

# Scriptural Holiness:

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*what is it, and how attained?*

E. Dennett.

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It may be questioned whether the subject of Scriptural Holiness occupies its due place in the minds of many Christians. They are satisfied with too low a standard of walk and conduct. Having received the forgiveness of sins, and understanding in some measure the value of the precious blood of Christ, they rest in the assurance that they are safe for heaven. The consequence is that they are governed, more or less, by worldly principles; they think little of daily failures, even if they do not regard them as a matter of course; and they aim at little more than maintaining outward consistency and a good report amongst their fellow-Christians. The possibility of unclouded communion with God, according to their measure, and daily victory over sin never seems to have dawned upon their souls. And yet it is evident from many scriptures that no lower standard than this ought ever to be accepted. Paul, for example, says of himself, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ." (Phil. 1: 20, 21.) To the Corinthians he writes: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7: 1.) His desire for the Thessalonians is, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and (I pray God) your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. 5: 23.) Peter says, "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (1 Peter 1: 15, 16.) John says, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." (1 John 2: 1.) Again, "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." (1 John 3: 6.) And once more, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." (1 John 2: 6.) In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established; and, as we cannot but see, Paul, Peter and John unite in their testimony that God has called us to holiness, and, as may be shown further on, to growing holiness during our sojourn in the wilderness.

Admitting this, our first concern must be to ascertain **WHAT IS SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS**, what is holiness as revealed in God's word. It may help us, in pursuing this enquiry, to say what it is not. To be kept from falling into sin, not sinning, is not in itself holiness. There is no necessity for the believer to sin; but intimately as this may be connected with our subject it is not holiness. That it is often said to be so is quite true, but even in such cases it will be found that by not sinning is meant that there has not been the commission of any known sin. But we cannot judge of our own state and condition, for the apostle expressly says, "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself I am conscious of nothing in myself; yet am I not hereby justified:

but He that judgeth me is the Lord." (1 Cor. 4: 3, 4.) The plain teaching of this scripture is that, although the apostle was not conscious of any failure at that moment, he was not necessarily "justified," inasmuch as the Lord alone could judge according to God's standard, and make manifest the counsels of the heart. When we read that the thought of foolishness is sin, he must be a bold man indeed who would venture to affirm that he had passed (say) a week without sinning. But we go further and say that absolute sinlessness, if such a state were possible, is not holiness as presented in the Scriptures.

What then is it? *God's standard of holiness is Christ, Christ as He is now glorified at God's right hand.* This can be easily demonstrated. From Ephesians 1 we learn that God chose believers in Christ before the foundation of the world, *that they should be holy* and without blame before Him in love (v. 4); and from Romans 8, that He has predestinated them to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Assuming that the first scripture, whatever the truth of our present standing in Christ, goes on, in its full import, to our glorified condition, the second shows that this condition is one of entire conformity to Christ glorified, and that He therefore is the revelation of God's thoughts of holiness. The Lord Himself, moreover, in John 17, when addressing the Father, says, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (v. 19.) For the present we will content ourselves with saying that this language means, that the Lord was about, in departing from the disciples and going to the Father, to set Himself apart at God's right hand; and that, as glorified there, He would be the model to whom His disciples should be conformed by the truth of what He was in that new condition. Yet another scripture; the apostle John says, after speaking of the manifestation of Christ in glory, "We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." Here clearly Christ, as He now is, is the standard of the believer's purification.

It is, then, abundantly evident from all these passages that Christ glorified is the expression of holiness according to God, and hence that the believer, who desires to be in communion with God's thoughts, could not accept any lower standard. And it should be further observed, that power will be lost in proportion as the standard is lowered. Satan knows this full well, and that it will give him an immense advantage in plying his temptations, if the people of God can be induced to substitute their own thoughts of holiness for God's, because then their eyes will be diverted from Christ. When, on the other hand, Christ alone is the goal, as in Philippians 3, He fills the vision, and the soul, drawn onward by His attractions, is filled with spiritual energy, and absorbed with the intense desire for growing conformity to Him, while looking "for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." (vv. 20, 21.) Holiness, then, according to God, will not be reached until we are with Christ, as John indeed says, "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

While this is true, and the testimony of Scripture is very uniform upon this point, it is yet to be insisted on that there should constantly be with the believer growing conformity to Christ, increasing practical sanctification, or holiness, every day. The reader must carefully consider the term "practical sanctification," because there is a sanctification which belongs alike to every believer, and in virtue of which all, without distinction, are called saints. Thus Paul writes to the

Corinthians, "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6: 11); and to the Thessalonians, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. 2: 13.) This sanctification refers to the setting apart for God of everyone in whom the Spirit has wrought in the new birth. Everyone, in other words, who is born of God is thus sanctified. In the epistle to the Hebrews we also read of a sanctification by blood; but this, equally with the former, belongs to the Christian position, and is in no way connected as to meaning with practical holiness, with holiness of walk, although it is ever true that the latter should flow out of the former.

Having called attention to this distinction, we may pass on to consider THE MEANS OF THE ATTAINMENT OF HOLINESS. A moment's reflection will show there are two aspects of the question: overcoming temptation, not yielding to sin; and positive growth in likeness to Christ. There is no doubt that in proportion to our increasing conformity to God's own standard we receive power to resist the solicitations of the flesh; but it will conduce to simplicity if we take these two aspects in the order named. (1) *Victory over sin*. As we have already seen, there is no necessity for the believer to sin; and now we desire to point out the ground of the absence of this necessity. In Romans 6 we read "Knowing this, that our old man" (a term which includes our evil nature, the flesh, or 'sin') "is crucified with Him, that the body of sin (sin in its totality) might be destroyed (or annulled as to its claims), that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed ('justified') from sin." (vv. 6, 7.) Most precious truth lies in this short statement. The second part of the gospel is contained in it; it proclaims salvation, deliverance from the dominion of indwelling sin, and should therefore be tidings of hope and joy to many a weary and disheartened soul. What, then, is taught in these words? First of all, that God has dealt with, passed judgment upon, what we are as children of Adam, upon our whole state and condition as his descendants, in the cross of Christ; that not only was there the expiation of our sins in His death, but that also the flesh, the nature that produced the sins, came up there before the eye of God, and passed for ever out of His sight under judgment. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (Rom. 8: 3.) Henceforward God sees His people as having died with Christ (Col. 2: 20; Col. 3: 3), and consequently as having met, as associated with Christ on the cross, all the righteous judgment which was due to their state and condition. Now faith receives God's thoughts, sees with God; and hence the believer sees himself as dead — dead in Christ's death; and he is thus enabled to understand the following words, "He that is dead is freed" (justified, discharged) "from sin." Sin — indwelling sin — cannot have any claims upon a dead man. By the very fact of death, and he is dead for faith, he has been cleared for ever from any imputation of sin and sinful lusts.

It should be most carefully noticed that the state of the believer in Romans 6 is not an *actual* but a *faith*-state. This will aid us to seize the significance of the next four verses. Associated with Christ in death, "We believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." On the cross He was made sin for us, and thereon He, having borne all the judgment due to our sinful estate, died to sin, having died out of that condition, once and for ever, in which He was a sacrifice for sin. Never more will He have to do with it in His own person, and hence, in that He liveth, He liveth

unto God. Not that — far be the thought — He did not always live unto God, but now, having completed His sacrificial work, He has passed, through resurrection, into a sphere where He has done with sin for ever, and where, as has been strikingly said, God will fill "the outgoings" of His whole existence. On this wonderful ground is laid the exhortation, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." We are not actually dead, but, according to the reckoning of faith, we count ourselves to be so, and also to be alive unto God in Him who is risen out of death. For faith, therefore, the old sinful life is gone in the cross of Christ, and also no life is now recognised but that which we have in a risen Christ — a life which only has, and could not but have, God for its object.

In this blessed truth lies the secret of victory over sin; for it is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which makes us free from the law of sin and death. But this is deliverance known in the soul, and deliverance must be practically apprehended before the path of holiness can be trodden. How then is it to be learned and enjoyed? Only in one way. Romans 6 describes how we are delivered from sin for God and for faith; Romans 7: 1-6 how deliverance from law is obtained; verses 7-12 answer the question, Is the law sin? And from verse 13 to the end of the chapter we have the experimental process by which the soul reaches the knowledge of its deliverance "from the body of this death," and of its new place in Christ. The process is described by one who has passed through, but is no longer in it; and the case supposed is that of one who has a new nature, for he delights in the law of God after the inward man, but is lying, notwithstanding all his struggles and efforts, in hopeless captivity to sin, to sin in the flesh.

Before the stages of the deliverance are indicated, it should be distinctly understood that the experiences of souls now do not exactly correspond with those detailed in this chapter. The reason of the difference is, that Gentile believers were never under law. Another thing is, that the case supposed in this chapter had never received the Holy Ghost, whereas it is quite possible for those who, on forgiveness of sins, have received the Holy Spirit, but who have never learned the truth of their evil nature, the flesh, and how it has been dealt with in the cross of Christ, to enter upon similar and analogous experiences.

The apostle, then, traces four stages before the deliverance is reached. The first is, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." Until the lesson is learned, that the flesh is totally, unchangeably, and hopelessly evil, there will be always the expectation of amendment, and progress becomes impossible. The second is that the soul is powerless: "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." (v. 18.) Many are more slow to recognise this truth than the former; but it is as imperative to come to the end of our own strength as to learn that nothing good can proceed from the flesh. The third is to understand how to distinguish between the old and the new natures, to be able to say of the motions of the flesh, the active principle of evil in me, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." The flesh will then be treated as an enemy, an enemy within, and as one who has become as hateful to us as it is to God; and also as one from whom, by faith, I entirely dissociate myself by identifying myself with Christ as my only and true life. (Compare Gal. 2: 20, 21.) The last stage is now reached.

Notwithstanding the lessons which have been acquired, the soul finds itself in the grip of a relentless enemy, and, though delighting in the law of God after the inward man, has to say, "But

I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. "In this helpless and hopeless condition, with every source of succour from within dried up, the cry is raised, and all the pent-up sorrow, agony, and disappointment from the unsuccessful conflicts of the past are expressed in the cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (v. 24.) The cry is no sooner uttered than the blessed light of deliverance, like the sun bursting through the dark clouds of a spent storm, breaks in upon the soul; and immediately perceiving that deliverance is to be found, not in self but in Christ, in Christ risen from the dead, and out of the whole estate and condition in which He died to sin, the song of triumph is heard, "I thank God (I am delivered) through Jesus Christ our Lord." Like Jonah, the soul has now learned that "salvation is of the Lord," for it has experimentally reached its new place in Christ, where there is no condemnation, because "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death," and God has already, in sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. (Rom. 8: 1-3.)

It would take us too far from our present subject to follow out all the consequences of this blessed deliverance as here described; and we will therefore content ourselves with pointing out two or three. First, the walk now is, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; the things of the Spirit occupy the new mind; the state is no longer characterized by the flesh but by the Spirit, for the Spirit of God dwells in the delivered soul. If moreover Christ is in the believer, the body is dead because of sin, and the Spirit is life because of righteousness; also there is the assurance that even his mortal body will be quickened, because he has dwelling in him the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead.

Leaving the reader to examine these consequences for himself, we may point out that the delivered soul will at once enter upon a path of liberty and power. The character of his liberty will be liberty from self and liberty before God, and this known in ever-increasing measure as he learns more of the fulness of the grace which has been displayed in redemption. The power will flow from the presence and activity of the Holy Ghost, a power sufficient to resist and overcome all the incitements of the flesh; and hence the apostle can say, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

These blessings are among the *possibilities* of one who has entered upon deliverance. Their realization will depend upon the maintenance of an ungrieved Spirit (see Eph. 4: 30), and of spiritual diligence or purpose of heart. This will at once be understood, at least in one aspect, by a reference to another scripture. The apostle John writes, "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not" (1 John 3: 6); power to overcome the temptation to sin, to gratify the flesh, is here plainly connected with abiding in Christ. What then is abiding in Christ? If we turn to the Lord's own illustration in John 15, the meaning is evident, "As the branch," He says, "cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." Look now at the branch of the vine. First, it is absolutely dependent on the vine; and, secondly, it lives of the life of the vine. It is the vine's sap which, flowing out from the stem into the branch, produces the fruit. To abide in Christ is therefore to be in absolute dependence upon Christ (and without, or apart from, Him we can do nothing), and to be living of His life. This condition fulfilled, there will always be an ungrieved Spirit, and always power, and thus always victory over sin. It should

also be said, that to be in constant dependence implies the activity of faith, and faith in exercise brings in God's power for our daily preservation. Jude teaches the precious truth that God is able to keep us from falling, but God does not always keep His people from stumbling; and the link between the display of His power and our preservation in His path is declared by Peter, when he says, "You, who are kept by the power of God *through faith*" (1 Peter 1: 4, 5). Faith then secures the interposition of an Omnipotent arm to uphold us against all the devices of the enemy, so that leaning on it, we may be victorious in every conflict, because He that has undertaken our cause is mightier than all our adversaries. Understanding this, we may adopt the language of the Psalmist, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Nay we have, in the confidence of faith, only to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.

Having now dwelt upon the means of victory over sin, we may consider, secondly, *how we may grow in conformity to Christ*; how, in other words, we may make advances in practical holiness. There are two scriptures which will explain this, one is John 17: 19, and the other 2 Cor. 3: 18. The former has already been mentioned, and it was explained that, when the Lord spoke of sanctifying Himself, He referred to His being glorified as man at God's right hand, and that He presents Himself there as the model to whom we are to be conformed. Further, when He speaks of our being sanctified by the truth, He teaches that we shall be brought into moral likeness to Him by the application to our souls of the truth of what He is as glorified; that is, that the revelation to us of what He is, in all His perfections as glorified, will have the effect of producing in us by degrees moral correspondence with Himself. It is, in fact, only another aspect of what is found in the second passage. Let us then examine it.

The first thing to be observed is, that the face of our blessed Lord is, in His glorified condition, unveiled. This will be understood if it is perceived that a contrast is drawn between Moses and Christ. Moses had been, in the mount with Jehovah, and the effect of his being in the immediate presence of God was that his face shone, and the people were afraid to come nigh him. Moses then put a veil upon his face until he had done speaking with them; for, as the apostle points out in verse 13, they "could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished." The reason of the people's fear was, that the very glory that shone from the face of Moses, told of the claims of a holy God, and they knew, from their recent transgression and apostasy, that if those claims were pressed, it would be for their judgment and destruction. In contrast with all this, the glory displayed in the face of our glorified Lord proclaims that His work on the cross has been accomplished, that atonement has been made to the eternal satisfaction of God. The Lord's glory is thus the divine witness to the efficacy of His sacrifice, to the perfectness of the redemption wrought out by His death and resurrection, and to God's own estimate of His finished work. This will explain, secondly, how it is that the believer can "behold" the Lord's glory, unveiled as it is, without fear. So far from striking terror into his heart, as the shining of Moses' face did into the hearts of the children of Israel, it excites his adoring gratitude, inasmuch as it proclaims that the question of his sin and sins has been for ever settled according to the requirements of the glory of God. He stands therefore, in the exercise of faith, boldly in the presence of his glorified Lord, and he sees, with unspeakable joy, in every ray of His glory the declaration that God reposes with infinite satisfaction in the One who glorified Him on the earth, and finished the work which He had given Him to do. Thirdly, it is to be noticed that Christ, as glorified at the right hand of God, is, as before remarked, the expression of the

purpose of God for His people. Every believer is to be conformed to the image of His Son. Adam and his race have been for ever set aside; and Christ, who is the beginning as the man of God's counsels, is in His glorified state the divine pattern after which God is now working. "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (1 Cor. 15: 48, 49.) This brings us to our last point in this connection, which is, that our growth in likeness to Christ, while down here, our increase in practical holiness, is the fruit of occupation, of being constantly engaged with, of meditation upon, our blessed Lord's glory. This statement is borne out by the language of our scripture. It says "beholding\* the glory of the Lord, (we) are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Three things are here given. First, that it is by beholding we are changed; second, that the change is gradually effected; and, third, that the Spirit is the power by which the transformation is accomplished.

\*The words "as in a glass" may lie in the etymology of the word so translated, but it should be understood that the phrase "beholding as in a glass" is but the rendering of *one* word, and it means simply contemplating. They are not necessary therefore to the meaning.

Here then is the means of all attainment in holiness. But the reader may enquire, How, or where, can we behold the glory of the Lord? Let it then be plainly stated that His glory, which He now possesses as the glorified Man (though He is ever all that He is in His glorious person), is revealed to us in the written Word, and it is, as we read of it there, and trace it out, that we contemplate it, and while adoringly contemplating it, the Holy Spirit silently, but actively, works within us and fashions us morally after His likeness. All the perfections of Christ (for these constitute His glory) — His grace, His love, His holiness, His truth, His tenderness — and everything that belongs to His glorified condition are displayed before our eyes in the sacred record, and as we meditate upon Him we are changed into the same image; but gradually, for it says, from glory to glory.

Another thing should be added. It is everywhere taught in the Word that it is to the *heart* the Lord communicates Himself, that it is through the heart we apprehend (by the Spirit we need not say) divine things. He who loves most will therefore learn most; and it is consequently of the greatest importance in the pursuit after holiness that the spiritual affections should be cultivated. And there is nothing that so nourishes the hearts of God's people as the consideration of our blessed Lord in His pathway through this world. To behold Him in all His meekness and lowliness, in the incessant flowing out of His grace to the poor and wretched souls, to the publicans and sinners, with whom He came in contact; to see Him in all His tenderness and patience in the midst of His disciples, watching over and caring for them, and never giving them up, whatever their ignorance and waywardness; to mark His consuming zeal for, His entire devotedness to, the glory of God; and, lastly, to watch Him at all cost going calmly forward to the cross, although He had to encounter in His path the malice of Satan and the enmity of men, the treason of Judas and desertion by the rest of the disciples, and then, finally, going down under all God's waves and billows, to endure there all that His glory necessitated, and to lay down His life under judgment — all this cannot but touch the renewed heart, and call forth emotions of gratitude and love to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. With these emotions in our souls, our gaze is drawn upward to Him where He is, and beholding His present glory we rejoice, and we adore as we remind ourselves that the One who is now glorified is the

same Jesus who down here learned obedience by the things which He suffered. In this way that condition of soul is produced in which the Spirit of God can most effectually work for our transformation.

Another thing will follow. Perceiving that Christ glorified is the model to whom we are to be conformed, we learn that He is our present standard; and, in the expectation of being like Him, when we see Him as He is, we shall, as John teaches, purify ourselves even as He is pure; we shall judge ourselves and everything round about us by the light of what He is; and refusing, whether in ourselves or in things around, all that is unsuitable to Him, we shall seek at the same time, through grace, the acquisition of everything that would call forth His approbation and delight. We should thus grow in holiness unceasingly, and the measure of our attainment will be the measure of our conformity to His likeness.

If, then, the Scriptures teach that absolute holiness, that is, entire likeness to Christ, cannot be reached until we see Him face to face, and be for ever with Him, *What, it may be well to enquire, are the possibilities for the Christian, as to state, walk, and conduct, while waiting for this consummation?* First, to go down to the foundation, the Scriptures teach that God is able, as already pointed out, to keep us from falling. God were not God if it were not so. Let not the reader therefore, however tried and tempted, doubt it; but let him rest calmly in this blessed assurance that he can be in no situation of difficulty, perplexity, or peril in which God cannot preserve him from stumbling. But it must again be remembered that God acts in, and through, the believer's faith. If we cease to look to Him through fear, or unbelief, even as Peter lost confidence in the Lord "when he saw the wind boisterous," we shall like him begin to sink. It is faith, faith in constant activity, that draws down into the soul the constant sustaining power of God; and walking thus in unfaltering trust in Him, no wile or seduction of the enemy will succeed in drawing us aside from the holy path of dependence and obedience. Again, we may repeat there is no necessity for the believer to sin. (See 1 John 2: 1; 1 John 5: 18.) Yet "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1: 8.) There is not a believer in the whole world who has not sin, the evil nature - "the flesh" — still in him; but "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections [passions] and lusts" (Gal. 5: 24); not indeed that all have actually done it, but that it belongs to Christians to do so; it is their true (normal) state. And power is given for it, for the apostle says, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (v. 16.) Should sin therefore break out, through the allowance of the flesh in any shape or form, the failure must be traced in every case to our own want of watchfulness, and our lack of the realization of our constant and entire dependence on God. But if we are careful, on the other hand, to maintain a state of soul in which the Spirit, being ungrieved, can always keep our eye on Christ; if we thus, to use the language of John, "keep" ourselves, the wicked one will not be able to touch us.

Once more, the possibility is put before us of walking like Christ. John says, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself so to walk, even as He walked." (1 John 2: 6.) Abiding in Christ and walking as He walked are here evidently connected - the latter flowing out, or being the consequence, of the former. As we have already explained what it is to abide in Christ, we may link with this another scripture, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." The apostle is undoubtedly speaking primarily of his ministry among the Corinthian believers; but, in doing so, he expounds

a principle of general application. It is this: If the life of Jesus, the same moral traits which He exhibited (whatever their infinite perfection in Him) during His pathway through this world, a walk like His own as before God and in separation from all evil, is to be seen in us, it can only be as the result of the constant application of death, of the truth of the cross, to all that we are in ourselves. It is well that we should be reminded that we are left here, not to express what we are, but to show out what Christ is; and if we are to do this in any measure, it can only be by refusing ourselves and by accepting the cross. Paul has shown us in another scripture the working out of this truth in his own case. "I am crucified," he says, "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.) The One who loved him and gave Himself for him, and He as Son of God was the object of his faith, and He also, because the object of his faith, was the power of life, yea, the life itself within him, for expression in all his walk, service, and ways.

Lastly, abiding communion, communion with the Father and with the Son, in our several measures, is put before us, as the possible state of the believer. John says, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1: 3.) That this fellowship is, in John's teaching, the enjoyment of eternal life, might easily be shown, as also that it is connected with the revelation of the Father in, and through, the Son, and with our being brought into the Lord's own place and relationship in association with Himself (John 20: 17); but it is not necessary to enter upon this now, as our only object is to call attention to the wealth of blessedness into which God would fain bring His people, even while they are in this world.

Let no one therefore think that we desire to discourage pursuit after holiness. Rather we would earnestly seek to stir up ourselves and our fellow-believers to more spiritual energy, and more constant purpose of heart in this blessed quest, that, having the glory of the Lord ever before our souls, we may daily attain to increasing measures of sanctification, to be displayed daily in growing likeness to Christ. This is God's own desire for us: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4: 3.) Again, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and [I pray God] your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5: 23); and yet once more, "Follow . . . holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12: 14.) These scriptures will suffice to show that we cannot be in fellowship with the mind of God for His people unless our hearts respond to His desires, and are bent upon the attainment of holiness in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Having now explained wherein holiness consists, and the means of its acquirement, it may be of service to point out some of the mistakes which are often made by those who are entering upon this path. There are those who hold, for example, that holiness will follow upon the entire surrender of ourselves to the will of God. Holiness is thus made to be the work of a moment; for it is further said, that, consequent upon this surrender, the Holy Ghost will enter, possess, and permeate henceforward the whole soul. This is sometimes termed the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and sometimes "the second blessing." Now we heartily unite with the advocates of this view in urging upon believers, that there can be no spiritual growth, no enjoyment of communion, and no sense even of the favour and blessing of God, as long as any known sin is unconfessed and unjudged, or while any habit, indulgence, or practice, known to be contrary to God's will, is

retained. And we do not doubt for a moment, that when the light has poured into souls through the ministry of the word, or otherwise, revealing much in the life and conduct that would not bear the test of God's holy presence, and when grace has been given, there and then, to judge themselves for the allowance of these things, they have experienced, almost immediately, such peace and joy in believing, and such a consciousness of the Lord's favour and blessing, as they have not hitherto known. Further, that having judged that which had been grieving the Holy Spirit, and the hindrance to His activity in the soul being thus removed, there would doubtless be an increased manifestation of His presence and power. Still this is neither scriptural holiness nor the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The former is, as fully explained, conformity to Christ in glory; and the latter took place on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 1: 5; 1 Cor. 12: 13.) The individual believer receives the Holy Spirit on the forgiveness of his sins (Acts 10: 43, 44; Eph. 1: 13), and we are exhorted to "be filled with the Spirit," but there is no mention of a second baptism of the Holy Ghost. If it be said that this is a difference only in words, the answer is, while not assenting to this objection, that our preservation from error depends upon adhering to the scriptural form and presentation of the truth. We are at one with all who insist upon the path of holiness for God's people; only adding, that if holiness according to God be sought after, it can only be found in God's way.

Another mistake is that holiness is the result of the continuous application of the blood of Christ. There are two different and erroneous views advanced in connection with this point. The first takes the blood of Christ as the means of victory over sin itself, His blood being the purifying medium whereby we gradually, being already justified, become pure and clean from all sin; i.e., from the guilt of all sin. But this interpretation entirely ignores the teaching of Hebrews 10, and would make "no more conscience of sins" impossible, denying as it does that Christ has by one offering "perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The second contention is, that the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," mean that by the continuous application of the blood of Christ our evil nature is gradually purified, so that the very tendency to sin is finally and completely removed. It is thus said (to cite from a well-known writer on the subject), "Sanctification is not a state in which we do not need the blood, and that continually. We never needed it more. Sin is only driven from its stronghold by the all-cleansing blood, and only can be kept from returning by the same blessed power — the life ('For the blood is the life'), the glorified life of the Son of God always flowing through the soul, and thus keeping it clean." Two very serious errors are found in this brief statement; first, the evil nature which we have all inherited from Adam, a nature which the Spirit of God often terms "flesh" (Rom. 8: 12, 13), is, according to this writer, actually expelled from the believer, "driven from its stronghold by the all-cleansing blood"; and, secondly, it is plainly stated that the blood represents the "glorified life of the Son of God." Let the reader test these teachings by the infallible Scriptures, and he will soon discover that they are entirely without foundation, for Scripture asserts that the flesh, man's evil nature, is never changed even in the Christian. (Rom. 7: 25.) The way God has dealt with it is, that He has passed judgment upon it, upon our old man, once and for ever in the cross of Christ (Rom. 6: 6; Rom. 8: 3), but it is never purified or expelled.

A careful consideration of 1 John 1: 7 shows, moreover, that the apostle is not speaking of the effect of the *application* of the blood of Christ, but of its *efficacy*. We often speak in the same manner. If we say, for example, "Poison kills" or "Medicine cures," we do not mean that the former is killing or that the latter is curing anyone at that moment, but simply that it is the known

property of poison and medicine to do what is asserted. So in 1 John 1: 7. The apostle in connection with our walking in the light as God is in the light, points out that it is in that blessed circle we have fellowship one with another, and adds, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." He thus proclaims the abiding efficacy of that blood which enables us to walk in the holy place into which we have been brought. Let us magnify the value of the precious blood of Christ in every possible way; but let us not pervert its application to uses which the word of God does not justify. Everywhere in the Bible the blood, first for the eye of God, is, in its application to us, for cleansing from guilt, and not for the purification of the flesh; and when once cleansed from guilt, the believer is completely and forever cleansed, so that there is no more imputation of sin as guilt. For sins after conversion God has another method; it is through the washing of water by the Word in answer to the advocacy of Christ (1 John 2: 1; John 13), and hence it is only to entangle the soul in error and bondage, as well as to lessen his estimate of the value of the one sacrifice of Christ, to direct him to have continual recourse to the blood of Christ, whether for cleansing from guilt or for the purification of the flesh. God desires the holiness of His people, and having plainly shown us the way to its attainment, it is in His own highway, not in paths of our own devising, that we must walk in order to reach this blessed goal.

The second error in the above quotation is, if possible, more dangerous, inasmuch as it unwittingly strikes at the very foundation of our faith. Does then the blood, we ask, signify the life of the glorified Son of God? It is the blood, we read, which "maketh an atonement for the soul," and whoever reads the account of the way the blood of the victim, of the sin offering, was dealt with on the day of atonement (Lev. 16) will see that the blood represented *life laid down under judgment*. Did Christ make atonement with His life in His glorified condition? Was it that life He laid down on the cross when forsaken of God? To put the questions suffices to expose this (unintentional) perversion of the all-important doctrine of the atonement, and to warn the reader to prove all things presented to him on this subject, and to hold fast only that which is sustained by the word of God.

In conclusion we willingly admit that the subject of holiness has been much neglected. But we earnestly counsel the reader again to beware of seeking it in himself instead of in Christ. Christ alone answers to the thoughts of God, and the more constantly we are found delighting in Him, in occupation with all that He Himself is, as revealed in the Word, the more we shall silently grow, under the blessed activities of the Holy Spirit, in His likeness. Such, moreover, is the grace of our God, that He will help us to this end in every possible way. He will cause everything to work together for our good — always having, in His dealings with us, His own perfect goal before His eyes — conformity to the image of His Son. If our steps become uncertain and feeble, in following on toward the mark for the prize of our calling on high of God in Christ Jesus, He will bring us more completely under the attractions of Christ, and so draw us onward with more zeal and purpose of heart; or, should it be necessary, He will for our profit use chastisements that we might be partakers of His holiness (Heb. 12: 10.) His purpose and His desire are that we should be holy; and He would have us ardently in communion with His own mind. Let us then challenge our hearts as to whether it is so with us, whether we keep God's object for us steadfastly in view, and whether, having His own perfect standard, Christ glorified, before us, it is our daily desire to purify ourselves as He is pure. We might also enquire whether we have yielded ourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, whether we have

presented our bodies a living sacrifice holy, acceptable unto God, our reasonable service. We belong wholly to Christ as Lord, and we should look unceasingly to Him for grace and strength to hold ourselves, in the power of the Holy Ghost, as absolutely at His disposal. Then, governed by His will alone, we should learn, as perhaps never before, that His yoke is easy and His burden is light, and that the path of holiness on which we have entered will conduct us into an ever-increasing intimacy with Himself, and thus be the means of our ever-increasing growth in sanctification.

May both reader and writer be always found pressing onward in this path, beckoned on by His blessed invitation to "come and see" Him in the place where He dwells (John 1: 38, 39), and also by the possibility of resting in the unhindered enjoyment of His love, like John when "lying on Jesus' breast." E. D.