

The Central Idea Of Christianity

By

Bishop Jesse T. Peck, D. D.

Revised Edition

Holiness is God's choice for man and in his creation he made him holy.

This choice remains unchanged, God's preference for holiness is eternal.

Sin interfered with this choice and called out the divine displeasure.

There has never been the slightest toleration of sin in God's plan. Sin is always condemned with un-sparing severity.

As man incurred the divine displeasure through sin, he can only be happy again by entire deliverance from sin and return to Holiness.

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THE CENTRAL IDEA
OF
CHRISTIANITY

By Bishop Jesse T. Peck, D. D.



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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

After twenty years of careful criticism and observation, the author responds to the call for another edition of this work, with much gratitude to God, and with increased confidence in all its main positions. In a most thorough revision he has not felt called upon to change one of them.

Let these positions be here formally stated:—

1. The essential depravity of the natural man is not completely remedied or removed in regeneration or the new birth.

2. Next, entire sanctification is provided, and offered to all believers in Christ.

3. In this work I have endeavored to show the loss and peril to the Church from the neglect of this great work of grace, so amply provided for all true believers. This sad fact needs no further amplification here. Let the chapter on "The Central Idea Neglected" be read; let heart examination go on at home, and everywhere, by the light of the Spirit; let history tell its own stories of earthliness, weakness, and defeat in the struggles of the Church, and we shall need to say nothing in addition. Let all men oppose sin, but holiness never—God forbid!

Give to each experimental doctrine its true distinctness and position. Perfect love is the center—the very heart—of the system, but you must not tear it out. Let it be your joy to move forward with the power of every truth and every grace of the Gospel.

This effort to present to the Church a thoroughly scriptural and practical view of the Central Idea of Christianity, is humbly and prayerfully committed to God for his providential care and blessing, and to Christians of all denominations, for their candid examination, in view of the judgment of the great day. May it, then, appear that some valuable purpose has been promoted by the humble labors of

THE AUTHOR.

PREFATORY NOTE

Bishop Peck's book, "The Central Idea of Christianity," is logic on fire. Without question it is a book without a parallel in holiness literature. We consider it a piece of unanswerable and unassailable reasoning. To attempt to reduce it to a booklet size without injuring the argument was not an easy task, but we think we have put the message of the book in small compass without diminishing it.

The contents given in another page will give the general idea of the book and an idea of the greatness of the argument. To preachers I think it will furnish apt suggestions for sermons and to teachers ideas for lessons.

It was impossible in such limited space to follow very closely the chapter and section divisions but an attempt has been made to keep up with the order of the book and its general outline.

Here is a great book with a great message.

GEORGE W. RIDOUT.

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CHAPTER I

THE CENTRAL IDEA ASCERTAINED

THE SCRIPTURE ARGUMENT

The interpretation of a system depends upon its central idea. This is seen in mechanism. The different parts of a watch, for instance, would be perfectly unintelligible to the most careful observer, without the idea which produced it.

We purpose, therefore, to discuss the question, What is the central idea of Christianity?

The great idea which originated the several parts of this amazing scheme is to be ascertained, not by accidental reading or limited study of the Bible, but by the strictest attention to its drift. Principles, in the abstract and in the concrete, must be collated with the utmost care. The minutest particulars, as well as the most prominent and extensive, must be viewed in their relations to each other, and the grand scope of the whole divine teaching ascertained. Whoever does this, will, we think, find the following truths, tending to a solution of our problem, clearly established:

1. The choice of God for the moral condition of the human race was perfect purity; hence he created man in his own image.

2. As this was once the choice of God, it must be eternally so, and the divine preference or will can never be met but by perfect moral purity.

3. Sin interfered with this choice, to the full extent

of its existence and reign, and hence called out the severest divine displeasure.

4. There has, therefore, never been and never can be the slightest toleration of sin in any divine communications; it is condemned with unsparing severity in its most secret and plausible forms.

5. As man, by becoming a sinner, has incurred the divine displeasure, he can be saved from calamity and made perfectly happy only by entire deliverance from sin.

6. Remedial measures, originating in God, must aim directly at the destruction of sin. Excepting it in any of its forms, making provision for its continuance, its justification, or excuse, in the soul of the saved, to any extent, would be trifling, impossible in him.

7. The sacrificial offering of Christ, and the means and appliances of the gospel, reveal the plan of salvation by the destruction of sin and the restoration of man to the image of God, and can, in no way, be reconciled with the idea of salvation in sin.

We have not room to amplify these propositions, or to introduce the Scriptures which prove them. Nor is it necessary, as they will not be questioned by any whom we can hope to reach. But if they truly indicate the drift of revelation, they show, incontestably, that the great idea of Christianity is holiness; that this vast scheme of suffering, teaching, labor, and agency, has all been produced and is carried on solely to deliver man from his sins, for the ultimate perfection of Christian character. There are certain Scriptures which show conclusively that we have not mistaken the teachings of revelation upon this great question.

St. Paul to the Colossians has this remarkable saying in regard to Christ: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." Then to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," is the grand and sole design of apostolic preaching. Christ as our Mediator, appears among men to answer to that idea. He throws himself into the greatest of the apostles to energize his soul, his eloquence, and his labors, for that purpose alone. Can there be a stronger declaration that the perfection of Christian character is the central idea of the gospel?

THE ANALYTICAL ARGUMENT

In exact proportion as the various branches of the Christian church and the heretical sects have departed from this original, have been their errors in doctrine, in ceremonies, in morals, and in government. We shall attempt to reach and expose these various errors only so far as the developments and brief application of what we believe to be the true idea, may serve this purpose.

The Lord's Supper is no central idea. And the application of water by one man, to the person of another, can be of no importance in itself; but solemnly performed "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," it carries us out of itself to the wondrous work of which it is "the sign and seal." *Baptism is not the central idea of the system.* But upon further observation we perceive that an organiza-

tion exists, that there is a vast and extended brotherhood, with all the powers and functions of a distinct and vigorous life; and we may ask, Is not this the consummation of the scheme? Certainly not; for an idea must produce an organization, and hence must be anterior to it and essentially independent of it. It may pervade the organization, but only as the soul the body, without losing its identity. *The church is not central in this system.* Examining still more closely the acts of this society, we perceive that stated public addresses are delivered; but these, like all speeches or harangues, are to get something done. *Preaching is, therefore, not the idea which produced Christianity.* Solemn invocation addressed to an invisible Being is another stated exercise; but this expresses an emotion or thought, or implores some good or the aversion of some ill, out of itself. *It was not, then, for the production of prayer that this system was instituted; and the same is true of praise.*

Traveling inward, the light increases, indicating nearer approach to the sun at the center. An unseen power has revealed to the soul the fact of its guilt, and it writhes in agony. But is this an object? Is the sufferer to be left in this condition? Surely not. *Conviction*, then, is not central to this system. This state is followed by an inward loathing of sin—a voluntary and decisive turning away from it. But repentance cannot exist alone. It can only be conceived of as a consequence or a means. Faith grasps a Redeemer, and hence, great as it is, is only an instrumentality—a condition of blessings out of itself. It was not, then, merely that men might believe, that this dispensation

was given. Pardon only absolves for the past. Of itself, it effects no radical change in the moral condition or tendencies of the sinner. Left at this point, he must the next instant commence a fresh accumulation of guilt. *Justification is not, therefore, the central idea of Christianity.* Bring the dead soul to life, let it be "begotten of God"—"born again"—"born from above," and does this alone meet the divine purpose in commencing the work of grace? Is regeneration the grand ultimate point to which the whole gospel scheme tends? Does this properly imply that specific moral state which, of itself, fits the soul for heaven? We grant that the word may be used in a sense which would comprehend it; but is this its proper use?

Carefully examining every particular of the system, within our reach, we find nothing else that will, as an end, meet the demands of the Almighty, explain the vast details of the remedial scheme, or account for the splendid results of that scheme in this world and in the next. By the test of analysis, then, as well as of revelation, *holiness is the central idea of Christianity.*

THE HISTORICAL ARGUMENT

Our next appeal is to history. And the question raised here, is, What is the law of religious development and power as an agent of reform? Or, in other words, regarding Christianity as the one grand agent, ordained by the Almighty to reform the world, in proportion to what has it been successful?

The following facts are beyond question. An individual professor takes his place in the church. He has wealth, and uses it freely for the benefit of the organi-

zation. He has talents, and they are zealously devoted to the defence of the church. He has popular influence, and he uses it to gather proselytes to the faith. But his piety is superficial. Words escape him every day which show that they come from an impure fountain suited only to unholy things. The most splendid talents would be no substitute for holiness; the brightest genius the world ever saw must pause at the gate of this celestial paradise, if a spot of sin be found upon his garments.

On the other hand, take a man whose heart is entirely consecrated; whose pure life indicates purity of heart, whose holy example commands universal respect, whose simple, unpretending efforts move all who hear his voice in prayer, or praise, or exhortation. Now, let him yield to temptation,—admit corruption into his heart,—and how soon it is seen that he is shorn of his strength! Just in proportion as he recedes from his elevated position in Christian holiness, his power of usefulness diminishes. Nor can he supply this deficiency by any other element. He who loses his purity may strive to save his power by increase of zeal, by enlarged charities, by the severest austerities; but it is all of no avail. He makes himself a living proof that holiness is the measure of power.

A comparison of two men in the ministry will strengthen this conclusion. One is a man of shining talents, of genteel address, of popular eloquence; the other, ordinary in all these respects—in all natural qualities, the inferior of his brother. But he is a man of God—a man of faith. His soul is filled with love—“perfect love that casteth out fear.” He moves among

the people like a spirit from eternity. His rebukes of sin fall with dreadful force upon the hearts of the wicked. His sermons, his prayers, his expostulations, his tears, all indicate the presence of an extraordinary power; and thousands are converted, sanctified, and saved through his instrumentality. But the other man sees no such fruits of his labor. Souls may be converted, but he feels that it is in spite of him rather than through his instrumentality. He wonders at the difference. He increases his exertions—elaborates his sermons with more learning and research—improves their rhetoric and oratory, but all to little purpose. He may increase the admiration of his hearers, but he cannot subdue their hearts, bring them weeping to the foot of the cross, and present them with joy as the trophies of the Redeemer. But let him seek and obtain the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Let fire from God's altar touch his lips and purify his soul, and he is a new man. He does not throw away his talents, his genius, his learning; but they are all sanctified. With the simplicity of a child, and a heart overflowing with love, he preaches the truth, and it is "in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power," and a glorious reformation follows. Whatever may be the seeming variations arising from the deficiency of our knowledge, we have, in these particular instances, strong historic indications of a general law.

What is true of individuals is true of churches also. Wherever a number of Christians have associated together, with the evident and exclusive aim of promoting purity of heart and life, they have prospered.

The most profound attention to the history of the

general church will show the same unvarying truth. Under the influence of apostolic purity, the early victories of the cross were as decisive in the reformation of individual character and public manners, as they were unparalleled in their extent and power. But the gradual departure from primitive simplicity, and the immense accumulation of corruption in heart and life which followed, by slow degrees destroyed the power of the church to act as a reforming agent.

The Wesleyan reformation was eminently a movement in favor of holiness. The true doctrine of Christian Perfection was perhaps more clearly taught and powerfully enforced than at any former time since the days of primitive purity. And while the great mass of converts made it their aim, large numbers pressed on to the actual experience and living demonstration of the power of Christ to cleanse from all sin. And mark the result: "No weapon formed against them could prevail." From the feeblest beginnings, without wealth, without power, in the midst of the most violent persecutions, they have moved on in a career of usefulness unparalleled since the days of the apostles.

THE EXPERIMENTAL ARGUMENT

Our final appeal is to experience. And here the heart of every man must answer for itself. If the grand design of the gospel be anything less than perfect purity then the soul can find full rest without it. If it be only pardon and regeneration, then the discovery of remaining corruptions ought to be no cause of uneasiness; the prayers of those who groan for full redemption ought to be unheeded; or, if relief be found,

it ought to be in some other system—through some other name than the name of Jesus.

But what facts does experience reveal? Why, that a deep and painful sense of inward purity may remain after all guilt is washed away; that in the midst of the divine comforts of adoption the soul longs for the rest of perfect love; that the more devoted the life of the regenerate Christian, the more intense is his desire to be cleansed from all sin, and while he is without the evidence of this finished work, he has more or less of fear for the future. By the most powerful internal convictions, and the most obvious tendencies of every work of grace that has heretofore been wrought upon his heart, he is urged on to this glorious consummation. And it is not in accordance with experience that he who sighs for purity of heart must sigh in vain—that he who cries, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," must pray in vain. From numerous examples in Scripture, from the testimonies of thousands long since gone to their reward, and of thousands still living, the declaration of Jesus is amply sustained: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

And precisely as it ought to be, if this is the center of the scheme, here the soul finds rest—here perfect satisfaction. All its desires, all its passions, all its plans are in complete harmony with the will of God. From this sanctified state it can develop itself without inward obstruction—from this position it can expand and advance with freedom and power.

Thus directly and inevitably does experience conduct us to holiness as the great want of immortal man

—the grand design of redemption.

We have now examined this question in the light of the Holy Scriptures, and found that this stupendous system of revelation and redeeming mercy was undertaken "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." We have subjected the scheme to the severest analysis. Moving inward from different positions outside of it, we have found holiness alone at its center. We have consulted history and experience, and found that in fact holiness is the measure of power. We are compelled, therefore, by the strictest logical necessity, to assert that holiness is the central idea of Christianity.

THE ARGUMENT APPLIES

It will, we think, at once be perceived that we have reached a position of immense practical importance. If this be the true central idea of the Christian scheme, we may try everything by it, which, in the lapse of centuries has come to be attached to this scheme. Evidently enough, whatever has no adaptation to produce entire sanctification in the hearts of believers,—“to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus,”—does not belong to the system, and must be promptly rejected.

From the nature of God it must be certain that he has made no mistakes in the details of a system designed to restore to man his lost image; and it is wonderful to see with what skill and directness he has adjusted everything to this grand aim. He has revealed his fiery law, which flames out in wrath against all species of sin. He has exhibited the immaculate purity of his own character, which causes seraphim to cry,

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.” He has uttered the unchangeable law to his people, “Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy.” He provided a Redeemer, whose blood made ample atonement for all sin. He gave the Holy Ghost to awaken, to regenerate, and to sanctify us. He gave his word to teach us the necessity of holiness. He moved men of strong faith to pray for the blessing in behalf of his people, and sketched with the pen of inspiration the characters and lives of those who had reached this glorious perfection. He bade us “mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.” He established the ministry to explain to us the way of holiness, to rouse us from the slumbers of sin, and persuade us to “lay hold on eternal life.” Indeed it may be safely said that while everything which God has instituted for man is most evidently designed and adapted to lead to purity of heart, he has omitted nothing which is essential to this result.

But we cannot conclude this discussion without inquiring, Why must the doctrine of holiness be assigned a subordinate place in systematic divinity, or even be excluded altogether? We have seen that this was not the intention of God; and, so far from retracing the true evangelical view of the doctrine, or apologizing to the world for the importance we have given it, we must in all candor ask pardon of God and man for having asserted it so timidly, dwelt upon it with so little pathos and power, and so seldom reduced it to practice. It is the center of our system. The mission which we have accepted at the hands of God, is “to spread scriptural

holiness over these lands;" and we cannot allow the doctrine a secondary, or inoperative place in the faith of the church. It must come out from its obscurity, extend its light, and its controlling power through every communion, and permeate the doctrines, the hearts, and the lives of the people, before Christianity can assert its rights in the conquest of the world. In the presence of Christians of every name, we demand for it the position which God has assigned it. What worthy motive can we have in denying it this position? Opposition to holiness is opposition to Christianity—a real, though not an intended denial of the rights of God and the privileges of man—a setting aside of the one grand object for which the Redeemer died and the church was instituted. And when this is done, what have we left? What one doctrine of the gospel is of any use, or of any significance, if holiness is excluded from the system? As well might you tear out the heart, and then attempt to give value to the veins and arteries and blood, as to reject holiness and still hope to save the gospel scheme. As well might you burn up your towns and leave your guide-boards standing, as to destroy holiness, and still insist upon justification by faith, or any other great doctrine of Christianity.

THE CONTENTS OF THE IDEA

Its general expression is "perfect love;" love to God without mixture of slavish fear; love to man without selfishness; love which springs up in the soul at the time of conversion, increasing, extending, conquering, and wholly superseding all love of the world, in its wealth, its honors, its pleasures; all forms of self-

love which seek to make the demands of self superior to the claims of God or the rights of man—love filling the soul, controlling the intellect, sensibilities and will, becoming the source of thought, feeling and action;—realizing the exact spirit of those great commandments, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” We understand perfect love to be inclusive of the following facts and results:

1. Entire Consecration.
2. Perfect Faith.
3. Cleansing of the soul from all inward impurities.
4. Perfect Love gives paramount power to the will of God.

CHAPTER II

THE CENTRAL IDEA NEGLECTED

We believe that Christians, generally, are sanctified but in part.

We remark that the probabilities are not against, but in favor of this position. Let it, however, be distinctly understood, that we speak not now of unconverted persons or apostates in the church. There are, doubtless, many of these. But we refer to those who are truly Christians, in the sense of actual inward experience. And, first of all, let no one assume that we undervalue the converted state. Pause for a while over those who can honestly say, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." What reasons have they for gratitude?

Their sins are pardoned, and they were very numerous, and very great. The inward corruptions of a fallen nature were long voluntarily retained. Thoughts of depraved action were fondly cherished. Desires that would shrink from the light of day; motives that were "earthly, sensual, devilish," were freely encouraged.

We cannot over-estimate the value of this great work. What a work of love—of love divine—is this surprising transformation! The soul of man alive from the dead, with a clear apprehension of its heirship to glory, unending as the being of God! The fruits of the Spirit new-born within, love gracefully leading the heavenly train! Its appetites changed from earthly to spiritual! Its aims elevated from a world of sin and

death to a world of God-like purity, love, and immortality! And all this without claim—without merit; nay, in despite of a life of ingratitude, a life of rebellion, which were enough to have vindicated forever his eternity of woe! All for the sake of Christ alone! Well might the soul, thus raised from the dead, exclaim,—

“I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath,
And, when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers
My days of praise shall ne’er be past,
While life, or thought, or being, lasts,
Or immortality endures!”

But we return to the position that Christians generally are sanctified only in part.

Verily, the mere suspicion that the mass of Christians are sanctified but in part, ought to rouse the spirit of inquiry throughout the length and breadth of Zion, and the positive knowledge of the fact ought to enlist the sympathies, and engage the energies of the church, till we can say, in truth and holy triumph, Christians generally are sanctified wholly.

THE FACT SHOWN IN THE STATE OF THE CHURCH

“Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” The reception of the Holy Ghost, in a special sense, is every believer’s privilege. This is evident from the promises made. John said, “He that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” The special character of this baptism appears in the language of the Savior given by St. Luke: “Ye shall

be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Now "the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty;" and "they were all with one accord in one place;" "and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." It was hence evident that this special baptism was provided for the whole church. St. Peter confirmed this opinion. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Though devoutly grateful for the special manifestations of saving grace, wherever they appear, the friends of Zion cannot fail to see, and mourn over, her low estate. Inefficiency is felt to so great an extent, as to excite alarm and anxious inquiry into its causes and remedies. The church question—involving the whole field of its essential and organic life, of its historic and prophetic relations to itself, to human governments, and to the ultimate destiny of the race—has no one aspect so intensely interesting as this: What is its essential want? With all deference to those who seek to solve this problem, in other modes, we believe that, The baptism of the Holy Ghost is the great present want of the church.

1. In proof of this position, we observe, that, The Vision of the church is obscure.
2. The life of the church is feeble.
3. The holiness of the church is defective.
4. The power of the church is inadequate.

The church must mourn comparative inefficiency in her enterprises. Look at the mission of the church to herself. To purge her own members from inward sin—to secure their steady, rapid growth in holiness and love—to exercise a wholesome, thorough, Christian discipline, recovering as many as possible of her erring children, and promptly removing those who, by their irreligion, do more harm to her than she can do good to them—to maintain her spiritual services and temporal economy, she is sent to herself. This mission, in fact, if not in form, she has always recognized. Efforts to accomplish these noble purposes for herself may be seen in all her societies. But who can carefully mark them, and not feel grieved at heart? Her most vigorous endeavors to lead her members into the fountain that “cleanseth from all sin,” fall vastly short of their object. Indeed, even to convince them that entire salvation is possible, and necessary, to rouse them to a spirit of fervent, agonizing, persevering prayer for it, seems wholly beyond her strength. She tries to do it; but her small successes, for which the Lord be praised, what extensive, mournful failures mark her history! What can be the cause, if not that the immense aggregate of her inward corruptions deprives her of the spiritual holy power with which she is bound in duty to prosecute this work? How can her ministers thoroughly and effectually “show the house of Jacob her iniquities, and God’s people their sins,” and lead them to the cleansing blood, while they are themselves neither made “perfect in love,” nor “groaning after it.” The cause of such lamentable weakness in these Heaven-sanctioned efforts, stands out as clear as the sun.

CHAPTER III

THE CENTRAL IDEA IN ITS CLAIMS

IT IS DESIRABLE TO BE HOLY

It is desirable to be holy, at least so it would seem to us; so, if we are not wholly mistaken, it must seem to all. Even opponents of the doctrine, must, upon sober reflection, exceedingly regret that, in their humble opinion, no available provisions have been made in the gospel, to save the soul entirely, and in this life, from so dread an evil;—or that provision having been made, it is placed beyond our reach;—or if entirely possible, we are so constituted that we never can, or never will, avail ourselves of it. We have often imagined that devout persons, unfortunately restricted by theological systems, must be driven again and again to search the Scriptures, and pore over the records of piety, to see whether, after all, there is not some lurking error in the view, which deprives the thirsty soul of full draughts of salvation; so abhorrent are the slightest motions of inward depravity to the truly regenerate. We shall write in harmony, therefore, with the feelings of such Christians, whatever difficulties mere theory may oppose, when we attempt to show how desirable it is to be “pure in heart.” And amongst the thousands who in honest faith receive the doctrine of experimental holiness as a practical reality, there must be extremely few who, even under the greatest delusion, cherish sin—or defend it from real affection; and yet surely the delay, the shrinking when the subject is mentioned, and the various apologetic theories put forth, justify the conviction that the true desirableness of “a clean heart,” is not appreciated by the

church.

Holiness is desirable in itself. It is purity; and we are formed to admire purity. Even the garments we wear about us are comfortable only when they are perfectly clean. If they become soiled, they are offensive. We brush them again and again, to remove from them the smallest particles of dust. If their quality will admit of it, we wash them and polish them, until they are as white as the driven snow. What comfort, what genuine satisfaction we realize, when every garment is perfectly pure; and how uneasy, how dissatisfied with ourselves, when the dust and sweat of the day adhere to us. With what instinctive loathing do we look upon the filthy and negligent around us. They may have excellent traits of character; they may be our kindred, and we may bear them the kindest regard, but can by no means avoid that nervous shrinking, in their presence, which was designed to protect us from pollution.

The Results of Holiness are Desirable. These are matters of experience. They can never be appreciated without experience. We begin to realize them at conversion when the work of holiness begins. Happiness is felt which no tongue can describe, arising partly out of relief from the enormous burden of sin, from the deep consciousness of guilt, from a terrible sense of the wrath of God, from the awful fear of punishment—happiness produced in part by the contrast which the soul feels between a state of pardon and a state of condemnation. But, besides all this, there are the beginnings of a new and spiritual life. The present manifest workings of the Holy Spirit upon the heart and

feeling of inward renovation are all suited to the constitution of the soul. Where the power of inward depravity is broken, and the feelings, motives, and will are brought into harmony with the will of God, inward comfort and joy are the natural results.

We have endeavored to show that it is desirable to be holy. We trust that this conviction has been deepened in the minds of some who have read. We are certain that little can be done without it. If a believer can see no charms in holiness,—nothing to be desired in a clean heart—in being wholly the Lord's—in perfect love, there can be no hope that he will endeavor to obtain it. He will not dwell upon it in his thoughts,—will not study it in the revealed will of God,—will not plead for it in his prayers. But it is manifestly improper to speak of a believer who sees nothing desirable in holiness. A man who can say, "I have no desire to be holy," cannot be a true experimental believer in Christ. The smallest degree of justifying, saving faith brings this charming state to the view of the soul, begins within the gracious work of cleansing, and gives an enjoyment so infinitely transcending every other, that delight in holiness and a desire to obtain it in greater measure, must be identical with a state of pardon.

Desirable! Ah! if it be desirable to be relieved from all fear—to be elevated to a state of calm and permanent bliss—to be able to glorify God even in the fire—to be ready for death without a moment's warning—to live with God forever, it is desirable to be holy. We thus see as clearly as we may with the light allowed us, one grand claim of the central idea of Christianity.

IT IS NECESSARY TO BE HOLY

Many will admit that it is desirable, that it transcends in importance all other objects of interest to an immortal soul. They are convinced that it is possible; for they do not dare to limit the power of God, nor the efficacy of his remedies.

But they do not regard it as necessary,—as indispensable. They incline to resolve the whole into a question of expediency or convenience. And, as it is inconvenient to give thorough attention to it; inconvenient to part with many cherished worldly gratifications; inconvenient to be wholly and only Christians, they waive it, and think they have committed no wrong, violated no law, run no risk! But we propose to show that entire deliverance from sin is not a mere question of convenience; that it is not left simply to our discretion; that it is a fixed, unalterable necessity; a matter of imperative obligation, demanding immediate attention—thorough and successful attention—such a necessity as that failure in relation to it must be finally fatal.

We argue, from the purpose of man's creation, and his primitive moral condition. It is certainly in harmony with Revelation, as well as the general sense of the church, to say, "The chief end of man" is, "to glorify God and enjoy him forever." But God is glorified by holiness alone. Sin interferes with his glory. It is the grand element and fact of rebellion in his universal empire. Wrong in itself, essentially and unalterably corrupt, it is against all his plans, and the occasion of all the disturbance in a government, designed to show the power of universal harmony in the right. Just in

proportion to its extent, it prevents the glory which would accrue to the Divine Being in the reign of universal goodness, happiness, and progressive perfection. Conquered, held in check, and resisted as it is, in the justified state, it yet, however concealed and plausible, is an antagonistic force that resists the spirit and plans of God, and loses no opportunity to seek and gain the ascendancy. Only the heart entirely consecrated, from which sin is all excluded, which is wholly dissolved in love, can completely glorify God. Then all the ransomed powers flow sweetly in the channel of the divine requirements.

We argue it from the nature of God. We cannot fathom the depths of infinite purity. The heavenly orders cry before him who sits upon the throne, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." This is the nature we are to please. To this awful moral attribute we must be adjusted in character, affections, motives and will, if we reach the other object of our creation "to enjoy him forever." With this holy nature we are to be compared, not in its infinitude, but in its freedom from all defilement, and its unchangeable devotion to the good and the true. With this august, living purity, we are to be united. God proposes to dwell in us as his temple,—to "sup with us and we with him." How appropriately, then, are we required to "come out, and be separate; touch not, taste not, the unclean thing;" to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." In pity to our fallen condition, he begins his reign in us before "sin is all destroyed."

CHAPTER IV

THE CENTRAL IDEA IN ITS COUNSELS

THE CONVICTION PRODUCED

The conclusions reached are such as must command attention. Holiness is not an outside or accidental appendage of Christianity. It is the very center of it—the grand element of its power—the essential fact of its value; and yet, it is generally neglected, so that a large proportion of converted men are sanctified but in part, and the church comes very far short of accomplishing her mission. It is time for us to ask “what shall we do?” May we not assume that the reader has already determined that it is desirable to be holy—it is possible to be holy—it is necessary to be holy? The most anxious desire must then be to understand the way; and there is certainly no need of mistake. The central idea which has produced revelation has filled it with counsels which “he that runs may read,” and which followed in the spirit of humble confidence, will surely lead us to the full realization of this glorious state.

But let us not be superficial. Whatever is valuable in religion must be grounded in conviction. The receptive intellect must take in the subject. If it disappear, memory must recall it, and attention detain it, for the most careful examination. The reason must determine its truth, its importance and its claims. The heart must yield to its deep impressions, and the resolves of the soul must harmonize with the understanding.

Conviction is a law term. It implies that the accused has been arrested, tried, and condemned—brought in guilty of the crime alleged against him in the indictment.

But in theology, this term has a special sense. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, imparting to the soul positive evidence of its guilt, its depravity, and its exposures. "And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." So perverted is the natural conscience, that it cannot be relied upon, for accurate moral discrimination, for safe and decisive moral impulsions, or just and remedial retentions. Man left to himself, accumulates guilt, with no true estimate of its enormity, becomes harder and darker as crime increases, and "treasures up to himself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." The light of reason, or of philosophy shines too feebly to penetrate the gloom of his depravity.

But there is a conviction for inward impurity—for "sin in believers," which is eminently the work of the Holy Spirit. Depravity of the heart, however subdued, cannot remain long concealed. Its first motions, as we have seen, are felt with surprise by the truly regenerated. They produce more or less of pain and exposure, but if promptly resisted, they do not bring a feeling of guilt upon the spirit trusting in Christ.

These convictions, let it be expressly stated, differ from those felt by the unpardoned sinner. They are convictions of inward depravity, and not of guilt; they are connected with felt aversion to the impurity recognized, and a conscious dependence upon the Savior's

merits for gracious acceptance; they produce pain, but not condemnation; they are not unfrequently strongest in the midst of fervent spirit-pleadings for gracious influence, and increase with the advance of the soul in its longings after God, and in the elements of a higher Christian life.

Are you convicted by the Holy Spirit, by the word of God, by your own enlightened conscience, that entire salvation is not only your high privilege, but your indispensable duty? Then with humble confidence advance. You have only to act upon these convictions, and the most gracious results will follow.

There must be no mental reservation. Did you think, as you were settling the question, I will make an effort—I will see whether it is for me—I will try the theory by an experiment? Alas! then you have been deceived by your enemy. Do you not see how marked is the evidence of unbelief in all this? Is it, then, only a resolution to ascertain whether God is true or false? Do you propose to debate the promises of the gospel, and to proceed only upon conditions that you shall find them reliable? No. This would be a fearful responsibility. We trust you are fully apprized of its wrong, and its danger. This alone would account for the failure of your effort. The resolution, to be successful, must be based upon the absolute unchangeable veracity of God—upon the unquestioned integrity of the promises, upon the positive certainty that the blood of Jesus can cleanse from all sin, and that it can, and will cleanse you so soon as you take the right position in regard to it.

It is, then, a question of grave importance, how is

the right feeling to be acquired? How may we obtain such tenderness of spirit, as will enable us to receive the stamp of God's image?

Our strong and general answer is, prayer. We deem it legitimate for the seeker of holiness to ask God directly for "a broken and a contrite heart." He alone can grant the peculiar influences which subdue the soul, and melt it to humble contrition. "He is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than parents are to give good gifts to their children." Yes, more willing, for while theirs is a finite, his is an infinite love, and with the yearnings of an infinite heart, he longs to give his children all that their wants require. The Holy Spirit melts the heart; and it is this very gift that your heavenly Father is so willing to bestow upon you. But your will must accord with his. He will hold you to the conditions. "Ask and ye shall receive." You may rely upon it. His promise is "yea and amen to him that believeth."

THE CONSECRATION MADE

May we assume that the reader has felt the conviction, formed the resolution, received the melting divine influence and made the confession, which we have ventured to suggest? Another point of great practical importance must now be introduced. Consecration is literally "the act, or ceremony of separating from a common to a sacred use." We have already introduced it as a law of sanctification, and mentioned humility as its test. But it is here introduced as a thing to be done. It is for you to make the consecration which your determination to seek for holiness requires. Your soul must

be separated from all carnal, worldly use, and formally set apart as the exclusive property of God. Your powers of intelligence, reason, imagination, feeling, will, must be solemnly dedicated to the service of Almighty God. Your affections are henceforth to belong only to him who made the power to love. Your body is to be given up as "the temple of the Holy Ghost," and never to be "defiled." Your talents, natural and acquired, are to be reckoned henceforth wholly his. Your property in part, and in whole, is to be held subject to the divine will. Your dearest loved ones must be no longer yours, but God's. Yourself, and your all, must be without reserve consecrated to the Lord for time and eternity; for he is to be your only object of adoration. He is to reign alone within your heart. Absorbed in the contemplation of his divine excellence;—devoted to the execution of his holy will,—seeking and recognizing the labor he has authorized, and the spirit in which he wishes everything done; rejecting everything, whether of honor, or pleasure, or profit, which is not for his glory; your life in all the future is to flow out in the channels of divine love.

And what will you lose—what will you really sacrifice? You must renounce the world; and do you not feel called to this? We mean not that you are to go out of the world,—not that you are to resign any of its lawful pleasures. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein;" but he has placed us here to honor him in its appropriation. It must therefore be acknowledged his, as it really is. No man is allowed a more delightful use of the precious gifts of God, temporal and spiritual, than

he who is wholly consecrated. It is a sanctified use—a use which recognizes all the claims of God in behalf of his church.

You have now reached a point in which the question of faith is of paramount importance. You have renounced all dependence upon self; all trust in an arm of flesh. You have seen one after another of your earthly supports fail. You dare not trust again, anything less than infinite power. You would not recall one worldly dependence which you have renounced. To you, there is now absolutely but one hope, one confidence left, and you need no other. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Pause humbly, silently, before the crucified. You have now but one all-absorbing desire—to be "cleansed from all sin,"—to be fully prepared to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

O, trembling spirit, take courage; be not afraid of Jesus; come near to him; fall into his arms; press closely to his bosom, that you may feel the throbbings of his heart of love. Let him wrap you in his crimson vest, and you shall feel, and say, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us"—cleanseth me—"from all sin." Now let your fears depart;—no more shrinking or hesitating. With humble simplicity, with faith that receives Christ for everything—your "wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption"—claim the answer to prayer, and claim it now, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults," "Create in me a clean heart, O, God." You are urging the prayer; hear what your Savior says, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

Here let your humbled spirit rest, and claim the full efficacy of the atonement, for yourself, without a doubt. Do you now really do this?

But do you say, I believe in the power and willingness of Christ to save me from all sin. I ask it, believing that he will just now answer the prayer, and yet I feel no change,—no inward witness,—no special baptism. Am I notwithstanding entitled to believe that I do receive the blessing? Certainly not; your state of mind is not such as would inevitably follow if the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost had fallen upon you. Do you therefore ask, has not the promise of the Savior then failed? No, verily. We beseech you indulge in no such unworthy idea of the infinite Jesus. Check at once this propensity to lay the blame or the responsibility of a failure on him. You will surely see the reason in yourself; and even now he who is infallible in knowledge and truth, is saying to you, as he did to others, “Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss.” It is not for the same reason, that you ask amiss; and yet so long as you fail, you are bound to believe that, in some particular, you “ask amiss.” Forget not how frail you are,—how imperfect are all human knowledge and judgment, and you will in all humility allow, that your consecration is imperfect, or your appropriating faith too weak while the answer delays. But you will by no means hence be discouraged. Remember it forever, that you have given yourself to God in holy covenant; and though he tarry, he will surely come. Keep your position, humble and self-abased at your Savior’s feet. Breathe in ceaseless urgency the prayer, “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.”

He will "strengthen you" for the conflict. He will exhibit to you, with clearer and clearer evidence, the great and sufficient provision for all your wants; a provision present, and available for you now just as you are, and you will rise in the power of faith, and claim your purchased inheritance.

"'Tis done, thou dost this moment save
With full salvation bless,
Redemption in thy blood I have,
And spotless love and peace."

THE EVIDENCE RECEIVED

A question of the utmost importance now presses itself upon our attention. How can it be known whether the work of sanctification is complete? What is the evidence of the fact to the individual in whose soul it is wrought?

The witness of the Spirit. We lay it down as a general truth that all authoritative communications to the spirit of man come from God. Revelation is authoritative, because God is its author. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The great Source of all truth knew what the facts and principles were which were needed for a general and special revelation to the race; and he communicated them to holy men, to be written and disseminated. But revelation cannot settle a question of fact, in relation to the light in which God views us personally. He, alone, knows what is passing in his own infinite mind, and therefore, he alone can declare it. Hence, the position, that the Holy Ghost is the great truth-telling agent to the souls of men. Mark the promise of the Savior.

As surely as the Holy Ghost is our sanctifier,—as he and he alone knows the nature, conditions fulfilled, and the time of entire sanctification,—as the blessing of holiness is one of “the things of Christ,” which “he shall show unto us,”—as it is one of “the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,”—as it is one of “the things that are freely given to us of God,”—as the Holy Ghost is “the Spirit of truth,” and as surely as all things which we know directly, officially, authoritatively, are from him, we may have satisfactory and reliable evidence that we are sanctified wholly, and that evidence must be the witness of the Spirit.

The soul in which the work is wrought, recognizes and understands the divine testimony. It has been aware of a supernatural agency, operating, with silent power, to produce a state of perfect purity and giving distinct assurance that the work is accomplished.

A consciousness of purity is one of the desirable, experimental results of a completion of this work. We mean not the mere negative fact that no corrupt desires, no unholy motives are felt within at a particular time; but the feeling of purity itself; deeper, richer, fuller, than before. As the soul bathes in the ocean of redemption, as it lies humbled at the foot of the cross, as it meekly kisses the rod with which it is afflicted, as it stands firm against the shock of temptation, as it recognizes the presence and indwelling power of the Holy Ghost, it feels that it lives in purity.

And there is a fulness of love—a perfectness of delight in God, and his holy ways, which no language can describe. Love is steadier, stronger and more pervading than formerly. Such is the depth of holy devotion

to God and his cause, and such is the sense of security in Christ which it gives, that it may well be styled perfect love, which casteth out fear; and its increase is to mark the genuineness of its character. The soul which now loves with all its power, will be stronger and larger tomorrow, and will hence love more. It will, if faithful, increase perpetually in its power to love, and in the holy exercise of its devoted affections, pervading the intellect and controlling the whole man, and thus realizing the prayer of the great apostle: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." This is the experience which the soul realizes in entire sanctification; feeling it, and giving it humble expression in the life, "to the glory and praise of God;" by no means to his own glory, for he is filled with a humility that sets up no claims for self, but all for his Master,—a humility that you can mark in the cast of his countenance, in the propriety of his words, in the tone of his voice, and in all his bearing toward his fellow men.

Finally, there is pure, rich and exalted happiness in this state. It is not generally tumultuous. It is not likely to be overwhelming, but sure to be deep and comparatively steady. It is the calm repose of unwavering faith—of perfect love, and of "hope that is an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast." It will not be always the same in degree. It is liable to abatement in time of severe trials. It may be interrupted by "heav-

iness through manifold temptations." It may be varied by the state of the body, especially of the nervous system, and by the sufferings and death of friends. It may be increased under the action of special means of grace, and by special baptisms of the Holy Ghost, so that with the psalmist the completely saved will exclaim, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies."

Is it the duty of the wholly sanctified to acknowledge it? We answer affirmatively; and we place it upon the broad ground of truth. If any man "speaketh the truth in his heart," it is surely the man who is "cleansed from all unrighteousness." He is the very soul of truth. There is nothing in him that he has reason to conceal. He is all "light in the Lord;" and the sincerity of his consecrated spirit is like the bright shining of the sun. Perfect transparency of character has been reached, and must be maintained by the full application of the blood of Christ; but it would surely be sacrificed by a misrepresentation of the facts, or by entertaining a desire to conceal them. A profession of religion is the acknowledged duty of all true Christians; but what is to be the profession made? We answer, the truth, just as we understand it to be. He who undertakes to narrate experience must tell what he has experienced. He who mentions the work of Christ must tell what he has done. If the declarative glory of Christ depends upon what he has done, the

more he has accomplished the more we have to tell, and the more he is glorified. If he has pardoned our sins, regenerated our natures, and adopted us as his children, we have so much to tell. With the psalmist we may say, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins: nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit; out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God, many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." And if the blessing should be greater, should we on that account shut it up in our own hearts, and allow no man to know it? Or is there anywhere in the Bible, an intimation that the work of God in the soul may be confessed up to a particular point, say of justification, and sanctification commenced, and that all beyond that is to be unacknowledged? We are sure not; for the more accomplished by rich and abounding grace, the more there is to be acknowledged, and, if possible, the greater the obligation to acknowledge it.

Have you now the evidence of your entire sanctification? Shrink not from the responsibility which this excellent grace implies. There is soundness in the position, that responsibility is always equal to privilege, and our privileges are great. You have received the special tokens of the Savior's love, and you are now

required to return gratitude to the extent of your ability. Doubtless the most appropriate expression of gratitude which you can make, will be the faithful preservation of the grace you have received. This can only be done by a living faith in Christ, keeping you in perpetual union with the source of your purity and love.

How shall this profession be made? There is an important sense in which the life is to bear testimony to the state of the heart. The Savior was distinguished for the profession of action. "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." In this let him be our model. St. James makes a distinct announcement of this principle. "I will show you my faith by my works." And no mode of profession can supersede this. The whole life must be in harmony with the doctrine.

The language of profession is safest when nearest the language of the Bible. The very "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," are less likely to mislead, and, as it seems to us, more properly expressive of humility, than any others. But surely there is no authority for shutting up any man to any one particular form of expression. As diversity is the law of our intelligence, so also is it the law of taste and of habit; and as no two persons would describe a scene, or an event, in the same language, so neither can they be expected to express a feeling, a conviction, a state of inward experience, in the same way.

Finally, we would attach the utmost importance to the spirit in which all this is done. To everything that savors of self-congratulation,—of personal conse-

quence,—of vain-glorious boasting, there are the most absolute objections. Such a manner tells but too plainly that the man is really self-deceived, and has nothing of peculiar sanctity to express. O, let him be warned of his danger before he further dishonors the sacred cause he professes to advance! His heart should glow with a depth of humility, and a purity of love, that would forever save him from so grave an error.

CHAPTER V

HOLINESS MUST NOT BE TAKEN OUT OF ITS PROPER CONNECTIONS

That there is a tendency to this, can hardly be denied. When we are thoroughly roused by the Spirit of God, from a state of comparative indifference to lively Christian activity, and enter upon a course of searching inquiry into the deficiencies of the past, and the depth and extent of our privilege, as a natural and first effect, we sink amazingly in our own eyes; and happy for us if, through the device of the devil, the work of God already done in our hearts, and still in progress, does not go down with self! Surely, we are in great danger of blindness here. Many have been the sufferers who, in the very struggle for "a clean heart," have been led to depreciate their past religious experience, until they grieved the Spirit, and reached a state of complete despair. But if the soul escapes this snare and the work goes on, the glory of holiness becomes entirely absorbing. Oh, how deep and rich, and full of its blessings. Completely enamored with its charms, and awed by its overpowering grandeur, one may very well say,—give me this, and I want nothing besides. Is it not wonderful that, in such a state, this one object should completely occupy the mind. And when this absorbing desire is gratified, the danger is not entirely past. We do not mean the danger of over-estimating the grace of perfect love. This, we are sure, is impossible. We mean simply the danger of making it the whole of the Christian scheme. It is doubtless the very

center and soul of the scheme,—the grand aim of remedial love in reference to sinners. But it is not the whole.

It supersedes no doctrine of the gospel. It is instead of no other work of grace. It acknowledges the atonement, conviction, repentance, justification by faith, regeneration, adoption, sanctification commenced, and growth in grace. Nay, more. It depends upon all these. It cannot exist without them, and hence requires its advocates to bend their energies, to a very large extent, to the work of producing and maintaining them.

THE SACRED PROFESSION MUST BE VINDICATED

The spirit of the sanctified must vindicate the profession. Such amazing grace cannot be hid in the heart. A light so pure, and bright, and constantly increasing, will shine out to the view of men. A tree so good will bear good fruit.

The spirit which characterizes the man wholly sanctified, is a clear and steady vindication of his profession. It is the spirit of love—of perfect love.

Increased usefulness must vindicate this profession. We are aware that there is no coercion in religion. Mind is free, and can, if it will, resist all kinds of saving influence. Voluntary unbelief baffled the skill and power of the Savior, while upon earth; and every day sinful men depart to hell because they resist the Holy Ghost. Christians can never, therefore, in the absolute sense, be held responsible for the salvation of others. And yet there is ground of a most fearful responsibility, in behalf of the church and the world.

If we cannot absolutely save men, we can influence their salvation, and whatever we can do, to rouse them from their slumbers, to pour light upon their darkness, to guide them to the Savior, to secure them a home in heaven, we are bound to do. For the full extent of our possible influence over the moral destinies of the world, we shall unquestionably be held accountable at the judgment. Whatever God has given, he will undoubtedly require; and this rule is clearly applicable to those who have been washed from all impurity in the blood of the Lamb. Mark, my brethren, the divine announcement of this stern and equitable law of responsibility—"unto whosoever much is given, of him shall be much required."

The spirit of the sanctified cannot be inoperative. It is felt and acknowledged, wherever it exists. Without a word, it reproves sin so directly, so forcibly, that the sinner trembles under its stern rebukes. It leads the wanderer back to God. It persuades with silent, but pathetic love, the regenerate to seek for holiness. It draws, like the heart of Jesus, by its powerful attraction, the souls of believers upwards, and of guilty sinners away from the devil. Religion, "pure and undefiled," so enters the person, the bearing, the words, the business transactions, the daily life of the wholly consecrated, that all men see it, and hear it, and feel it when they mingle with them.

AN APPEAL TO THE GENERAL CHURCH, AND ESPECIALLY
TO THOSE WHO ARE SANCTIFIED IN PART

The deep solemnity of the truths we have reached in this discussion, and especially in the chapter on the cen-

tral idea neglected, must profoundly impress us. The want we have ascertained is highly suggestive.

It calls the church to profound reflection. Facts so immensely important in their bearings cannot be passed slightly over. Whoever neglects to consider them carefully and thoroughly, must incur a fearful responsibility. Throughout the length and breadth of Zion, let us anxiously inquire how much we have lost by dependence upon false remedies for the evils which have threatened us. What intense folly to have speculated so much and so wildly upon the means of church renovation and power!

It calls the church to deep humiliation. Can we brethren, look at our sad deficiencies, and retain our pride, our arrogance? Is it a small evil, that we have grieved God's Holy Spirit; that we have declined the light, the life, the holiness and power, which he has urged upon us, and spread "blasting and mildew" through such large portions of the heritage of God?

Finally, it calls the church to fervent prayer. The church, the whole church; for what will it avail if only here and there a weeping few shall pour out their complaints before God?? They may save themselves. They may save some far off and near. They may secure refreshing seasons, limited in extent and power. They may even save the general church from dissolution and divine renunciation. All this they may undoubtedly do. But this is not what the present age demands. The church and the world require a revival so deep and all-pervading as to shake the nations; so pure and glorious as to wrap the earth in a flame of light; so benign and penetrating as to enter all hearts, and move

and mould all classes of society, all departments of education, and all human governments.

We protest it is no new doctrine we are preaching, it is no new struggle in which we are engaged, it is no new victory we claim, it is no new profession we make. God is our witness for how many ages this very faith has been the faith of the living church, how long and fierce has been its war with the coldness, the unbelief, the worldly-mindedness, the corruptions of men; and yet how many and how glorious have been its triumphs. To these very triumphs every bright spirit in heaven is indebted for his crown, and upon the success of this very faith the salvation of the world depends. This is the vindication of our zeal.

HOLINESS MUST BE PREACHED

We believe the solemn vows of that ministry which does not aim directly at the promotion of experimental and practical holiness are trifled with, in the fearful presence of him who will judge the quick and the dead. Philosophy is valuable so far as it removes the blindness from our spiritual vision, and reveals to our sight the true and the good. Polemics are in place when heresies obstruct the triumphant march of the King of kings. Rhetoric is available when it renders more transparent the medium through which the light of heaven shines upon the world. Oratory is at home in the sacred desk, when it is the out-gushing of a soul filled with the Holy Ghost. But when any or all of these assume to supersede or embellish the message of God to dying men, they are a fraud upon the soul so grievous and cruel as to deserve the indignation of

earth, and the wrath of heaven. O, tell us, brethren beloved, what language within the power of man, deserves to supersede, or is able to embellish the heaven-inspired summons, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," or the solemn, thrilling announcement—"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

The great object of the gospel is to make men holy. To accomplish this work, he appoints ambassadors—ministers of his grace,—and puts the Bible into their hands, as the great declaration of terms, upon which men may be saved from all sin. They are authorized to offer freely, pardon to the guilty, regeneration to the dead, adoption to the alien, sanctification to the impure. They are by no means at liberty to adopt any other standard.

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BISHOP PECK Says:

The reception of the Holy Ghost is a baptism of holiness. He is, by way of eminence, the Holy Ghost, as the sanctifier of believers, as the great source and efficient agent of holiness in the church. He alone can give the light which reveals the necessity of purification. He alone can move the great deep of the heart to abhor sin, and pant for holiness. He alone can excite that abandonment of self, that complete reliance upon Christ, which consecration implies. His power can cleanse and renovate the soul; can fill it with "perfect love." This is making the tree good. It is thoroughly cleansing the fountain. And may it not be a general blessing? It is the church, the whole church, that needs this purification. Its worldly tendencies mar its distinctive character. Its corruptions cripple its energies. Its imperfections make it fearful, where the boldest courage is demanded.

The special outpouring of the Holy Spirit is alone a baptism of holiness; the holiness of the church is defective, therefore the great want of the church is a baptism of the Holy Ghost.