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GUIDE TO HOLINESS ARTICLES
Volume 14 -- July 1848 to January 1849 -- Part 4

Edited by Dexter S. King

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS DIGITAL PUBLICATION

This is one of nineteen divisions of a bound book containing articles from the "Guide To Holiness," edited by Dexter S. King, during the years 1847 to 1850. The indexes in this bound book of articles from the Guide did designate the "Volume" of the Guide from which each of these divisions was taken -- Volume 13, Volume 14, Volume 15, Volume 16. However, I was unable to determine whether each of these divisions consists of a complete issue of the Guide, or whether some or all of the divisions consist of selections from one or more issues of the Guide. No specific date was included at the beginning of these divisions, as one would expect to find if they were complete and separate issues of the magazine. Therefore, instead of designating these divisions to be "Issues" of the Guide, I have designated each of them as a "Part" of the Guide "Volume" from which they were taken, assigning each "Part" the number corresponding with its consecutive place in the bound book. The articles of this digital publication were a part of Guide Volume 14, shown to have been originally published from July, 1848 to January, 1849. -- DVM

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01 -- FAITH AS CONNECTED WITH ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

(Report of a Sermon delivered at the Eastham Camp-Meeting, August 11th, by Rev. Charles K. True. Published by request.)

Mark 11:20-24. -- "And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them."

Did we not know, Christian brethren, the divine author of the doctrine herein contained, we should say, on the enunciation of this text. These are the words of a great doctor -- here are the depths of divinity. Nor shall we, upon examination, be obliged to shallow these deep waters by supposing the text is not to be taken literally, but figuratively. For the fact in reference to which these sayings originated, the whole circumstances of the case, and the entire phraseology of the passage, forbid our giving to it any other than a literal interpretation.

No figure of speech is here, nor is any spiritualizing upon the text admissible. Read the passage over, at your leisure, and you will see that our Savior meant to convey just the whole meaning which impresses you at the first announcement. Nor in steering clear, on the one hand, of a mystical or figurative interpretation of the text, need we be in fear of striking upon the breakers of Irvingism and miracle-working enthusiasm, on the other hand. Yet it is simple and universal truth, that faith in God will dry up fig trees to the roots, lift up mountains and whelm them in the sea, and secure to him who exercises it all things whatsoever he desires when he prays. It only needs that faith should be fairly and legitimately understood, to make this view of the subject acceptable to sober reason. I propose, therefore, to treat upon the subject in the following order:

- I. Explain the nature of faith.
- II. The power of faith.
- III. The prerequisites of faith, or what is requisite in order to its unlimited exercise.
- IV. Illustrate the propriety and reasonableness of perfect faith.
- V. Offer some encouragements to faith.

In considering this subject, I shall bear in mind that we are gathered together in this place expressly to attend to the business of our personal salvation, and endeavor to give the discourse a direct bearing upon our present and complete deliverance from sin. And may the Spirit from above breathe upon the assembly, help our infirmities, and guide us into the truth.

1. The Nature of Faith

Faith is trust in the word of God. It is not merely unequivocal assent to the truth of his word, but it is reliance upon that word. It is not merely the conviction or impression produced on the mind by the testimony of God in his Word and by his Spirit, but it is a voluntary action of the mind in view of that testimony. It has its sphere in the free agency of the soul, and requires an exercise of the will. It is not a divine operation on us, but it is a human operation, under the enlightening and quickening influence of the grace of God.

The example of Abraham explains it -- "Abraham believed God." The word of God to him was, that through Isaac he should be the father of many generations. Now, he not only received this declaration as true, but he relied upon it, as his works show, for he acted upon it in a most momentous transaction. God directed him to offer his son in sacrifice; and though this seemed so directly contrary to the promise of God, yet such was his reliance upon God, that he did not hesitate to attempt the sacrifice, expecting that it would make no difference in the result.

The whole transaction shows, that whatever other feelings he had to encounter in attempting to execute this deed, whatever instinctive dread and sorrow he felt at doing violence to his son's afflictions, and inflicting the pains of a temporary death upon him, no misgivings, no fears for the final consequences, mingled with them. "He expected to receive him again from the dead." And why? Because he relied upon God's word, that "in Isaac should his name be called, and he should be the father of many generations."

This point is too familiar to need any further comment. It is necessary, however, to remark, that though it is admitted by itself, especially among our hearers generally, it is nevertheless, in some minds, confounded with the witness of the Spirit. Now the operation of the Spirit, distinctively called the witness of the Spirit, is wholly distinct from faith, and makes no part of it whatsoever. It is vouchsafed to corroborate and confirm our faith; but it is not faith. It is, however, so immediately consequent upon faith, in conversion, that for want of ability to analyze their mental operations, some have confounded them in relating their experience.

In Mr. Wesley's account of his feelings in conversion, properly understood, we see the distinction accurately described. Journal -- "May 14, 1738 -- In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans." And here let me remark how God connects the two great reformations of the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, by making a spark from one kindle the other -- Luther teaches Wesley. "About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation: and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. I began to pray with all my might for those who had in

a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all, what I now first felt in my heart." -- Vol. iii., page 74.

The expression, "I felt my heart strangely warmed," is a summary statement of that complex experience of faith -- the witness of the Spirit -- and the operation of new-born love, which he delineates in the subsequent sentences. Here the three proper witnesses of personal salvation appeared in immediate connection -- the rational witness, or conscious exercise of trust -- the direct witness of the Spirit of God, and the witness of his own spirit, or the conscious exercise of those affections which characterize a regenerated mind.

They seemed to be instantaneous, yet were really successive -- as in the generation of lightning, there is the collision of the elements, the electric stream, and the flash, succeeding one another in order, yet appearing in one moment. But let it be distinctly understood, that the direct witness of the Holy Spirit is never given until we exercise faith -- and that faith includes the voluntary exercise of our own mind in trusting the promise of God.

II. I pass now to consider The Power of Faith. Faith is omnipotent within its own premises. "Verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them."

Here is our authority, and it is abundantly clear and emphatic. But you will bear in mind what faith is -- it is trust in the word of God. It must have the word of God to lay hold on, or it is not faith in God, but faith in something else, or mere imagination. If you should believe that the brother who sits behind you will give you a thousand dollars after the conclusion of this exercise, it would not be faith in him, for he has promised no such thing. If Peter had stood up in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and, to test the words of our Savior, had cried out to Mount Olivet, to rise up from his ancient seat and roll over Jerusalem into the Great Sea, it would have been in vain, because God had never promised to his apostles the power of working miracles unconditionally. It was promised them, on condition of its being necessary to the vindication of Christianity. And when, in their judgment, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, a miracle was necessary for the glory of Christ and for the establishment of Christianity, then they could say without doubting, be it done, and it was done.

None Of the apostles wrought more miracles than Paul, and yet Paul could not restore Epaphroditus to health, by miracle, nor did he attempt it, though he was sorely grieved on account of his sickness. Christ himself performed no miracles merely to display his power. The blasting of the fig tree, though it seemed at the time to be more willful than any other act of his life, afterwards appeared as an awful emblem of the destruction of the Jewish nation, which had so long been unfruitful of goodness, and whose doom he was about to pronounce.

Nor was the promise of miracles given to the church beyond the immediate successors of the apostles. The apostles and those on whom they laid their hands, are the only persons designated to possess this power; and for the obvious reason, that after them, it would not be necessary for the proof of the divinity of Christianity. The testimony of a generation given to the fact of the working

of miracles by the apostles and their coadjutors, was sufficient for all subsequent ages. Christianity was demonstrated to be of God, and that was enough. The miracles of the apostles are the miracles of the whole church -- they shed their light on all time; what need have we of other lights, if there is the north star?

[The above observations seem to preclude too much, because God has performed many miracles through his messengers since the apostolic days. No, perhaps post-apostolic messengers of God have not been given the same promise of miracle working power, but no doubt many since those days have been just as divinely impressed to exercise their faith for the performance of miracles that Christ desired to perform through them. -- DVM]

Now there are other promises of more importance to our individual welfare than the promise of miracles. They are written in God's book; and we find them there and claim them.

There is the promise of the divine providence over his people -- the assurance that no evil shall happen to them, but every event shall sooner or later result in benefit.

There is the promise to the widow, which she may plead without fainting.

There is the promise of pardon to the penitent sinner, who asks in the name of Christ.

There is the promise of the Holy Ghost to the imploring disciple.

There is the promise of a clean heart to the Christian. "If ye confess your sins, he is faithful and just to forgive your sins, and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness."

There is the promise of Christ's presence where two or three are gathered together in his name.

There is the promise of his special supervision over his ministers in the work of saving men. "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

There is the promise of comfort in death to the faithful soul. "If any man keep my sayings he shall never see death."

There is the promise of admission to heaven given to the departing Christian. "I will come again, and receive you to myself."

There is the promise of the resurrection of the body. "The dead in Christ shall rise first."

These promises are exceeding great and precious, and they are made to us on plain and positive conditions. But as these were given conditionally, faith, without respect to their conditions, would not be faith in them, but in something different from them. So every enlightened disciple will find it impossible to believe without a doubt, unless he be properly prepared to believe. If he doubt, it prevents the result -- if he truly believe and doubt not, it is done, whatsoever it is.

III. We are prepared now to consider, in the third place, The Prerequisites of Faith; or What is Necessary to Qualify us For Its Unlimited Exertion. This saying of Christ was addressed to disciples, that is to men, following the precepts of Christianity. Supposing that the promise of entire sanctification in the present life, is that which most of the Christian world have found the hardest to believe, I shall confine my remarks to that, and shew briefly what is requisite to prepare the mind truly to believe that promise.

1. It is necessary that we should be conscious that there is depravity remaining in us, for, "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

2. It is necessary that we confess and abjure our depravity. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

3. It is necessary wholly to consecrate ourselves to God -- that is, to resolve and promise that we will do all that in us lies to please and serve God, in all pure, pious, and benevolent works. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," says Paul, "for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure."

This text shows the distinction which some have failed to see, between entire consecration and entire sanctification. It shows us that as voluntary agents, we, assisted by grace, have a work to do on our part, as well as God on his part. But the divine agency is one thing and the human agency is another thing. Now a man may entirely consecrate himself to God, firmly resolving upon all holy obedience to God in all things, and yet not be entirely sanctified; for he may find evil propensities, though not so strong as to have dominion over him, yet still moving within him and prompting him to sin with a force which makes him painfully feel that all is not right within -- that there must be a better distribution of the moral forces -- a better state of the affections, before he can account himself possessed of Scriptural holiness here, or ready for the holy rest of heaven hereafter.

4. Another thing remains to be done to prepare the Christian to believe in the promise of sanctification. He must consider the ground on which the promise of salvation is given to man, viz.: the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ; and he must ask in the name of Christ, and on account of his atonement. Having done all this, looking up to God in prayer, he may believe that God does now sanctify him wholly that he purifies him from all moral defilement -- that he obliterates the very element of depravity from his spirit.

IV. The Propriety and Reasonableness of Perfect Faith. Now a great many come just up to this point and stop short. They confess and abjure all their sins, they humble themselves before God, and consecrate themselves without reserve to his holy will and service; they ask in the name of Jesus Christ, and earnestly and importunately plead the merits of his death; in a word, they comply with all the conditions required in order to salvation, except the final act of reliance on God's word; nay, they go so far as to expect that God will soon sanctify them, but they dare not venture to think that he doeth the work now. But this is not fulfilling the divine Redeemer's direction -- "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them."

Let others attempt to mend the theology of Christ, if they will, but I affirm I know of no way to obtain this salvation but to follow the exact directions given -- "Believe that you receive and you shall have." But here is the difficulty. I can believe, one will say, when I pray for pardon through the mediation of Christ, that I obtain it, for pardon is an exercise of the divine mind; but sanctification is a change wrought in my own mind, and how can I believe that I receive it before I am conscious that I have it?

I will premise the answer by remarking, that at the point at which we now contemplate the seeker of holiness -- having done all except to trust that God does now do the work, he is, according to the views of those who consider entire consecration as entire sanctification, already sanctified and needs only a little more faith in himself, or self-confidence, to enjoy the satisfaction of considering his object secured. But you, my brethren, regard this duty of consecration as but our part of the work, assisted, (as we always suppose in reference to the acceptable performance of any duty,) by the power of God -- but the counterpart is the divine operation, which must also take place, in order to our entire sanctification. Resolving we will indulge no pride or envy, is consecration in respect to those matters; but it is a very different thing, as I have before said, from having that removed from the soul which prompts to envy or pride. This is depravity, and its removal is the work of God.

And here I will remark that consecration to the extent of the light which we have upon our moral state, is essential even to the pardon of our sins. The penitent cannot be justified without this consecration, and the justified believer cannot retain this state of justification without consecration; and I will venture to add, in explanation of what seems a great mystery, that the reason why God does not entirely sanctify the penitent sinner when he justifies him, is that he is not capable of such a discernment of his inherent depravity, the evil of his very nature, as to make so thorough work of consecration as is desirable. His mind is occupied with his guilt, with its dreadful consequences, and the dominion of sin over him, and he cries out for pardon and rescue. God hears him and pardons him, and regenerates him, and breaks up the dominion of depravity, so that while he believes, he successfully resists all that remains of depraved propensities; but he soon discovers that they exist; he then sees clearly the perversion of his moral nature, and is prepared to confess it, and to set himself to rectify it. Now he can make understandingly a thorough consecration of himself to God, and receive entire sanctification.

But to return to the point, the difficulty is expressed in such inquiries as this: "How shall I believe that I receive the grace of sanctification before I have evidence that it is accomplished?" I answer, you have the evidence or assurance of God's Word; But you say, I do not feel any change.

1. I answer that the change may take place without your feeling it at the time. An irascible or envious temper is not always in exercise, but it is manifest when a suitable provocation is presented, by which one knows that it does exist. Supposing now, when one is not in an angry or envious mood, that temper should by miracle, be taken away, would he be likely to know that it is gone? No, not at the time, but afterwards, when the provocations are presented under which it was wont to appear, he would find to his joy, that it was gone. So when engaged in prayer, impelled by the recollection of sinful tempers, you ask to be delivered in the name of the Redeemer, you may

believe, with God's word alone before your mind, that he delivers you according to your desire, for you have no evidence to the contrary.

2. Again I observe that depravity consists not in any propensities which belong to human nature properly, but in their undue strength, or in their tendency to operate in an unlawful direction. Love is natural; but our sin is that we love the creature more than the Creator; or we love not God with all the power of love which he demands. It is lawful to hate; but the carnal heart is enmity' against God and holiness, and not against sin and Satan.

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed." But our enmity to the serpent may be carried too far. It is wrong to manifest our hate even to the devil so as to do him any injustice. I hate the devil because Christ hates him. I hate not his works only, but his character. He is every way hateful. But we are informed by St. Jude, "even Michael, the archangel, when disputing with Satan, contending about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee." Indignation at the mean and vicious conduct of other men, if restrained with certain limits, is lawful but its excess and improper exercise is sin. "Be ye angry and sin not."

Self-love is right, for it is made the standard by which we are to love our neighbors -- but in excess, it evolves envy and jealousy and covetousness. Love of approbation is natural and lawful, but it is depraved when it prompts to seek the praise of men more than the praise of God -- then it is vanity.

Now, what I wish to deduce from these remarks is this, that such are the complicated workings of our minds, that we cannot always certainly judge ourselves. Paul said, "I judge not my own self -- but he that judgeth me is the Lord." As we are liable to erroneous judgment of our actions, so also of our affections. Some condemn themselves when they should not; others approve themselves when they should condemn. What, then, -- when we confess all we know, and all we feel, and all we suspect, and all we doubt, to him who judgeth righteously, cast ourselves upon his promise, "that he will forgive, and cleanse from all unrighteousness," and believe that he cleanseth from all unrighteousness, as he has promised to do? -- shall we then judge ourselves, or shall we look to God?

3. But some may still say, how can I believe that I receive until I do receive? Nay, but you are receiving, through that very faith which you are graciously assisted to exercise. Your perfect faith naturally, i. e. legitimately, develops a perfect mind. It is a delusion that cleaves to some minds, that holiness is something put into the mind, whereas it is the right development of the mind itself, by the power of grace [This is not so, for the Bible clearly teaches that holiness consists of both that which God removes from the heart and that which He puts into the heart. -- DVM].

Perfect love, for example, is characteristic of a holy mind but perfect love cannot be but through perfect confidence. You cannot love God with all your heart unless you confide in him with all your might. A brother present remarked, that were not God a being of perfect integrity and goodness, no creature could have perfect confidence in him. He might command and threaten, but his omnipotence could not make us trust him while mind is what it is. So I say that, God being perfectly holy and good, we cannot perfectly love him till we perfectly confide in him. But love

flows from confidence, or as Paul has expressed it: "Faith works by love." If then, by prevenient grace, you are raised to exercise perfect trust, exercise it -- exercise it freely; it is bringing you into the desired state.

V. I am now to offer some encouragement to the Exercise of Perfect Faith in God.

1. In the first place, consider whatever might be the results of faith, as bringing you to the desired state -- it is your duty to believe, and perfect faith is an act which reaches the highest point of virtuous conduct possible to you -- I was about to say, possible to any creature. What virtuous deeds angels are capable of I know not, but I doubt if there be an angel in heaven who can find occasion for an action more excellent in its principle, or more acceptable to God, than for you, a worm of earth, who have never at any time "heard the voice of God, nor seen his shape," but having his written word in your hand, commanding you to trust in him, for whatever deliverance your soul needs and desires, for you, I say, struggling against sin and the infirmities of a fallen mind, and looking up to the great propitiatory sacrifice, to cast yourself upon his naked promise, and believe that you do receive while you pray, though you feel as yet no change in your own spirit, and have not yet the witness of his Holy Spirit bearing witness with your spirit; Oh, this is an effort which angels themselves must admire! When Jesus said of a certain woman, "She hath done what she could," he uttered the highest praise "For angels can no more."

The perfect act of faith strikes upon the summit of moral perfectness, if it do not lift you into that state. Make, then, my Christian brethren, this sublime endeavor. "Have faith in God!" I assure you it will secure the end, and you may never find in your future experience a greater task to try your virtue.

2. You need not be afraid to believe that you receive while you pray, for according to the testimony of thousands, you will thereupon receive the direct witness of the Spirit. This is what you have hoped to receive first in order to believe, but it comes, if it comes at all, as the confirmation of your faith. You heard upon this ground testimonies last year which were of the most satisfactory character. One aged brother, whom I have known for years, and whom I have always considered a perfect and upright man, told us that for forty years he had been seeking holiness of heart, but he never had the witness until he received it at this camp-meeting. But while in secret prayer in the retirement of the woods, he received the witness of the Spirit.

I heard his statement with the greatest pleasure, for I had listened to the same discourses which he had heard, and had endeavored to follow the directions which were given, similar to those which I have given to you now. But I had received no special witness of the Spirit. I had confessed and abjured all my sins I had renewed my consecration to God; I had cast myself on the atonement; I had plead the promises, repeating them again and again, and I resolved to believe that my prayer was answered, and not to doubt until I had evidence to the contrary.

At this time, if any Christian brother had asked about my state of mind, I should have said, "I am trusting in God," but no more. I wanted to see that aged Christian, and ask him particularly to explain to me how he received the witness of the Spirit, (and if possible, to describe it,) but he left the ground before I accomplished my object.

The day before the meeting was dissolved, I retired as usual into the woods, and laid the whole matter before God, and told him all that was in my heart. At that time, while prostrate before Him in consecration and prayer, what seemed a heavenly glory pervaded my soul and thrilled my body, accompanied with a sense of union with God in affection and love. It seemed very distinct from any excitement of my own mind, and I felt it was the Spirit of God bearing witness with my spirit. I add, however, that as you all know what the witness of the Spirit is, and how it has been diversified at different times, and in the experience of different individuals, you will not look for any particular form or mode of the divine manifestation, but let the Spirit, which giveth to every one, severally as he will, do as it seemeth him good -- only you may expect that he will satisfy your own mind, and that is all you should ask.

3. Before I conclude, I ought to say that it will aid your faith if you consider that the whole transaction is between you and God. You are not obliged to commit yourself to the public, until in your honest judgment the proper time shall come, and you need have no other mind in view but the Holy One with whom you have to do. Before God alone, therefore, walk in the faith, which his Word seems to dictate to you -- if you err, it is to please God -- the whole motive will be known to him.

Venture on him, therefore; do what he requires -- believe what he says -- and then, when you have experienced his blessing, you may communicate it to others as you may consider it your duty and privilege to do. But let it be remembered that all beholders will judge you by your works, your life, more than your words, and that if this grace be in you, it will manifest itself to all considerate persons, who look not for a perfection in man above human, and consider that the state of the heart is the true criterion of moral character.

And remember, too, best of all, that as you are acting solely to please God, "whom it is impossible to please without faith," his eye will be upon you in the secret place and before the world, as his eye was upon Abraham, and he will own you as he did Abraham: "For Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God."

The friend of God! Oh, here is a distinction valuable indeed to an immortal creature! and the thought of it will sustain you amidst the difficulties of virtue, and under the frowns of an unbelieving world. I say then, fear not -- "have faith in God."

* * * * *

My flesh, which cries, "it cannot be,"
Shall silence keep before the Lord;
And earth, and hell, and sin shall flee,
At Jesus' everlasting word.

* * * * *

On The Relation of the Created to the Uncreated

Everything which is created has a beginning. Having no beginning in itself; but in that which is out of itself; it owes to that principle of causation from which it came, not only its being but its powers. All existence and all power are in God; and everything which is not God has its existence and its power from Him.

2. These views indicate, in general terms, the relation of the created to the Uncreated; the relation of the creatures of God to God, the Creator. It is not only a relation which implies beginning, but a relation which implies continued dependence. The created not only come from God, but receive from God. And on the other hand, God, sustaining the relation correlative to that of beginning and reception, is not only the beginner of existence, but is the continual supplier of its wants.

It is not possible, in the nature of things, that a being who has a beginning out of himself; should ever have anything in himself; that is to say, by his own originating power. Whatever he has is given. This, as it seems to me, is one of those first truths which, in being suggested by nature herself; are above and beyond reason. Created beings are not only created, which is a distinct act, and a distinct event, but in all time subsequent to their creation, (repeating here the sentiment which has already been expressed,) they are and can be only what they have power to be from God.

3. Let it be remembered, then, that in all things God is the giver. Among the gifts which thus flow from God, is that high and invaluable one of moral freedom. In the exercise of that moral power, which is involved in the possession of moral freedom, men sometimes speak of it as their own possession, their own power; but they cannot with any propriety speak of it as a power which is not given. The gift of freedom involves the possibility of walking in the wrong way, but it does not alter the straightness and oneness of the true way.

The laws of holy living, although they are and can be fulfilled only by those who are morally free, are, nevertheless, unalterable. Founded in infinite wisdom, they necessarily have their permanent principles; and God himself; without a deviation from such wisdom, cannot change them. In the exercise of their moral choice, it is undoubtedly true that men may endeavor to live in some other way, and to walk in some other path, than that which God has pointed out -- but it does not follow from this that there is, or can be, more than one true way.

God, in imparting to men the gift of moral freedom, has said to them, life and death are before you; but he has not said, Ye can find life out of myself. He tells them emphatically, there is but one Fountain; but having given them the freedom of choice, he announces to them also that they may either rest confidently on his own bosom, and draw nourishment from that eternal fountain of life which is in himself; or may seek in the exercise of their moral freedom, the nourishment of their spiritual existence from any other supposed source of life, with all the terrible hazards attending it.

4. But if God is the only true Fountain, those who seek any other fountains will find them "broken cisterns, that can hold no water." When moral beings, in the exercise of their moral option,

choose to seek their support and life from any source separate from God himself; they necessarily die. It cannot be otherwise. Created beings as we have already seen, are necessarily dependent on their Creator. They have no power of making that which is not already made -- no power of absolute origination. It is true they have the power of choice, but they must choose among the things that are. They must either choose God, or that which is not God. If they choose as their source of life and of supply that which is not God, they look for help to that which has no help in itself; for life to that which has no life in itself; much less help and life for another. They ask "for bread, and they find a stone;" they ask "for a fish and they find a serpent." They are compelled to say, in the language of the prodigal son, my father's hired servants "have bread enough and to spare, but I perish with hunger."

Their freedom, invaluable as it is, does not give them the power of doing or of enduring impossibilities, of drinking without water, of eating without food, of receiving while they turn aside and reject the hand of the great Giver.

5. It is a truth, then, which cannot be too often repeated, and too earnestly impressed, (a truth necessarily resulting from the relation of the created to the Uncreated,) that there is and can be but one source of life. This is one of the great truths which the Savior came to illustrate and confirm. It is in man's power, as a moral agent, as we have already seen, to turn from God, because God has given him power to do so, and to seek support somewhere else. But the necessary result is, if there be but one source of spiritual support, that he finds only deprivation and hunger, instead of a full supply and death instead of life. For wisdom, he finds ignorance, for strength weakness, for confidence fear, for purity impurity, for love hatred, for joy remorse, and for hope despair. God, in the fulfillment of his plan of supporting him in existence as a moral being, sustains and will continue to sustain him physically.

In other words, making a distinction between the material and mental man, he does not deprive him of a natural or physical existence. But the life which he thus lives will be, and can be, only the receptacle of death. It will be the physical or natural repository of a moral corruption; the living and moving sepulcher of a death that never dies. It cannot be otherwise. He has nothing to live upon but himself; or creatures as poor as himself. And in the continual exhaustion of that which is not only limited in its supply, but poisonous in its nature, he lives a horrid and ghastly existence, and pines away with a death that never dies.

6. O my God, thou source of all good, truth, and life, when will men discover the truth of the blessed Savior's words, "There is none good but one, that is, God;" or say with one of thine ancient servants, "There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beside thee?" [1 Samuel 2:2; Mark 10:17] When will they discover that from thee all come; and that in thee all that live the true life must live; that by an eternal law, which is not more obvious from revelation than from the light of reason, that he who has not life, has death, and he who has not God in his heart, has Satan, who, as his name imports, is the opposite of God.

The Savior came to give us life, by bringing back "the sheep to the fold," by restoring us to God, and making us one with him. Hence it is that the holy soul, who has ascertained this truth by the bitter lesson of a sinful and hopeless experience, inspired at last with the instinct of return, has found forgiveness through a Savior's blood; and mounted upward, by the aid of that Savior's arm,

to the renewed vision of a yet benevolent and loving Father, utters the deep-felt and eternal voice, (a voice which shows both how he lost his life, and where he found it,) God alone, God alone, God alone. -- A. K.

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03 -- EVERYTHING A HELP IN THE DIVINE LIFE -- No. 4

WORLDLY PROSPERITY

"If, through unruffled seas,
Toward heaven we calmly sail,
With grateful hearts, O God, to thee
We'll own the fostering gale."

It seems to be universally admitted that affliction is an important means of grace. Many think it the only thing that does much for the soul. The poet says,

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone
Leads to the world where sorrow is unknown."

But does not our Father often try gentler methods with his children, drawing them with the cords of love -- and might it not be so with all, if all would yield to those gentler means? Surely, that heart of love does not willingly afflict -- we ourselves create the necessity.

Worldly prosperity is generally considered dangerous to the soul, and sorrow its best friend. Solomon says, "Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better." No doubt this is so when he who sends the grief sends with it sanctifying grace. Many a child of sorrow has had occasion to say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word."

Trials of some kind seem to be the lot of all, and much has been said and written to show how serviceable they are to the soul. There are few, if any, who have not some experimental knowledge on this subject. But if trials are good to draw the heart to God, blessings are still better. This we should infer from the fact that blessings are constantly bestowed, while troubles are only occasional. Mercies descend upon us like the gentle dew -- unheard, unheeded. We frequently take no notice of them. But it is not so with troubles -- they are always noticed, and felt, and made much of.

Suppose we should make as great account of each mercy as we do of each trial! Why, if we should reckon them up, they are more in number than the sand. We should have our hands full indeed, and our hearts full too. Our mouths would be filled with praises; nothing would be heard in our dwellings but thanksgiving and the voice of melody. Suppose every blessing of everyday life were received in this spirit, would it not minister grace to the happy recipient?

Trials may be made to work out our good, but they are not good in themselves. Blessings are really and intrinsically good, and are as truly designed for our spiritual benefit as afflictions. If trials are the medicine of the soul, mercies are its appropriate food. Madame Guyon says, "I nourish my soul on the providences of God." To the soul in a healthy state, the daily providences of God minister sweet food. They seem to be, as they certainly are, so many proofs that there really is somebody about us who loves us! It is the little attentions, constantly repeated, that afford the highest proof of affection, and infallibly win the heart. So should the little attentions we continually receive from our nearest and best friend, convince us of his love, and gain ours in return.

When a friend obliges us in a matter ever so trifling, we are grateful, and thank him at once. How stupid it is never to acknowledge the favors we receive from God, except at stated periods! Why should not our hearts, and it maybe our lips too, express our thanks at the moment we receive them? This was David's custom. Hear him: "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth."

Notwithstanding it is generally thought that worldly prosperity is dangerous to the soul, it is curious to see how willing most people are to encounter this danger. To the soul in which sanctification has made but little progress, undoubtedly it is dangerous, for it is the misery of persons in that state, that "their table often becomes a snare, and that which should have been for their welfare, a trap." Some, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, have been so impressed with the idea that the soul could not thrive in the atmosphere of prosperity, as actually to pray for affliction. But this seems not to be authorized by Scripture or reason. We have no right thus to limit God. It is as easy for him to bless our blessings, as our trials.

Affliction does not always do so much good as it seems to. That chastened, subdued feeling, which it usually produces, that deadness to the world, that seriousness, that desire for the repose of the grave and the rest of heaven, that compassion for fellow-sufferers, that patience, and gentleness, and quietness, that sentimental religion which consists in having the imagination and sensibilities quickened into unusual activity and directed to serious subjects, a feeling which makes one love sacred music and repeat sad hymns, and turn over the Bible to read all its words of consolation, and then philosophize and moralize -- all this may produce a great change in an individual, but it is not a saving change; all this is not religion. On multitudes of sufferers has this change passed, and it made them so different from their former selves, that they thought, and so did their friends, that they had passed from death unto life.

Thus the school of suffering is in danger of being overrated -- or if this be not so, the bright and beautiful teachings of prosperity are in danger of being underrated. What is religion? Love to God. What so calculated, in itself considered, to inspire that love, as his perpetual mercies? It is said that a continual dropping will wear away stone; shall no impression then be made on these stony hearts by the perpetual droppings of his goodness? The fact is, neither mercies nor judgments will soften these hearts of ours any farther than they are especially sanctified to us. Both may be -- both often are; they always are when we really wish it -- when, desiring holiness above every thing else, we enter into God's designs, and heartily co-operate with him.

All the circumstances in which we are placed, all the things which happen to us, (as we say,) are blessings. They may be divided into two classes -- the sweet blessings, and the bitter

blessings. Now our Father loves us too well to give us one more bitter blessing than we really need, and he loves us too wisely to give us one less. For he knows full well that though all are blessings, the sweet are sweet, and the bitter are bitter. Never does the tenderest earthly parent take half so much delight in bestowing comforts on his children, as our Father does in giving his sweet gifts to us. Yes, he is happier in bestowing, than we are in receiving. The beautiful truth uttered by the Savior, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," is a great truth, and reaches up to heaven. He who rules, sustains and loves the universe, feels its power. The gifts of God are not half so sweet as the love that bestows them.

The secret then, of making prosperity a help in the divine life, is really to take every thing from his kind hand as a gift of love. No individual ought to feel as if he were overlooked, or lost in the mass. O no; that watchful eye of love is on each one of us as constantly as if we stood alone in the universe. We must not feel as if the Almighty Dispenser of good scattered his blessings indiscriminately among his creatures, or threw them down carelessly without thinking any thing about it. True, he is very rich, and could afford to do so -- but this is not his way; he loves us too well. When you bestow favors on your friends, you consider what will be most appropriate and most acceptable to each one. The more evidence of this kind of forethought and consideration you afford them, the more will your favors be prized. They love to feel that you have bestowed thought upon them. Our heavenly Father nicely adjusts every circumstance, and every good gift to the peculiar wants and characteristics of each recipient -- giving to every one of the innumerable dependents on his bounty precisely that which is on the whole best adapted to his particular case. He not only sends what is good, but invariably, what is best -- taking into account, in the case of each individual, his present and prospective happiness, present and prospective usefulness, and his holiness.

But thousands will say, "After all, it is a well-known fact, that everywhere, and in all eyes, an abundance of this world's goods has proved unfavorable to piety. This was well understood three thousand years ago, when Agur said, "Give me neither poverty nor riches!" A good prayer -- though, as Bunyan says, "It has grown rusty for want of use!" Perhaps we are not to ask for wealth, for the same reason that we are not to ask for poverty, because it may lead us into temptation; but when either is sent, we ought not to consider it as a hindrance to the divine life, but welcome it as something which, by the grace of God, may prove a help to us.

But it may be objected, the Lord Jesus Christ said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." True, but when his disciples expressed their astonishment at this assertion, he modified the expression, and said, "How hard is it for them that trust in riches, to enter into the kingdom of God!" The fact that worldly prosperity is often injurious, brings us back to the old point, viz., the necessity of entire consecration. To one who is not really and fully living for God, prosperity will be dangerous, and so will adversity, and so will everything else. There is no safety for any one but in being wholly the Lord's. Here there is safety. So long as the Christian continues to regard himself; his talents, learning, wealth and honors, as belonging wholly to the Lord -- to be used only for him -- so far from being retarded, his soul will be wafted along by the gales of prosperity.

He has great facilities for doing good. Now, every dollar the Christian gives away to a good object, in the right spirit, does his own soul good. Every time he lends the influence which his position in society gives him, to aid another, he aids himself. Every hour he spends in thinking, and planning, and toiling for the benefit of others -- doing it as unto the Lord is as valuable in its results on himself as if he had spent it in direct efforts to promote his own spiritual welfare. The Christian who has the true idea of the matter, will give his time, talents, money and influence, where God calls for them, not merely from a sense of duty, nor from natural feeling, nor because it must be done, but because it is an important means of grace. Thus we see, that where wealth and other gifts are received in love, to be imparted again in love, they bless the soul twice.

While we regret that examples of this kind are not more numerous, we have cause for gratitude that there are and always have been instances enough to sustain the theory, and prove the truth of the assertion of Paul, "All things work together for good to those who love God."

Child of God, are you rich? You will probably answer, "no;" for rich is a comparative term, and few feel that they are rich, while there are others who are richer. It is on this account that, while the danger of wealth is universally admitted, hardly any one feels it in his own case. But are you rich, in the sense of having more than you need? Then be persuaded to make full trial of liberality as a means of grace.

"Freely ye have received, freely give; and God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye always having, all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." We are often told that wealth is committed to a Christian only that he may do good with it; but this does not unfold the ultimate design; it is rather that he may get good with it -- that his own soul may be blessed in blessing others.

But woe to the Christian who fails to use all the advantages of his position for the good of others. His soul will grow narrower and narrower, every grace will wither, and his wealth will prove a hindrance indeed. Alas! instances of this kind meet us on every side; in fact, they are so very numerous, that the true idea in regard to the design of wealth is almost lost. Let those who are prospered in life, who have health, wealth, talents, friends, influence, honors, accept them from the Lord with gratitude, and regard them as so many cords of love, by which he is drawing them to himself; but let them beware, lest by abusing his mercies, they compel him to make a whip of these small cords.

Is it not better to be drawn than driven? Let us live so near to God, and be so devoted to his service, that he can trust us with good things; and let us be faithful stewards of all that is committed to us, having specially in view the reflex influence on our own souls.

But, it may be asked, "Is it not dangerous to be rich in intellectual gifts? Paul says, 'Knowledge puffeth up.'" Yes, but he does not say that is its design, or its necessary consequence. There is not one of all heaven's good gifts which the unsanctified heart has not perverted, and not one on which the truly regenerate heart will not write, "Holiness to the Lord." The time is coming when this is to be the motto on all our possessions -- even on the bells of the horses -- why not now?

Probably in the millennial days, after the work of missions is completed, and universal piety has well-nigh banished poverty, there will be a vast deal of wealth in the church, and Christians will have nothing to do but enjoy it. Yet we expect that then, this great abundance, instead of injuring them, will promote a cheerful, high-toned piety -- why not now?

I love to look back to the primitive church, and forward to the millennium -- for what the church "has been, and shall yet be," she may be now. We have the same Bible to guide us, and we cannot suppose that any larger measures of the Spirit was received by the early Christians, or will be by the later ones, than is freely offered to us. -- S. J.

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04 -- FAITH IN DARKNESS

Believing in darkness, on God's bare word, where nothing like fulfillment of the promise is to be seen, is certainly a great and glorious thing, by which God is honored; and O, that such a faith were more frequently found among us! Alas! even where true faith really exists, it is but too generally in a state of conflict, and seldom triumphant and perfected. Let the Christian cling to the divine promises, and the deepest cloud will become radiant; for faith is the evidence of things hoped for, and points to those eternal realities which are the Christian's reward.

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THE END