither be barren nor unfruitful" "shall never fail" and--blessed, glorious privilege of grace--"an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Here, any one can see, is a vivid contrast to what he speaks of in chapter 4:18.

First Peter iv, 18, describes a bare admission into Heaven; but II Peter 1:11 declares an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom. The first man was "righteous;" the second, according to the statement made in the fourth verse, had received a second grace; for he, through certain gracious promises, became a partaker of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption of the world through lust. The first was scarcely saved, the second character was abundantly saved. Is there a difference between "scarcely" and "abundantly?"

The writer wants an abundant entrance into glory. Who would not have it? Especially since it is our privilege through Christ.

Let us hunt up the exceeding great and precious promises, where God says: "From all your filthiness and all your idols will I cleanse you; and I will take the stony heart out of our flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you;" "Tarry at Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high;"

"For the promise is to you and your children, and to them that are afar off, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call;" and lo! He calls all of us to holiness.

Thus shall we be prepared for abundant usefulness and for the abundant entrance into Heaven.

Thus went into glory one of the Northern Methodist preachers, who said exultantly with his dying breath: "I am sweeping through the gates."

So swept in a sanctified preacher's wife of our acquaintance, who, when she was dying and told she would pass away in five minutes, looked up and said, "And this is death! Hallelujah!" and was gone.

Somehow, if God wills, we would like to do our best preaching on the day of our death. We would like our dying bed to be a pulpit of fire; it side to be an altar of salvation to others; and the soul just tarrying to speak a few farewell words before springing up and away on its pathway beyond the stars.

There are twelve gates to the city--three on the north, three on the south, three on the east, and three on the west. Somehow we would prefer to enter though the center gate on the sunny south side.

And when we are gone, may it not be said of us that he was simply resigned to go, but he longed to depart and be with Christ!

Elijah was not "scarcely saved," but swept upward with an abundant entrance into glory. The same chariot and horses of fire are in Heaven.

May we live so that they will be sent for us, and as we float upward with trails of glory left in dying face and last speeches, may Elishas left behind catch up the falling glory, and so perpetuate the line of men who desire and shall have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom!

15. THE BETTER REWARD AT THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

We once thought that the redeemed race entered and took rank in Heaven just alike. But a deeper study of the Word has long ago showed us our profound mistake.

The very instinct of justice would cry out against such a state of things. The Judge that would reward alike a John Wesley and the unsacrificing life of many of the Christians that we see around us, would show himself lacking in the first principles of justice. Moreover, it would be so at war with our own knowledge of what is right and just, that there would be an outcry against it at the Judgment.

All would feel that the judges of our own petty courts on earth could do better than that.

The Bible passage to which some cling to support them in the monstrous error that all will be rewarded alike, is the parable where the laborers are represented as coming in at all hours, even to the eleventh, and the lord or owner of the vineyard is seen giving all a penny alike, whether they had labored six hours, three, or one, saying: "May I not do what I will with my own?"

All this is plausible; but, unfortunately for the quoter, this passage was not intended to teach the manner of rewarding in Heaven, but the intrustment and benefit of the Church to different nations on earth. The Jews had it given to them in the beginning of the day; the Gentiles were called at the eleventh hour, and lo! The same "penny"--i.e., the same benefits and grace--was given to them as to those who had borne the burden and heat of the day for centuries.

A better parable to quote, to get at the idea of difference in rewards, is that of the "pounds." In that we see that to each of the servants was given a pound. So to all of us who will accept is salvation presented. But we find that one man so uses the gift of His master as to bring up ten pounds, and another appears with an increase of five. To the first the word is spoken, "Have thou authority over ten cities;" to the second, "Be thou over three cities;" to the man who buried his pound, there was no reward, but a taking away from him of what he had.

So the Lord's own words teach the fact of grades in reward.

The same truth is taught again in the word: "They that suffer with Him shall reign with Him." Not all suffer for or with Christ; but others do. They drink a bitter cup for the gospel's sake. They endure the cross, despite the shame, for Christ's sake. They are made to suffer in many ways where multitudes of believers never feel a pang. The promise is, they shall reign. So some are on thrones, and some are not.

Again, we have the Word: "Let no man take thy crown!"

The warning here is not in reference to salvation itself, but to honor and dignity. There will be crowned heads in Heaven, and some without crowns. As in an earthly kingdom not all are crowned and sceptered rulers, so in the kingdom above. Everybody on a throne in Heaven would be a strange and anomalous sight. A crown is a reward, not salvation. Let no man take thy crown!

Still again, the fact appears in Rev. 22:12: "Behold, I come quickly; ... to give every man according as his work shall be."

Still again, the fact appears in Romans 2:6: "Who will render to every man according to his deeds;" and in 2 Cor. 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Still again, the words: "And every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor." Away, then, goes the thought that we all shine alike in Heaven. Paul says, distinctly: "As one star differeth from another star in glory so also shall be the resurrection of the dead."

The author of this work made a desperate effort for years to level everything in Heaven; but encountered so many statements and facts altogether irreconcilable with such a theory, that his eyes were opened with a great wonder to see that the Word taught a twofold salvation--a salvation of the multitude, and a salvation of kings and priests. In other words, that many people are saved on death-beds; and many who are converted, but have shirked the cross; and many who have adopted a temporizing life, barely keeping the light of justification,--and these, with others, form what John calls an "innumerable multitude." They have been saved out of every kindred and tribe and people.

We would be utterly blind not to see that multitudes are being saved who never arose above mediocrity in the Christian life.

On the other hand, there is a salvation going on, side by side with that of these people, of the deepest character--a redemption from fear, idleness, and sin. We see them as a company of moral stalwarts, a Gideon's Band, who have given up all for Christ, and who count name, reputation, and life itself, naught for His sake.

God, looking at them, calls them "priests and kings." A priest is a conductor of religious worship: one who labors, intercedes, and prevails for others. A king is one who has such power over self and others that God gives the real title to him. To apply these terms to the great body of believers would be such evident misnomers as to excite a smile.

It is distinctly stated that those who are to reign with Christ in the Millennium are kings and priest; and that not all God's people are kings and priests is known by experience, observation, and Divine statement. So the difference of reward is seen in the fact of crowns and thrones given to some above others; for the idea of giving a crown and throne to those who did not take up the cross and deny themselves daily, but barely got into Heaven through the pitying grace of God, is simply preposterous, and manifestly opposed to all ideas and instincts of right and justice, and altogether contrary to the plain teaching of the Word of God.

Let the reader run his eye over a multitude he has seen in the Church, to get full confirmation of mind in regard to the thought.

The point some would make here is, that while it is true that works affect our reward in Heaven, what has that reward to do with, and how is it affected by, the second work of grace, or sanctification?

In reply, we say that the baptism of the Holy Ghost, or the blessing of entire sanctification, gives us the grace and power to work as never before. It qualifies and energizes us for the work. The disciples, after the reception of the blessing, were like new men, and abounded, from that day until death, in the work of the Lord.

So is it with all who receive the baptism of fire. The stream is up; the zeal of the lord's house eats them up; they are constrained to go and work; there is a fire in their bones; they can not rest, like the seraphim, day nor night, while they think, speak, write, and labor for the Lord and the salvation of men.

The writer was much struck with a formula he heard given by a minister:

“Children are justified without faith or works.
“Sinners are justified by faith alone.
“Christians are justified by faith and works.
“At the Judgment, we are justified by works alone.”

To sum up: faith alone in Christ will admit a soul into Heaven; but one’s station in Heaven is regulated by his works.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire will bring forth works as the sap, coursing up the tree, will cover it with blossoms and fruit.

The reward is according to the works. How foolish to reject the blessing that qualifies and enables us to bring forth the works in abundance that are to regulate our reward!

Heaven itself is truly a reward; but the Savior speaks, and says: “To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.”

O, for the better reward!

16. THE BETTER COMPANY IN HEAVEN

According to the seventh and fourteenth chapters of Revelation, there are two companies of redeemed people in Heaven. The fact of two distinct bands is the striking thought of these passages of Scripture; for while both are saved and in glory, yet there is a difference between them plainly observable.

There is no question about the identity of the “multitude that no man could number.” These are evidently the vast hosts who, in life and at death, have believed on the Son of God and been saved.

No man can number them, says the Word; and it is true. These are the regenerated, out of every land and kindred and tribe and people. They are washed in the blood of the Lamb.

But who and what is this other company of 144,000? Many have hazarded opinions, and if others have done so, why may not the writer try to interpret, if he does so humbly and reverently.

Some suppose that this company stand for those Jews who believed on Christ in the first century.

But why confine it to the first hundred years? And what is there so different in the faith of a Jew and a Gentile as to create this marked distinction we see in Heaven?

Some have suggested that the 144,000 stand for little children. They base their supposition on the expression that these “were not defiled with women.”

Two facts show up the absurdity of this idea: One is, that nearly one-third of the human race die in childhood, and as we know that children are saved, the 144,000 utterly fails to be a proper symbol of the magnitude of their number in glory. The other fact is, that if they are children, then, of course, they have not been “defiled,” and to make this expression refer to that is to accuse the Holy Ghost of uttering a preposterous and needless saying.

Our own firm belief is, that the 144,000 stand for those who were sanctified in this life, waiting not for the dying hour to receive a work of grace which Christ stands ready and willing and able to perform at the present moment. When we remember what it costs to obtain this blessing--what ridicule, opposition, persecution, and ecclesiastical rejection it invariably entails--we are not surprised that the suffering ones have a distinction accorded them that is not granted to all who are in Heaven.

We have made the point elsewhere that all believers must be sanctified before seeing the Lord and that many obtain this grace only on a death-bed, because they heard not of it, or were not properly taught; or, as is most generally the case, were unwilling to pay the great cost of the experience.

The question may be raised, if all of us, either in life or in the death hour, obtain sanctification, why should there be a difference existing between us in Heaven?

To this we reply that He who says that as “one star differeth from another star,” so also shall be our resurrection body; and He who is to say to one, “Take thou authority over ten cities,” and to another, “Rule thou over five cities,” He is a just God and will do right. Moreover, let it be remembered that there is bound to be a great difference in the faith, life, religious character, labors, and sacrifices of a man who sought the blessing of holiness at the cost of the death of self, the loss of all things--keeping it in face of raging devils, a hating world, a ridiculing and persecuting Church -- and that man who obtains it in a dying hour. If any one thinks that such a life will not be accorded a special distinction in the world to come, he has forgotten that God is just; and needs to be reminded that the Scripture itself ends with a recognition of two grades of spiritual life in Heaven. Hear it: “He that is righteous let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.”

Sanctification in death gives that purity or holiness of heart without which no man shall see the Lord, but it does not make up for the life that could have been spent in such union and communion with God and such toil for souls as would have told on the world and Church forever. The character is crystallized at death; the book is finished; the tree lies as it falls; we take rank in Heaven as we actually were in God’s sight on earth. A faith that recognized and took Christ as the uttermost Savior, as a Sanctifier, as much as Pardoner, was bound on earth to affect the soul’s life and development, and is bound for the “blood’s sake,” to be honored and distinguished in Heaven. It is, after all a distinction of grace. Christ is honored by it.

With these thoughts in mind, let us see if we can find any signs or features about the 144000 that would confirm the assertion that they represent the sanctified.

One is that it is a much smaller band than the other. The first can not be numbered, but the second is 144,000. This disparity has always been seen on earth, and it is not surprising that it should appear in Heaven. For some reason, comparatively few have accepted the grace of sanctification. In our Church membership, pastors report hundreds of regenerated members, but only a dozen or score of sanctified ones. In the revival it is often the same way; scores are pardoned, but only a few are purified. This is to be accounted for partly through lack of instruction of the people, and partly because it costs more to be sanctified than justified. To obtain the latter a man gives up his sins; to secure the former he gives up himself. Regeneration is a birth, while sanctification is a crucifixion.

It is easier, both in the physical and spiritual world, to be born than to die. John explains why there is a great multitude in Heaven which can not be numbered, and right in the same Heaven another company of 144,000.

Some objector may say that the 144,000 is a very small number to describe the sanctified hosts of all ages. But we must bear in mind that it is a symbolic figure, and does not mean literally 144,000. On the other hand, it is not to be construed as meaning an innumerable host like the other, because the perfect number twelve is multiplied by another perfect number twelve, thereby producing the doubly perfect number 144. This mistake we are saved from making by observing that the 144,000 is contrasted in size with the innumerable multitude. The whole truth taught is, that while the 144,000 is a much smaller company than the innumerable multitude, it is nevertheless a perfect number.

A second fact appearing is, that the 144,000 were all “sealed.” This is not said of the innumerable multitude. Sealing can not be birth. A thing has to be born or made before it can be sealed. So right here appears a second work of grace.

This is made perfectly clear in Ephesians 1:13: “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, ... in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.” The emphasized words clearly show that there is a subsequent work of grace that is here called sealing.

Webster says that to seal is to confirm, ratify, establish, to make fast, to keep secure or secret.

None of these terms can be twisted into synonyms of the word “regeneration.”

History teaches us that when the Roman Governor had sealed the tomb of our Lord, it meant that no one could enter. It was made inviolable. The Roman Government stood by and behind that seal.

Daily life tells us that when one seals an envelope, from that moment something is shut up for himself and another. It means secrecy, sacredness, and peculiar ownership. The letter is first written, and then, sometime after, sealed. So God writes His law, and deposits His love in our hearts. He places very precious things there. Afterward He seals. There is a second work of grace that brings the soul into a sacred nearness to God--into a hidden and, to outsiders, a mysterious life. There is a holy grace that shuts one up and in with God. There is a delightful understanding, a blessed secret, between the Sealer and the sealed, known only to them.

God’s peculiar protection and ownership is seen and, above all deliciously felt in the seal. Who dares to tamper with a sealed letter or package? Whereas, an open missile or bundle is a temptation and invitation to prying eyes and ruthless fingers.

The soul instinctively craves this second and finishing work of God. The Methodist Church acknowledges the fact in one of its celebrated hymns, where, after a lament over wandering, there is immediately added a petition:

“Here’s my heart, O take and seal it;
Seal it for Thy courts above.”

According to this hymn, the “sealing” comes afterward. St. Paul declares the same thing: “In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed.”

A third fact stated is, that they were taken from Israel--some from Judah, Simeon, and the other tribes, but all from Israel. This is deeply significant. It shows that the smaller band came out of the great multitude; that the sanctified are found in and lifted from the regenerated or God’s Israel.

A fourth feature of the 144000 is God’s name in their foreheads. This is still more striking. It declares a higher grade of religious experience. It proclaims a manifest and unmistakable piety. What they were was evident to all. Their relation to God was the prominent and conspicuous fact of their lives. Certainly it is well for the cause of God when his people are thus easily recognized. It is not the case with all of his children, but it is invariably so with those who are genuinely sanctified.

It is worthy of remark that the severe judgments and criticisms passed upon holiness people are in reference to their religious lives. No one accuses them of worldliness. As in the case of Daniel the accusation is made about their worship, their self-denials, and their God. Their uprightness is the prominent thing with them: it shines from their faces, it is written on their foreheads. And the religious life is attacked because conspicuous.

A fifth feature noticeable is their joyous and fresh experience. The passage under scrutiny says that they sung, and it was a new song. Two things have invariably impressed us about the holiness people: One, their gladness; and the other the constant newness and freshness of their religious life and experience. As a holy man once said in our hearing, “Every day is like a new conversion to my soul.” They are the happiest people in the world today: always singing, shouting, or praising God, and always having new and delightful manifestations of Divine grace. Strike them where and when you will they have just found something wonderfully precious in the Bible, or Christ has revealed Himself in a blessed way to the heart, or in a marvelous manner in His providence, and they are running over. They have the melody in the heart that Paul speaks of, and the “well of water” in the soul that Jesus told the Samaritan woman about. So who wonders at their gladness and spiritual freshness?

A sixth observable fact is, that their experience was a peculiar one. The third verse says that no one could learn the song they sung but themselves. So the innumerable multitude, washed and saved, did not sing the song. Only the 144,000 could sing it.

The teaching is unmistakable that there is a religious experience not known to all of God’s children. It has always been so, and will be to the end of time. Many could not sing the song that the 144,000 sung. More than once the writer has seen regenerated people try to imitate the sanctified in their experience and rejoicing, but it was an evident and utter failure. The most difficult of things to do is to praise God, and rejoice in spirit and lip, when the spirit of praise and rejoicing is not in you. In the regenerated life this rejoicing comes at certain wide-apart times as a result of much prayer or revival effort. In the sanctified life the inward rejoicing is a constant experience; for the cause of it is indwelling and abiding. How easy for them at all times to praise God, with this unending melody within, and salvation, like a well of water, gushing and springing up in the soul all the time into everlasting life; while how difficult, and indeed impossible, for those to do so who are strangers to this work of grace! No one could sing the song but the 144,000.

A seventh fact is their purity. They were not “defiled.” Commentators, like Dr. Clarke, say this means simply spiritual chastity. Here are the pure in heart, whom Christ in His sermon calls “blessed.” There is a grace which keeps God’s child unspotted from the world. There are such people today. They are a peculiar people: their garments are kept constantly white by the blood, and God continually abides in them and is glorified by them. They may be a small number compared to the great mass, perhaps as 144,000 to an innumerable multitude; but they exist for all that in this world, and will be signally rewarded in Heaven.

An eighth description reveals the fact that there is no guile in their mouth. If any one should ask me to name a distinguishing trait of sanctified people, I would reply that their conversation is in Heaven, their language chaste and pure. No profane word repeated as having occurred in a story, no impure anecdote; nothing in the conversation that would show a relish for or bias of mind toward anything unclean; no slander, nor abuse, nor slang, nor worldly fun nor low wit.

The tongue is pure, because the heart is clean. There is no guile in their mouth.

A ninth description shows them without fault before God; not without fault before men. There will never be a time that we will be able to measure up to the exacting standards of men. The Savior Himself could not please men, and brought upon Himself their bitter censure. To the morally jaundiced eye of that period he was unlovely. But here is an experience where, in spite of adverse criticisms and disapproval in high places, you can still be without fault before God. Christ can do such a work in sanctification, that the heart is not only made pure, but kept pure, while the soul rejoices in an unbroken consciousness of Divine approbation. The Bridegroom’s affirmation to the soul married to Him is: “Thou art all fair, my love.”

A tenth description is, that they “followed the Lamb whithersoever He went.” Here, in a sentence, we find that consecration, devotion, and perfect obedience that are the striking features of the life of holiness. The sanctified man is a follower of Christ in all things and at all times.

There are many Christians who will follow Christ, but not all the time and everywhere. Some things and places they shrink from. Some calls they do not heed, some crosses they will not take up.

But the sanctified man is ready for Gethsemane with its loneliness, the judgment-seat of man with its false witnessing, and the cross with its shame and suffering. All that is needed is for Christ to lead, and they will follow.

Does the reader see a difference between the two companies, or not? A mightier faith, that claimed and received holiness in this life, results in a purer life and greater deeds for God; and the holy and just One who says, “according to your faith “ and according to the “deeds done in the body,” that Judge of perfect righteousness will honor the splendid royal faith that

honors fully the blood, and there will be two companies as shown in Revelation. One believed in the power of the blood to pardon; the other, in its power to sanctify. One believed it could save us in sin; the other, that it could save us "from sin." One looked for perfect salvation in the future, at death, or in Heaven; the other trusted for and obtained the full and perfect salvation as a present experience--now. Such a superior faith in Christ is bound to result in a more exalted experience and devoted life, and is comprehend by a just God to be peculiarly honored in Heaven.

Once admit what John insists on here that there are two companies in Heaven, no matter what has originated them--and the principle for which we contend is admitted. We can not conceive of anything that could so properly account for the existence of the two bands as the two different faiths, just mentioned, in the power of Christ's blood.

The innumerable company believed in it for pardon; the smaller company trusted it for holiness.

The first looked for purity of heart to come in the future, with the help of time and growth in grace; the second, trusting in the blood alone, believed for and accepted sanctification now.

It is this second and smaller company that most honored Christ; and it is not surprising that He should be seen peculiarly honoring them in the day of rewards and in the kingdom of Heaven.

*This chapter is taken from the author's "Second Blessing in Symbol" to complete the argument of this book.

17. THE HIGHER GRADE IN ETERNITY

It is wonderful how painfully sensitive some Christians are at the thought of differences of station in Heaven.

When, in addition to this, we show from the Scripture a different moral grade in the Character World above, and perpetuated through eternity, a feeling of resentment will doubtless arise in some minds.

Some have asked the question, What right has one to classify Christians? In reply, we say that Christ did it, and far more rigidly than we ever dreamed of doing. If the reader will study the first few verses of the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of St. John, he will see that Christ, in the figure of the Vine and Branches, divides the Christian world into four classes; namely, the no-fruit, the some-fruit, the more-fruit, and the much-fruit branches. All stand for just the kind of people we have seen in the Christian life.

When we turn to the angelic world we find cherubim, seraphim, archangels and angels. This certainly should prepare the mind for the fact of a higher moral grade among the redeemed of our race in Heaven.

The truth is plainly taught in the last chapter of Revelation.

The judgment is over; the great plain of the seat of trial is empty and forsaken; the vast concourse of angels and men who once covered it have vanished, in the blue above or in the blackness beneath, to different worlds. St. John, in spirit, is left surveying the scene, and the speaker of this wonderful book concludes the revelation by pointing the man away to the consideration of the destiny of the race.

Character is now crystallized and perpetuated forever, without hope of change. As the tree falleth, so shall it lie. If it falls to the north, it shall lie to the north; if it falls to the south, it shall lie to the south. If the soul falls hellward, it shall lie hellward; if heavenward, it shall be heavenly forever.

Nor is this all for in the two worlds is seen the solemn fact of moral grade. The Divine hand points downward to the bottomless pit, and the word is pronounced: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still." Here is the man who neglected, not rejected salvation, and is lost. He is an unpardoned, unjustified man. Let him be unjust still.

But there is a rank beneath that class--listen: "And he that is filthy, let him be filthy still." Here is a character darker and fouler than the other. Here is a man who not only refused salvation, but added all vileness of living to his unbelief. He has become filthy. Let him be filthy forever! Is now the word.

After this, the hand points upward to the Paradise above, and as the eye settles on the jasper walled city with its white-robed inhabitants, the voice that divides speaks again, and says: "He that is righteous, let him be righteous still." Here is the pardoned man, the individual who was satisfied simply to be saved. He, with nothing marked or distinguished in the line of spiritual excellence, kept justifying grace, and so enters Heaven. Let him be righteous still.

But the hand points higher, and the voice peaks again: "And he that is holy, let him be holy still!" Here shines the character who was not satisfied with simply a justified life, but hungered and thirsted after righteousness. He panted to be holy and craved the full image of Christ. This world and all it had to offer was gladly given up that he might find the hidden life in God. He cheerfully endured shame, suffering, and the loss of all things, that he might win Christ in His fullness. Such desires and such a life brought a peculiar blessing and a wondrous transformation, which would appear not only on earth, but in its greatest effulgence in Heaven; and so the voice says: "He that is holy, let him be holy still."

As one rank was beneath another in hell so one class is seen to tower above another in Heaven.

Moral grade and the perpetuation of moral grade is seen in the contrasted words "unjust" and "filthy," and "righteous" and "holy." The first contrast is not more marked than the second.

We doubt not that there is a ceaseless moral sinking in hell and there is a constant spiritual growth and development in Heaven; but the two grades remain sharply and distinctly drawn through all the sinking in one world and the rising in the other. For if the "unjust" become lower in hell so does the "filthy;" and if the "righteous" keep rising in Heaven, so does in like measure the "holy;" and the division line is ever seen as between archangel and angel and cherubim and seraphim.

What says the Book? "He that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

Men may choose a flowery path to Heaven, they may shun crosses and avoid the reproach and hardship and daily dying of the true Christian life to which we are all called; they may go on in a soft, compromising way, called "Rabbi" in the market places, and all men speaking well of them; but as certainly as there is justice in eternity, and a just God on the throne, they will wake at the judgment to see they are "rewarded according to their works." They have shaped the size of their own cups of happiness; they have the resurrection body shining in a degree of glory according as they suffered and toiled for Christ, and in a word, that they, with all other men, go to the place prepared for them, because they prepared themselves for the place. Or it will be said of them, as of an individual in the Bible: "He went unto his own place." "Truly, as spoken by Daniel it will be said of all: "Thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

Who would not have the best in Heaven, and be nearest the throne? And what shall be thought of one who, being informed of the way that leads to it, the grace that prepares for it, refuses to walk in the one and rejects the other?

We once read of a man who had a vision one night as he slept. There stood before him a shining being of such beauty of countenance, such dignity of bearing, such glory of appearance, that his soul almost swooned at the sight. In a little while the form began to fade away, and a voice said aloud, in his dream: "This would have been yourself, had you not turned aside from the will of God, and thus lost the grace that would thus have transformed you!"

Many will feel the truth contained in that vision in the eternal world. There is no second probation. There is no other opportunity given us after death to sell all take up the cross, deny self daily, and follow Christ. We will see our mistake too late. We can not come back to school; for the school-house is burned up, with all its works. The vineyard is empty and desolate; the laborers have been called to receive their hire. No chance now to warn sinners, help the poor, visit the sick, and do the things that Christ commanded. The day is over; the night has come when no man can work.

If we have "nothing but leaves," if we have idled away the hours in dreaming or shirking toil there is nothing to do now but wait for the lord to come in, hear our doom, receive our pay, be it great or small and take the place which has been prepared for us, and which, strange to say, we, by our own lives on earth, prepared, and in which we take position, the very grade declaring to the universe what we have been while living, and what we have done for man and God.

God calls believers to holiness in the Bible as clearly as He does sinners to pardon. May we hear and heed the call! The Better Way is open for us that leads to peculiar honor and glory in Heaven.

The light falls upon it. It is a beautiful way, a safe way, and a happy way. Christ bids us come. The Spirit says, Come. The Bride says, Come. Ten thousand sanctified souls, rejoicing in a clean heart, cry, Come! May every one that heareth come! May the reader of this volume determine now to come; and may we all be found in the way of holiness, with songs and everlasting joy, pressing on in the upward course to the Jerusalem that is above!

18. HOW TO ENTER THE BETTER WAY -- MOSES' WAY

We trust that enough has been said to make the reader hungry for a deeper work of grace; and that the earnest query and cry of the heart is, "How can I enter?"

The conditions are, consecration and faith, with importunate prayer. Expressed differently by writers inspired and non-inspired; yet the three great mountain-peaks of consecration, faith, and prayer are seen rising above all the mists and clouds of language and controversy.

Let the opposers say what they will about having consecrated as repenting sinners, yet all thoughtful men must admit that the agitated consecration of a penitent sinner is one thing, and the calm, all-embracing devotement of self, time, talents, substance, wholly and forever to God, of the illuminated child of Heaven, is another thing altogether.

The writer firmly believes that the sinner can not consecrate; that he has nothing but sin on hand, and how can one consecrate sin? We believe the teaching of the Bible is, and that it is confirmed by life, that a sinner surrenders, and a Christian consecrates.

Yet, even if the reader would not agree to this, it still remains that the Christian's consecration is much deeper, broader, richer, every way, than that of the sinner. This fact comes out vividly in the Parables of the Treasure and Pearl. There it is seen that the "all" (consecration) of the "wayfarer," which purchased the field in which was the buried treasure, was far less than the "all" (consecration) of the "merchantman," which secured the pearl of great price. The "all" of the wayfarer could never have bought the pearl.

In happy correspondence with this thought we notice that the Bible does not say the box of treasure was of "great price." The "pearl" outranked the "box."

So it is that everywhere a perfect consecration faces the soul as the gateway to entire sanctification. All writers harmonize here.

Let us glance at the different and yet same way in which we are told to secure holiness, or the Better Way.

MOSES' WAY.

This is laid down in Deuteronomy 26:17, 18, and 19:

Thou hast avouched the Lord this day "To be thy God,."And to walk in His ways, "And to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, "And to hearken unto His voice."

Here, in the 17th verse, are the four features of a perfect consecration:

"The Lord shall be our God."

No other God shall be ours. He shall rule and reign in heart and life.

"We will walk in His ways."

Not the ways of the world or men. God has ways for us. They are plainly laid down as to spirit and conduct, and illustrated by Christ. We promise to be found in them.

"We will keep His statutes, commandments, and judgments."

They ought to be well known--the Ten Commandments--and their amplification in more minute commands. How can a law-breaker receive the blessing of sanctification? So the commandments [touching idolatry, image-worship, light or profane handling of God's name, disobedience to parents, murder by hand or heart, adultery in act or look, stealing, false witnessing, and coveting,] must be reviewed, and we must let them glow and sparkle again, as they once did from the finger of God on the table of stone.

"And to hearken unto His voice."

God has calls outside of the Book to special services and duties. There are messages He wishes us to deliver, warnings to speak, letters to write, sermons to preach, duties to perform, and sacrifices to make. He may want us to go in the pulpit in a Christian land, or to cross the sea, and work for Him on a foreign shore. No matter what, we promise to hearken unto His voice.

All we ask is, to be sure it is His voice; and He will not leave us in doubt there: "My sheep know My voice."

What is all this but a perfect consecration, and all mixed up with the sublimest faith?

The result that will come from such a consecration and faith is declared in the 18th and 19th verses--the very blessing itself. Hear the Word:

"And the Lord hath avouched thee this day "To be His peculiar people,."And that thou shouldst keep all His commandments; "And to make thee high above all nations, in praise, and in name, and in honor; "And that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God."

Let the reader examine, and he will see the striking feature of a sanctified life plainly drawn in the words,

A peculiar people.
An obedient people;
keeping his commandments.
An exalted people;
high above others in praise, name, and honor.
And a holy people.

Let the reader notice that we first "avouch " the Lord to be our God; and then He "avouches us" to be His people.

Of course there follows, peculiarly in the Gospel sense, the obedience that is the condition of keeping the light, the exaltation in praise and honor and the life of holiness before God.

This remarkable passage can no more be confined to the Jews than the promise of the Messiah.

The writer used this passage as one of the stepping stones in crossing Jordan into Canaan.

Several years afterward, in speaking to a lady at the altar in his church, he repeated to her the three verses which have been quoted above. She quietly said, "Repeat those words;" and once more we said:

"Thou hast avouched the Lord, this day,

“To be thy God;
“To walk in His ways,
“To keep His statutes,
“And to hearken unto His voice.”

“I will,” she said, and instantly arose with the blessing of sanctification in her soul. With her consecration came an immediate accompanying exercise of faith, and the glory came down upon her and in her. So will it come upon all others who shall do likewise.

19. PAUL'S WAY

This is laid down in Romans 12:1-2.

“I beseech you.” Regenerated people can not be driven into this grace. They must be wooed instead of threatened, and besought instead of abused.

“Brethren.” Sinners are never called brethren in the Bible. So the class addressed here is clearly seen.

“Present your bodies.” Of course the soul is in the body. If we present our bodies to God, in the sense used here, we certainly do not keep back the soul. We have heard of Christians who presented their souls to God, but kept their bodies for self-indulgence and even sin. But he who presents his body to God has already given his soul. One of the difficult things for the regenerated man to do is to present his body entirely to God. He wants his own way and his rest. He is disinclined to give his tongue at times. He likes to let his eyes rove, and his feet move in ways more pleasing to self than to God. So the presenting of the body is a big thing. It is in fact consecration; and it is the consecration of a Christian that is here being urged, and not the repentance of a sinner.

“A living sacrifice.” This proves that it is a Christian being addressed. The sinner is a dead sacrifice. God says of him: “He is dead in trespasses and in sins.” So the “living sacrifice” can not be the sinner.

“Holy, acceptable unto the Lord.” The sinner never comes for holiness, or as a holy offering, but simply for pardon.

“Which is your reasonable service.”

What “service” can a sinner render God? He is in no condition to do anything of the kind until he is pardoned and regenerated. Sinners don't serve God, but regenerated people do.

“And be not conformed to this world.” Here is that dying to the world in its customs, laws, fashions, maxims, pleasures, honors, etc., that rounds up and fills out the consecration that the apostle is urging upon the “brethren.” There are many things that are lawful and not morally wrong which we have to die out to, before we can get the blessing of sanctification. The writer died out to lectures, the platform, secret societies, ritualisms, dignities, and the being called Rabbi, Rabbi, in the market-places.

“But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” But is not this regeneration? How can it be when he is talking to “brethren,” and the exhortation is not to “knock at the door” for pardon, but to get on the altar for sacrifice and transformation? Let us see where the “renewing of the mind” comes in.

Paul in writing to Titus, says: “He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”

So a full salvation is made up of two works--the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. “And” is a copulative conjunction and means something else. Lange, the commentator, is struck with this double expression. In fact, it is the statement of the “double cure” that the hymn speaks about.

Notice that the verse says this “renewing of the Holy Ghost” was “shed on us abundantly.” The allusion is to Pentecost. Regeneration is not “shed,” but the baptism of the Holy Ghost was; and it was, and is, and always will be done “abundantly.”

So the “renewing” of Rom. 12:2, is the renewing of Titus 3:5, 6, and comes after regeneration.

“That ye might prove”--
That is, find out--
“What is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God.”

And this is the will of God, even your sanctification. So says Paul in I Thess.. 4:3.

Only let the reader follow Paul's direction above, and he will obtain the transformation, the glorious renewing, which enables him to find out the perfect will of God in himself; namely, his sanctification.

Does any one ask where the faith is in this passage? The reply is, that it is impossible to do the things laid down here without faith. And, as we have noticed in hundreds of instances, the instant a Christian make the complete consecration, there is felt an instantaneous power to believe. And, as we expressed the fact in another volume, the blossom of faith comes forth at once from the end of a perfect consecration. Then, after that, the world sees the heavy fruitage on what had been before a mere stick or rod.

20. THE SAVIOR'S WAY

If the limits of this volume would permit, we would show that no matter what book in the Bible, or what inspired writer therein, mentions the manner of the obtainment of a pure heart, that the conditions in every instance are just the same. They are always consecration and faith.

Some writers are more explicit than others; some emphasize one step more than the other; and others, while recognizing the two steps, make prayer a prominent factor,--all of which is allowable, and is understood by the spiritual reader.

It is certainly most strengthening to the faith to see Moses, Paul James, and John, all agree as to these steps.

In addition, however, to these inspired authorities, we mention.

THE SAVIOR'S WAY.

More than once He showed the entrance into his blessed experience.

Once in John 14:23, where He says: “If a man love Me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

Here is a distinct blessing from pardon; for it is promised to a man who loves Christ and keeps His words.

The blessing promised is the indwelling of Christ in the soul--not for a day, but for all time: He will take up His permanent abode in the heart.

The condition is briefly put, as is the custom of Scripture; and that condition is, a loving and complete obedience to the Lord. This is only another way of expressing the idea of a perfect consecration.

Let a regenerated man who is sighing for the higher grace, determine on a full obedience to God; let him say, I will hearken to His voice in every particular,--and what is that, when examined, but a perfect consecration? Let the reader try it, and find out for himself.

Well did John say: “Whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; and again: “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and” (right there, while in the light, and rejoicing in the fellowship of Christians -- right there the wondrous grace takes place) “the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.”

But the conditions of entrance into the Better Way are still more clearly put by the Savior in Matthew 11:29: “Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me; ... and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

In this paragraph of three verses, from which the verse quoted is taken, there are two rests mentioned. One is "given;" the other is said to be "found." One is received before taking the yoke; the other, after putting it on. To the class obtaining the first rest, Christ says, "Come unto Me;" but to the other class, who are to obtain the second rest, He gives a different direction altogether.

Let the reader observe that it is after the reception of the second rest that Christ says that "His yoke is easy, and His burden is light." This is the joyful experience of all who receive the blessing.

The two conditions of consecration and faith are remarkably clear in the 29th verse:

"Take my yoke upon you."

Here is consecration, and we know of no more striking figure to express a complete consecration and yielding up of self than the one employed here.

An ox is one thing, but a yoked-up ox is another. Many oxen object to the last condition. They don't regret belonging to a certain man, but there is a disinclination to being "yoked up;" for from the instant that the bow is shot into the yoke, and the key slipped in the bow, the ox is completely at the will of his master. He has now to pull or stop as the master says. He must go to the right or to the left according to the sound of the owner's voice, or to the touch of the guiding hand or lash of whip. The will of the ox has passed over to the will of the owner.

Consecration is a yoking up. Not all Christians like it. They want to be the Lord's unyoked people.

They are glad to believe and say they belong to Christ, but they want their will and way in many things. They tremble at the thought of a perfect consecration. God's will might entail great loss and suffering upon them, and lead them into very great trials and sacrifices. Thus they reason. So when we call them to the altar and beg for their complete abandonment to the Lord, they grow fearful; and just as we begin to fix the yoke, and prepare to place the bow and put in the key, we have seen them suddenly start back, mentally regret the whole thing, and come back no more to the altar, which is the yoking-up place.

What a strange fear this is, that the yoke of Christ would prove burdensome! What an unnatural dread to make a full consecration of ourselves to God, which is our reasonable service! Some of us obeyed the voice of the Savior, and bowed the neck low, and had the yoke fastened upon us and locked. The instant we did it we found that the yoke was a wing to lift us up instead of a load to drag us down. How it lifted us then, and how it lifts us now! The devil came nearly deceiving us with the suggestion it was heavy and galling, in face of the opposite statement of Christ that it was easy.

Bow down your head, my reader, and let Christ's yoke of doctrine and service come upon you.

You will never lament it, but will only sorrow, when the blessing comes, that you had not done so before.

Second comes the step of faith: "Learn of me."

Here is faith. Don't look to self, others, or even to your consecration, but fix your eyes at once on Christ.

If a man, having taken the yoke, will immediately turn his eyes to the Savior, the blessing will come.

"Learn of me."

Don't ask the tobacco-using colonel down-town if he believes in sanctification. Of course he doesn't, with such an unclean habit.

Don't ask the gossipy and fussy female member of the Church, with the sharp tongue, no matter if she is head of half of the societies in the Church.

Why go to people whose very faces and tongues declare that they are strangers to the great grace?

"Learn of me" said the Lord.

A young preacher in our Church asked a prominent minister if he believed in sanctification as a second work of grace. The brother, in reply, removed a cigar from his mouth, and blowing the smoke in the air, said, with a deep, guttural accent, "No, sir." That, of course, settled it for the young preacher, but fortunately did not for an increasingly great multitude. Tobacco smoke is a great obscurer. It is dense enough to hide some blessed things in the spiritual life, and we have noticed that it invariably hides the Holy of Holies, or "The Better Way," from some people. What a mistake the young man made! Christ said: "Learn of me." It would have been better for his soul if he had gone to Jesus in prayer and faith.

Would Christ have taught him? He has taught many, and led them who believed "into His rest." To the question, Lord, is there such a blessing for my soul? The Divine voice would have replied: "Father, sanctify them through Thy truth; and not these only, but all who shall believe on Me through their word."

21. THE METHODIST CHURCH WAY

This is made plain, regularly at every Annual Conference, to the preachers, by four questions propounded by the bishop to ministerial applicants for admission into the Conference.

The Methodist Church, knowing the privilege of the soul and determining to protect her people from a lifeless pulpit, and save herself from formality and spiritual death, fixed these questions as an inner gateway before something deeper and richer than justification.

No traveling preacher is allowed to dodge these questions. He may in after years try to invest them with shades of meaning which he well knows would never have been allowed at the time of his candidacy, and if stated then would have led to his rejection.

It will be a sad day for Methodism and for the outside world, which she is called to save, when these questions are dropped from the Discipline, or shall be so ingeniously twisted as to mean nothing.

There are just four questions, and they cover the ground of a second work of grace, its subsequence to conversion, and the method of obtaining the blessing.

First: "Have you faith in Christ?"

This question had been asked indeed before, at the Quarterly Conference; but we are thankful that it is uttered again at this juncture, as it proves the fact of the regenerated condition of the preacher, and shows that anything else that may be described in the following three questions as something yet to come can not be anything but a second grace or blessing.

If the young preacher replied here that he had not faith in Christ, at once the whole proceedings in his case would stop, and he would have to retire.

The second question is: "Are you going on to perfection?"

Not growing, but going.

Going is one thing; growing, an entirely different thing. The writer does not grow from one city to another in his travels. If he did, no hotel could entertain him: there would be no room to dispose of his body. Instead of growing to a place, he gets on the cars, and does some going.

"Let us go on to perfection," said Paul. Something to be reached is so clearly brought out by the expression that it possesses a locality meaning.

If merely growth or unfolding is meant here, as some contend, then it makes the bishop utter a very silly thing in requiring a solemn vow from individuals to go on to what must inevitably come to them of itself. If a mere development and maturing of Christian graces and powers are referred to, the question would have to be altered. Indeed, what need to require an oath at all if simply development is meant; for maturity comes from the flight of years and observance of the means of grace.

The question is directed to the obtainment of purity, not maturity.

Are you going on to perfection? Is the bishop's question; and it shows how the Methodist Church has caught the idea of the apostle, and has recognized the character of the blessing. It is something, not to be grown into; but gone to. It is not an evolution, but an obtainment; not a blessing coming out of us, but one getting into us.

One of our bishops' explanation of this question at a recent Annual Conference must have excited wonder over all the Church. He said the question, "Are you going on to perfection?" was to be explained by a hyperbole so great that the lines drawn from it would forever approach each other, but never come together.

According to this explanation, the bishop would have the Church ask the following strange question: "Are you going on to something that, in the nature of things, you can never expect to reach?"

Unfortunately for the bishop's position, the verse in Hebrews, "Let us go on to perfection," according to Dr. Clarke, is better translated, "Let us be borne on immediately unto perfection." The Methodist Church has made no mistake in this question. The words are wonderfully Scriptural and correct: "Go," not grow; "to," not toward.

The third question is: "Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?"

Made perfect, not grow perfect, nor developed. Not an evolution, but a creation.

And in is life, not at death, or in purgatory; but made perfect in love in this life.

Let the reader glance back, and re-read the first question that settles the fact of the preacher's acceptance with God; then notice this third question, Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life? What on earth is this but a second work of grace?

The fact of the existence of faith and love in the man is first admitted; but here is something still to be experienced which the Methodist Church calls the perfecting of love, or Christian perfection.

It stands to reason that if the possession of love for God constitutes an experience, then the conscious perfecting of that love must be another and second experience. And if Mr. Wesley and his early followers were pleased to call it the Second Blessing, that is just what it was and is. What else could it be and can it be?

That there is such an experience, who can deny in the face of the Scripture, which says plainly, "In Him was the love of God perfected," while John repeatedly alludes to the same thing?

Then follow a host of people, whom no man can number, who say that it came into their hearts, as clear and definite an experience as the witness of sonship at the time of pardon.

A Southern Bishop lately, in addressing a class of Conference undergraduates, after asking this third question, said: "I got that when I was regenerated." If that was so, then the amazing thought is, how could he press this question on them? Or if, as according to the first question, they were regenerated men and he, the bishop, said he was made perfect in love in regeneration, why ask regenerated men if they expected what, according to his statement, they ought already to have? Is God partial? Will God give perfect love at regeneration to one man and not to another?

The writer insists that, if we are made perfect in love in regeneration, then the third question is silly and utterly needless. Moreover, to ask such a question of converted men is to reflect upon their regenerated lives. In fact, a Kentucky minister called the attention of the bishop to his inconsistency and actual unkindness to the young men by such a question; for if perfect love comes with regeneration, to ask these young preachers if they expect to be made perfect in love in this life, was simply another way of saying they were not regenerated now.

The fourth question is: "Are you groaning after it?" Not growing, but groaning.

Not groaning to grow in grace, but to be made perfect in love.

Not groaning after love, but after perfect love.

When will the people get to see these differences?

Let the reader observe particularly the word groan. It calls for the very exercise of spirit that many are unwilling to give. It means, beyond question, a soul-travail that many know nothing about.

Groaning after it!

Groans declare a burdened heart. All know that. And here is groaning for perfect love--not for growth in grace.

Let us simplify this.

A child does not groan to grow. To think of a little fellow going around the house groaning, and saying he was doing that to grow! But he doesn't do that. He eats bread, drinks milk, frolics around, and grows unconsciously, without any groaning about the matter; but O, how he groans for a pony, watch, or gun!

So, in the Christian life, we don't have to groan to grow in grace; but drink the sincere milk of the Word, take the bread of life, go to work for Christ; and, lo! We grow unconsciously, and all the more beautifully for the very unconsciousness.

But how we groan for something outside of us! Something we want in us and that God alone can put in us!

Are you groaning after it?

It takes groaning to get it. The Methodist Church knew that, and made the preachers vow they would groan.

Mind you, the Church did not say, Will you grumble about it, or will you groan about it? But, Will you groan after it? Some of the preachers seem by their course these days to have forgotten the word they used that day before the Conference bar. It was not growl grumble, ridicule, abuse, or deny; but groan. Are you groaning after it?

Truly, there has never been a Church which has laid its ear closer to the breasts of men, and heard the very blood drip from their hearts in the spiritual life, as the Methodist Church. She knows what groaning is, and what groaning will bring to the soul. "Are you groaning after it?" she asks of all her preachers.

I have seen some of our preachers look like they were swallowing walnuts when they said "Yes" to that question. I found afterward it was mental reservations they were swallowing. One of them publicly afterward said so. This is what the Jesuits do--vow with a mental reservation.

The writer was quite stirred up for a time over the question and promise, and "groaned" for hours afterward. But he noticed that nobody else was groaning around him--neither bishop, presiding elder, pastor, editor, or connectional officer--and so discontinued the painful exercise. He was lonely, had no company in that line and so ceased groaning.

But after living in that groanless state some years, a preacher came to help the writer in a protracted meeting, and taught him how to groan. In a word, he commenced seeking the blessing of sanctification with such ardor that he found himself unconsciously groaning for it. He recalls now that on the street, in his room, in the night, and through the day, his soul was reaching after God with inward cries and groanings for the blessing. At last it came to him, and his groans were changed into hallelujahs that have dwelt in his heart ever since.

But the strange thing is, that the Church which made him groan for fourteen years to get the blessing, immediately began to make him groan because he did have it. Bless her dear heart! He has determined to make her groan until she gets it. He knows what it has been to him, and it will be equally precious and blessed to her.

The writer is devoutly thankful that he belonged to the Methodist Church. If he had been a member of other denominations, they would have been satisfied with his regeneration, and he would have missed the greatest blessing of his life.

But the Methodist Church knew of the Better Way, and was not satisfied that her people should have a less, when there was a greater grace and blessing. So she added the questions: "Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life, and are you groaning after it?"

The same experience is held up before every new Church member, in the words of our ritual spoken by the pastor: "Brethren, do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love."

It is brought out more clearly to the preacher in the ordination vows, because the Methodist Church rightly reasons that, if the preachers get the blessing, they will soon bring the people in.

We marvel how a man who has taken such vows could ever ignore them as utterly as some have done. We marvel that a man can take this oath, and then turn about and deny and decry an experience which he swore he believed in and expected to obtain in this life.

The time to have objected and denied was when he stood before the bishop; and so have given the Church a chance to have defended her doctrines and people from future assaults, by keeping out a man who was to prove a foe. He should have said then: "I do not believe in it; I take these vows with certain modifications of meaning."

Suppose he had; do we not all know that he never would have been admitted into Conference, or allowed to preach to a Methodist congregation?

We stand amazed at the boldness of some men who have been allowed to come inside our fold.

They were humble enough when they knocked for admission. The fable says the camel dictated after he got inside the Arab's tent. Alas, that it is so still!

It is certainly a curious spectacle to see a man chinking Methodist dollars in his pocket, and getting fat on Methodist bread and meat, turning about and striking at a Methodist doctrine!

They tell us that the holiness people are disturbers of the peace, agitators of Zion, and Church-splitters, and that we should leave.

In reply, we would say that we are perfectly satisfied with the Methodist Church, her songs, prayers, praises, shouts, altar-work, and especially her doctrines and experience. We see no reason to leave. The teachings of Wesley, Clarke, Fletcher, exactly suit us. We have never read the works of any author in our Church that can equal much less surpass, these writers we have mentioned, in spiritual insight, and in the unfolding of the Word.

We do not, as holiness people, object to the "four questions." We have no disposition to whittle them down, explain them away, or get rid of them. We have found they are right. In a word, we are perfectly satisfied with Methodism as given to us by Wesley, and that has been handed down to us in great integrity until the last few years.

If anybody wants to leave, let it be those who have forgotten their ordination-vows, ridiculed Wesley, denied the standards, and preached sermons or written books against that doctrine "for which God appears chiefly to have raised us up."

Let it be understood, once for all that the holiness people are satisfied with the Methodist Church.

Others may go, but we propose to stay. We may be put out, but we will not come out.

22. SOME WITNESSES IN WESLEY'S DAYS

We have known a large number of persons of every age and sex, from early childhood to extreme old age, who have given all the proofs, which the nature of the thing admits, that they were 'sanctified throughout; 'cleansed from all pollution both of flesh and spirit; that they loved 'the Lord their God with all their heart, and mind, and soul and strength; that they continually presented their souls and bodies 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God,'--in consequence of which, they 'rejoiced evermore, prayed without ceasing, a in everything gave thanks.' And this is no other than what we believe to be true Scriptural sanctification.'" (Sermons, Vol. II, p. 247.)

"Agreeably to this is the plain matter of fact. Several persons have enjoyed this blessing, without any interruption, for many years. Several enjoy it at this day; and not a few have enjoyed it unto their death, as they have declared with their latest breath calmly witnessing that God had saved them from sin, till their spirit returned to God." (Sermons, Vol. II, p. 174.)

To Miss Elizabeth Hardy, 1761: "The plain fact is this: I know many who love God With all their heart, mind, soul, and strength. He is their one desire, their one delight, and they are continually happy in Him. They love their neighbor as themselves. They feel as sincere, fervent, constant a desire for the happiness of every man--good or bad, friend or enemy--as for their own. They 'rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks.' Their souls are continually streaming up to God in holy joy, prayer, and praise. This is a plain, sound, Scriptural experience, and of this we have more and more living witnesses." (Works, Vol. VI, p. 737.)

"After meeting the society, I talked with a sensible woman, whose experience seemed peculiar.

She said: 'A few days before Easter last, I was deeply convinced of sin and in Easter-week I knew that my sins were forgiven, and was filled with 'joy and peace in believing.' But in about eighteen days I was convinced, in a dream, of the necessity of a higher salvation, and I mourned day and night, in an agony of desire, to be thoroughly sanctified, till, on the twenty-third day after my justification, I found a total change, together with a clear witness that the blood of Jesus had cleansed me from all unrighteousness.' " (Journal, June 23, 1761.)

"In the evening I spoke to those at Manchester who believed that God had cleansed their hearts.

They were sixty-three in number, to about sixty of whom I could not find there was any reasonable objection." (Vol. VII, p. 381.)

To Mr. Furlay, 1762: "For me, I shall only once more state the case. There are forty or fifty people who declare (and I can take their word; for I know them well), each for himself: 'God has enabled me to rejoice evermore, and to pray and give thanks without ceasing. I feel no pride, no anger, no desire, no unbelief, but pure love alone.'... Here is a plain fact. You may dispute, reason, cavil about it just as you please. Meantime, I know, by all manner of proof, that these are the happiest and holiest people in the kingdom. Their light shines before men.'" (Methodist Magazine, 1856, p. 988.)

"That many of these did not retain the gift of God is no proof that it was not given them. That many do retain it to this day is matter of praise and thanksgiving. And many of them are gone to Him whom they loved, praising Him with their latest breath--just in the spirit of Ann Steed, the first witness in Bristol of the great salvation, who, being worn out with sickness and racking pain, after she had commended to God all that were round her, lifted up her eyes, cried aloud, 'Glory! Hallelujah!' and died." (Journal, Oct., 1762.)

"I buried the remains of Joseph Norbury, a faithful witness of Jesus Christ. For about three years he has humbly and boldly testified that God had saved him from all sin, and his whole spirit and behavior in life and death made his testimony beyond exception." (Journal, Dec., 1763.)

“I buried the remains of Thomas Salmon, a good and useful man. What was peculiar in his experience was, he did not know when he was justified; but he did know when he was renewed in love, that work being wrought in a most distinct manner. After this he continued about a year in constant love, joy, and peace; then, after an illness of a few days, he cheerfully went to God.” (Journal, Feb., 1764.)

To his brother Charles, 1766: “That perfection which I believe, I can boldly preach, because I think I see five hundred witnesses of it.” (Works, English edition, Vol. XII, p. 122.)

“In the evening I preached, in the house at Wednesbury, a funeral sermon for Elizabeth Longmore, I think the first witness of Christian perfection whom God raised up in these parts. I gave some account of her experience many years ago. From that time her whole life was answerable to her profession, every way holy and unblamable. Frequently she had not bread to eat, but that did not hinder her ‘rejoicing evermore.’” (Journal, March, 1770.)

“I assisted at the funeral of Susanna Pilson. She was one of the first members of this society, and continued firm in the hottest of the persecution. Upward of twenty years she adorned the gospel, steadily and uniformly walking with God. For a great part of the time she was a living witness that ‘the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.’ After a lingering illness, she calmly resigned her soul into the hands of her faithful Creator.” (Journal, May, 1771.)

“From the very time of her justification, she (Susanna Spencer) clearly saw the necessity of being wholly sanctified, and found an unspeakable hunger and thirst after the full image of God, and, in the year 1772 God answered her desire. The second change was wrought in as strong and distinct a manner as the first had been.” (Journal, Oct., 1774.)

“I returned to London, and Sunday, 11th, buried the remains of Eleanor Lee. I believe she received the great promise of God – entire sanctification – fifteen or sixteen years ago, and that she never lost it for an hour. I conversed intimately with her ever since, and never saw her do any action, little or great, nor heard her speak any word, which I could reprove. Thou wast indeed ‘a mother in Israel.’” (Journal, Oct., 1778.)

“In the afternoon I preached a funeral sermon for Mary Charlton, an Israelite indeed. From the hour she first knew the pardoning love of God, she never lost sight of it for a moment. Eleven years ago she believed that God had cleansed her from all sin, and she showed that she had not believed in vain by her holy and unblamable conversation.” (Journal, May, 1781.)

To L. Caughland, 1768: “Blessed be God, though we set a hundred enthusiasts aside, we are still ‘encompassed with a cloud of witnesses,’ who have testified, and do testify, in life and death, that perfection which we taught these forty years; This perfection can not be a delusion unless the Bible be a delusion too. I mean ‘loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves.’ I pin down all its opposers to this definition of it. No evasion. No shifting the question. Where is the delusion of this? Either you received this love, or you did not. If you did, dare you call it a delusion? You will not call it so for all the world. If you received anything else, it does not at all affect the question.” (Journal, Aug., 1768.)

To Mrs. Bennis he writes: “Now, certainly, if God has given you this light, He did not intend that you should hide it under a bushel. It is good to conceal the secrets of a king, but it is good to tell the loving kindness of the Lord.” In the same letter he says: “One reason why those who are saved from sin should freely declare it to believers is, because nothing is a stronger incentive to them to seek after the same blessing. And we ought, by every possible means, to press every serious believer to forget the things which are behind, and with all earnestness go on to perfection.”

To Miss Chapman, 1773: “You can never speak too strongly or explicitly upon the head of Christian perfection. If you speak only faintly and indirectly, none will be offended and none profited; but if you speak out, although some will probably be angry, yet others will soon find the power of God unto salvation.”

“At our love-feast in the evening (at Redruth) several of our friends declared how God had saved them from inbred sin, with such exactness, both of sentiment and language, as clearly showed they were taught of God.” (Journal, 1785.)

“Whenever you have opportunity of speaking to believers, urge them to go on to perfection. Spare no pains; and God still give you his blessing.” (Letter to Mr. Booth, 1791, Vol. VII, p. 238.)

“A man that is not a thorough friend to Christian perfection will easily puzzle others, and thereby weaken, if not destroy any select society.” (Letter to Mr. E. Lewby, 1791, Vol. VII, p. 253.)

These last quotations from Mr. Wesley’s Journal are dated after the time that some say Mr. Wesley changed his views.

HESTER ANN ROGERS.

We select from the Autobiography of Hester Ann Rogers the following: In describing her struggle after the blessing, she records this prayer: “Lord, cried I, make this the moment of my full salvation.

Baptize me now with the Holy Ghost and fire of pure love. Now make me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. Now enter the temple, and cast out sin forever. Now cleanse the thoughts, desires, and propensities of my heart, and let me love Thee perfectly.”

After receiving the blessing, she describes her experience with these words: “I now walk in the unclouded light of His countenance; ‘rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks.’ I resolved, however, at first, I would not openly declare what the Lord had wrought; but it was seen in my countenance, and when asked respecting it, I durst not deny the wonders of His love. I soon found that this repeating of His good confirmed my own faith more and more. And so did the Lord bless me in declaring it; yea, and blessed others also, that I was constrained to witness to all who feared Him:

‘His blood can make the foulest clean; His blood availed or me.

I dared not to live above a moment at a time, and that moment by faith in the Son of God. I never felt till now the full meaning of those words, ‘In Him we live, and move, and have our being.’ And again: ‘I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and be their God; I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts.’ Glory be to my God, I felt it written, ‘It was no longer I that lived, but Christ that lived in me!’

‘Yes Christ was all in all to me,
And all my heart was love.’ “

JOHN FLETCHER.

“I have received this blessing before; but I grieved the Spirit of God by not making confession, and as often I let it go. I lost it by not observing and obeying the order of God, who hath told us, ‘With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,’ which latter I neglected.”

“Now, my brethren, you see my folly. I have confessed in your presence, and now I resolve, in your presence also, henceforth I will confess my Master to all the world. And I declare unto you, in the presence of God, I am now dead indeed unto sin. I do not say I am crucified with Christ, because some of our well-meaning brethren say, by this can only be meant a gradual dying unto sin; for a man who is crucified is a long time in dying; but I profess unto you I am dead unto sin, and that as effectually as my original nature was free from righteousness.” (Life of Hester Ann Rogers.)

23. SOME WITNESSES IN OUR TIME

Rev. S. A. KEEN D. D.

In my twenty-sixth year I became a member of the Conference. I was at once given a better place and more responsible work than I deserved; for I knew I did not measure up to what I ought to be.

For the first three months of my ministry I earnestly sought for the equipment which I knew I needed if I would be a success for God; but I had no help, and so made no progress.

With the incoming of the new year I began a meeting; had large congregations and good interest, but no souls saved. I worked on until the second Sunday, and I thought surely someone would come that day. God helped me to preach, and I presented the altar, but no one came. My heart was almost broken. I did not go about shaking hands as usual, but stood alone within the chancel-rail until all were gone, and then went home in the darkness alone, searching my heart as I went. To the question, 'Why is it that sinners are not saved under my ministry?' the Spirit gave this answer: 'You can not expect sinners to act up to their convictions when you don't do it yourself?' I went home and told my wife that I had found out what was the matter with the meeting. She asked: 'What is it?' I replied: 'It's the preacher; I want entire sanctification.'

Well, wife and I were the first seekers in that meeting. Every time I presented the altar I would leave the pulpit and go outside the rail, and kneel at it myself, and my wife would come and kneel by my side. Over and over I would say: 'Lord, I am Thine, wholly Thine, forever Thine.' But I was so dull that I didn't know that that was faith; but soon I could not do any more praying. Every time I went to prayer the same thing happened. I could not pray for this blessing any more.

Then one day I went to my room just to pray for help in preaching, and there I got the full assurance. I was all melted down; tears flowed in streams; and as I went up the aisle of my church that night I just 'blubbered' like a baby. I tried to tell them what had come to me, but I couldn't for 'blubbing'. But sixteen men were converted that night, and one hundred and sixty were saved in all in the meeting; and from that day to this God has not left me a single year without a great revival.

For twenty-five years I have preached a gospel of full salvation in the Churches to which I have been sent. I have shouted it in the ears of thirty-two Annual Conferences, and for three weeks in the General Conference, and in almost numberless camp-meetings and revivals; and I am here tonight in the strength of it to invite you to bring in your 'tithes' and get the 'abundant' blessing."

For a more complete account see "Praise Papers," which embraces his autobiography and a chapter by his wife on his triumphant translation, November 11, 1895..**Rev. W. C. DUNLAP.**

"In 1878--I never shall forget the day or the place--after a long season of closet prayer, during which time I thought sure the witness would come, I went out on my pastoral rounds (it was in the town of Thomson, thirty-seven miles from Augusta). On my return, visiting a widowed sister in Christ, I passed some colored carpenters at work on a house, and stopped and exhorted them on making sure of the 'House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.' About fifty yards beyond, all of a sudden I was filled with the Heaven of love. There was no great shock about it, and yet it permeated, in a second of time my whole being.

"I realized the cleansing and filling of the Holy Ghost. I knew Jesus was enthroned in my heart as King and Priest, without a rival. All unbelief was gone. I stopped in the center of the court-house square and looked at my hands and feet. I said, 'What is this?' and the Spirit answered as plainly to my spiritual consciousness as ever human voice spoke through my sense of hearing: 'This is the blessing you have been seeking; this is the blessing of perfect love.'" "I did not shout, as I had always done previously under a great baptism of the Spirit; I did not feel like making a noise; I was all dissolved in love. I wanted to put my arms around the whole world of mankind and pass them to the great heart of Jesus. I had an experience of love for every creature of God. I felt I could go into a lion's den without the least fear of harm from the wild beast. I went down to the parsonage; I embraced my wife and all my children. I felt I loved them for the first time with a pure love; I felt that I loved God with all my heart, and my neighbor--both black and white--as I loved myself."

Rev. J. W. CULLOM.

He wrote to a friend as follows: "You know I have long been seeking the blessing of perfect love. On Tuesday, August 29, 1893, I went to Church fasting, and with heart-cries to God. As soon as the morning services were over, while the people were partaking of the basket dinner, I went to the woods. Down a little dry branch among the trees I walked for perhaps a quarter of a mile. I lay down on the ground and talked with God. I had long sought the blessing of sanctification by leaving off one thing and another that I thought might be a hindrance. Then it occurred to me that I was trying to kill the tree by cutting off a branch here and there. Why not ask the Lord to take up the tree, root and branch? And why not now? 'Lord, I believe it is done!' But at once the thought came, 'Yes, it is done, but where is the evidence?' Then I said: 'Evidence or no evidence, I will never recede from this act; everything is on the altar, and there it shall stay.' "Instantly a sweet peace possessed my whole being. I had no concern about a text or sermon, but selected St. John's words: 'What we have seen and heard we declare unto you.' I could do nothing for a while but laugh and cry, and had to get a brother to lead in the opening exercises.

"Since that hour I have never had a moment that I could not say, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul!' The Bible is a transformed book, and our hymns have a new meaning. The air is pure and sweet. My soul is as a bird on the wing. I am happy every moment."

THE EXPERIENCE OF Rev. T. A. ATKINSON.

I went to hear the opening sermon. It was on "Elijah's Altar on Carmel." The fire fell.

At the close of the sermon, when an opportunity was given for seekers for sanctification, about twenty came. We were called to prayer. I got inside the altar, and knelt.

I found myself in a strange frame of mind, which I have found impossible to describe. I believe if it had not been for my relation to the meeting I should have left. Dr. Carradine called on me to lead in prayer. It was a very unsatisfactory effort. It seemed impossible to lift the petition.

There seemed to be a question asked: "What are you praying for?" "Who are you talking to?"

"Where are you anyhow?" I tried to pray for those at the altar. Then I struck a breaker, which reminded me that it was inconsistent to pray for those who were seeking the very thing I stood greatly in need of myself. At the close of the service I went home, solemn, silent, and thoughtful. I told my wife I believed there was some truth in it. The night was spent in prayer, and no sleep at all.

My prayer was: "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."

God heard and answered that prayer. The search light was turned on. My! My! What revelations!

Every room from garret to cellar was examined, and we were astonished to find things and principles that ought not to be there. How the "old man of sin" did squirm and writhe under the light and the fire!

Monday morning dawned, January 8th. I hastened to the ten o'clock meeting. Dr. Carradine opened with a testimony-meeting. I made a little speech--reviewed my twenty-two years of ministerial labors: said I had been sufficiently pliable and sanctified to pull in any kind of harness, even if there was frost the collar; that my idea of sanctification was service. After that, I thought a person ought to have grace enough to keep still, and give others a chance to talk, which seemed hard for many whom I had seen, who professed to be wholly sanctified. I was fighting in the last ditch.

I said: "But if there is anything better, I want it." Dr. Carradine seemed to be looking through and through me, and said: "God bless your honest heart!"

In the sermon that followed, the power came upon the audience. There was conviction everywhere. I began to feel the last prop taken away. I said: "Old fellow, you are in for it! You have either got to stand in or run." I went forward with the crowd. I said: "I can't withstand God's work."

I felt His presence and power, when the devil presented the probable consequences of my surrender to the doctrine.

I said: "Who am I, that I should withstand God?"

In a moment the temptation was gone.

In the evening the interest was intensified.

O, what a sermon! It seemed to me that the lightnings were flashing and spangling over the audience. It struck! I was as pliable as wax. The Holy Spirit in mighty power was upon me. I returned home, to spend another night of heart-searching and wakefulness. About one or two o'clock there was a sense of surrender--every antagonistic element in my heart gave way; yet I did not have the evidence of sanctification.

All at once the Bible seemed to be animated; text after text began to be repeated, and impressed upon my innermost consciousness with the flash of a new illumination. One in particular was: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20.)

In a moment my thoughts reverted to the dread and anxiety I had had of the Carradine meetings, when, suddenly, a vivid impression of two stanzas of the old Methodist hymn came into my soul, and I repeated them audibly:

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take:
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on our head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

I said: "Lord, they are breaking now; this may come out all right now." Then came this stanza:

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain:

God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

I prayed: "Lord, make it plain! Don't let me be deceived!" I was up early next morning at the church before the time for service. I can't describe the expectancy of my soul. God was leading in a marvelous way. I had not talked privately with anyone of my convictions. They left me with God. When the call came, after a loving, unctuous sermon from Dr. Carradine -- which proved most helpful to me in the peculiar state that I was in -- I walked forward, took a chair, passed by the altar where crowds were bowing, seeking sanctification, among whom was my wife, which enabled me to feel, "Well, thank God, I will be understood at home!" I placed the chair to itself, and as I bowed, determined to make a perfect, absolute, and eternal consecration. It was a struggle of a soul aroused, awakened, convinced, convicted of the supreme need, the one thing needful, "the more excellent way."

As I prayed, I said: "Yes, Lord, I know Dr. A. will actually laugh, ridicule, and have a grand time over my profession of sanctification. I am going to be misunderstood, crucified, discounted!" And then the reflection came that the reason I had not received the blessing before was, that I feared the preachers and members of the charges in the Conference, who had known of my attitude, and who would be greatly surprised that I had gone back on my position, and shifted quarters. Then the twenty-two years of ministerial labor would be discounted.

Finally I put all on the altar. I became oblivious to the surroundings. I forgot the people; everything seemed to fade away. "The horror of great darkness fell upon me," and in a few moments a strange awe took possession of my soul. I became motionless as a corpse. I began to get rigid. I had a sense of dying, and yet felt no fear. There came over my soul the most awful and thrilling sense of God's presence ever realized.

Then an impression of a small globe of light in the midst of the darkness was before my soul, which was perfectly steady, and in the midst of which came out in clearly-defined outlines a face of marvelous tenderness and beauty, under which my heart melted. My soul seemed to say, "Is it my Savior?"

Then came a passage of Scripture: "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."

Then came the impression upon my soul: It all depends upon you; you can yield, let me in or resist. Close the door if you are unwilling to pay the price and make the consecration. But if you do so, then I will withdraw. Suddenly, as I trembled in the balance, I felt that the crisis had been reached, and to have resisted would have imperiled my salvation.

I pen these lines now, eight months after I had that vivid impression. I do not doubt that, had I resisted and the blessed Savior passed away, the echoes in my soul of the departing footsteps would have been the knell of eternal damnation.

At that moment this Scripture came to my mind: "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

As I submitted, and my will yielded, I threw wide the door of my heart. There went through me the sweep and thrill of electric fire! I became conscious that the work was done. I cried: "The blood cleanses! The blood cleanses!" there came the most thrilling sense of a clean heart.

I knew I had a clean, pure heart. It seemed to me that a great magnolia had blossomed in my soul.

I opened my eyes and said: "I am sanctified! I've got it, sure! It's true, after all!" O why did not somebody tell me twenty years ago that God had such a blessing as this for His believing children?

As I arose from my knees, I spoke to Sister G., and extended my hand, saying: "I've got it sure! It's true! Glory to God!"

Then came a wave of joy and a thrill of ecstasy which swept me up the aisle with shouts of praise to God. For two more nights I did not sleep. I was filled and thrilled with an indescribable and ecstatic joy. Glory to God! I am so wonderfully kept, sustained, and blessed. Christ is all and in all to me. He has been made unto me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and, I expect in the end, redemption. I do not understand all the wonderful phenomena of God's marvelous dealings with my poor heart; but it is true, glory to His precious name!

He tells us that He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Unto Him be glory in the Church (not out of the Church, am no come-outer), by Christ Jesus throughout all ages (not at Pentecost, but even in this and all ages), world without end. Amen!

Rev. W. B. PALMORE,

(Editor of the St. Louis Christian Advocate) There are two men--one now in the Church triumphant, the other in the Church militant--to whom we shall feel indebted throughout the endless or eternal ages. The conversion

and life of Dr. Addison P. Brown outweighed all the books, lectures, and sermons we ever read or heard on the evidences of Christianity. He was the human instrument used to lead me to conviction, to a Methodist mourners' bench, and to the blood of atonement--to conscious peace and pardon. The Methodist Church was chosen, and joined, somewhat as we choose a berth and recline in a Pullman sleeping-car.

Not for a moment has the genuineness of my conversion ever been doubted; but my rest has been anything else but perfect or continuous. There were times, through all these years, when "wandering notes from a diviner music" strayed into my spirit; but these experiences came at few and fitful moments. I had no sense of possession in them. They came unannounced, and left without explanation. At times lifted up with the hope that peace was beginning to flow as a river, which was as suddenly lost amid the rush of the rapids and dreadful roar of a possible cataclysm; but over all the cloud of mist was the constant bow of promise and of hope that some day I would attain unto perfect rest.

To the bishop who received me into the Methodist ministry, I expressed the expectation to receive it in this life, and that I was groaning after it. These groans, I fear, have been too much like angels' visits.

After fruitless efforts in the consecration and the growth theory, I was persuaded to try consecration and faith. In this theory I went to the altar, time and again, for days in succession, asking the prayers and help of all who had found this rest, just as I went to the mourners' bench while seeking pardon years ago. After the battle of full consecration came the battle of faith, to believe the altar--the Divine nature of Christ--cleanses and keeps the gift. After walking for a time by naked faith, the intellect assenting, then came the inner witness, the heart consenting, and entering into rest.

Water rests only when it gets to the lowest place; so did my soul. And I am persuaded that I can only keep this rest by walking continually down in the valley with Him who made Himself of no reputation," who is "meek and lowly in heart."

We do not propose in this writing to open these columns for a debate. I know from personal experience that a man who is unwilling to humble himself, and seek the "hidden manna and the white stone with a new name," will be but little benefited by such a discussion. Some will doubtless say that I was never before converted; others will say it is only a case of recovery or restoration from a backslidden state. Suppose we admit the truth of both or either, possibly some reader of these lines may be as badly deceived as the writer has been through all these years. If so, we would advise you at once to come to St. Louis, and place yourself under the influence of a marvelous meeting now in progress in Centenary Church. We have not witnessed such manifestations of the presence and power of God for twenty years. Services every morning at 10:30 and in the evening at 7:30.

This meeting has been in progress about three weeks, and 130 have professed sanctification, seven of whom are preachers, besides eighty professions of regeneration. "He that doeth the will of my Father shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God." Come, brother, try the Baconian or experimental method in the discovery of truth. Death to the lower self is the nearest gate and quickest road to life. Some plants are never found in high altitudes. Heart's-ease will only grow down on the level of the ocean of God's love.

As Doctor Brown was to my regeneration, so was Doctor Carradine to my sanctification. His serene life in the midst of a tempestuous criticism and opposition, together with his plain, practical preaching, led me to test his doctrine, whether it be of God; and I am satisfied with the test. Long may he wave, and never waver! (From an editorial in the St. Louis Advocate of May 20, 1891)

24. HOW I ENTERED

The preacher who led me into this grace, told me it was received through two steps, and that the first was:

Consecration.

Immediately I began to consecrate. One would say that I had consecrated before; that all Christians, worthy of the name, should be consecrated. All this is true; but in seeking sanctification, I discovered the difference between consecration and perfect consecration. The latter alone obtains the blessing of entire sanctification.

So the consecration made this time was one where nothing was withheld from God. There was not a single mental reservation. The various steps taken at this time in getting on the altar, remain vividly with me after the lapse of six years, and will never, for that matter, be forgotten.

One of **the first calls** or impressions of the Spirit upon me was, **Would I give up big Churches?**

This means much to many preachers. It is felt by numbers to be a proper ambition: that it means a larger sphere of usefulness. Anyhow, we all know it means gratified ambition. So the question went into me like a dart. But in the midst of the pain, I cried out: "Yes, Lord, and will go to the humblest circuit in the Connection if you will give me this blessing."

The second impression was like unto it, **Would I give up big salaries;** be willing to have a small income in the service of the Lord if He should so order it?

The answer was, "Yes, Lord."

The third call was, **Would I quit trying to preach big sermons?**

Quick as a flash came the response of my heart, "Yes, Lord" and I have not tried to deliver such a sermon from that day to this.

A fourth thought came to me in the same questioning form, **Would I give up all desire and** expectation of becoming a bishop?

Many of my preacher readers will smile at this, but they know better than others how much is in the thought. I question in my mind whether there has ever been a traveling preacher in our Church but has had dreams and desires concerning this office. Paul said that he that desired the office of a bishop, desired "a good thing." Judging from many things we see today, we think that conclusion is cordially shared with the apostle by a great many others. Judging from advantages not always spiritual or heavenly, it is the best thing in the gift of the Church today.

While preaching at the St. Louis Annual Conference, several years ago, I remarked in my sermon, to an audience in which were nearly one hundred preachers: "Brethren, if you all knew now many preachers here once expected or still hope to be bishops, you would be amazed." A profound stillness came upon the audience, as if they expected I would call out names; but I did not have time to run over the Conference roll, and so went on to another point in the discourse. Later in the afternoon, I met a young preacher, who had been preaching for six months as a "supply," on some remote backwoods circuit. He was a young man of unusually unsophisticated appearance. Stopping me, he said:

"Doctor, you greatly hurt me today in what you said in your sermon."

"Hurt you, my brother!" was my response "Why, in what way?"

"O" he rejoined, "you struck me in what you said about being a bishop."

I dropped my head to hide the smile that would come up, and inwardly cried: "O Lord is the leprosy in this lad also?"

So the reader sees something of the inward query: "Will you give up all dreamings about the bishopric?"

The answer came welling up, "Yes, Lord." The dream vanished from that moment, never to return. What a relief this alone has been! What a relief it would be to many others if they would do likewise, and what a relief to their friends, and to the whole Church, and to Heaven!

A fifth test came up in the question, **Would I be willing to be cast out by my brethren?**

That preacher who has a first-class appointment, and possesses a large number of ministerial friends, can best understand the heaviness of the cross revealed in these words.

Again came the old answer, "Yes, Lord;" and the eyes grew suddenly wet, and the heart saw Gethsemane in the distance, and knew there were coming hours of lonely prayer, and sweat of blood, and angry voices of arrest, and at the same time would be heard the dying away in the distance of the retreating footsteps of former friends. But the word "Yes" was said in spite of the vision.

A sixth trial came up. [Would I be willing to be regarded and called a crank and fanatic?](#)

So this meant that the reputation that had been patiently built up for fourteen years was to be all knocked down and blown away.

"Yes, Lord."

And what have they not called me since that hour!

A seventh test came up in the form of a gold watch that I wore at this time.

[Would I take it off for Christ's, conscience', and the people's sake?](#)

Why should I? Was the mental query.

The answer came: The Bible says not to wear gold, the Methodist Discipline says not to do it, and the consciences of many are offended at such a spectacle in a preacher's dress.

This was amply sufficient; and the watch was sold for \$65, and the money given to foreign missions.

Let no one suppose that we are making our own conscience a law for other people. We know very lovely, religious people who wear gold watches, and who are far more spiritual and devoted and useful than the writer. I am simply telling how I obtained the blessing.

I took off the gold watch; and I removed it because I did not want an appearance of evil on me.

I did not want, when correcting a man in the future for violation of the Word of God or infraction of the discipline, to be embarrassed and even silenced by the remark that I was also guilty.

So I took off the watch; and the people said I was losing my mind; and it was so, but it happened to be my carnal mind.

An additional test came at this time, in a still simpler form. I had developed a taste for carrying a rattan. One morning, on coming to the altar, my rattan fell with a slight clatter, on the floor near my knees. Something whispered: "What are you carrying that rattan around for?"

"O," I mentally replied, "I am not feeling very strong this spring, and I want it to lean on."

"Yes," said the inward whisper; "but it is so pliant that you can not lean on it; you know that it bends under the lightest touch."

"That is so," I said, with an inward groan.

After a pause came the still whisper: "[Would you not like to lean on Christ altogether?](#) Would you not like to 'come up out of the wilderness leaning on the arm of your Beloved?' "

The tears dashed into my eyes, and I said, "O yes, Lord, I want nothing better; let me have Christ alone, from this hour, to lean upon;" and springing up, I took the little walking-cane, broke it over my knee, walked to the window, and cast the pieces into the yard.

And now the word ran swiftly among the outside critics and judges that I had certainly lost my mind.

I only said "Hallelujah!" when I heard of the remark.

Somehow I could not conceive of Christ wearing a gold watch and carrying a rattan; and so, desiring to be as much like Him as possible, most gladly I stripped myself of anything and all things that I could not say were Christ-like.

Still another test came up in [the rectification of little wrongs](#).

When persons are looking for friends to visit them, they are careful to make everything tidy, and not only to sweep in the house, but around and even under the house, to make the place in a sense worthy of the loved visitor is the idea. So, when looking for Christ to come into the soul and life as a perpetual indweller, this conviction and desire both agree in regard to being cleansed and prepared for the heavenly coming.

"Sanctify yourselves; for I, the Lord your God, will sanctify you."

With a jealous care I studied my life to see what would offend Christ's holy eye should He draw near. Everything of course went that was in the slightest way questionable. I gave the benefit of every doubt to the Savior.

Among the things I rectified was the recalling of hasty speeches and the humble acknowledgment to the party against whom the offense had been committed.

One of these persons was a friend and favorite steward on my Board of Officials. Walking over to him, with a heart full of pain at the confession, I told him, with a choking voice, as I gently laid my hand on his shoulder, that I had talked about him; and to please forgive me. In an instant we were in each others' arms, and happy tears were falling down my face.

The other party to whom I made acknowledgment of hasty, irritable speech on a certain occasion, was my wife. The hasty speech had been forgiven by the Lord at once; but the Spirit brought it up to mind as a test of obedience to His suggestions, and as a proper confession to her.

All this may look very little to some people; but I simply beg them to remember that I got the blessing along this line, and so these things can not be so little.

Somehow the writer believes that if every husband in the land would do the just thing to his wife in this regard, there would be a wonderful clearing up of the home atmosphere, and a great many female hearts would be made happy in the land.

Anyhow I did it, and the cork-like feeling of the body and the feather-like sensation of the soul steadily increased.

Still another and final test of consecration came [in the line of obedience](#). I had promised to "hearken unto His voice," whether in the Word or whether it came as deep impression on my soul.

One day, while in the French part of the city of New Orleans, on the way to pay a pressing pastoral call, the inward voice and impression that I knew so well to be of God, bade me do a very trying thing. It is needless to describe minutely what it was: would only say that I was unquestionably moved to speak an hour with a very prominent man about his soul and a hurtful influence that he was just then exercising over many thousands. For nearly an hour I spoke with the man, face to face, about these things, doing it gently and lovingly, but firmly.

It was after this that I felt my consecration was complete--that God had given me the final test, and had proved to the angels and men and myself that I was all on the altar.

Going to the preacher, I said: "What more shall I do? What is the next step?" His reply was:

["Believe that the altar on which you have placed yourself now sanctifies you."](#) He gave me two Scripture passages for it: "Whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy," and "The altar sanctifieth the gift."

But I said to him: "I don't feel it."

His reply was: "Believe it without feeling."

And so I did. I walked away, saying in my heart, "The altar sanctifies the gift." I said it over and over; first with a sinking heart, but with a growing strength and faith as the hours went by.

As there came a test to my consecration, so there came a test to my faith; and an impression, conviction, or leading--I know not which--formulated itself thus in my mind: "[If you believe truly what the Word of God says about it, why not tell it?](#) Do you believe it enough to acknowledge it to others?"

This brought a kind of gasp; but at once rallying, I said: "Yes, Lord, I will tell it to all you want me." So I told first my wife, and then my Church, that the altar sanctified me; that I did not have the witness yet, but believed the altar sanctified me.

If there is any one on earth who knows a man, it is his wife; and if any body of people knows an individual, a congregation has very well weighed and sized up their pastor. To both of these I made the confession of faith.

There was nothing now more to do except pray and wait. This was continually done. Prayer at this time was the very breath of my mouth, and my eyes were ever looking upward in expectation of the descending blessing for which my soul was now panting and crying.

On the morning it came, I was suddenly awakened, an hour before day, by the touch of the Divine Hand. It was not nature's gradual awakening and recovery of the mental faculties, but a sudden and yet complete entrance into a full consciousness of all around and within. I knew it was the Lord. He has awakened me in like manner many times since.

I was aroused thus for a final prayer. I shall never forget how my body was wrenched in an agony of supplication for purity and an indwelling Christ. It seemed that it was wrung as I have seen a woman wring water out of a garment. I got to see how the blood was forced out of the body of the Savior in the Garden of Gethsemane.

After an hour thus spent, this agonizing pleading left me, and in a quietness of spirit that I can not describe, I arose, and went down to breakfast; but could eat nothing. Returning to my room, I sat down, with this great inward stillness upon my soul, and began softly singing to myself:

"Down at the cross where my Savior died, Down where for cleansing from sin I cried, There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His name!"

Suddenly I felt the blessing was coming. Some spiritual influence telegraphed ahead. I arose to my feet to receive it, and as I was rising, it came upon me. Jesus entered the second time into His temple.

He came this time to stay. He baptized me with the Holy Ghost and with fire. I knew it was the baptism of the Holy Ghost I was receiving. I knew I was being sanctified. The Spirit told me so. He witnessed to the work that was being done in me, and wrote upon every billow of glory that rolled over my soul, "This is sanctification."

I fell on my knees by the side of my bed, overpowered by the greatness of the blessing that had entered. I cried, and shouted with a voice that seemed literally propelled from within. I felt the blessing throughout me. It seemed to press upon my whole being. There was a sense of being actually charged as an instrument with electricity. I thought for several minutes that I would die. I could only say, "O my God! O my God!" and "Glory! Glory! Glory to God!"

This wonderful day is past; but the reflection still glows and burns in the sky. The storm of glory swept by; but it left Jesus walking on the waves. The work abides. The witness remains. The soul is in a haven of rest.

It was not for months afterward that I noticed that the disciples were sitting when they received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and that it was at nine o'clock in the morning.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. But Peter, standing up, ... said, ... These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day." (That is nine o'clock.)

So with myself. I was sitting, and was in one accord with God and man, when suddenly the breath of Heaven and the fire came upon me, and I was filled with the Holy Ghost. And it was exactly nine o'clock, or the third hour of the day.

I was converted in the morning, and sanctified in the morning, and, please God, I expect to rise in the morning of the resurrection, when Jesus appears in the sky and calls to the slumbering dead.

God grant that the writer and reader may be children of the morning, and abide at last in the city of which it is said, "There is no night there!"

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